

## AJC CEO Ted Deutch Seeks To Strengthen Israel-Asia Pacific Relations On His First Trip To Japan And South Korea

"Japan and South Korea's support of Israel following the Oct. 7 terror attack by Hamas is a reflection of a strong bond between the two nations forged by an unstinting commitment to democracy and economic ties that have propelled both nations' growth," American Jewish Committee (AJC) CEO Ted Deutch said.

Deutch was joined on a mission to Japan and South Korea at the recently by AJC Board of Governors Chair Bobby Lapin and AJC Asia Pacific Institute (API) Chair Bob Peckar, in his first trip to Japan and South Korea as CEO.

"Throughout all of our meetings in Japan, what was made abundantly clear is the opportunity to expand the Japan-Israel relationship," Deutch said. "In every meeting with the senior leadership of Japan, the officials expressed condolences for the October 7 terror attack, condemnation of Hamas, and support for Israel and the Jewish community."

The group met with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamikawa Yoko, Minister of Defense Kihara Minoru, Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Saito Ken, National Security Ad-



visor Akiba Takeo, and Ambassador of Israel to Japan Gilad Cohen.

"Japan's support for Israel after October 7 and in the weeks and months since is a reflection of the momentum we've seen over the past decade in this relationship and – we hope – a harbinger of growth going forward," Deutch said. "The Japan-Israel relationship is not only imperative for economic growth, but also to support democracy around the world and counter the autocratic, dangerous alliance

growing between Russia, China, and North Korea. Stability in East Asia is linked to stability in Europe and the Middle East. Strengthening these ties as well as the critical U.S.-Japan relationship, which is stronger than ever, is incredibly important, and I am hopeful for the future."

Also on the mission were AJC Asia Pacific Institute Director Shira

Loewenberg, AJC Executive Council and API Board Member Clifford Goldstein; AJC Board of Governors member Marcie Goldstein; API Board Member Randall Chafetz; National Leadership Council members Eve Lapin, Lisa Strauss-Chafetz, Kathryn Fleischer and David Stein, and AJC New York President Robert Skolnick.

In South Korea, the group met with South Korean First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Hong-kyun, National Assembly Speaker

Kim Jin-pyo, Ambassador of Israel to South Korea Akiva Tor, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg, and Rev. Billy Kim, Chairman of Far East Broadcasting Company and Pastor Emeritus of Central Baptist Church.

"The U.S.-South Korea alliance, underpinned by our shared commitment to democratic values, is a relationship mirrored by the U.S. relationship with Israel. Both are natural partners in our shared mission of strengthening a rules-based global order where bad actors who seek to create chaos are deterred," Loewenberg said. "The issues we face today are inextricably linked – Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine, the unprovoked Hamas attack on Israel — backed by Iran, and North Korea's provocative actions all threaten global stability. We must continue to strengthen the relationships between the U.S., South Korea, and Israel as we work towards a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable future."

For more than three decades, AJC has promoted American and Israeli ties with Japan and South Korea. AJC Asia Pacific In-

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## Hadassah Thanks the Senate for Passing Emergency Aid for Israel

In response to the Senate passing a bipartisan bill including over \$14 billion of emergency aid to America's democratic ally, Israel, Hadassah National President Carol Ann Schwartz issued the following statement:

"Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, thanks the Senate for taking bipartisan action to pass a bill that includes emergency aid to Israel. Four months ago, Hamas invaded Israel in a brutal terrorist attack, killing children, raping women and taking 240



hostages. America must stand with our ally at this critical time. We urge all Members of Congress to work together, across chambers and across the aisle, to bring the hostages home and ensure that the US provides this essential security funding."

Carol Ann Schwartz

## Frankenstein's Matzah Comes to Life in This Laugh-Out-Loud Passover Parody That Picture Book Readers Will Love

Author K. Marcus is excited to announce the publication of her debut picture book, FRANKENSTEIN'S MATZAH: A Passover Parody. In this laugh-out-loud Passover picture book parody of Frankenstein, Vee, Victor Frankenstein's great, great, great Jewish non-binary grandchild, wants to win the school science fair and become the world's greatest scientist.

When their experiment succeeds, zany chaos ensues, and Vee is left to wrestle with some Frankenstein-size ethical dilemmas. A graphic picture book told entirely through comic bubbles, Frankenstein's Matzah invites young readers to join in the joy of Passover (and science!) by conducting their own Super Seder Science



experiments.

The reviews are positive:

"The book is obviously fun, but it can also be a catalyst for family discussion." - Bookishly Jewish

"This Passover parody of Mary Shelly's 'Frankenstein' is a delight." - Storybook Lady

K. Marcus comes from a long line of strong women readers and when she isn't reading, writing, or

researching, you'll find her outside enjoying nature. She has two children and lives in the

Historic Hudson Valley with her spouse, cats, Westley & Buttercup, and dog, Indie.

For more information, please visit [kmarcus-writes.com](http://kmarcus-writes.com).

stitute has worked closely with government officials, foreign policy analysts, and other thought leaders to deepen understanding and relationships. Together with AJC Project Interchange, API has brought three delegations of Japanese government officials and two delegations of Korean diplomats and foreign policy leaders to Israel.

In this current period of conflict, AJC has been heartened by statements of solidarity with Israel from Tokyo and Seoul, demonstrating all the more the importance of our engagement with Japan and South Korea.

AJC's Asia Pacific Institute (API) was founded in 1989, even before the balance of economic and political power in the world began to shift toward Asia. Today, the organiza-

tion plays a significant role in expanding the relationships of Israel and the global Jewish community with Asian Americans and Asian countries. Headquartered in New York, API has representation in Southeast Asia, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and New Delhi.

AJC is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York, 24 offices across the United States, 14 overseas posts, as well as partnerships with 38 Jewish community organizations worldwide, AJC's mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world. For more, visit [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org).

# AJC LFT

## Leaders for Tomorrow

### EMPOWERING TODAY'S GENERATION OF GLOBAL JEWISH ADVOCATES



AJC Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) high school students at the 2024 LFT Summit participants after advocating on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

## Calling all 10th, 11th, 12th graders!

Are you interested in learning to be a strong Jewish and pro-Israel advocate?

AJC's Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) innovative education program for Jewish high school students, is designed to empower today's generation of young Jewish leaders to advocate on behalf of the Jewish people and Israel. LFT instills in teens the knowledge, confidence, and passion to serve as positive changemakers among their peers and in their communities.

To learn more about LFT and Apply for the 2024-25 LFT High School Leaders Cohort, contact Jill Friedman at [friedmanj@ajc.org](mailto:friedmanj@ajc.org) or [westchester@ajc.org](mailto:westchester@ajc.org)

# NYC Man Sentenced to Seven Years for Illegal Gun Possession

Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah recently announced that a New York City man was sentenced to seven years in state prison for illegal gun possession.

DA Rocah said: "This sentence is another example of my unwavering commitment to removing dangerous weapons and those who illegally possess them from our streets."

The defendant, Jose Valle, 35, of New York City, pleaded guilty on October 12, 2023, to Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, a felony. In addition to his sentence, the defendant will receive five years of post-release supervision. The defendant, who

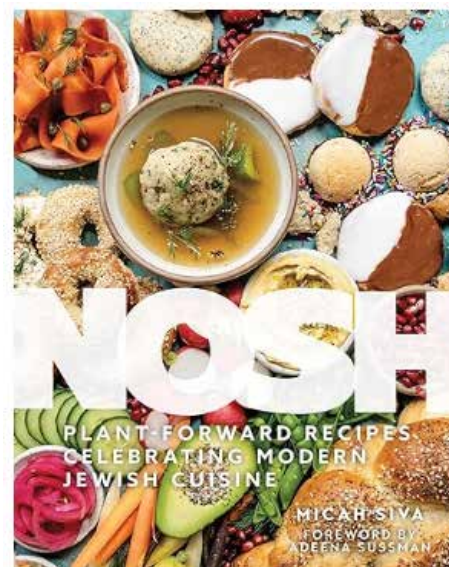
has prior felony convictions, is prohibited from legally possessing firearms.

On December 28, 2022, at approximately 4:48 p.m., the Westchester County Department of Public Safety conducted a routine traffic stop on the Hutchinson River Parkway in Harrison. The defendant attempted to flee before police arrested him and recovered from the defendant's pant leg a 9mm pistol loaded with seven bullets.

The case was before Judge George Fufidio in Westchester County Court and prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Adrian Murphy of the Trials and Investigations Division.

# Chef Dishes Up International Plant-Based Jewish Cuisine in New Cookbook

Passover without brisket? Matzo ball soup without chicken broth? Bagels without lox? In NOSH: Plant-Forward Recipes Celebrating Modern Jewish Cuisine (The Collective Book Studio/distributed by Simon and Schuster; ISBN: 978-1685559151; Hardcover), author, chef and dietitian Micah Siva (with a foreword by Adeena Sussman) brings her love for cooking, her commitment to a plant-based, health-supportive way of eating, and her devotion to her Jewish heritage together in a collection of delicious recipes.



reinforcing a sense of tradition, comfort, and community.

In NOSH, Siva offers more than 80 plant-forward recipes — divided into sections spanning every course of the meal and occasion. The recipes reflect the culinary influences of the diversity of places where Jewish food has its roots — Africa, India, the Middle East, and Western as well as Eastern Europe — and are all accompanied by mouth-watering photographs and easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions. Throughout, Siva offers gentle suggestions for going vegetarian or vegan while welcoming omnivores and flexitarians to the table without guilt.

The book includes a food glossary, from Amba to Zhoug; sample holiday and everyday menus; plant-based substitutions for dairy items and eggs; gluten-free and Passover-friendly options; recipes for pantry and fridge essentials, from Simple Applesauce to Sauerkraut, Tahini Sauce to Everything Bagel Spice; fascinating historical and cultural tidbits, helpful hints and ample encouragement throughout. Siva will be doing food demos and book events in Brooklyn, NY a book launch event at GERTIE in Brooklyn on March 5.

Micah Siva is a trained chef, registered dietitian, recipe writer, and food photographer specializing in modern Jewish cuisine. After graduating from the Natural Gourmet Institute of Health & Culinary Arts, she pursued a career in nutrition. She later worked for global brands, media outlets, and publications in food media. She shares Jewish-inspired, plant-forward recipes through her blog, Nosh with Micah. She lives in San Francisco, California, with her husband, Joshua Siva, their newborn baby, and their mini Sheepadoodle, Buckwheat. She and her husband are the coauthors of 1, 2, 3, Nosh With Me, an illustrated children's book about Jewish foods and their meanings.

NOSH: Plant-Forward Recipes Celebrating Modern Jewish Cuisine is available from Amazon.com

Siva's favorite place as a little girl was in the kitchen with her grandmother, who taught her that family is built by peering through the oven door, watching over a pot of chicken soup, and sitting around the dinner table. Though she cherishes memories of stewing chickens and roasting brisket, Siva's food ethos and preferences have shifted from the Eastern European "meat and potatoes" staples. Today, she has an avid social media following for creating appealing recipes that rethink Jewish cuisine as healthy for the body, soul, and planet while



# Spiritual Memoir Weaves Profound Connections Between Author's Past and Present Lives

In Peter Mond's fascinating new book, *The Life of a Stone: Memoir of a Path Between Lives*, Mond shows readers that there can be more to life than one life and that the connections between past and present lives offer a path toward wisdom, spirituality, and self-healing.

"Seemingly random events, or 'coincidences,' give evidence of the Divine at work in our everyday lives," Mond said. "They serve as 'disturbances' in life that challenge us to take a deeper look to glean wisdom for the soul's journey."

In *The Life of a Stone*, Mond revisits and expands upon themes he shared in his first book, *The Birth of a Stone*. He relates the otherworldly vision in which he saw his life in three stages — the life of the body, the psyche, and the spirit. He explores the connections between the dilemmas he faced as a child growing up in Brighton, England; as an adult living in Tzfat, Israel; and as a Jewish teenager in Poland's Warsaw Ghetto. Mond shares the story of his past life as "Shimi," who was murdered by the Nazis for smuggling. Shimi's words were inspired by a past life regression session under the guidance of Dr. Mark Cohen, resulting in a profound healing. Mond also includes his wife's account of their visit to Treblinka's death camp, which inspired him to share Holocaust stories



in order to keep the memory of the dead alive.

"Events and experiences described in the books opened me up, and served as catalysts to a process of discovering why I am here in this world, which is the greatest mystery in life," Mond said. "Each individual has a different path and destination, but we can share with each other what happened at different stops on our journey. We can tell our story and hear the other's story; a story heard becomes our story."

In *The Life of a Stone*, Mond's quest to discover the deeper meaning of his "personal history" expands to embrace the collective history of the Jewish People. In his closing chapters, Mond contemplates the connection between the two most extreme events in Jewish history — Auschwitz and Mount Sinai. His message, for the next generation, is to listen deeply and to "stretch out a hand" for the well-being of another.

"Spiritual life is above all about listening to messages that come to us from within everyday events, from within us and from beyond this world," Mond said. "We need to understand these messages and endeavor to act upon them. Listen ... understand ... act."

PETER SIMON MOND lives with his family in Tzfat, Israel. He holds an M.A. in Social

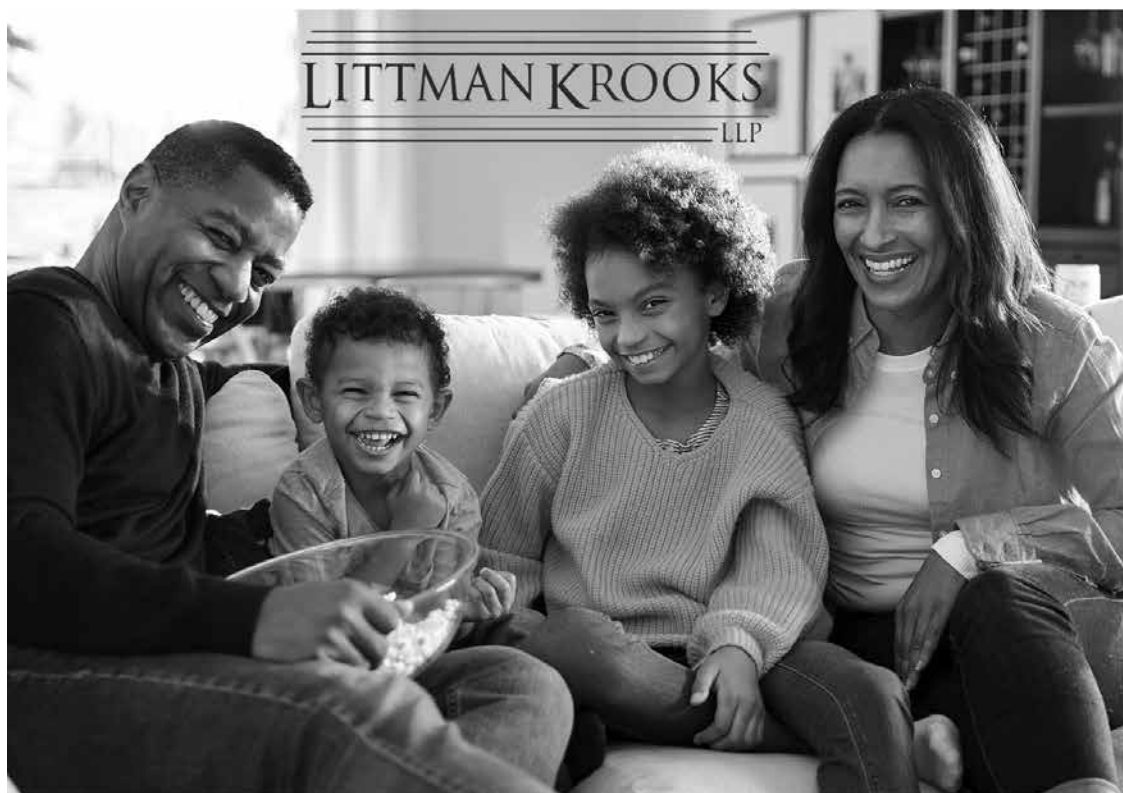
Work from Tel Aviv University and studied with the late Dr. Mark Cohen, philosopher and Life Between Lives therapist. Mond formerly served as a Psychiatric Social Worker, Group Facilitator, and Social Work Lecturer. He and his wife, Pamela, are the founders and Co-Directors of the In the Quiet Space Center in Tzfat. Their company, CalmCoping Ltd., serves as a platform for providing children all over the world with the opportunity to learn the unique self-calming coping method developed at the Center. Mond and his wife have four children and 17 grandchildren. He is also the author of *The Birth of a Stone: A Journey of Discovery* (2011), the first book in "The Stone Trilogy" series. Today, his passion is to share Hasidic and Holocaust stories with others.

To learn more, visit [www.petermond.com](http://www.petermond.com), or connect with the author on the following social media platforms:

<https://twitter.com/TheJewishStory>

<https://youtube.com/@thejewishstory-withpetermond> <https://chat.whatsapp.com/GdeoisKIFKJKzEdmNK6e6m>

Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/Life-Stone-Memoir-between-Trilogy/dp/BoC2SG695H/>



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# Mastercard Executive Leads 2024 Westchester Fairfield Go Red for Women® Movement

Cara Pensabene, MD, Vice President, Global Medical Director at Mastercard, has been named Centennial Chair of the American Heart Association's Westchester Fairfield Go Red for Women movement, a worldwide initiative of the American Heart Association designed to increase women's heart health awareness and serve as a catalyst for change to improve the lives of women locally, national and globally.

This year, Go Red also celebrates 20 years of making an impact as the movement continues to make bold moves to save lives and pioneer scientific discoveries.

"I'm honored to serve as the Centennial Chair for the Westchester Fairfield Go Red for Women movement," said Dr. Pensabene. "Since 2004, Go Red for Women has addressed the awareness and clinical care gaps of women's greatest health threat, cardiovascular disease. We need to continue focusing on cardiovascular health in women because it remains the leading cause of death. The simple truth is that most cardiovascular diseases can still be prevented with education and healthy lifestyle changes."

For two decades Go Red for Women has been saving and improving women's lives by advancing equitable research and care, advocating for inclusive health policies, and raising

awareness. As women grow and change so does their risk for cardiovascular disease. Go Red for Women is here for their health and well-being at every age, stage, and season of their lives.

"The American Heart Association believes everyone deserves the opportunity for a longer, healthier life and it's been the mission to fulfill that vision and I hope we can help provide that through this campaign," said Dr. Pensabene.

The American Heart Association's centennial is a celebration of the lifesaving achievements and shared vision for a bold second century that will exponentially advance heart and brain health. The Association will continue to lead breakthroughs in science and technology, improve healthcare, and advocate for federal, state, and local policies that drive healthier lifestyles.

The 2024 Go Red for Women movement in Westchester and Fairfield Counties is nationally sponsored by CVS Health and locally by Mastercard, White Plains Hospital, Fujifilm, and Northwell Health.

This year's Go Red for Women movement and its local achievements will be celebrated on Thursday, March 21, 2024, at The Whitby Castle in Rye, NY. For more information, please visit [www.heart.org/goredwestchester](http://www.heart.org/goredwestchester).

# Local Non-Profit Lifts Up Displaced Israelis During Crisis

Since the crisis in Israel broke out on October 7 of last year, Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI) has supported Israelis who have temporarily relocated to the Westchester and NYC areas by coordinating emergency support, including housing, medical, dental, community connections, and other urgent needs, while mobilizing local volunteers to help.

October 7 was one of the darkest days in modern Israeli history; 22 communities were infiltrated by Hamas terrorists, leaving thousands injured, 1,200 murdered, and 240 abducted to Gaza, including babies, the elderly, and entire families.

To date, UJA-Federation of New York has allocated more than \$71 million to support the people of Israel. WJCI is a recipient of a UJA grant to assist in this effort in the Westchester/Hudson Valley. WJCI has been using the allocated funds granted to help displaced Israelis needing temporary assistance after fleeing danger and has been urgently responding to requests since October 7. In addition, local volunteers have donated clothing, use of automobiles, computers, and other essential items to help ease displaced Israelis whose lives were uprooted on the day of the attacks.

Since December 2021, WJCI has mobilized the local Jewish community to welcome refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. As a result of that work, a network of resources, volunteers, synagogues, and local organizations is now available to WJCI to support displaced Israelis.



"We gently shifted our mission after October 7 to enable us to help displaced Israelis. WJCI uses an ethics-based framework to mobilize our community to channel obligation into action, and we decided that it is our responsibility as a Jewish organization to stand up for our brothers and sisters in Israel who are suffering," said Holly Rosen Fink, President and Co-Founder of WJCI. "The response from community members combined with our ability to help financially because of the grant from UJA has been powerful. It has been a glimmer of hope for all of us during these dark times."

Examples of WJCI's assistance include securing temporary housing for six families, furnishing these apartments through donations

# White Plains Hospital Opens First Dental Practice

White Plains Hospital celebrated the opening of White Plains Hospital Dental Care, its first dentistry practice and the latest addition to its expanding line of services, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 23. The dental practice, led by long-time White Plains community dentist and Director of Dental Services at White Plains Hospital, Dr. Joseph Leanza, DDS, is located at 79 East Post Road in White Plains, in the same location as the Hospital's Family Health Center and St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Center.

Dr. Leanza was previously the owner of White Plains Dental at 1 East Post Road in White Plains, which he founded in 1993, and has been practicing dentistry since 1984. He has served as Section Chief of White Plains Hospital's Department of Dentistry since 2010, helping to provide emergency dental treatments to patients in the Hospital. Dr. Leanza and his team began as part of White Plains Hospital at the end of 2023.

"My team and I have been part of this community for many years, providing high-quality affordable dental care to our patients," said Dr. Leanza. "We are so pleased to formally launch White Plains Hospital Dental Care, where we will continue to serve those who need it the most in a beautiful new office and with the full support of White Plains Hospital."

"White Plains Hospital Dental Care is a perfect complement to the internal medicine and behavioral health services already offered at that location. Dental health, while critical on its own, also plays an important role in general health – so going to the dentist is a great preventative health measure. In addition, having these services under one roof allows us to enhance access to care and help manage referrals for patients and families who need it most," said Susan Fox, President & CEO of White Plains Hospital.

The addition of White Plains Hospital Dental Care was made possible through a Statewide Health Care Facility Transformation Program III grant from the New York State Department of Health.

Ms. Fox and Dr. Leanza were joined at the January 23 ribbon-cutting by White Plains Hospital's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Michael Palumbo; Vice President, Organizational Performance, Karen Banoff; Jill Schulmann, Assistant Vice President; Bernadette Kingham-Bez, Executive Director, St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester; Sari Maenza, FNP, Family Health Center; Larry Smith, Immediate Past Chair of White Plains Hospital's Board of Directors; and Dr. Leanza's staff and family, including his mother Angela.

To make an appointment at White Plains Hospital Dental Care, call 914-849-3488.



from community members, helping to enroll children in Jewish schools through community connections, paying for after-school activities for Israeli children who fled the war and are experiencing trauma, providing a camera to enable an individual to work and make money, paying rent for the mother of a young Israeli woman who died at the Nova festival who came to finish her Master's degree at Hunter College, paying medical and dental bills for Israelis who are here as temporary visitors and whose travel insurance does not cover all costs, and more. In addition, WJCI has held two events at JCC Mid-Westchester for displaced Israelis, providing them with a socialization opportunity and a way to learn about available resources.

Other partners in this work have included The Westchester Jewish Council, Common Point Queens, Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Scarsdale Synagogue, The Jewish Board, Hebrew Free Loan Society, Chabads of Chappaqua, Pleasantville, and Armonk, Neighbors for Refugees, WJCS, and others. WJCI is also part of a local collaboration called B'Yachad Westchester, which came together to help families during this challenging transition.

Many of the families WJCI helped early on in

the war have gone back to Israel; others who live in parts of Israel that have been shattered or remain under threat are still living here.

WJCI helped David, a 25-year-old native of Ukraine who survived that war and then relocated to Israel to endure another war and is now in America. WJCI has helped him by securing an AirBnb for six weeks, purchasing a camera through donations to help him pursue a career as a photographer, and providing other funds and contacts to help him get on his feet and ease his transition. "After leaving two places being bombed daily, it is a relief to be somewhere I feel safe," he said. "WJCI has helped me every step of the way. The generosity from the WJCI team and their volunteers has restored my faith in humanity."

WJCI also launched its annual initiative, HIAS Refugee Shabbat 2024, on February 2-3, which many local synagogues are observing until May of this year, with many displaced Israelis speaking about their experiences to educate the community about what they have been through and to inspire community members to stand up and do something to help. For those who want to join WJCI in its efforts, please get in touch with [info@wjci.org](mailto:info@wjci.org).

## Hadassah Launches “End The Silence” – A Global Campaign to Raise Awareness of Hamas’ Weaponization of Sexual Violence and Demand Accountability

On February 21, Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America – the largest Jewish women’s organization in the United States and one with an international network of supporters – launches “End The Silence,” a global campaign to unite people all over the world in speaking out against the weaponization of sexual violence by Hamas in Israel and by others around the globe.

“As leaders of a humanitarian organization, we at Hadassah are shaken to the core by the horrific evidence of how Hamas used rape and other acts of brutal sexual violence during its October 7 attack on Israel. And we are outraged that these war crimes have been ‘justified,’ denied – and even celebrated by some,” said Hadassah National President Carol Ann Schwartz.

“Rape should never be sanctioned as an act of war,” continued Schwartz. “That is why we are bringing together Hadassah’s hundreds of thousands of passionate volunteers and leaders from across the world – to end the silence, to speak out, to raise awareness, and, critically, to demand justice.”

The international community’s silence in the face of irrefutable evidence of Hamas’ savage war crimes legitimizes rape and the use of rape as a weapon of war. Hadassah’s “End The Silence” campaign will focus the world’s attention on the gruesome reality that Hamas planned and systematically carried out acts of sexual violence against women and girls in Israel. The campaign will ensure that people everywhere not only hear the truth but also have the facts they need to counter misinformation, including attempts to justify these actions or deny they happened.

Hadassah’s “End The Silence” campaign is mobilizing grassroots leaders in 14 countries to demand that United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres advance an unbiased, independent, and thorough UN investigation and pursue

vigorous prosecution of Hamas for these war crimes.

Hadassah will post videos and calls to action on the “End The Silence” website and on social media. Hadassah’s more than 800 chapters across the US will join the organization’s leaders around the world in taking up the challenge in their communities by organizing events, rallies, and other advocacy activities.

The “End The Silence” campaign builds on actions already taken by Hadassah’s grassroots and leadership – including calling on international organizations to denounce Hamas’ use of rape as a weapon of war, leading 60 organizations to send a letter to the UN demanding an impartial investigation of Hamas and urging Congressional leaders to speak out.

Learn more about Hadassah’s “End The Silence” campaign here: [www.hadassah.org/endthesilence](http://www.hadassah.org/endthesilence)

Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, is the largest Jewish women’s organization in the United States. With nearly 300,000 members, donors, and supporters, Hadassah brings women together to effect change on such critical issues as ensuring Israel’s security, combating antisemitism, and promoting women’s health care. Through its Jerusalem-based hospital system, the Hadassah Medical Organization, Hadassah helps support exemplary care for more than 1 million people every year as well as world-renowned medical research. Hadassah’s hospitals serve without regard to race, religion, or nationality and in 2005 earned a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for building bridges to peace through medicine. Hadassah also supports two youth villages that set at-risk youth in Israel on the path to a successful future. Visit [www.hadassah.org](http://www.hadassah.org) or follow Hadassah on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

## AJC Congratulates Julie Katz on Appointment to State Department Antisemitism Team

American Jewish Committee (AJC) congratulated Julie Katz, AJC Atlanta Associate Director, on her appointment to a special one-year role at the U.S. State Department, working under Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt in the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (SEAS). AJC is pleased to support Katz’s tenure for the upcoming year as she takes a sabbatical from the organization, reaffirming its steadfast commitment to supporting the efforts of the United States in countering antisemitism.

“This is an incredible opportunity for Julie, who has proven to be a powerful advocate for the Jewish people. As antisemitism continues to rise here at home and around the world, I know that her knowledge and experience will be a great asset to Ambassador Lipstadt’s team – just as she has been to AJC,” said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. “All of us at AJC look forward to continuing to collaborate with SEAS and congratulate Julie on this new role.”

During her more than seven years at AJC, Katz advanced a multitude of advocacy initiatives, spanning antisemitism education, political outreach, and intergroup relations. In her new role at the State Department, she will support Ambassador Lipstadt’s public diplomacy to enhance global awareness of antisemitism.

AJC is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York City, 25 offices across the United States, and 14 overseas posts, as well as partnerships with 38 Jewish community organizations worldwide, AJC’s mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world.



## Spring – Oil Paintings by Jacqueline Davis

The Harrison Public Library presents Spring, oil paintings by Jacqueline Davis on view March 3-29, with a Meet the Artist event on March 18 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Jacqueline, who creates contemporary artworks in oils, developed a love for painting with oils after studying at the Art Students League in New York and taking workshops with working artists around the East Coast, eventually painting full-time herself.

Jacqueline has a strong design background. Originally from England, she graduated with a B.A. in Design as well as a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education from Manchester (UK). She has worked in Graphic Design, led a High School Design and Technology department for several years, and then ran a ceramics business.

She began oil painting with a passion about 10 years ago and has recently returned to teaching, leading oil painting classes within Adult Education.

Jacqueline has exhibited her work locally at The Edward Hopper House, Nyack, The Blue Door Gallery, Yonkers, The Mamaroneck Artists Guild, and The Rye Arts Center.



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# Tel Aviv University Researchers Successfully Prevent Memory Deterioration in Alzheimer's in an Animal Model

The researchers discovered a method with the potential for early detection of Alzheimer's during sleep or anesthesia in the pre-symptomatic stage, between 10-20 years before the onset of dementia symptoms.

The researchers found a variety of methods that were found to be effective in preventing abnormal brain activity and subsequent cognitive impairment in an animal model of Alzheimer's disease, including Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), which is a well-known method used in the treatment of Parkinson's and epilepsy.

"In the study, we discovered a connection between the abnormal activity in the hippocampus and a small nucleus called the nucleus reuniens, which connects the thalamus to the hippocampus. Using DBS to suppress this nucleus inhibited the epileptic activity during anesthesia and prevented memory loss after it. Moreover, DBS treatment during the pre-symptomatic phase prevented memory loss in Alzheimer's animal model during the symptomatic phase," said Prof. Inna Slutsky from Tel Aviv University (TAU). "We hope to start clinical trials in humans in the future," she added.

In 2022, a team of researchers from the laboratory of Prof. Inna Slutsky from the Faculty of Medicine and the Segol School of Neuroscience at TAU uncovered a pathological brain phenomenon in an animal model that precedes the first appearance of Alzheimer's disease symptoms by many years. This is an increased activity in the hippocampus during the states of anesthesia and sleep, which results from damage to the mechanism that stabilizes the neural network. In the current study published in Nature Communications, Prof. Slutsky's laboratory team, in collaboration with the Safra Center for Neuroscience at the Hebrew University, found that

suppression of neuronal activity in a small nucleus in a specific area of the thalamus (which regulates sleep states) caused a decrease in pathological activity in the hippocampus and prevented the deterioration of the memory in Alzheimer's in an animal model.

The researchers hope that their research will speed up the start of clinical trials in humans, lead to progress in the fields of early detection and prevention of the onset of dementia symptoms in Alzheimer's disease, and in the field of treating cognitive impairments caused by surgery (POCD - Post-operative Cognitive Dysfunction).

"As early as 10-20 years before the appearance of the familiar symptoms of memory impairment and cognitive decline, physiological changes slowly and gradually occur within the patients' brains," explains the doctoral student who led the study, Shiri Shoob. "There is an accumulation of amyloid-beta deposits and abnormal accumulations of tau protein, a decrease in the volume of the hippocampus, and more. Moreover, about 30% of the people who were found to have a pathology typical of Alzheimer's disease at postmortem did not develop the typical symptoms of the disease during their lifetime. It seems, then, that the brain has an, admittedly limited, ability to protect itself from the damage of the disease."

The research focused on finding those protective mechanisms that the brain has against the damage from the disease. The researchers found that during sleep - and especially during sleep as a result of general anesthesia - the early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, which appear many years before the symptoms of dementia, could be more easily identified. Prof. Inna Slutsky: "Anesthesia reveals a pathophysiology in the brain activity in the animal

model. We think that there are mechanisms that compensate for that same pathology while awake and thus prolong the pre-symptomatic period of the disease."

The researchers identified hyperactivity in the hippocampus - "silent seizures," which look like an epileptic seizure in terms of brain activity, but do not appear externally - in an animal model of Alzheimer's disease. This compared to the reduced activity in the healthy hippocampus during sleep and anesthesia. To examine potential treatment and prevention measures, the researchers tried a variety of methods but mainly focused on deep brain stimulation (DBS) using electrical signals to the nucleus reuniens - a small nucleus in the brain that connects the affected hippocampus and the thalamus, which is responsible for sleep regulation.

"When we tried to stimulate the nucleus reuniens at high frequencies, as is done in the treatment of Parkinson's, for example, we found that it worsened the damage to the hippocampus and the silent epileptic seizures," said Shoob, "only after changing the stimulation pattern to a lower frequency were we able to suppress the seizures and prevent cognitive impairment. We showed that the nucleus reuniens had the ability to completely control these seizures. We could increase or decrease the seizures by stimulating it."

Prof. Slutsky adds: "Epidemiological studies indicate a link between aging and a phenomenon called POCD - cognitive problems that arise after surgery under general anesthesia. In young people, the symptoms usually pass very quickly, but in older people, the chance of cognitive impairment increases, and it may last a long time. Our research indicates a potential mechanism underlying the

phenomenon. We found that suppressing the thalamic nucleus reuniens - by pharmacological or electrical means - successfully prevented both pathological activity in the hippocampus during anesthesia and cognitive impairment following anesthesia. In addition, we identified a relationship between certain pathological activity in the hippocampus during anesthesia in the presymptomatic phase of Alzheimer's to memory problems in a more advanced stage of the disease. This indicates a potential for predicting the disease in the dormant state before the onset of cognitive decline." The leader of the study, Shiri Shoob, added: "We saw that no matter what means we used, when we inhibited the neural activity in the nucleus, we also measured a decrease in the pathological activity in the hippocampus during anesthesia."

The research was led by PhD student Shiri Shoob, with the participation of Nadav Buchbinder, PhD student Ortal Shinikamin, Halit Baeloha, Dr. Tomer Langberg, Dr. Daniel Zarhin, Dr. Ilana Shapira and Dr. Gabriella Braun from Prof. Inna Slutsky's lab and in collaboration with Dr. Naomi Habib and Or Gold from the Hebrew University.

About Tel Aviv University

Tel Aviv University (TAU) exemplifies the qualities of the city it inhabits - innovative, fast-paced, exciting, and creative. A globally top-ranked university, a leading research institution, a center of discovery - TAU embraces a culture and student body that is inquisitive and responsive to pressing issues and worldwide problems. As Israel's largest public institution of higher learning, TAU is home to 30,000 students, including 2,100 international students from over 100 countries. The University encompasses nine faculties, 35 schools, 400 labs, and has 17 affiliated hospitals in its network.

## Israel Tennis & Education Centers Foundation (ITEC) Names Ilan Allali as New Chief Executive Officer

The Israel Tennis & Education Centers (ITEC) recently announced that Ilan Allali has been appointed to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the U.S.-based Israel Tennis & Education Foundation.

Allali, who is also ITEC's Global CFO, will work closely with ITEC's board of directors and professional staff in North America and Israel to implement innovative development strategies, strengthen the organization financially and operationally, and enhance donor engagement. He will also take the lead role in steering the organization's plans as it communicates its mission to the world.

Founded in 1976, Israel Tennis and Education Centers is a non-profit organization committed to empowering and supporting all the children of Israel, regardless of background, religion, ethnicity, physical ability, or socio-economic status. With 17 centers and 7 satellites in cities and towns throughout Israel, ITEC builds bridges across cultures to reach and connect with children from all communities, including those that are underserved or underrepresented. Dedicated to the principles of equality, excellence, education, and leadership, ITEC seeks to create a more peaceful, stable, and

stronger Israeli society by creating new pathways for communication and understanding.

In this far-reaching role, Ilan will lead the North American ITEC team in New York City and the global financial team in Israel, as they expand operations and recruit new employees.

Due to Ilan's exceptional leadership and ability to manage a diverse array of projects and staff, ITEC has grown in both size and reach over the past few years, despite economic and logistical challenges presented by the global pandemic.

"I'm excited and looking forward to taking ITECF to new heights," Allali says. "There are many challenges, but with teamwork and passion, I am sure we can achieve greater results than ever before. My own passion comes from seeing the faces of the children we serve in Israel and knowing the



huge impact the ITEC had on my life growing up in a disadvantaged area of Ashkelon. I spent many hours on the tennis court as a child and it shaped me to be the adult I am today. My most fervent wish is to give as many children as possible the opportunity to thrive and to become stalwarts of a strong Israeli society."

Allali has a strong and varied professional background serving in several important leadership and managerial roles, including vice president of international activities at Leumi Bank of Israel, CFO at Leumi Trust Company, and CFO at Carmel Agrexco. In these positions, he has managed all financial aspects of large, multinational corporations and has overseen the management of professional relationships with overseas offices and boards. This comprehensive experience has made Ilan

well-suited to the role of transforming ITEC for a new generation and expanding its reach in North America.

A certified public accountant, Allali received a master's degree in accounting from Bar-Illan University and a bachelor's degree in business administration.

About Israel Tennis & Education Centers (ITEC) Israel Tennis & Education Centers (ITEC) empowers children and transforms lives by providing opportunities to support any Israeli child regardless of geography, religion, ethnicity, physical ability, or socioeconomic status. Since opening its first center in Ramat Hasharon in 1976, ITEC has helped over 500,000 children, many of whom live in underserved towns throughout Israel. ITEC currently serves nearly 7,000 children weekly throughout 24 Israeli communities, stretching from the Lebanese border in the North to Beer-Sheva. The ITEC Foundation, a 501(c)(3), is the fundraising organization for ITEC, with offices in New York City, Florida, and Toronto. For more information, visit <http://www.israeltennis-centers.org>.

# Abraham as a Son—Can You Ever Leave Home Entirely?

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

On February 8, Rabbanit Atar Lindenbaum, Associate Rabbi at the Hebrew Institute of White Plains (HIWP), a Zoom Torah Discussion, “Avraham as a Son: Can You Ever Leave Home Entirely?”

“Abraham was a son who broke away from his father,” Rabbanit Lindenbaum began. “People think about disappointing their parents, but there is also something about your parents disappointing you, not living up to your expectations. We think of Abraham as a son and what it meant to leave his father’s house.”

Rabbanit Lindenbaum pointed out that Genesis states that Abraham’s father, Terah, was an idol worshipper and that Abraham defied his father by taking a club and shattering all of Terah’s idols. He then put the club in the hand of the largest idol and told his father that the idols were fighting over which one was going to eat a dish of fine flour offered by a woman. When Terah asserted that idols were lifeless and incapable of delivering such blows Abraham replied, “Then why do we worship them?”

Rabbanit Lindenbaum continued “Terah then referred Abraham to Nimrod. Abraham told Nimrod, ‘Let us bow down to water, to which Nimrod agreed. Abraham then said, ‘Let us bow down to the clouds that bear water, then wind that scatters the clouds, and finally, bowing to a person who can withstand wind.’ Nimrod retorted that he bowed down only to fire and cast Abraham into a fiery furnace; Abraham was rescued. Haran was cast into the fire and was scorched, dying in the presence of Terah, his father.”

She concluded her presentation by stating that when Rashi commented on Genesis 15:15, UNTO THY FATHERS, even though Abraham’s father was an idolator, Abraham would go to him. “This teaches you that Terah repented his evil ways (Genesis Rabbah 30:4),” Lindenbaum concluded.

## JCC Mid-Westchester Announces The Once and Future Queen: A Star Among Stars

The JCC Mid-Westchester invites the community to an unforgettable performance of The Once and Future Queen, a captivating interpretation of the timeless tale of Purim, intricately woven with themes of courage, resilience, and the challenges faced by today’s youth.

Through the graceful art of dance, the lives of Queens Vashti and Esther are explored. Set against the backdrop of a kingdom in turmoil, their stories unfold, showcasing their unwavering bravery and resilience in the face of adversity.

In this innovative retelling, parallels are drawn between the struggles of Vashti and Esther and the modern-day challenges encountered by children, particularly the pervasive issue of bullying. Throughout the ballet, audiences are invited to reflect on the profound impact of bullying on young lives and the importance of standing up against injustice.

The Once and Future Queen is choreographed by Ho-Shia Thao, Marika Brussel, and Jessica Whitehorne for the Dance School of JCC Mid-Westchester with original music by Mahlon Berv. The ballet is performed by students from JCCMW’s youth and adult divisions with professional dancers from Hudson Ballet Theatre.

The ballet will be presented on Saturday, March 16, at 8:15 p.m. and Sunday, March 17 at 4:00 p.m. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$25 for seniors and children and can be purchased at [www.jccmw.org/event/the-once-and-future-queen/](http://www.jccmw.org/event/the-once-and-future-queen/). The Sunday afternoon performance will feature a special talkback with the choreographers and composer after the performance.

The JCC Mid-Westchester is a nonprofit organization that supports the community by offering outstanding recreational, cultural, educational, and human services programming to all people regardless of age, background, religion, or sexual orientation. Programs are grounded in Jewish values and are open to all!

The JCCMW enriches families, connects friends, strengthens community, and helps people lead joyful lives.

## New Law Requires Merchants to Provide Clear Disclosure of Credit Card Surcharges to Consumers

Westchester County Executive George Latimer, New York State Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, and County Director of Consumer Protection Jim Maisano are working together to ensure that residents are well-informed about a new law aimed at promoting transparency in credit card transactions. This new state law, which went into effect on February 11, 2024, mandates that merchants in New York State must provide clear and conspicuous disclosure of credit card surcharges to consumers.

Latimer said, “Transparent pricing is essential for consumers to make informed decisions. This new law will empower Westchester residents by ensuring they have clear visibility into any credit card surcharges they may incur, and I thank my colleague in government Assemblywoman Paulin for her efforts on its passage and Governor Hochul for signing it into law.”

Paulin added, “This new law protects New Yorkers from hidden surcharges by requiring sellers to clearly post the price of a credit card surcharge. Credit card surcharges now have to be disclosed clearly so that customers are fully aware of them upfront and not just when they go to pay. The new law also prevents businesses from charging a higher fee than what they are charged by the credit card companies. This legislation is ultimately about transparency, fairness, and preventing consumers from being misled when making purchases using credit cards. I thank Jim Maisano, Director of the Westchester County Department of Consumer Protection, for bringing this important issue to my attention. His idea is now a law which will protect New Yorker consumers.”

The new law limits credit card surcharges to the amount charged to the business by the credit card company and requires businesses to clearly display the total price inclusive of any surcharges before checkout. It aims to prevent consumers from being surprised by hidden fees and ensures that they have a clear understanding of the costs associated with credit card transactions.

# Alzheimer’s Association Launches AlzWell Social Club in Westchester

On select Sundays beginning March 10, the Alzheimer’s Association Hudson Valley Chapter welcomes community members to its free AlzWell Social Club at the JCC Mid-Westchester.

The AlzWell Social Club is a fun, friendly afternoon of activities designed specifically for people with early-stage dementia or other memory impairment and their families. The program includes lunch, a choice of three creative programs, and a musical performance. The creative programs will vary and can include art, dance, or music groups; a book club; writing workshops; book making; art journaling; and a drama group that will work collaboratively on a short play.

Meg Boyce, vice president of programs and services for the Alzheimer’s Association says, “Our goal is to create a welcoming place for people living with Alzheimer’s or other dementia. You can meet people facing similar challenges, make new friends, and most importantly, have an enjoyable, relaxing afternoon.”

The AlzWell Social Club will meet at JCC Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583 on the following Sundays, March 10 & 17, April 14 & 21, May 5, 19 & 26, and June 2 & 30, from 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Free, but registration is required.

For more information or to register for the Social Club, visit the Alzheimer’s Association Hudson Valley Chapter, visit [www.alz.org/hudsonvalley/helping\\_you/social-programs/alzwell\\_social\\_club](http://www.alz.org/hudsonvalley/helping_you/social-programs/alzwell_social_club) or call 800-272-3900. In addition to AlzWell, the Chapter offers a range of free programs and services for people impacted by dementia in Westchester as well as Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, and Ulster counties.

About the Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer’s care, support, and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer’s and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s and all other dementia®. Visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call 800.272.3900.



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# Estate Planning for Retirement Accounts

By: Bernard A. Krooks, Certified Elder Law Attorney

Estate planning requires a lot of thought and involves so much more than drafting and executing a few documents. One thing you need to ensure is that your overall estate plan is coordinated with your retirement and other accounts so that your beneficiary designations do not upset what you think is a perfectly drafted estate plan. For example, if your will leaves everything to your son and daughter equally, but your 401(k) plan at work lists your daughter as the beneficiary, then she will inherit all the money in the 401(k) notwithstanding what the will says. As a general rule, a specific beneficiary designation in an account, including a retirement account, will control where the funds go upon your demise, regardless of what your will says.

Moreover, retirement account beneficiary designations present additional challenges due to the fact that, for many clients, this is where the bulk of their wealth is, and retirement plan custodians often have their own set of internal rules and policies that must be complied with; many of which don't make sense or are frustrating to deal with. Thus, in many instances, it is difficult to figure out how to complete your retirement account beneficiary designation forms, especially if you have a living trust, would like to leave money to charity, or wish to minimize income taxes. We have heard multiple horror stories from clients about some institu-

tions requiring medallion guarantees for signatures (which can be difficult to obtain), and others not allowing online beneficiary designation changes, among many others. Therefore, it is best to get your retirement account affairs in order before you become incapacitated or pass away so that your beneficiaries don't get caught up in a morass of red tape, causing delay and confusion.

If you are married, naming your spouse as the beneficiary of your retirement plan is usually (but not always, especially in a second marriage situation), the best option. This is due to the fact that a surviving spouse can "rollover" your retirement account into his/her own retirement account which typically leads to the best tax results. If you are re-married and have children from a prior marriage, there may be better options available to you that would involve the use of a trust to ensure that your children inherit the portion of your retirement account that you intend for them to have. However, this area of the law is fraught with traps for the unwary so please make sure you proceed with a competent estate planning attorney.

If you have charitable intentions, leav-



ing money to a charity from a retirement account is often an excellent choice since the charity will not have to pay income taxes on the distributions from the retirement account after your death. Whereas, if you name an individual as the beneficiary of your retirement account, he/she will have to pay income taxes on the distributions. Thus, if you leave your \$100,000 retirement account to your daughter, depending on her own personal tax situation, she may have to pay \$35,000 in taxes and would net only \$65,000 from your retirement account. If you left the \$100,000 retirement account to a charity, the charity would net the entire \$100,000, a much better result. You could leave your daughter \$100,000 from a non-retirement account and she would receive the entire \$100,000 since income taxes would not be owed on a non-retirement bequest.

The recently enacted SECURE Act made significant changes to retirement plan distributions, including eliminating the stretch IRA, except in the case of eligible designated beneficiaries (EDB). An EDB is a spouse, a disabled or chronically ill individual, an individual who is not more than 10 years younger than you, or a

minor child. For EDBs, the stretch IRA still lives and can result in significant financial and tax benefits to your family if all the relevant criteria are met. However, please note that the rules are complicated, especially if you want to leave your retirement accounts to a trust. A trust could be a good idea if you are concerned about protecting retirement assets from the cost of long-term care for a disabled or chronically ill beneficiary.

Retirement account beneficiary designations can be challenging, and it is important that they be coordinated with the overall estate plan. When updating your estate plan, do not forget to include a review of all your beneficiary designations, including retirement plans.

*Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the "Best Lawyers" in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is a past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914-684-2100) or by visiting the firm's website at [www.littmankrooks.com](http://www.littmankrooks.com).*

## WJCS Honoring Meira Fleisch and Stephanie Marquesano at April Gala

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) is proud to be hosting its annual Gala on April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, NY. The Gala will be honoring Meira Fleisch, a Board member and longtime Early Learning Specialist at WJCS, and Stephanie Marquesano, Founder and President of the harris project.

"We are thrilled to honor Meira Fleisch and Stephanie Marquesano, two remarkable individuals who have consistently used their outstanding skills and deep compassion to improve the lives and future of children, youth, and families," said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. "Each of these people are models for how people can make a difference in the Westchester community."

Meira Fleisch has been a dedicated and invaluable WJCS Board member for eight years. Before joining the Board, Meira worked as an Early Learning Specialist for WJCS's ParentChild+ program, helping families develop positive parent/toddler interactions, build language skills, and strengthen children's readiness for school. After joining the Board, Meira continued her work on a volunteer basis. When the program went virtual during the pandemic, Meira continued helping families, as well as tutoring a student from Yon-



Meira Fleisch

kers, a participant of a different WJCS program in a new virtual mentoring program.

Meira has served on WJCS's Executive; Children, Youth, and Families; and Gala Committees, was Chair of the Program Services Committee, and currently chairs the Jewish Program Services Committee. She served in various capacities on UJA-Federation of NY's Westchester Women's Cabinet for over 15 years, eventually as Vice Chair of the Westchester Women's division.

"As an adult child of Holocaust survivors, who were refugees in Israel and eventually immigrants to the U.S., I find the work of WJCS particularly meaningful, even more so in the current environment of rising antisemitism," said Fleisch. "I am in awe of the agency's work, the compassion of its staff, and commitment of the Board."

Stephanie Marquesano launched the harris project after her 19-year-old son Harris died by accidental overdose in 2013. Like millions, Harris had co-occurring disorders, the combination of both mental health and substance use challenges. As the nation's only nonprofit organization dedicated to the development of an integrated sys-

tem of care from prevention through sustainable recovery, the harris project strives to improve the lives of teens and young adults with, or at risk of developing, co-occurring disorders. Stephanie's proactive, collaborative, and transformational approach to the overdose and suicide epidemics gripping our nation led the harris project to collaborate with WJCS on several fronts, including co-chairing the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health Co-Occurring System of Care Committee, training staff on co-occurring disorders, and launching new services for teens and young adults in Westchester County. She also leads a multi-agency project, that includes WJCS, bringing Encompass, an integrated evidence-based treatment modality to local teens and young adults.

"As a parent who founded a nonprofit focused on co-occurring disorders, it has been so important to collaborate with those in the space already doing great work and open to truly transforming the way that mental health and substance use-related care is delivered," said Marquesano. "Working with WJCS has provided an unwavering partner in our effort to integrate everything from prevention to treatment to sustainable recovery



Stephanie Marquesano

to meet the needs of teens, young adults, and their loved ones."

CODA, the peer-led Co-Occurring Disorders Awareness prevention movement created by the harris project, has made significant strides in empowering youth to take an active role in raising awareness, connecting with peers, and linking to resources. Stephanie's work and Harris's story were featured in a New York Times Sunday Review article in 2022. She was a TED presenter at the 2023

National Council for Mental Wellbeing Conference. A recent public service campaign created for the harris project, entitled "You Don't Know The Half Of It," was named the 24th best advertisement in the Ad Age list of "The 40 Best Ads For 2023." Central to her work is a commitment to saving lives and improving outcomes.

Stephanie is a member of the New York State Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Board. She received her BA in Political Science and Public Communication from Brooklyn College, JD from New York University School of Law, and is a former school board member and PTA president.

To register for the WJCS 2024 Gala, visit [www.wjcs.com](http://www.wjcs.com).

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# Israel's Carmel Winery Launched the USA Premier of New CARMEL BLACK, a Signature Luxury Brand, in February, Just in Time for the Passover Season.

Carmel Winery, the largest winery in Israel, has added the new vintage to its distinguished SIGNATURE series, a portfolio of luxury wines from the highest-quality producing vineyards known for its long tradition of winemaking knowledge and expertise.

The new wine joined the brand's highly successful Carmel Mediterranean Vats (\$30 SRP), Single Vineyard (\$45 SRP), Carmel Mediterranean (\$60 SRP), and Carmel flagship wine Limited Edition (\$99 SRP).

Carmel Black, a sign of strength and elegance, is a mysterious marvel that exudes prestige and sophistication. Inspired by its boundless depth and signature timelessness, we created Carmel Black, a new exclusive edition in the distinguished Carmel Signature series. This full-bodied velvety wine epitomizes Carmel's artistry and innovation and encapsulates the vast expertise and philosophy of Carmel Signature: to nurture and enhance the unique qualities of the grapes, extracting their best attributes and realize their full potential with love, care, and minimal interference.

Carmel Black Cabernet Sauvignon Galilee 2021 boasts a rich, dark crimson hue and delights the senses with aromas of ripe fruit, cassis, and hints of tomato leaf, complemented by subtle notes of warming spices. This wine offers a full-bodied, silky texture, with flavors of luscious ripe red fruits that linger through a satisfying medium finish. It has been meticulously aged for 14 months in French oak barrels within its wine cellars. Bottle aging potential: 5-7 years under suitable storage conditions.

Yiftah Peretz, Chief Winemaker of Carmel Winery, "Our new Carmel Black is meticulously aged for 14 months in French oak barrels. Grown in the Galilee, its climate provides comfortable temperatures which offer excellent conditions for nurturing and enhancing the unique qualities of the grape.

Etti Edri, Carmel's Export Manager, "Israel is naturally the historical homeland of kosher wines, and we are excited to introduce our exclusive Carmel Black in the USA in time for Passover when more than 40 percent of all kosher wine sales occur."

Carmel BLACK Signature was launched in the USA at the NJ Kosher Food & Wine Experience (KFWE) on February 26, 2024. This important trade show regularly drives trends for Passover holiday wines and spirits, as well as yearlong forecasts. The trade event at the Meadowlands Hilton in Rutherford NJ is open to wine and spirits industry buyers, caterers, and restaurateurs.

Carmel BLACK Signature Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 Galilee (SRP: \$30) can be purchased at specialty wine stores and online sites.

CARMEL SIGNATURE is Carmel Winery's most prestigious wine category. The wines are produced from grapes nurtured and selected with strict precision from Carmel's top vineyards, with an emphasis on elegance and harmony between all the elements.



## No Hate in Our States



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL, AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

### Women's History Month: Believe Israeli Women.

TRIGGER WARNING.

March is Women's History Month, celebrating the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. In part, the month was selected to coincide with March 8, International Women's Day.

For Women's History Month 2024, I have one message: **BELIEVE ISRAELI WOMEN!**

On October 7, Hamas terrorists broke into Israel, kidnapped and murdered Israelis and citizens from over 40 countries, all in a well-planned, well-coordinated terror attack.

Hamas terrorists intentionally committed horrific, well-documented acts of sexual attacks on women and girls – and men – by using sexual violence as a form of terror and war.

The Hamas terrorists FILMED these horrific war crimes, intentionally demonstrating that they wanted the world to see and celebrate their heinous crimes.

Throughout the year, women's organizations across the United States and around the world tell us how important it is to stand against gender and sexual violence.

And yet, most have been SILENT in the face of Hamas' heinous attacks.

How can these same women's organizations that champion the imperative to believe women somehow avert their eyes when it comes to Hamas' assaults on Israeli women?

Overtly or implicitly, these purported champions of "Me Too" somehow not only look away when it comes to Hamas' attacks on women but worse, they attempt to justify these heinous war crimes.

Women and teenage girls continue to be held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. The reports by the few hostages who have returned tell horror stories of the ongoing physical violations of female Israeli hostages.

We would NEVER allow victim blaming or shaming in other cases of violence against women.

Somehow, it's different when it's about Jews.

All of this also takes place against the backdrop of skyrocketing antisemitism in the United States.

What's more, our traditional allies have left the Jewish community feeling abandoned by the very communities we have stood with together against all types of hate facing their communities.

AJC's newly released 2023 State of Antisemitism in America Report – the most comprehensive study of its kind – has measured the impact of antisemitism on Jewish Americans and the findings are alarming.

Three major takeaways from AJC's new report underscore the need for all of society to come together – to believe Israeli women – and to stand with their Jewish sisters and brothers – against Hamas' terror:

**1. Hamas' massacre of Israelis made most American Jews feel less safe.**

**2. For most American Jews, Israel is important to their Jewish identity.**

Eight in ten American Jews said caring about Israel is important to what being Jewish means to them.

**3. Rising antisemitism is changing everyday life for American Jews in the workplace, online, and especially on college campuses.**

One in four (26%) American Jews with a current or recent connection to a college campus (as a parent or student) said they avoided expressing their views on Israel because of fears of antisemitism. One in four (24%) said they felt uncomfortable or unsafe at a campus event because they are Jewish.

**The data reveals a path forward.**

More Americans recognize that there is a problem and want to know more and do more. State and local governments should include contemporary antisemitism in public school curricula. Perhaps most noteworthy, nine in ten Americans, both Jews and U.S. adults, say antisemitism affects society as a whole, and everyone is responsible for combating it.

**During this women's history month, it begins with believing Israeli women.**

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. To get involved or request an AJC speaker, visit [AJC@westchester.org](mailto:AJC@westchester.org).

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