

County-Wide Solidarity Rally for Israel Held at Temple Israel Center of White Plains

BY JOYCE FARRELL

On October 10, Westchester Stands With Israel, a county-wide Solidarity Rally, was held at Temple Israel Center of White Plains. Jews and non-Jews alike attended to show their solidarity with Israel. There were many political and community leaders in attendance; some of them spoke to the capacity-filled temple. Tara Slone-Goldstein, the Westchester Regional Chair of the UJA Federation of New York, stated that over 1,000 people were killed (to date), many more were kidnapped or are missing, and over 4,000 families will need assistance for many different reasons, including medical needs.

Rabbi Evan Hoffman, President of the Westchester Board Rabbis, began his address with a



prayer and stated, "We are comrades in arms." He then prayed for those taken hostage and told those gathered that not everyone will be on our side, even concerning the hostages, "but we appreciate those who are."

Elliot Forchheimer, CEO, Westchester Jewish Council shared, "The Westchester Jewish Council was founded 48 years ago in response to the Jewish community needing a central organization to convene and unite the community after the Yom Kippur war. And thus was born the Westchester Jewish Conference(Council). This past week, in response to the

massacre of the people of Israel by Hamas, the Westchester community, Jews and allies alike, gathered in record numbers to stand together in solidarity with Israel in a series of rallies and events. Once again we learn that love and unity will always beat hate. Always."

AJC's Chief Advocacy Officer, Belle Yoeil, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, spoke to the crowd, calling the attack on Gaza an "organized massacre," Israel's 9/11, and pointed out that both Israelis and Palestinians were killed. She stated that the American Jewish Committee was doing all it could to bring home the hostages kidnapped by Hamas and referenced President Biden who said the attack by Hamas was "pure, unadulterated evil unleashed on

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Diplomats Join American Jewish Committee in Solidarity Rally to Support Israel

The New York diplomatic community—including envoys from 60 nations—joined American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, at the organization's headquarters today for a solidarity rally with Israel to unequivocally condemn the Hamas massacre of more than 1,200 Israelis and the kidnapping of more than 200 people.

AJC CEO Ted Deutch told the standing-room-only crowd that the United Nations must "stand on the side of decency, and humanity." He continued, "It does not go unnoticed that at a time like this, all of you, recognizing your own histories, all of the times that you looked to the world for support, acknowledge the importance of being here now, with one another, in support of Israel as Israel battles Hamas ... as Israel stands up to evil on behalf of the world."

Deutch was joined by Gilad Erdan, Israel's ambassador to the UN and Tsach Saar, the Israeli Acting Consul General in New York.

"Israel is at the forefront of the war on radical jihadist terror, and if Israel does not succeed in eradicating Hamas' terror capabilities, the whole world will pay the price," Erdan said. "Hamas' genocidal ideologies ... is not just about destroying Israel. It is ultimately about

bringing the jihad war to each and every one of your countries. They will not stop until they murder all of what they call infidels."

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, told those assembled "the eyes of the world are on us. The eyes of history are on us," and said there must be a full-throated condemnation of the "unadulterated evil" that has led to 1,200 Israelis dead, more than 3,200 injured and as many as 200 held hostage.

"As President Biden made clear, Hamas does not stand for the Palestinian people's rights to dignity and self-determination. The path of terror that Hamas is engaged on has not improved the life of a single person or done anything to advance peace and stability," Thomas-Greenfield said. "Let's be clear here: For far too long, Israel has been unfairly targeted in the UN system, and that needs to change. Now is the mo-



AJC CEO Ted Deutch

ment to stand in solidarity with Israel."

With the specter of a protracted conflict, Deutch warned of the possibility and said as Israel battles Hamas, it must also win the battle of public opinion.

"The tendency will be to either move on or change the narrative, to forget everything that's transpired these past few days, to recast what is happening in ways that are not only false but are dangerous," Deutch said. "We at AJC will do everything we can to ensure that doesn't happen."

AJC is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York, 25 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.

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center Appoints New Board Members

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains has announced that Yonat Assayag has joined their Board of Directors, and Rika Levin has joined the HHREC Advisory Board.

Yonat Assayag is a member of the HHREC GenerationsForward Speakers Bureau and is the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors. She is a Partner at ClearBridge Compensation Group, a New York City-headquartered company that works with Boards and senior management advising on executive compensation strategy and design.

Ms. Assayag has appeared as a guest lecturer at The Wharton School's Women on Boards: Building Exceptional Leaders program and has been a frequent speaker at industry conferences including American Law Institute Continuing Legal Education (ALI-CLE), Equilar, National Association of Stock Plan Professionals (NASPP), and WorldatWork. She has authored numerous articles on compensation design and governance practices and has been quoted in major publications such as The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, and The Financial Times. Ms. Assayag earned a Master of Business Administration at the Leonard N. Stern

School of Business, New York University, and a Bachelor of Science from the Martin J. Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University.

Rika Levin is the daughter of Holocaust survivors. Currently, she is the Chief Marketing Officer of Sunnyside Federal Savings and Loan based in Irvington, New York. She manages the marketing, communications, philanthropy, and community outreach for this nationally chartered bank. Previously, she served as Managing Director at JCC of Mid-Westchester, and earlier in her career, she held high-level executive marketing and strategy positions, serving as Chief Marketing Officer at MetLife Bank, N.A., and as Vice President in various business at JP Morgan Chase including New Product Development, Community Relations, Regional Banking, Diversity, and Inclusions.

Ms. Levin also serves as Mayor of the Village of Ossining and is involved with numerous nonprofit organizations in Westchester. She earned an M.B.A. from New York University, Stern Graduate School of Business; a B.A. in American Studies at Brandeis University; and a degree in Economics at Tel Aviv University.

"It is with great pleasure that we welcome Yonat and Rika to our Board," said Michael Gyory, HHREC Board Chairperson. "They each bring a tremendous level of energy and experience to our organization,



Yonat Assayag

along with a high level of enthusiasm for our work. We are very excited to have them join us to help in our effort to promote education about the Holocaust and human rights at this critical time."

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center is a not-for-profit organization based in White Plains New York that serves Westchester, Fairfield, and neighboring counties. Their Mission is to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. We encourage students to speak up and act against all forms of bigotry and

prejudice. Their work with students and teachers helps schools fulfill the New York State mandate that the Holocaust and other human rights abuses be included in their curriculum. Since 1994, they




Rika Levin

have brought the lessons of the Holocaust, genocide, and human rights crimes to more than 1,500 teachers, and through them to thousands of middle and high school students. Through their volunteer Educators Program Committee, the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center gives teachers the unique opportunity to develop programs for themselves and others. These programs not only enrich

teachers' knowledge about the Holocaust and related issues, but they also provide the lens through which to view all other human rights violations. For more information call 914.696.0738 or email info@hhrecny.org.

AJC Westchester/Fairfield

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UJA-Federation of New York Allocates Initial \$10 Million for Israel

Israel is at war, and in response to the overwhelming - and rapidly escalating - scope of the crisis, UJA-Federation of New York is allocating an initial \$10 million in emergency funding from its endowment to provide immediate relief to victims of the vicious terrorist attacks.

Right now, the thousands of victims include hundreds of bereaved families, those coping with the unimaginable horror of loved ones having been taken hostage, and children who lost both parents. This is a crisis the likes of which Israel has not seen in half a century.

To help with the immense needs, UJA-Federation has also launched an Israel Emergency Fund to raise the necessary resources to support UJA nonprofit partners providing critical aid to the people of Israel. To donate, go to www.ujafedny.org/israel-emergency-fund.

In New York, Community Security Initiative, a partnership of UJA-Federation and JCRC-NY, is working to strengthen and protect local Jewish institutions in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies.

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the world.” She then informed those gathered that the first plane with advanced U.S. ammunition had landed in Israel earlier in the day and that Israel was preparing for more threats from terrorists. She stated that rallies justifying the actions of Hamas cannot go unanswered, asserting, “Hamas must be strongly condemned and held accountable.” Comparing the attacks to those on 9/11, she asserted that rallies supporting Hamas were analogous to justifying the hijackings by Al-Qaeda terrorists on 9/11. She concluded by saying, “We are heartbroken, but we stand together.”

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader of the NYS Senate, remarked that she was “in shock and mortified that we again have to stand shoulder to shoulder” against Hamas and against the idea that the State of Israel had no right to exist. She expressed pride in her community and all for showing up, not just to the rally but every day until “we have defeated Hamas and peace prevails.”

NYS Senator Shelley B. Mayer told the rally’s attendees that when she heard of the attack on Israel, she was celebrating her son’s wedding. She spoke emotionally about how Hamas was holding children hostage and asserted that it was time to unite and to make sure that we bring our American brothers and sisters home. Senator Mayer vowed, “We stand with Israel without hesitation” and stated that we would not be divided by politics or anything else. She concluded, “We will win the fight against Hamas and terrorism.”

Westchester County Board of Legislators Chair Vedat Gashi shared that he was born in Kosovo and was an Albanian Muslim refugee. Remarking about the more than one thousand people murdered by



County Executive Latimer speaking

Hamas in the attack and close to two hundred more kidnapped and held hostage, including Americans, he maintained that we must do all that we can to rescue them and pledged unwavering support for Israel. He asserted that this is not the time to debate the politics of Israel; rather, it is a time for compassion, empathy, and humanity – a time to grieve, pray, and show support.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer followed Gashi and spoke of the horrors and atrocities of the attack. “We are one with them,” he stated. He noted the support of all, whether Catholic, Muslim, Jew or those with no faith, all understand what an inhuman thing happened. He maintained that Hamas and Iran aren’t seeking fairness for Palestinians; they’re seeking to obliterate Israel and that the ideology Hamas is trying to spread in the Middle East is akin to the ideology of China, Russia, and North Korea. He was appalled by the rallies orga-

nized by the Democratic Socialist Party in support of Hamas and that they dared to put a human face on something so inhumane. Latimer praised Israel for working more than seventy-five years to build a land more inclusive than the counties around them. He pledged that we will support allies in war when the cause is just, concluding, “Our cause and the cause of Israel is just.”

Itay Milner, Spokesperson and Consul for Media Affairs at the Consulate General of Israel in New York, related that he awoke on October 8, to a message from his mom, “We are at war.” About the attackers, Milner said, “We miscalculated them, but I think that they miscalculated us more.” He felt that they thought we were divided and weak. He asserted, however, “Whenever they try to get rid of us, we unify, and we get stronger.” Promising both to get all the hostages home and justice, he stated, “Unlike those years when we got massacred, we have an army, one of the strongest in the world, and we have an ally who is the strongest in the world.”

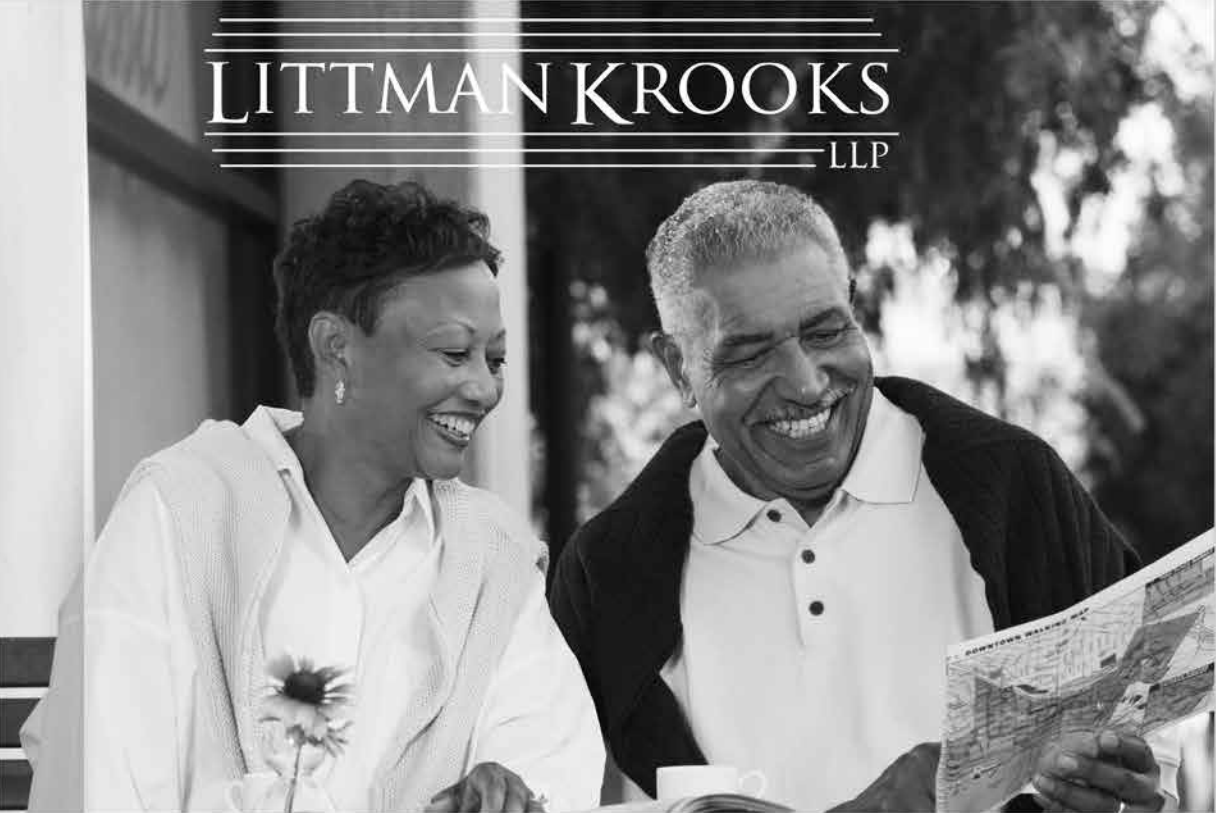
Sixteen-year-old student from Scarsdale High School, Benjamin Siegel, related that he received a text on Sunday morning, October 8, that one of his best friends in Israel, his scout leader, had been killed in battle. He mentioned that he had other friends who had been injured and stated, “This is not normal. It can never be normal. They were only teenagers.” In conclusion, he said that his scout leader’s story is a story of Israel, and we must stand with Israel.

Doctor Erwin Lee Trollinger, Jr. of Calvary Baptist Church of White Plains and President of the Minister Fellowship Council of White Plains spoke of how on June 17, 2015, when an anti-Black mass shooting occurred during a Bible study at Emanuel

African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, the Jewish community and all religious leaders stood together against violence, and we must repay that debt. He stated, “In order for our world to move forward to a world of understanding, we must stop making hate become normal.” He lamented the attack on Israel, the place of many faiths that stem from Father Abraham, but feels that “even in this dark time, there is still a light that will be shone. May it come swiftly.”

At the end of the program, Arlene Kleinberg, a member of the Executive Committee of the Westchester Jewish Council, spoke of how people can help. First, show up and show support, like the thousands outside of the United Nations today. Next, be as generous as you can and donate what you can. Also, reach out to political offices and build political support, and reach out to those who live in Israel and give them a virtual hug. Finally, stay informed.

Afterward, William H. Schrag, President of the Westchester Jewish Council, commented, “The Westchester Jewish Council was formed 48 years ago, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, to provide a single organization for the diverse Jewish population of Westchester to unite under a single banner. With 1,500 people attending the rally in person and another 1,500 participating online, we were true to our mission and are honored to have helped our community show their solidarity with the people of Israel and give strength and comfort to one another. It was particularly gratifying to see, not only Jews of all stripes come together, but also a large turnout of our elected officials and non-Jewish neighbors--clergy and lay people alike-- who wanted to be counted during Israel’s time of need.”



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Water 4 Mercy Joins Israeli Government, CultiVaid, and Don Bosco Institutes of Africa to Open Agricultural Innovation and Technology Center in Kenya

Water 4 Mercy, a not-for-profit based in the United States with an innovative approach combining water access with agricultural solutions and community engagement that empowers sub-Saharan communities, recently opened its first Israel-Kenya Don Bosco Agricultural Innovation and Technology Center in Embu County, Kenya (AITEC-EMBU) here to help train and equip local farmers to produce healthier and more bountiful crops.

The grand opening celebration included Israeli Ambassador H.E. Michael Lotem, Water 4 Mercy Founder and CEO Nermine Khouzam Rubin, Embu County Deputy Governor H.E. Kinyua Mugo, Don Bosco Technical Institutes of Africa Board Chairman Fr. George “TJ” Tharaniyil, CultiVaid Co-Founder Tomer Malchi, PhD, and Don Bosco Embu’s Rector, Fr. Babu Augustine.

The Israel-Kenya Don Bosco Agricultural Innovation and Technology Center in Embu County, Kenya (AITEC-EMBU) is a multifunctional farm that serves as a dynamic training center and inno-

vative research hub, designed to train and equip local farmers with hands-on skills. The Embu location joins other similar centers throughout the sub-Saharan region driving agricultural advancements.

The collaboration between Water 4 Mercy, Israel, and Kenya, is implemented through the local Don Bosco Technical Institutes and CultiVaid. AITEC shares Israeli knowledge, and advanced water and agricultural solutions, helping to build local capacity and developing a self-sustainable model for communal partners. The project thereby supports the growth of the agricultural ecosystem throughout the county.

“The launch of AITEC Embu demonstrates the strong partnership between Israel and Africa and how Israeli technology can make a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of local community members. It shows the local youth that agriculture can be a profitable and exciting field to work in. It underscores that knowledge and technologies mitigate risk and that there are many hi-tech op-

portunities in the agricultural sector” said Israeli Ambassador H.E. Michael Lotem.

“We are thrilled to partner with each of these incredible entities to help launch Water 4 Mercy’s AITEC-EMBU,” said the group’s Founder and CEO Nermine Khouzam Rubin. “Our goal has always been to provide sustainable clean water and agricultural solutions that empower African communities to break out of their cycle of poverty, and we’re excited that AITEC – Embu is going to join our network of AITEC programs already making a difference in everyday life in the region.”

The Israel-Kenya Don Bosco Agricultural Innovation and Technology Center in Embu County, Kenya (AITEC-EMBU) is a certified agriculture program and curriculum they developed with CultiVaid and offered through select campuses of Don

Bosco Technical Institutes of Africa. AITEC is growing a new generation of experts for the future of food and nutritional security. Additionally, it provides agricultural training and technology to help farmers increase their yields and ensures their produce is exponentially more nutritious and more bountiful than before, empowering their economic prosperity and promoting human dignity.

Water 4 Mercy’s innovative approach combines water access with agricultural solutions and community engagement, empowering individuals to thrive and transform their lives and futures. Its holistic approach brings about a transformative impact on the people, improving health, education, economic opportunities, and overall quality of life in African communities. For more information, visit www.water4mercy.org.

AJC Welcomes New Faith-Based Toolkit from White House to Counter Antisemitism

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, today welcomed the Biden administration’s release of Allied Against Hate: A Toolkit for Faith Communities as part of the effort to implement the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.

“In announcing the National Strategy, the White House sent a clear, unequivocal message that antisemitism is a problem that affects all of society, not just Jews, and one that demands a whole-of-society response,” said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. “Hate does not exist in a vacuum, and interfaith partnerships to combat antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of bigotry help us to create safer, more inclusive communities. AJC is committed to the implementation of the National Strategy and continues to work with our partners across faiths and all sectors of society to ensure its realization, now and in the future – no matter who is in the White House.”

Many of the proposals in the Allied Against Hate toolkit mirror the recommendations for coalition partners in the AJC Call to Action Against Antisemitism, a society-wide guide that offers numerous sectors specific tools to understand, recognize, and fight antisemitism. Additionally, the Toolkit quotes AJC’s Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations, Ari Gordon, from his article From Conflict to Cooperation: Lessons from the Road to Muslim-Jewish Partnership.

“The American Jewish community cannot fight antisemitism alone—it requires leaders and people of good faith, from religious, ethnic, and racial communities across the ideological spectrum, to join in the fight,” added Deutch. “Non-Jewish voices need to raise awareness that antisemitism

is not just a Jewish problem, but an assault on the core values of pluralism, freedom, and democracy that Americans hold dear. As the toolkit references, AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America report found that 73% of people who know someone Jewish say antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. today, compared with 59% who do not know anyone who is Jewish. Working with all faith communities is vital to the success of the National Strategy and this new toolkit from the Biden administration will be a key tool in this work.”

AJC has and continues to support the White House in drafting, amplifying, and implementing the National Strategy. These efforts are bolstered by the AJC Task Force to Implement the National Strategy, composed of more than 50 AJC staff and three dozen AJC leaders from across the country, which is focused on ensuring that the plan’s more than 200 recommendations, 100-plus for the federal government and another 100-plus for the rest of American society, are carried out.

Three months prior to the Biden administration’s release of the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, AJC organized a meeting with envoys from across the globe at the White House, where they shared best practices and lessons from abroad, as well as their individual action plans with the interagency policy group.

AJC is the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people. With headquarters in New York, 25 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. More at AJC.org.



Ted Deutch



BY RABBI MICHAEL GOLDMAN

As the Director of the WJCS Jewish Spiritual Healing Center, I ask myself that question a lot. And I don’t have a dictionary-worthy answer for you. For one, “spiritual” seems to have as many definitions as there are people. And “healing?” Show me the spiritually “healed,” and I could show you a self-deluded person. So, what are we even talking about?

Although I struggle to define the two middle words in my own job title, I know spiritual healing when I see it. Since I see it happening all over WJCS, I asked my colleagues for stories of their clients (we didn’t share names) who experienced spiritual healing and renewal through our agen-

cy’s programs and services. Here are three stories they shared.

- A longtime member of one of our Dementia-Caregivers Support Groups, whose husband died after many years of illness, recounted to my colleague how during the last few years, without the group, she would not have survived. The support she received from the group gave her the fortitude to share her experience with others in a High Holiday sermon.

- A survivor of domestic violence who, after receiving therapy and peer counseling at a WJCS clinic, got a job in our agency helping others living who had experienced abuse.

- Two widowed people met in one of our Spouse-Loss Bereavement Groups. Several years later, they got married.

Don’t let the dazzling ending of that last vignette distract you; all these stories are about loss—profound loss—whether it be the loss of a loved one or the loss of a sense of self-worth. Every time that newly-wed couple retells the story about how they met, they remember the spouse whom they outlived. So, where’s the “healing?”

Let’s look deeper at what these stories have

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“Sushi in the Sukkah” Celebrated at Iona University

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

“Sushi in the Sukkah” was celebrated on the Iona University Montgomery House Lawn on October 3rd, with generous varieties of Sushi served and instruction by Second Year Hebrew Union College Rabbinical Student Spencer Szwalbenest.

The event was hosted by Iona University’s Driscoll Professorship in Jewish-Catholic Studies and Core Curriculum Director, Elena G. Procario-Foley, Ph.D., and Hillels of Westchester, represented by its Executive Director, Rachel Klein, MSW. It was co-sponsored by Iona’s Office of Mission and Ministry and its Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. “We want to make our campus as welcoming as possible for people of all faiths,” Professor Procario-Foley stressed.

“Today I learned for the first time that during Chol HaMoed, the middle phase of Sukkot, we use a different greeting, ‘Moed Tov,’” Klein observed.

According to Rabbinical Student Spencer Szwalbenest, “Lulav (palm fronds) and Etrog (resembling a lemon) symbolize the joy of the holiday and presence of G_d everywhere. The Lulav is a collection of four species, representing human body parts, Lulav, spine; willow, lips; hadass, myrtle, eyes, and Etrog, heart. With the Lulav in the right hand, you say the blessing ‘al ni-telas Lulav.’ Turn Etrog with the tip facing up and shake Lulav three times forward, three times to the right, three times behind you, three times to the left, three times up, and three times down.”

The Hebrew word “Sukkah” means “booth”



Traditional Sukkah fruit ceiling decorations

or “hut.” During the week-long harvest holiday of Sukkot, many Jews construct a temporary structure in which they eat their meals, entertain guests, relax, and even sleep.

A Sukkah is reminiscent of huts in which ancient Israelites lived during their 40 years of wandering in the desert after their Exodus from

Egypt, symbolizing G_d’s benevolence in providing for all the Jews’ needs in the desert. Iona’s Sukkah was made possible by the generosity of Temple Israel of New Rochelle, Rabbi Jesse Gallop.

In front of Iona University Sukkah, front row, left to right: Dr. Elena Procario-Foley, Ph.D., Brother John G. Driscoll Jewish-Catholic Studies and Director, Core Curriculum, Iona University; Rachel Klein, Executive Director, Hillels of Westchester. Back row: Hillels of Westchester and Iona University students.



The U.S. Postal Service Has Released A New Forever Stamp Honoring The Late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

On October 2, the United States Postal Service released a new Forever stamp honoring the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, unveiling it at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery during a first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony that was open to the public.

Designed by Ethel Kessler, an art director for USPS, with a Michael J. Deas oil painting based on a photograph by Philip Bermingham, the stamp captures the 107th U.S. Supreme Court justice in her black judicial robe and favorite white-lace collar.

“Justice Ginsburg was an iconic figure who dedicated her life to public service and the pursuit of justice,” said USPS Board of Governors Chairman Roman Martinez IV. “She was a true pioneer, and it is our honor to celebrate her incredible legacy in this way. This stamp serves not just as a tribute but as an inspiration for future generations to uphold the values she fought for.”

Joining Martinez for the ceremony were Nina Totenberg, legal affairs correspondent at National Public Radio, Lori Dym, USPS procurement and property law managing counsel, Elizabeth Glazer, founder of the public safety nonprofit Vital City, and Ginsburg’s granddaughter Clara Spera, a lecturer at Harvard Law School and senior associate at WilmerHale.

The Ruth Bader Ginsburg stamp is being issued as a Forever stamp and is available in panes of 20 at select Post Office locations nationwide and at usps.com/shopstamps. Forever stamps will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

The stamp will serve as a lasting tribute to the Brooklyn native who has left an indelible impact on American jurisprudence and society at large.

Ginsburg’s multifaceted legacy includes the legal and social changes she helped to bring about, the example she set of tenacity and perseverance in the service of meaningful work, the inspiring passion that she brought to her dissents in defense of principles she held dear, and the countless people — young and old, men and women — who view her as a role model.



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Jewish Historical Fiction Novel By Westchester Author Florence Reiss Kraut

Historical fiction author and long-time resident of Rye, Florence Reiss Kraut, brings us her highly-anticipated follow-up to 2021's *How to Make a Life with Street Corner Dreams*, a suspenseful family saga, love story, and gangster tale, wrapped into one great book club read (On sale: November 14, 2023; She Writes Press; ISBN: 978-1647425913; Price: \$17.95). *Street Corner Dreams* is an exploration of a timeless question: how much do we owe the families that have sacrificed for and shaped us—and does that debt outweigh what we owe ourselves and our own hopes and dreams for a better life?

Just before WWI, Golda comes to America yearning for independence, but she tosses aside her dreams of freedom and marries her widowed brother-in-law after her sister dies giving birth to their son, Morty.

In the crowded streets of Brooklyn where Jewish and Italian gangs demand protection money from local storekeepers and entice youngsters with the promise of wealth, Golda, Ben, and Morty thrive as a family. But in the Depression, Ben, faced with financial ruin, makes a dangerous, life-altering choice. Morty tries to save his father by getting help from a gangster friend, but the situation only worsens. Forced to desert his family and the woman he loves in order to survive, Morty is desperate to go home. Will he ever find a safe way back? Or has his involvement with the gang sealed his fate?

Street Corner Dreams is a beautifully written and engaging second novel that will be the perfect addition to book clubs this winter. Consider it for Jewish historical fiction, city life fiction, and book club roundups.



Westchester County Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast Celebrates Unity and Community Harmony



The Westchester County Executive's Office hosted an Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast recently at the Pace University Elisabeth Haub School of Law. This event brought together individuals of diverse faiths and backgrounds to celebrate the rich tapestry of Westchester County's community.

Latimer said: "In Westchester County, our strength lies in our diversity - and events like this Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast remind us of the importance of unity and understanding among our residents. It is through such gatherings that we can truly appreciate the rich tapestry of our community and work towards a harmonious future together."

The event was hosted by Crystal Collins, Director of Policy & Programs for Faith-based & Urban Communities, and Christopher Steers, Director of Countywide Administrative Services & Real Estate and offered attendees an enriching experience, promoting unity and understanding among Westchester County's residents.

Collins said: "This event was a testament to the power of interfaith cooperation in building a more inclusive and harmonious Westchester County. It showcased the potential of diverse faiths coming together to celebrate our shared values and strengthen the bonds of our community."

Steers said: "The Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast at Pace University Elisabeth Haub School of Law served as a platform for meaningful dialogue and connections among community members of various faiths and backgrounds. It reinforced the idea that when we come together, we can foster understanding and solidarity in our vibrant County."

Dean Horace Anderson of the Elisabeth Haub School of Law extended a warm welcome to all attendees, setting a tone of inclusivity and community spirit. Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins delivered opening remarks emphasizing the sig-

nificance of interfaith cooperation in building a harmonious Westchester County.

The event's highlight was the remarks from County Executive George Latimer who shared his vision for a harmonious and inclusive Westchester County.

The Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast featured inspiring opening prayers from Reverend Dr. Stephen W. Pogue of the Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mount Vernon, and Imam Shafieq Chace of the Islamic Center of New Rochelle, highlighting the event's commitment to celebrating diversity and promoting respect for various faith traditions.

Qalvy Grainzolt, a Shinnyo-en Buddhist priest, offered a moment of reflection and unity, emphasizing the shared values that bind us all together. This was followed by presentations from County officials, including Senior Programs & Services Commissioner Mae Carpenter, Human Rights Commission Fair Housing Director Josh Levin, and Department of Community Mental Health Commissioner Michael Orth, underscoring the County's commitment to supporting its residents and fostering inclusivity.

A moderated dialogue session encouraged open discussions and the exchange of ideas among attendees, further promoting understanding and unity. The event concluded with a closing prayer led by Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, CEO Emerita of The Rabbinical Assembly and Minister Caura Washington of New Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

Attendees were also provided an opportunity for networking and engage in meaningful conversations with fellow community members.

The Westchester County Interfaith Appreciation Breakfast was a significant event that brought together individuals from all walks of life to celebrate our shared humanity and the richness of Westchester County's cultural tapestry.

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The National Museum Of Modern Art In Croatia Returns Artwork To Heir Of The Reischsmanns Killed By The Nazis During The Holocaust



The World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) welcomed the return of two significant artworks, André Derain's "Still Life with a Bottle" and Maurice de Vlaminck's "Landscape by the Water," to Andrew Reichsmann, culminating a decades-long restitution process. The artworks were turned over in Zagreb on September 18, 2023, by the National Museum of Modern Art, in compliance with the Civil Court's decision.

Gideon Taylor, President, WJRO issued the following statement:
"We welcome the return of these two paintings. This is a positive step in dealing with outstanding Holocaust-era restitution issues in Croatia."

In 1946, the artworks were entrusted to the Museum by the Ministry of Science and Culture on behalf of the State after they were retrieved from Marijan Polić. Polić had safeguarded them for the Reichsmann family, who had lost their possessions during the NDH (Nazi-allied Independent State of Croatia) regime's confiscation. Mr. Reichsmann and his wife were killed in Auschwitz.

To read more about it, visit www.jutarnji.hr/kultura/art/supruznici-reichsmann-ubijeni-su-u-auschwitzu-nakon-70-godina-zagrebacki-muzej-vratio-je-oduzete-slike-njihovom-nasljedniku-15375871.

Standing with Israel – in Memory of Yannai Kaminka z”l



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Don't turn the page. Don't look away. I should not be writing this.
The Hamas monsters who led the horrible terror attack on Israeli babies, children, teens, mothers and fathers, and Holocaust survivors cared about one thing. Killing Jews.

As news reports broke, with more and more and more updates, we all sat frozen. Incapable of comprehending the horror, the depravity that the Hamas terrorists unleashed on our beloved Israel.

Every time we thought it couldn't get worse, a new update. And another and another.

And then Sunday morning, we woke up to a text that we should never have received.

It said that our friend and neighbor's son, Yannai Kaminka, was killed in action, defending the Israeli communities in Southern Israel on the border with Gaza. He was 20 years old.

How would we tell our 16-year-old son that his mentor, his Israeli scouts leader in Israel had been killed? No parent should ever have to tell their child that horrible news. No family should ever bear that terrible, unimaginable burden and loss.

What could we possibly say to Elana and Eyal, Yannai's parents? And what could we possibly say to Yannai's siblings, one of whom was a classmate and friend of our son?

Until his last moment, Yannai was defending his people, the Jewish people, and all Israelis. Israeli soldiers defend us all, in the great tossed salad that is Israel. People from every background, every religion; that is the sacred duty of the IDF: protect its citizens.

Yannai Kaminka was my son's leader. He was a role model. Smart, fun, funny, strong, sometimes shy, always there for the kids.

And so when the awful text came in on Sunday morning, we were shattered.

In the IDF, Yannai gave his heart and soul to his



Yannai Kaminka z”l is picture in the center of this photo in the black t-shirt and shorts (photo courtesy of Elana Kaminka).

soldiers, didn't eat or sleep all week to do everything for them, and then he'd come home and sleep for 2 days straight.

One of Yannai's squad commanders was hit in the head, but since she was wearing a helmet, she was only injured. Yannai helped evacuate her under fire and took her position. Yannai, another officer, and two soldiers were then hit by an RPG and killed immediately.

In the photo above, Yannai and some of his soldiers are just normal teenagers doing normal things. Smiling. As Yannai always did. He lit up every space.

One of the girls is the one he evacuated under fire. She came to his funeral bandaged. Another is in the hospital with serious injuries. The other two in the photo spoke at his funeral.

This is NOT normal. It can NEVER be normal. They were just teenagers.

And our teenagers here in Westchester and around the country need to feel safe and strong to be proud Jewish, pro-Israel advocates.

We are here for them. They are not alone. We are here and we are strong and we are advocates with government officials, diplomats, and interfaith and inter-group leaders. We will never apologize for being strong, for being educated, for being powerful. We learned throughout our collective history what happens with-out power.

We will continue to honor Yannai's memory and the memory of every Israeli and every foreign national killed, wounded, or kidnapped by the evil that is Hamas.

Am Yisrael Chai.
Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield Regional Director. westchester@ajc.org.

Statement by UJA-Federation of New York on Jack Lew

"UJA-Federation of New York applauds President Biden's nomination of Jack Lew as the next ambassador to Israel. A distinguished American leader, and longstanding member of New York's Jewish community, Jack is deeply engaged with every aspect of the US/Israel relationship. Jack's extensive international and policy experience, familiarity with issues critical to the Jewish community, and unwavering commitment to promoting Israel's stability in the region will make him an exemplary Ambassador."

Working with a network of hundreds of nonprofits, UJA extends its reach from New York to Israel to nearly 70 other countries around the world, touching the lives of 4.5 million people each year. Every year, UJA provides approximately \$180 million in grants. In addition, to date, UJA has provided more than \$11 million in Ukraine-related emergency funding. For more information, please visit ujafedny.org.





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Can a Person with Alzheimer's Disease Sign Legal Documents?



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

Approximately 6.5 million people in the United States have Alzheimer's Disease. In fact, more than 10% of people age 65 and over are living with Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease that gets worse over time and there currently is no cure. We have written extensively in this column about the importance of getting your affairs in order and taking care of your estate planning before something happens to you. By doing so, you will make things much easier for you and your family. So, what happens if someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and they have not yet done their estate planning? Is it too late? That depends.

A certain level of capacity is necessary in order to sign legal documents. Someone who is in the later stages of Alzheimer's probably does not have the requisite capacity to sign legal documents. However, a person in the early stages of Alzheimer's or with a diagnosis of dementia may very well be able to sign legal documents.

For these purposes, capacity is typically analyzed situationally. That is, the question will be answered differently depending on the nature of the document and

the circumstances of the signing. The general rule: the signer has to have sufficient understanding to know what the document is, and the effect of the signing.

Here are a few examples:

- Ability to sign a contract.
 - Understanding of a power of attorney, which might give the authority to another person to make financial decisions for you.
 - Capacity to sign a trust.
 - Capacity to get married (which is, after all, a specialized kind of contract).
 - Ability to make medical decisions -- including refusing medication, or either seeking or declining mental health treatment.
- Although each of these situations will be evaluated differently, we can offer some general thoughts:
- The capacity level required to sign a trust is generally thought to be similar to the level of capacity to sign a contract.
 - The capacity to sign a will is generally considered the lowest level of capacity required to sign any legal document in New York.
 - There are few legal ways to determine capacity in advance. Some argue whether it is a legal or medical determination. Challenges to capacity are almost always initiated after the signing is completed -- and often after the signer has died or becomes mentally incapacitated. That means that evidence of capacity (or lack of capacity) is often being reconstructed after the fact.

It's also important to remember that we are writing here about capacity, and not necessarily about

the validity of documents signed by someone with Alzheimer's. It is entirely possible that although someone with Alzheimer's has the legal capacity to execute a new will, they were unduly influenced by someone else when signing their will. There is a difference between capacity on the one hand and undue influence on the other. Alzheimer's might make a person incapable of signing a document, or their capacity may be sufficient to sign. But that same person might be more susceptible to undue influence because they have Alzheimer's.

The following example may help explain what we mean: an elderly widower, living alone, has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's. He is nonetheless charming, witty, and perfectly able to discuss his wishes. He can recall the names of his three children and his seven grandchildren. He can report their ages, the cities they live in, and their careers (or status as students) -- and he is mostly correct, though sometimes his information is two or three years out of date.

This gentleman's daughter lives in the same city and is the one who oversees his living arrangements and care. She does his shopping, hires people to check on him daily, takes him to doctors' appointments, writes out his checks (he still signs them), and otherwise helps out. She also talks to him endlessly about how his other two children don't deserve to end up with his house and bank accounts, how she really ought to be the one who benefits from his estate, and how his late wife (her moth-

er) always wanted her to inherit everything. Eventually, he agrees to sign a new will and trust, mostly to stop her constant harangues.

Did he have the capacity to sign the new estate planning documents? On the facts as we've given them here, probably yes. Was he unduly influenced? Very likely. Was that influence facilitated (and the proof made easier) because of his Alzheimer's? Absolutely.

When did the daughter's behavior cross the line? The legal system isn't actually very helpful, since the answer is defined in a circular fashion. Her influence was "undue" when it resulted in her wishes being substituted for his. It was not necessarily objectionable (at least not legally) when she told him what she wished he would do, what her mother had wanted, or what was fair. But at some point, she may well have turned ordinary familial influence into "undue" influence.

As you can see, this area of the law is quite complex. By working with a competent estate planning attorney, you can increase the likelihood that your wishes will be carried out if you become incapacitated or pass away.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP and 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. Call (914-684-2100) or visit the firm's website at www.littmankrooks.com.

Avodah Relaunches Jewish Justice Fellowship in New York City

Avodah, the 25-year-old national Jewish social justice organization, will relaunch The New York Justice Fellowship program later this fall.

The New York Justice Fellowship is a deep learning and community-building program designed to build the field of Jewish social justice leaders working effectively and sustainably in New York City.

While ongoing in other cities, the program has been on hiatus since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the program returns a new set of Jewish young professionals and activists will have the opportunity to participate in this transformative fellowship.

The Justice Fellowship brings together a pluralistic cohort of social justice leaders working on a diverse set of local issues in a variety of different ways. Fellows are given the tools to break out of their personal silos and dig into a more holistic learning approach to building power in their communities.

"This is a big deal for the New York Jewish community. This program brings together the next generation of local Jewish justice leaders, and that vision and energy is what our city needs so urgently right now" said Avodah CEO Cheryl Cook.

The Fellowship is proudly funded by the UJA Federation of New York.

The Fellowship program will be led by Sonia Alexander, a local justice educator who has been educating and organizing within the New York Jewish community for over a decade.

Her experience includes running queer Jewish teen programs for Mosaic of Westchester, helping launch the Manhattan JCC's Center for Social Responsibility, and leading racial and social justice programming at a Jewish high school.

She spent many years as an active member-leader of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ). Sonia holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Pomona College, where she focused on food systems and environmental justice, and a Master of Social Work from the Silver School of Social Work at New York University, where she did graduate research on healing from collective trauma is currently working as a therapist and has been training in Internal Family Systems.

"I'm honored and excited to be the next Fellowship Director of the New York Justice Fellowship. This program has a rich history of bringing together powerful justice leaders from the city, and I look forward to continuing that legacy," said Alexander.

"Sonia brings years of experience educating and leading on justice issues. She is the right person to rebuild this program and help fellows dig into learning about how they can do this work most sustainably and effectively for the long haul" said Avodah CEO Cheryl Cook.

Applications for the NYC Fellowship are open now with an October 12th deadline. After that, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis for a November start.

Those interested should go to www.avodah.net/what-we-do/avodah-fellowship to find out more and to request an application.

Addressing Substance Use and Co-Occurring Mental Health Concerns

There are 19.4 million American adults and children who have co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders (SUDs). Unfortunately, not everyone with co-occurring conditions gets the treatment they need. Some people get treatment for neither disorder and others for only one of the conditions. When someone has an SUD and another mental health disorder, it is usually more effective to treat them at the same time rather than separately. Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) provides a comprehensive treatment approach to address both disorders. The following are some of the programs WJCS offers Westchester residents suffering from co-occurring disorders:

WJCS's Substance Use Disorders Intensive Outpatient Program (SUD IOP) is a 6-week program designed to bring substance-involved individuals, including those with co-occurring disorders, from active substance use to early recovery, ready to capitalize on WJCS's wide array of treatment and supports to fully realize their recovery goals.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) is the use of medications, tailored to the individual, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a "whole-patient" approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. MAT can help sustain recovery. It is also used to prevent or reduce opioid overdose.

Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) is a treatment program for the loved ones of people experiencing substance use issues. It teaches parents, spouses, partners, and close friends of people with substance use issues

how to change their interactions with their substance-using loved one so that they make positive changes in their use and seek and remain engaged with treatment. It also focuses on how loved ones can take care of themselves as they support their loved one in treatment.

Encompass is an approximately 17-week treatment for individuals 12 to 30 with co-occurring disorders. It utilizes evidence-based best practices for treating co-occurring disorders, including motivational interviewing, contingency management, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and medication-assisted treatment. It is a program offered in select community and school-based settings, with clinical consultation provided by Encompass developer Dr. Paula Riggs and the Department of Psychiatry, University of Colorado School of Medicine. This is made possible thanks to the award of a Promising Practices grant by WMCHHealth to Family Services of Westchester in collaboration with the Harris project. Additional support is provided by the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health.

To enroll in WJCS's Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders Treatment Program, or to inquire about insurance coverage, please contact WJCS's Central Intake Line at 914-607-4500.

For more information about WJCS's Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders Treatment Program, please contact Sam Mogilensky, LMHC, Encompass Coordinator, at 914-949-6761 x2447; smogilensky@wjcs.com or William A. Mullane, Ph.D., Director of Innovation, Integration, and Community Partnerships, at (914) 761-0600 x3211; wmullane@wjcs.com

What is "Spiritual Healing?" A Days of Awe Message

continued from page 4

in common. For one, all three tell of people who found strength in sharing their experience with someone else, whether it was individuals in their support group, a therapist, congregational peers, or a partner in grief. And that act of sharing benefited those who heard.

We are hard-wired in such a way that we are not merely to survive loss but to continue to live, a person must seek out others who have lost, and share that experience with them. So, if you need to know what I think spiritual healing is, I'd say: people helping other people integrate their personal losses into their lives, and by doing so, helping themselves to do the same.

When we gather during the upcoming Days of Awe, we essentially will be demonstrating our

commitment to this kind of collective meaning-making around loss. This year, if you go to Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur services, look around the room. Not one of the throngs of people there has lived without loss, alienation, or other spiritual maladies requiring—okay, I'll say it—spiritual healing. Our very presence signifies our need for this thing and demonstrates our intuition that we can get in the presence of others. Even if we can't really define spiritual healing, I'm glad to be working for an organization where, once the holidays are over, people can find it.

Westchester Jewish Community Services offers a wide range of supportive, educational, cultural, and spiritual programs and human services. Please go to www.wjcs.com to learn more.

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Calendar of Events



The Center for Jewish History
15 W 16th Street, New York, NY
The Museum and Laboratory of the Jewish Comics Experience
Ongoing through December 2023
A new exhibition, *JewCE! The Museum and Laboratory of the Jewish Comics Experience*, opened on
Housed in the connected Rosenberg and Winnick Galleries, the exhibition includes both a Museum examining the history of Jews and comics and a Laboratory with immersive, family-friendly activities teaching about the craft of graphic storytelling. For free tickets to the exhibit, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/center-for-jewish-history-exhibitions-tickets-158148146363?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>. For more information, email jewce@cjh.org or call 212-294-8322.



The Center for Jewish History
15 W 16th Street, New York, NY
The Museum and Laboratory of the Jewish Comics Experience
Saturday, November 11 and Sunday, November 12, 2023
JewCE! The Jewish Comic Book Convention, presented in conjunction with JewCE! The Museum and Laboratory of the Jewish Comics Experience. For tickets to the convention, visit <https://jewce.org/>. For more information, email jewce@cjh.org or call 212-294-8322.



Purchase College Performing Arts Center
735 Anderson Hill Rd, Purchase
October 15, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.
Yearning and Rejoicing: Jewish Music of the Diaspora
An afternoon of Baroque Sephardic Music co-sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program at Purchase College, SUNY and the Westchester Jewish Council. Free and open to the public. A light reception will follow the concert. For more information, visit <https://www.artscenter.org/events/yearning-and-rejoicing-jewish-music-of-the-diaspora/> or call 914-251-6222. To RSVP, visit <https://www.artscenter.org/events/yearning-and-rejoicing-jewish-music-of-the-diaspora/>

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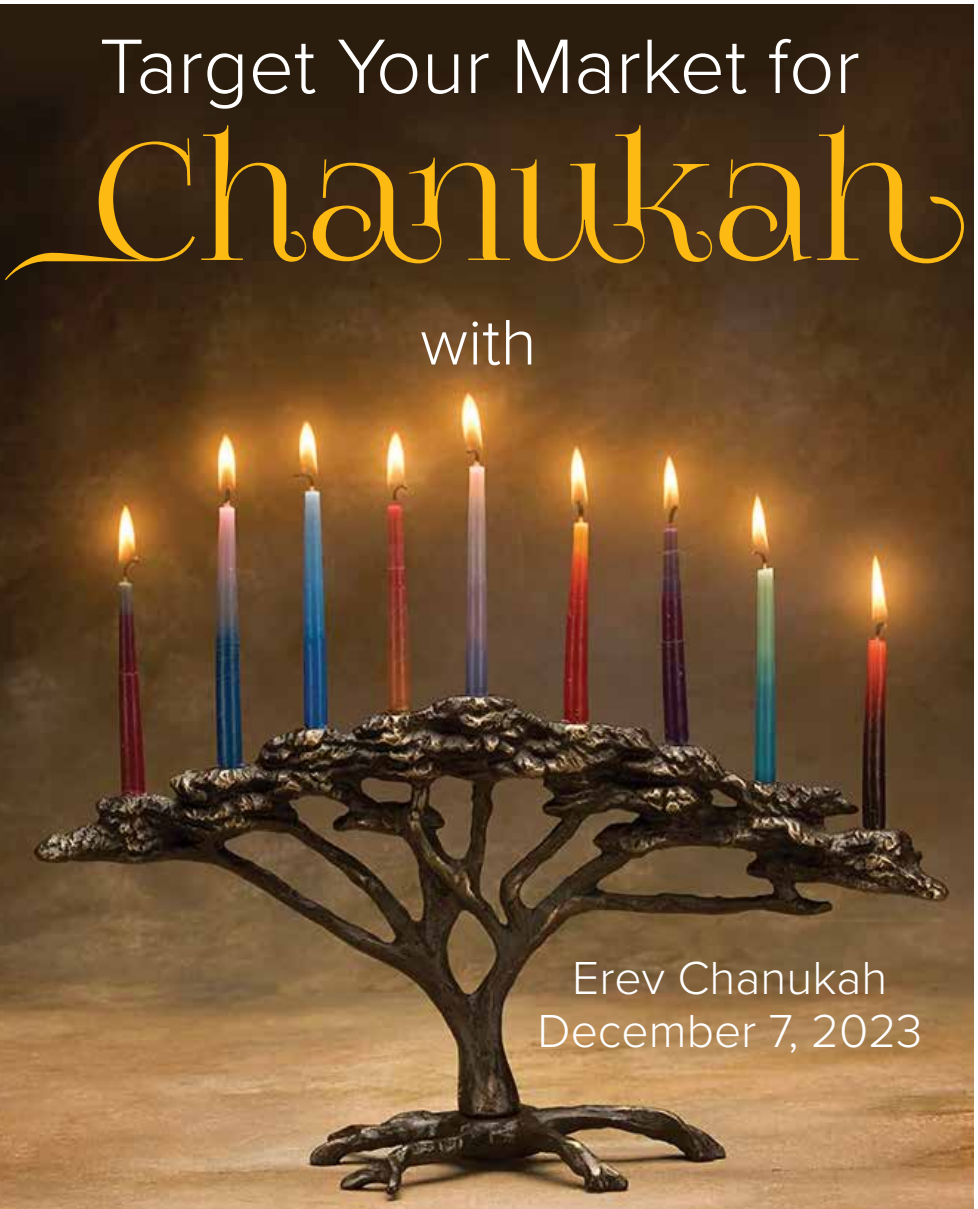
Jewish Dungeons and Dragons
JCC Mid-Westchester
999 Wilnot Road, Scarsdale
Sundays, Oct. 22, Nov. 19, Dec. 10, Jan. 7, and Feb. 11
Time: 3:30-5:30 p.m. For ages 9-13.
This month D&D campaign will explore creative Jewish worlds and characters and connect with other local games. No D&D experience is necessary. To register or to learn more, visit <https://jccmw.org/event/dnd/>.



Beth El Synagogue Center
1324 North Avenue, New Rochelle
November 18, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.
Westchester's Eighth Night of Learning Celebration
The Westchester Board of Rabbis and the Westchester Jewish Council are proud to offer this special community learning event which will take place at Beth El Synagogue Center. There will be over 20 different classes offered by 28 Westchester Rabbis with 2 sessions, at 7:30pm and 8:30pm. One hybrid live stream class per session will be available. The link for the hybrid live stream class will be emailed the week before the program. A list of classes available soon. The fee is \$20 if you register by November 3rd. After that date, the fee is \$25 and \$30 the day of event. A kosher dairy dessert reception will follow the event. Register here - <https://conta.cc/3OUZxPn>



Museum on Eldridge Street
12 Eldridge Street, New York, NY
On View Through November 19, 2023
A Collage of Customs, Iconic Jewish Woodcuts Revised for the Twenty-First Century
This exhibition featuring works by artist Mark Podwal offers inventive interpretations of woodcuts from the 16th-century Sefer Minhagim (Book of Customs), and combines light-hearted, imaginative whimsy with insightful commentary on Jewish customs and history. He not only injects a sense of playfulness into religious objects and practices, but also invites deeper contemplation and appreciation of their significance. For more information, visit www.eldridgestreet.org/events or call 212-219-0302.



Erev Chanukah
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