

AJC Welcomes Long-Overdue Return of Hostages



After 738 days, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) is overjoyed watching the reunions of the 20 surviving hostages with their loved ones, and our hearts are with the families of the deceased hostages who await their return.

As we welcome home 20 of the 48 hostages, we hope that we will very soon be able to say that all 48 – Tamir Adar, Muhammad Al-Atarash, Matan Angrest, Sahar Baruch, Uriel Baruch, Gali Berman, Ziv Berman, Elkana Bohbot, Rom Braslavski, Itay Chen, Nimrod Cohen, Amiram Cooper, Ariel Cunio, David Cunio, Evyatar David, Ronen Engel, Guy Gilboa-Dalal, Meny Godard, Hadar Goldin, Ran Gvili, Tal Haimi, Asaf Hamami, Inbar Hayman, Maxim Herkin, Eitan Horn, Guy Illouz, Bipin Joshi, Segev Kalfon, Bar Kupershtein, Eitan Levi, Eliyahu Margalit, Omri Miran, Joshua Luito Mollel, Eitan Mor, Omer Neutra, Tamir Nimrodi, Yosef-Chaim Ohana, Alon Ohel, Sonia Ok'Krasari, Avinatan Or, Dror Or, Daniel Oz, Daniel Perez, Sontisek Rintalk, Lior Rudaeff, Yossi Sharabi, Arie Zalmanowicz, Matan Zangauker – are finally back home.

Until they are all home, none of us will be whole.

While we are relieved and grateful to have finally reached this point, the work does not end once all the hostages return. As we welcome home the surviving hostages and mourn with the families of deceased hostages as they wait to bury their loved ones, we must ensure full rehabilitation for the living and the continued support for all the families who have endured extensive trauma and grief.

AJC is both proud of and humbled by the trust hostage families and previously rescued and returned hostages have placed in us, allowing us to advocate with them across the United States and around the world to keep their stories front of mind for officials at the highest levels of government and across civil society. Their strength, determination, and selflessness are an inspiration and the Jewish people around the world are standing with them as this darkest chapter comes to a close.

Westchester Jewish Council Supports Israel Peace Plan

BY MICHAEL MITTELMAN, PRESIDENT
ELLIOT FORCHHEIMER, CEO
WESTCHESTER JEWISH COUNCIL

After two years marked by profound pain, resilience, and unwavering hope, the moment our community and the world have long awaited appears finally at hand. The news that Israel and Hamas have reached an agreement that promises the imminent return of all remaining hostages to Israel and their families fills us with immense relief and joy. We are also deeply moved and thankful that the agreement provides for the return of the bodies of those who were killed on October 7 or in captivity, so they may finally be laid to rest with dignity in Israel bringing solace to grieving families and communities.

We extend our deepest gratitude to President Trump, his administration, Prime Minister Netanyahu and the other countries who played a pivotal role in bringing about this historic breakthrough, which is the first step in President Trump's comprehensive plan for lasting peace.

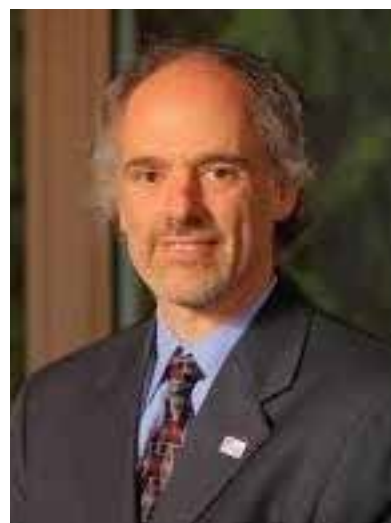
Their leadership, determination, and diplomatic efforts have given hope to families who have waited far too long for this day.

We also recognize the courageous efforts of the Israeli Defense Forces and the resilience of the hostages' families, whose steadfast advocacy and faith have inspired our community and the global Jewish people.

While we celebrate this extraordinary step toward peace and the safe return of the hostages, we know that the work of healing and rebuilding must continue. The Westchester Jewish Council shares in the joy and relief of families who will soon be reunited and remains committed to supporting all those affected, fostering unity, and advocating for peace, justice, and security for our community and for Israel.



Michael Mittelman



Elliot Forchheimer

Visit www.westchesterjewishlife.com

WJCS Hosts Sukkot Luncheon for Holocaust Survivors

More than 50 Holocaust Survivors, along with their relatives and caregivers, gathered on October 9 to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Sukkot at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale. The luncheon was hosted by Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) in partnership with the Claims Conference, UJA-Federation of NY, Wolfensohn Family Foundation, and Westchester Reform Temple.

Allison Danzig, Coordinator of WJCS Holocaust Support Services, welcomed guests from the podium, emphasizing that Sukkot is a holiday that “rejoices in the many blessings of our lives, our families, and our communities. Sukkot reminds us

that joy is not only important and fulfilling, but also sacred. We NEED joy.” Joy filled the afternoon. Guests enjoyed seeing old friends, making a blessing over the etrog and lulav, dancing the hora, and humming along to the lively music provided by a two-piece band. Danzig led attendees in a singing of the Shehecheyanu, a blessing of gratitude for reaching this moment.

Other speakers at the luncheon, catered by Seasons of Scarsdale, were U.S. Representative George Latimer (NY-16, Westchester and Bronx Counties), New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, WJCS Chief Executive Officer Seth



Dora



Ida

Diamond and the Claims Conference’s Chief Operating Officer Michael Elkin. Each speaker shared how inspired they are by the powerful lessons of strength and resilience that Holocaust survivors teach us and how important they are to the Westchester community.

This year’s Sukkot luncheon was held indoors because of the chilly weather. Yet nothing could dampen the spirit of the day. Colorful décor enhanced the dynamic spirit. Table centerpieces—creatively designed mini-sukkahs—were lovingly made by the residents of Chai House, a WJCS group home, and the only all-Jewish residential group home for challenged women in Westchester.

WJCS offers an array of support services and social opportunities to Holocaust survivors in Westchester. To learn more, go to www.wjcs.com.



WJCS Celebrates 25th Anniversary of the ParentChild Center

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) NextGen volunteers came together to pack 25 art kits in honor of the 25th anniversary of the WJCS ParentChild Center in New Rochelle! These kits will go to families in need, helping to spark creativity, joy, and connection at home. It was a beautiful way to celebrate a milestone year and give back to the community.



AJC Westchester/Fairfield

AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD

ANNUAL GALA

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Harriet P. Schleifer

American Jewish Committee
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Immediate Past Chair,
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of Major American Jewish
Organizations, Past President,
AJC Westchester/Fairfield



Ted Deutch

AJC Chief Executive
Officer, Edward and
Sandra Meyer
Office of the CEO



Van Jones

CNN host, political
commentator, Emmy
Award-winning
producer, and best-
selling author



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Westchester Jewish Life • November 2025 • Cheshvan-Kislev 5786 • Page 2 • www.westchesterjewishlife.com

Anne Frank the Exhibition Unveils Vital Antisemitism Curriculum

Anne Frank The Exhibition is launching an innovative curriculum to confront antisemitism across the United States, in response to extraordinary interest from middle and high schools since its debut on International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2025. This new initiative powerfully responds to teachers' urgent calls for classroom resources that address the full spectrum of antisemitism, from its historical roots to current manifestations. This bold educational commitment solidifies the Anne Frank House's role as a global leader in education, dedicated to combating antisemitism, racism, and discrimination and empowering the next generation to actively challenge hatred and prejudice.

Anne Frank the Exhibition will distribute an additional 20,000 free copies of Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl to students in New York City and Long Island public schools this year, in addition to the 10,000 diaries distributed over the summer. This initiative further extends access to Anne Frank's powerful story, reaching thousands more students beyond those who have already engaged with the exhibition this year. This strengthened collaboration with New York City Public Schools—with the distribution of 20,000

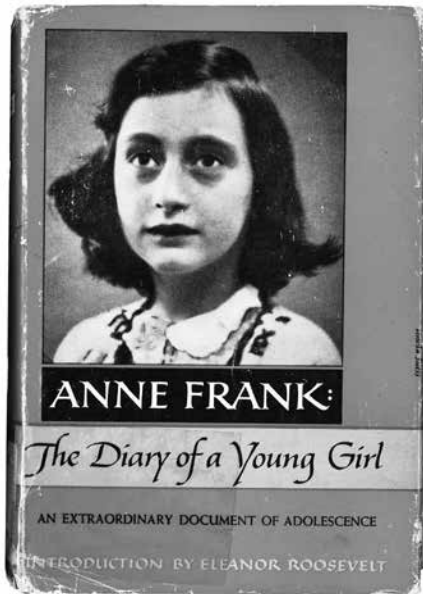


Photo credit: John Halpern

copies of Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl—is made possible thanks to the generosity and leadership of UJA-Federation of New York, Heckscher Foundation for Children, and Einstein Astrof Foundation, with additional support from Melik-Baschkopf Foundation and the Slome Family.

This news follows the announcement

of the final exhibition extension at the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street, New York City, through February 1, 2026, and complimentary enhanced access days for families, educators, librarians, and select groups (eligibility information below) on November 4th (Election Day) and November 11th (Veterans Day).

“In response to the urgent needs voiced by teachers and students who have experienced Anne Frank The Exhibition, the Anne Frank House has developed a new antisemitism curriculum. Driven by an obligation to meet educators and learners where they are, this curriculum provides practical tools for confronting antisemitism, past and present, and helps foster a personal sense of responsibility in standing against hate. To ensure meaningful classroom impact, we are offering training sessions with our expert education team, empowering educators to guide students in building a more just and compassionate world,” said Ronald Leopold, Executive Director of the Anne Frank House.

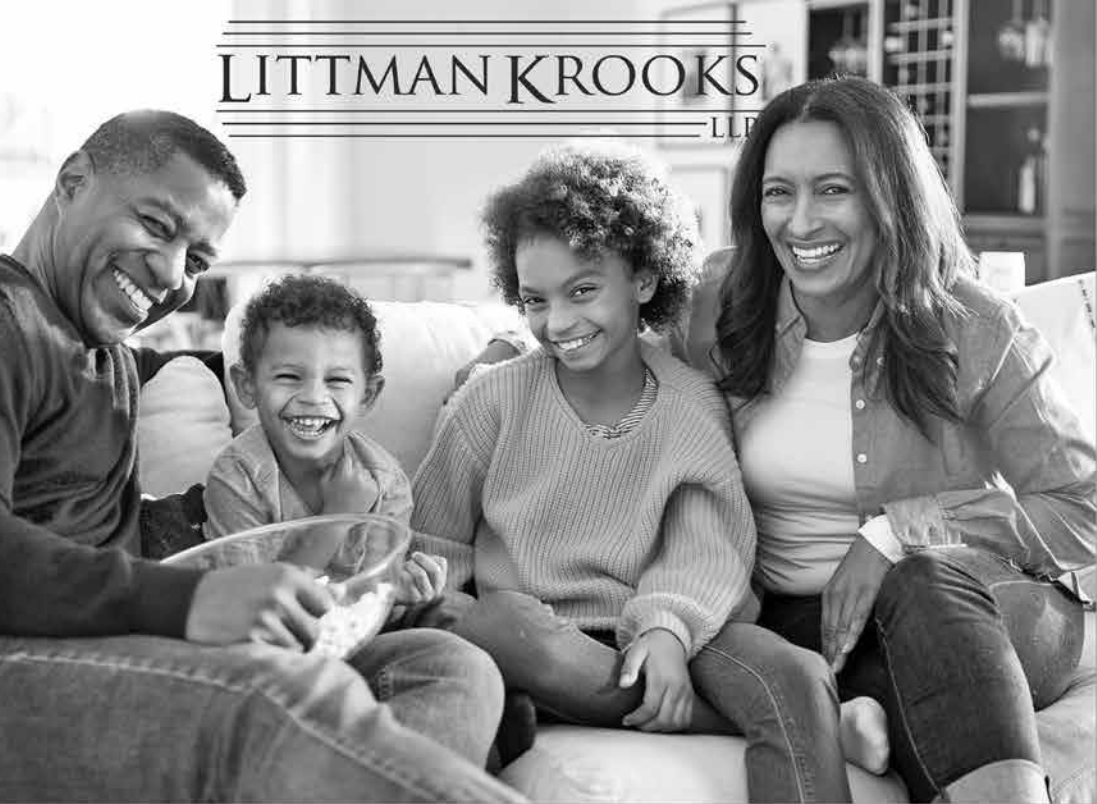
Educators can access the curriculum, specifically designed for secondary students, through the Anne Frank The Exhibition website. Teachers are invited

to register for free sessions with education experts from the University of South Carolina for personalized guidance on delivering these lesson plans, tailored to student needs, classroom rigor, and readiness to address antisemitism.

As noted when the exhibition was extended, New York State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa said, “Anne Frank The Exhibition provides a profound educational experience that connects the lessons of history to the challenges and responsibilities of today. It provides students with a meaningful opportunity to explore the realities of antisemitism and intolerance while equipping educators with resources to thoughtfully integrate these lessons into their instruction. This exhibition not only honors the memory of Anne Frank and her family but also strengthens our shared responsibility to ensure that future generations learn the importance of empathy, tolerance, and standing against hate in all its forms.

“Anne Frank’s diary gives voice to the hopes and fears of a young girl facing unimaginable hatred — and that voice still speaks powerfully to young people today,” said Eric S. Goldstein, CEO, UJA-Federation of New York.

continued on page 4



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tion of New York. “By helping to put this book directly into the hands of students, we’re giving them the opportunity to connect personally with Anne’s story, reflect on the consequences of hatred, and understand the possibility of resilience and the human spirit. Particularly now, at a time of sharply rising hatred targeting the Jewish community, our hope is that young readers will be inspired to stand up to hate, to find courage in the face of adversity, and to believe in the power of their own voices.”

With the launch of a curriculum designed for educators across the United States, the Anne Frank House reaffirms its mission: to keep Anne’s story and voice alive and to educate new generations to stand against antisemitism, racism, and all forms of discrimination.

Special Access Days with complimentary admission

General admission tickets are available every day the exhibition is open, and enhanced complimentary admission will be offered to select visitors on the following dates:

November 4 (Election Day): All-day access for families, Hometown Heroes, educators, and librarians.

November 11 (Veterans Day): All-day access for families, Hometown Heroes, educators, and librarians.

Official ID and email are required for police officers, firefighters, first responders, medical professionals, military per-

sonnel, educators, and librarians for free admission on special access days. Tickets for special access days are available with day-of on-site registration.

Anne Frank The Exhibition is the first time in history that the Anne Frank House presents a pioneering experience outside of Amsterdam to immerse visitors in a full-scale recreation of the Annex rooms, fully furnished, where Anne Frank, her parents and sister, and four other Jews spent two years hiding to evade Nazi capture.

Four exhibition galleries immerse visitors in place and history through video, sound, photography, and animation; and more than 100 original collection items from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Anne Frank The Exhibition provides an opportunity to learn about Anne Frank not as a victim but through the multifaceted lens of her life—as a girl, a writer, and a symbol of resilience and strength. This is a story inspired by one of the most translated books in the world.

Artifacts in the exhibition include:

- Anne Frank’s first photo album (1929-1942);
- Anne Frank’s typed and handwritten invitation to her friend for a film screening in her home (by 1942, anti-Jewish measures prohibited Jews from attending the cinema); and
- Handwritten verses by Anne Frank in her friends’ poetry albums.

Tickets are available at AnneFrankExhibit.org.

WJCS Personal Kit Drive Supports Westchester Teens

One of the most embarrassing experiences for high school and middle school students is to be pulled aside by a teacher to hear that their hygiene is not up to par. Frequently, the problem in under-resourced communities is that students don’t have access to deodorant, body wash, shampoo, or even toothpaste on a regular basis.

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) has 11 School-based Satellite Clinics in Westchester that provide mental health services, support, and risk prevention to teens. Clinicians are always looking for donations of personal care kits and menstrual items to give to students so they can address their hygiene needs. You can make an impact by participating in the WJCS Personal Care Kit Drive.

The Personal Care Kit Drive culminates on Veterans Day, November 11, 2025, with a Family Volunteer Event, where children and adults can help pack Personal Care Kits for Westchester students in middle and high school. The Family Volunteer Event is a way for family members to bond while sharing in the experience of doing for others. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. To register, go to https://secure.qgiv.com/for/wjcs/event/personalcaredrive/?blm_aid=450658305.

To donate supplies, such as toothpaste, deodorant and soap, visit the WJCS Amazon wishlist at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1EKHLN26PL6TO/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex.

Purchase supplies by November 10 to drop off at WJCS headquarters, 845 North Broadway, White Plains.

For more information, email Michelle Siegel, Volunteer and Event Associate, at msiegel@wjcs.com.

AJC Addresses Anti-Semitism on Campus

As part of the American Jewish Committee’s (AJC) Center for Education Advocacy’s (CEA) strategic partnerships with leading universities, AJC CEO Ted Deutch met with Washington University Chancellor Andrew Martin in September to discuss the educational reform initiative, “A Return to Principles,” co-authored with Vanderbilt Chancellor Daniel Diermeier, which has garnered national attention for its commitment to academic excellence and institutional integrity. Chancellor Martin shared his approach to addressing campus antisemitism and creating an environment where all students can learn without fear or intimidation.

Over the past three months alone, CEA conducted 19 high-level meetings with presidents and chancellors at Ivy League schools, large public research institutions, and liberal arts and faith-based colleges. This engagement produces tangible results, helping universities develop strategies for culture change and adopt items from AJC’s action plan to address campus antisemitism.

United Hebrew’s Director of Willow Gardens Memory Care Wins National Memory Care Innovation Award



Sallie Carlin

United Hebrew is proud to announce that Sallie Carlin, Director of Willow Gardens Memory Care at United Hebrew, has been named a winner of the 2025 Senior Housing News Memory Care Innovation Award.

The award recognizes leaders who are transforming memory care through groundbreaking programs, exceptional leadership, and measurable improvements in resident well-being. Under Sallie’s direction, Willow Gardens has implemented innovative initiatives—including personalized music therapy, intergenerational programs, culturally responsive activities, and enhanced staff training in dementia communication and trauma-informed care—that have improved quality of life for residents and set new standards for excellence.

Sallie’s leadership has also delivered outstanding clinical outcomes: Willow Gardens’ rehospitalization rate is less than half the national average, 7.7% vs. 17.1%, and its falls-with-injury rate is virtually zero—just 0.01% versus the national average of 4.43%.

“Sallie’s vision, empathy, and ability to inspire her team have made Willow Gardens a place where residents thrive and families find comfort,” said Rita Mabli, President & CEO of United Hebrew. “We are thrilled that her extraordinary contributions are being recognized on the national stage.”

The full list of winners can be found on the Senior Housing News Innovation Awards website: <https://innovation.memorycarebusiness.com/2025-winners/>.



In times like these, we can't wait for better days. We must *create* them.
It's your generosity that sets everything in motion.

With **Israel still confronting needs** that stretch from north to south, we're not letting up for a moment. With **antisemitism growing louder and more mainstream**, we're fighting back strategically on every front. And with **social service needs skyrocketing**, we're supporting care for those who need it most — guided by an innovative mindset and a dignity-first approach.

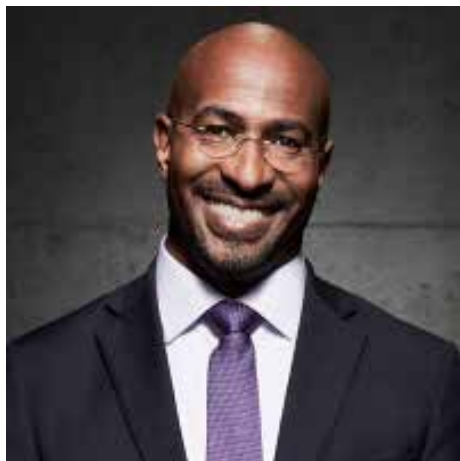
And in a welcome challenge, **with Jewish pride soaring**, we're investing in all the ways to find Jewish connection and meaning.

From New York to Israel, our work never stops.

WILL YOU STAND WITH US?
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November Calendar of Events



AJC Westchester/Fairfield Fall Gala
Tuesday, November 18, 6 PM
The American Jewish Committee (AJC)'s annual fall gala will honor AJC Past National President Harriet P. Schleifer and feature AJC CEO Ted Deutch. Special guest speaker is Van Jones, CNN host, entrepreneur, and Emmy-winning changemaker known for uniting unlikely allies to drive real progress—from green jobs to criminal justice reform. Cocktail hour begins at 6 PM, followed by the program at 7 PM. Ticket prices start at \$360. For tickets, go to www.AJC.org/WestFair/2025Gala



Other
Tuesday, November 4 through Saturday, December 6
Greenwich House Theater, 27 Barlow Street, New York City
Tony Award® winner Ari'el Stachel brings an ensemble of voices from his past to life in a raw and hilarious one-man show about his anxious search for belonging. From childhood reinventions to performing through chronic panic in front of thousands, he navigates identity, self-acceptance, and the pursuit of his dreams with hilarity and heart—delivering a performance as relentlessly funny as it is vulnerable. For tickets, email tickets@greenwichhousetheater.com.

Rabbis Got Talent: A Night of Jewish Learning
Saturday, November 8, 7 PM
Beth El Synagogue Center, 1324 North Avenue, New Rochelle
Rabbis from across the community come together to share their wisdom and insights on a wide range of topics in 30 classes taught by 30 rabbis. This special night offers a unique opportunity to learn, reflect, and engage in meaningful discussion with these teachers and neighbors. A kosher dairy dessert will be served. Admission is \$25. To register, go to wjccouncil.org.

Comedy Night Out
Saturday, November 8, 7:30 PM
Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale
Enjoy a night of laughter at Comedy Night Out, hosted by comedian Teresa DeGaetano and curated by local Larchmont mom and comedy sensation Alyce Chan of the immensely popular parenting platform MomComNYC! Expect a hilarious evening as Alyce brings her sharp wit and parenting humor to the stage, along with powerhouse comedians Ophira Eisenberg and Ben Rosenfeld! Wine reception begins at 7 PM. Admission is \$54. For more information, go to <https://jccmw.org/event/comedy-night-out/>.

Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast
Thursday, November 20, 8 AM to 10 AM
The theme of the 23rd Annual AJC Westchester/Fairfield Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast is "One Table, Many Voices: Standing Together." The event celebrates the rich diversity of the community and challenges attendees to listen, learn and take action together. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for registration before November 12. For more information, email westchester@ajc.org.

Stories and Songs of Broadway: Lerner and Loewe
Sunday, November 23, 3 PM to 5 PM
Shames Jewish Community Center on the Hudson, 371 South Broadway, Tarrytown
Experience the music of the renowned duo with a live performance and narration by Broadway producer Jack Viertel. Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe are the pair behind My Fair Lady, Brigadoon, Camelot, Gigi, and more. Tickets are \$55 for members, \$65 for non-members and include a dessert reception after the performance. For more information, email info@ShamesJCC.org.

Movie Wednesday with Shari Baum
Wednesday, November 26, 2 PM to 4 PM
Jewish Community Center of Harrison, 130 Union Avenue
This month's movie is Here Today, an American comedy-drama directed and produced by Billy Crystal, from a screen play that he wrote with Alan Zweibel. When veteran comedy writer Charlie Burnz (Billy Crystal) meets New York street singer Emma Payge (Tiffany Haddish), they form an unlikely yet hilarious and touching friendship that kicks the generation gap aside and redefines the meaning of love and trust. Learn more at <https://jccch.org/program-events/>.

Save the Date!
Join 500 leaders and friends from the community for an unforgettable night as the Westchester Jewish Council celebrates 50 years of memories and milestones at the Council's 50th Anniversary Gala on Saturday, February 7, 2026! Get ready for a spectacular evening filled with joy, laughter, and surprises. Details of the event, including the names of the honorees, will be announced in the coming months.



Wine Tasting and Silent Auction
Thursday, November 13, 7 PM
Scarsdale Woman's Club, 37 Drake Road
Sample wine and place an order in preparation for the holidays. Bid on a chance to win on a wide range of items from fine jewelry to local dining. For more information, email swc1918@verizon.net.

Email future events to
Nancy Coveney at
nancy.coveney@shorelinepub.com

The next deadline is November 18.

Do you know a child or young adult with autism/developmental delay who wanders, elopes, or has gotten lost?

WJCS Project Lifesaver uses radio frequency technology, employing devices worn on a wrist or ankle, to locate wandering and lost children/young adults to bring them home safely.

Questions? Please contact Isabel M. Petterson, Project Lifesaver Program Manager, at 914-761-0600 x2230; ipetterson@wjcs.com. For more information, visit www.wjcs.com.

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Westchester County Board of Legislators Invests in Youth Employment, Mental Health Services, and Historic Preservation

The Westchester County Board of Legislators approved measures to create summer work experience for young adults, expand employment services for people with mental illness, and acquire a Revolutionary War landmark at its meeting on Monday, September 29.

Board Chairman Vedat Gashi (D-New Castle, Ossining, Somers, Yorktown) said, “The Board’s actions Monday night show we’re thinking about every member of our community—from young people building their first job skills to adults seeking employment support to families looking for places to connect with our history. The County is investing in opportunities that matter to the people of Westchester.”

Summer Program to Help Young Adults Build Career Skills and Earn Income

The Board approved agreements with eight municipalities to provide a six-week summer work experience program for youth ages 16-24 from income-eligible families. The program offers participants more than just a paycheck—they’ll develop workplace skills, build professional networks, and gain valuable contacts that will serve them throughout their careers. Fully funded by a \$150,000 grant from New York Presbyterian Hospital, the program incurs no direct cost to county taxpayers. The Westchester County Youth Bureau will coordinate with local youth bureaus in Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Peekskill, Yonkers, White Plains, Ossining, Port Chester, and Greenburgh.

Minority Whip James Nolan (R-Yonkers, Eastchester, Bronxville), Chair of the Board’s Veterans, Seniors and Youth Committee, agreed and said, “I’m proud to support expanded summer employment and training opportunities for our youth here in Yonkers. Our young people are the most valuable resource we have. Programs like this not only provide early job experience and mentorship, but also help build confidence, responsibility, and community engagement. Investing in youth is investing in the future of Westchester.”

Mental Health Employment Services Expanded

The Board also approved expanded support for adults with serious mental illness to find and maintain jobs. The initiative includes job coaching, rapid placement assistance, and connections to community employers. New York State is providing an additional \$244,858, increasing total funding to \$1.39 million through 2026. Westchester

Medical Center administers these services, helping participants build independence and achieve financial stability.

Legislator Nancy E. Barr (D-Harrison, Port Chester, Rye Brook), Chair of the Board’s Human Services Committee, said, “Finding and holding a job is an important milestone for most adults, providing both a livelihood and a sense of self-worth. But for adults affected by serious mental illness, this can be very challenging. I am pleased that we are now able to increase funding to support these job seekers with money from the NYS Department of Mental Health. Helping these individuals find and maintain appropriate employment is a win-win, and we are fortunate to be able to partner with WCHCC to administer this program.”

Preserving Revolutionary War Heritage

In addition, Westchester residents will soon be able to experience a rare piece of living history at the historic Ward House in Tuckahoe, following the Board’s approval to acquire the property. The \$2.55 million bond authorization will purchase the Revolutionary War-era property on White Plains Road for \$980,000 and fund renovations to make the site welcoming and accessible to the public. This investment ensures that an authentic glimpse into 18th-century life becomes a community asset for generations to come.

Built more than 270 years ago, the Ward House served as home to Stephen Ward, Eastchester’s Town Supervisor in the 1700s, and played a significant role during the Revolutionary War. After British General William Tryon burned the structure, Ward’s son Jonathan restored it—preserving a tangible connection to the County’s colonial past.

Legislator Judah Holstein (D-Eastchester, New Rochelle, Tuckahoe) said, “I am immensely pleased and proud that we have approved the purchase of the Ward House in Tuckahoe, ensuring that this important Revolutionary War landmark will be preserved. This investment safeguards a rare piece of our colonial history and makes it possible for future generations to connect with the story of our nation’s founding right here in Westchester and in District 10. My sincere thanks go to all who made this possible—my colleagues on the County Board, the County Executive, the staff in our Planning and Parks Departments, the Village of Tuckahoe, the property owner, the Friends of the Ward House, and everyone who came together to achieve this milestone.”

Westchester County Office for Women Hosts 23rd Annual Police Interactive Training Conference



The Westchester County Office for Women held its annual Police Interactive Training Conference, a keystone event during October’s Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The theme of the conference was “Saving Lives ... a Growing Westchester Partnership” and the objective was to provide police officers who respond to domestic violence incidents with best practices for safe outcomes for victims. Over 300 individuals were in attendance from the Westchester County Department of Probation, community partner agencies, service providers and representatives from 34 police departments County-wide.

The comprehensive program featured a keynote entitled “Leading with Courage and Compassion: The Guardian-Warrior Path in Policing.” It detailed the retired NYS Police Senior Investigator Matthew Stegner’s journey to prioritizing domestic violence cases, and emphasized the need for officers to embody and balance the “warrior” and the “guardian” when interacting with victims. The audience heard updates from the County’s Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) on current cases, the first time testimonial of a survivor, a review of how to implement existing and amended NYS laws and a report from the County’s Gun Violence Task Force detailing the intersection of gun safety and domestic violence.

In addition, several awards were presented: a survivor and volunteer advocate received the Blue Bird Survivor Leadership award, ADA Joyce Miller received the James Cannon award for excellence in the field and Office for Women Director Robi Schlaff received the DVHRT Leadership Award.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said: “The Police Interactive Training Conference is where you see first-hand the incredible results of bringing together the right stakeholders to assist domestic violence survivors. Building bridges between law enforcement and community providers is essential to making inroads into this dangerous issue. This is why other counties and communities are reaching out to replicate our outstanding model. Westchester County stands committed to investing in domestic violence prevention efforts.”

Westchester County Department of Probation Commissioner Rocco Pozzi said: “Domestic violence impacts individuals across all ages, genders, and backgrounds, leaving lasting effects on families and communities. The 23rd Annual Police Interactive Training Conference serves as a powerful platform to showcase Westchester County’s unified and coordinated response to domestic violence. This annual event underscores the County’s unwavering commitment to prevention, survivor protection, and offender accountability—highlighting the strength of cross-agency collaboration in creating safer communities for all.”

Westchester County Office for Women Director Robi Schlaff said: “Westchester County continues to be the model for DV response. The training, the presentations by the keynote and other speakers and the survivors who had the courage to share their

continued on page 9

Why Safe Deposit Boxes May be Creating More Problems Than Protections



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED
ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:
AMY C. O'HARA, CERTIFIED ELDER
LAW ATTORNEY

For generations, families relied on bank safe deposit boxes to safeguard important documents, jewelry, and sentimental heirlooms. Having a key to a safe deposit box once symbolized prudence and financial responsibility. But in today's world of digital records, cloud storage, and home safes, these boxes are not only outdated but they can create serious legal and practical challenges, especially after a death. Understanding how safe deposit boxes work, and how access is handled when an owner or co-owner dies, can prevent costly delays and emotional frustration for loved ones.

When a person who rents a safe deposit box dies, the box and its contents are typically sealed by the bank. Financial institutions do this to protect themselves from liability and to ensure that only an authorized person, usually the executor or administrator of the estate, can access the contents. The problem is that the executor often cannot be appointed until the Will is submitted to the Surrogate's Court for probate, and the original Will is often inside the box. This circular dilemma can delay probate for weeks or months.

In New York the Estates, Powers and Trusts Law (EPTL) allows limited access to a decedent's safe deposit box for specific purposes, such as retrieving a Will, burial instructions, or a life insurance policy. However, the bank must follow a prescribed procedure and require proper identification and usually a court order before opening the box. The process takes time, particularly if the family is unaware that the box exists or cannot locate the key.

Many people assume that naming a joint owner on a safe deposit box will avoid these problems. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. A "joint tenant" has full access during both parties' lifetimes, but once one owner dies, banks often restrict access until proof of death and estate documentation are provided.

This happens because the contents of the box may not actually belong to the surviving joint owner, even if their name appears on the box. The legal question becomes one of ownership: were the contents

jointly owned, or did the deceased simply grant access for convenience? In some cases, the court appointed executor must provide a full inventory of the contents before removing anything, to prevent misappropriation of estate assets.

Beyond the access issues, safe deposit boxes themselves are quietly disappearing. Many major banks no longer offer them at new branches, and some have stopped renting them altogether. Maintaining secure vaults is expensive and labor-intensive, and today's consumers increasingly prefer digital or in-home alternatives.

Many of the reasons people once used safe deposit boxes, including storing original deeds, stock certificates, savings bonds, or important legal documents, no longer apply. Most records are now maintained electronically or can be easily replaced. What cannot be replaced is your original estate-planning documents which should be kept somewhere immediately accessible to your fiduciaries, not behind a locked door in a bank vault.

Branch consolidations also pose a risk. As banks close or merge, box holders may be notified that their branch is shutting down and must remove their contents by a deadline. If the notice is missed or goes to an old address, the contents can end up in the state's unclaimed property system, creating another layer of complexity for heirs.

For most people, a well-secured home safe offers a more practical and accessible option. Fireproof and waterproof safes rated for at least one hour of fire resistance can protect critical papers and valuables. Originals of your last will and testament, power of attorney, health care proxy and any trusts should be stored there, while your attorney should maintain copies.

It's also wise to maintain a written inventory of what's in the safe, share its location with your executor or trusted family member, and ensure that someone knows the combination or where to find it in the event of an emergency.

Digital storage is another alternative. Many law firms now provide secure client portals, and reputable online vaults offer encrypted storage for scanned copies of legal documents, insurance policies, and passwords. However, digital storage should supplement, not replace, properly executed original documents.

Safe deposit boxes once represented the height of security and orderliness, but in modern estate administration they often cause the opposite: inaccessibility, delay, and confusion. Families can avoid these complications by understanding how banks handle access at death, reconsidering whether a box is necessary, and ensuring that essential documents remain easily

accessible to those who will need them most. By modernizing how you store and safeguard your important papers, you can give your loved ones the true peace of mind that safe deposit boxes were once meant to provide.

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

Westchester County Office for Women Hosts 23rd Annual Police Interactive Training Conference

continued from page 8

stories inspired those who attended the training and strengthens the collaborations that exist through all participating disciplines."

Westchester County DVHRT Director David M. Ryan said: "This 23rd Annual Police Interactive Conference demonstrates the commitment by the leadership in Westchester County to support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and intimate partner violence. By providing an umbrella of resources from all disciplines working in a coordinated and collaborative response, we are able to support victims, allow them to feel safe and begin healing while also holding offenders accountable."

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 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.

Yonkers Police Department Domestic Violence Lieutenant Robert Spink said: "Attending the 23rd Annual Police Conference is an essential step in ensuring our teams are equipped with the most current, trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches. While discussions around law updates and case reviews are crucial, hearing a survivor's story powerfully underscores the real-world impact of our work. This conference is a powerful reminder that our dedication to continuous learning is the foundation of effective public safety."

To view the full presentation and resources, visit women.westchestergov.com/police-training/police-2025

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Nancy Coveney, Editor
nancy.coveney@shorelinepub.com

Cynthia Pena, Art Director
shorelineproduction@gmail.com

Mary DeYoung, Advertising Account Executive
mdeyoung.61@gmail.com

Lauren Levine, Advertising Account Executive
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Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust Presents the 4th Annual New York Jewish Book Festival on Sunday, November 16, 2025

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will presents the fourth annual New York Jewish Book Festival on Sunday, November 16, 2025, featuring events for adults and families. Attendees can also tour the Museum's current exhibitions, *The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do* and *Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark*.

"The New York Jewish Book Festival has become a beloved tradition that celebrates Jewish creativity and community in all its forms," said Jack Kliger, President & CEO of the Museum of Jewish Heritage. "This year's lineup brings together extraordinary authors, performers, and partners who embody the spirit of discovery and dialogue that defines our mission."

This year's festival will celebrate Jewish storytelling, heritage, and creativity through a full day of talks, panels, readings, and workshop highlighting the vibrancy and diversity of Jewish voices in contemporary literature. Signature programs include:

- Spinning Silver with Naomi Novik and Michal Schick, exploring Jewish folklore and fantasy storytelling.
- Matchmaker, Matchmaker... Jewish Love and Romance, co-presented with *The Ripped Bodice*, a lively conversation on love, identity, and modern matchmaking.

• Tamara Yajia's *Cry for Me Argentina: My Life as a Failed Child Star*, an irreverent and heartfelt performance blending humor, memoir, and cultural reflection.

Attendees will also enjoy a curated marketplace featuring *Haus of Babka*, *Made by Maggie*, *Myriad Mirage*, and *Sophia Chizuko*, offering book-themed gifts and artisanal products.

The festival will run from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM at the Museum, located at Edmond J. Safra Plaza, 36 Battery Place in Battery Park City. Admission is free though a donation of \$10 is suggested.

You can view the full schedule at <https://mjhnyc.org/new-york-jewish-book-festival-2025>. Contact pubprog@mjhnyc.org with any questions about the festival.

Festival partners this year include McNally Jackson Books, *The Forward*, *Lilith Magazine*, *Yiddish Book Center*, *Be'chol Lashon*, *The Ripped Bodice*, *Moment Magazine*, the 14th Street Y, and the Jewish Book Council.

While visiting, attendees can nosh at the acclaimed LOX Café, visit Andy Goldsworthy's *Garden of Stones*, and visit the museum's inspiring and moving exhibitions. The Museum's exhibitions, *The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do* and *Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark*, also will be open to book festival registrants.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is New York's contribution to the global responsibility to Never Forget. Opened in 1997, the Museum is committed to the crucial mission of educating diverse visitors about Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

The Museum plays a leading role in Holocaust education in New York City and the tri-state area, serving many thousands of school children each year, with initiatives such as its Holocaust Educator School Partnership Program, professional development opportunities, its Speakers Bureau which enables conversations with survivors, and the creation of tools and resources such as the newly released *Antisemitism FAQ Educator Resource* to support educators in teaching about both historical and contemporary antisemitism.

The Museum's current offerings include *Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark*, an exhibition about the extraordinary rescue of Denmark's Jewish population in 1943, a story of mutual aid and communal upstanding in difficult times for visitors aged 9 and up; and *The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do*, a major exhibition offering a

timely and expansive presentation of Holocaust history, on view in the main galleries.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage maintains the Peter & Mary Kalikow Jewish Genealogy Resource Center, a collection of almost 40,000 artifacts, photographs, documentary films, and survivor testimonies, and contains classrooms, a 375-seat theater (Edmond J. Safra Hall), special exhibition galleries, and a memorial art installation, *Garden of Stones*, designed by internationally acclaimed sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. The Museum also hosts LOX at Café Bergson an OU-certified café serving eastern European specialties.

Each year, the Museum presents over 100 public programs, connecting our community in person and virtually through lectures, book talks, concerts, and more. The museum provides free admission to Holocaust Survivors, active members of the military, first responders, New York City educators with current ID cards, and New York City public school K-12 students.

The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts. For more information, visit mjhnyc.org.

30 Rabbis. 30 Classes. One Extraordinary Night of Learning.

The Westchester Jewish community is invited to an inspiring evening of study, conversation, and discovery at Night of Jewish Learning 2025, taking place Saturday, November 8 at 7pm Beth El Synagogue Center. During this event, 30 rabbis will teach 30 engaging sessions, sharing their wisdom, passions, and unique perspectives. From baseball to literature, food to travel, technology to Torah, each class will explore how Jewish learning connects with the world around us.

Some of this year's fascinating topics include "Judaism and Jazz," "Kafka: Dark Jewish Mystic," "Should Jews Gamble?" and "Torah of Yellowstone." Each session invites participants to engage in meaningful dialogue with rabbis and fellow learners from across Westchester.

"Night of Learning brings together our community's rabbis and learners in a way that is uniquely Westchester," said Elliot Forchheimer, CEO, Westchester Jewish Council. "It's a celebration of the creativity, diversity, and wisdom that make our community so vibrant."

The event is proudly presented in partnership with the Westchester Board of Rabbis, whose members have generously volunteered their time and teaching to make this beloved bi-annual gathering possible.

For more information or to register, visit <https://www.wjcouncil.org/2025-night-of-learning/> or contact Donna Bartell, donna@wjcouncil.org.

American Jewish Committee Applauds Increased Support for Holocaust Survivors from Claims Conference and German Government

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, welcomes today's announcement from the Claims Conference and the German government that close to one billion euros will be allocated in 2026 to provide much-needed home-care assistance for Holocaust survivors.

AJC is a founding member of the Claims Conference, which negotiated its first agreement with the German government on behalf of Holocaust survivors in 1952. In recent years, the Conference has focused on securing funding specifically for home-care assistance for aging survivors, as the most needy and infirm are homebound.

More than 100,000 survivors, with an average age of 88, receive this assistance through the Claims Conference, funded by Germany, and provided by Jewish social service agencies in the United States and around the world and the National Health Service in Israel.

"It is noteworthy that through-

out these years and despite changes in government coalitions and priorities, Germany has never wavered in shouldering its responsibility to address the needs of Holocaust victims," said Rabbi Andy Baker, AJC Director of International Jewish Affairs, who has been a member of the Conference negotiating committee for the past two decades.

In addition to the home-care funding, more than 150 million euros will support Holocaust education efforts across the globe over the next four years. This is especially important at a time when Holocaust distortion is spreading, and even rudimentary knowledge is lacking among large segments of the population, as identified in recent American Jewish Committee and Claims Conference surveys.

According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, the majority of U.S. adults do not know that six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust (52%) or that Hitler came to power through a democratic political process (60%).

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