

Eighth Night of Jewish Learning Celebrated at Beth El Synagogue

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

On November 18, the Westchester Board of Rabbis and the Westchester Jewish Council presented their Eighth Night of Jewish Learning, led by 24 rabbis from all over Westchester County, at Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle. The evening began with Havdalah (end of the Shabbos Celebration), presented by the chair of the program, Rabbi Joshua Strom from Congregation B'nai Yisrael in Armonk and Beth El Synagogue Center Cantor Gaby Schwartz.

Two of the presentations given were by rabbis from Port Chester and Briarcliff. In his presentation, "Reform, Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, How Did We Get Here?"

Rabbi Ben Goldberg from Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel in Port Chester discussed



Rabbi Josh Strom, Congregation B'nai Yisrael and Chair, Night of Jewish Learning.

whether the Talmud and Bible are immutable documents of divine origin. Rabbi Goldberg asserted that Abraham Geiger, Zecharias Frankel, and Samson Raphael Hirsch argued, and Rabbi Danny Schiff concurs, that the Talmud and Bible are of human authorship and are, therefore, subject to interpretation and change.

In her presentation, "G-d's Many Names," Rabbi Dina Rosenberg from the Congregation Sons of Israel in Briarcliff discussed how Rabbinic Judaism considers [the] seven names of G-d, which include El, Eloah, Shaddai, Ehyeh, Tzevaot, and YHWH, "so holy that they should not be erased" and discussed how the names people have called G-d show how they have thought of and have related to Him at different

times and in different situations.

This much-anticipated event was organized by The Westchester Board of Rabbis and the Westchester Jewish Council and included over twenty different classes offered by twenty-eight Westchester rabbis. "We were thrilled to have rabbis from all over the County and from all different denominations offer learning sessions for our members and the larger Jewish community," Rabbi Josh Strom, Congregation B'nai Israel, Armonk and Chair, Night of Learning commented. "It is a biennial event and one that has some history and roots of success that we are privileged to build on every other year."



Rabbi Dina Rosenberg, Congregation Sons of Israel, Briarcliff.



Cantor Gaby Schwartz, Beth El Synagogue Center holding Havdalah Vessels.

Annual AJC Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast Held at Iona University

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

"Standing Together – Hate Will Not Divide Us," was the theme of the Annual AJC Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast, held at Iona University on November 16. The breakfast was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee Westchester/Fairfield (AJC); the Ecumenical and Interreligious Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of New York; Iona University; Manhattan College; the OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, and the Westchester Jewish Council. Westchester County Executive George Latimer was the Keynote Speaker.

Welcoming remarks were extended by Sheryl Sachs, Co-Chair, Interfaith and Intergroup Outreach and Community of Conscience, AJC Westchester/Fairfield, and Dr. Tricia Mulligan, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Iona University.

During Latimer's speech, he remarked, "Thirty years ago I saw Schindler's List, where Oskar Schindler had the strength to stand up and risk his life, saving 1,200 Jews from the Holocaust by employing them in his factory." Latimer

then wondered if we would have such strength and bravery to stand up for others if there was a



AJC Westchester-Fairfield President Wendy Lubkin; Debbie Friedman, Legislative Aide to Nancy Barr; AJC Member Richard Lubkin

moral necessity.

NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins stated, "We come together to reaffirm our love, humanity, and our integrity for a better today and a better tomorrow. That's what's happening here."

The Honorable Leticia James, Attorney General of New York appeared remotely, followed by a Call to Action by the AJC Westchester/Fairfield Regional Director Myra Clark-Siegel. Facilitated Table Discussions were introduced by Ellen Jancko-Baken, AJC Westchester/Fairfield Executive Committee Breakfast Co-Chair, after the Keynote Presentations.

Musical entertainment was provided by the Iona University Pipers and Iona University Singers, who sang "America the Beautiful" and "Stand By Me," and a prayer from the Quran was delivered by Dr. Mehnaz Afridi, Breakfast Co-Chair.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps were made by Nancy Fried-Tanzer, Co-Chair, Interfaith and Intergroup Outreach and Community of Conscience, AJC Westchester/Fairfield.

The AJC held its first Thanksgiving-themed Diversity Breakfast in 2002, responding to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Every year the number of participants has increased, and this year was the largest, with over 400 participants.



AJC Westchester-Fairfield Immediate Past President Mona Abramson; Pastor Martin Nelson, Bezer Holiness Church

Leading U.S. Jewish Organizations Launch ‘The 10/7 Project’

Following last month's historic March for Israel that brought nearly 300,000 people to the National Mall, the nation's most prominent American Jewish organizations have today joined forces to launch The 10/7 Project — a new centralized communications operation. The 10/7 Project is designed to promote continued U.S. bipartisan support for Israel by working to ensure more complete and accurate information about the Israel-Hamas war in real time for policymakers and the American public.

The 10/7 Project is led by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), ADL (the Anti-Defamation League), the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

A bipartisan effort, The 10/7 Project will fo-

cus on fact-based coverage of the Israel-Hamas war, aggressive rapid response, and a media campaign dedicated to reminding policymakers and the broader American public about the more than 100 hostages still held by Hamas terrorists; uplifting the stories of the innocent victims of October 7; setting the record straight about the conflict in Israel and Gaza; and combating misinformation spouted by Hamas terrorists and their anti-Israel allies.

“Since October 7, there has been a concerted and consistent effort from Israel's enemies to draw a false and dangerous equivalence between Hamas' deadly rampage to destroy the Jewish state and Israel's right to defend itself against terrorists,” said Ted Deutch, CEO, American Jewish Committee (AJC). “The 10/7 Project will be a trusted and timely source of accurate information

to set the record straight and combat false narratives perpetuated by Hamas terrorists and their anti-Israel allies. They are responsible for slaughtering some 1,200 innocent Israeli civilians. This is no time for equivocation.”

“At this critical juncture, it is imperative that we separate fact from fiction regarding America's most important Middle East ally and remind people that the vast majority of Americans understand that Hamas is our common enemy,” said Eric Fingerhut, President & CEO, the Jewish Federations of North America. “Through aggressive rapid response and a comprehensive media campaign, The 10/7 Project will work tirelessly to combat misinformation and inaccurate reporting about the Israel-Hamas conflict and continue shining a light on the victims and hostages of October 7. We must ensure that murderous Hamas terrorists are not covered in a way that morally equates them with the sovereign, democratic state of Israel and its people, and that the loudest, most uninformed voices are not permitted to drown out the facts.”

“In the wake of Hamas's deadly terrorist attack on Israel, there has been an onslaught of misinformation and conspiracy theories about the conflict and Israel circulating on social media and, in some cases, elevated by mainstream press outlets,” said Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of ADL. “Tragically, we have even seen alarming incidents of antisemitic violence and hate stemming from inaccurate coverage of the conflict. And while it's understandable that Americans are clearly interested in what's happening in the Middle East, The 10/7 Project will make sure they're receiving verifiable, truthful, and balanced information,

especially at a time when some platforms have regrettably cut back on their trust and safety teams.”

“The 10/7 Project will help ensure that America's leaders are educated and informed about Hamas's despicable assault on the people of Israel and the Western values that America and Israel champion together,” said Howard Kohr, CEO, AIPAC. “The United States must continue to stand with our democratic ally as it works to protect its families and secure its future.”

“As leaders of American Jewry, we cannot be silent in the face of deadly violence from the Hamas Terrorist Army targeting the people of Israel,” said William Daroff, CEO, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. “We must ensure

that America and the entire world are told and retold the stories of the butchery of the October 7 massacre. We must discredit and make outcasts of 10/7 deniers, who are Hamas sympathizers seeking to perpetuate false and misleading narratives by minimizing and rationalizing the most deadly day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. And we must work together, as one Jewish community, to successfully communicate to the American people the critical need to stand with Israel, as well as the importance of the US-Israel relationship to America and to Israel.”

The 10/7 Project has also launched a daily newsletter, The 10/7 Project Daybook, for journalists and other interested parties and a new website. Members of the media interested in connecting with The 10/7 Project or talking with a spokesperson should email tensevenproject@skdknicks.com.

The 10/7 Project will not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office.



Ted Deutch

Alpha Epsilon Pi International Alumni Raise Funds to Buy Menorahs and Gifts for Children Living on Israeli Kibbutzim

A group of Alpha Epsilon Pi alumni from around North America have launched an effort to provide Hannukah menorahs, candles and gifts for children living on Israeli kibbutzim. Working with AEPi alumni and AEPi undergraduate students in Israel, the group is raising money through the Alpha Epsilon Pi Foundation to purchase the Hannukah gifts and have the Israeli Brothers deliver them. Alpha Epsilon Pi is the world's largest and leading Jewish college fraternity.

Loren Nelson (UC - Santa Barbara, 2001) and Brett Blumstein (UC - Irvine, 2000), co-owners of the Hannukah Superstore and founder of the AEPi Business Networking Group, conceived of the idea (Goods purchased through the campaign will not be purchased from the Hannukah Superstore. All monies raised will be spent to provide for Israeli children). AEPi student members in Israel volunteered to deliver the menorahs and gifts and the idea has taken off.

“When I was a kid, my house burned down in an arsonist-set fire and I remember what it was like to have nothing except the clothes on my back,” said Nelson. “That's why this is so important to me. None of us can imagine the horrors that some of these children are experiencing or have witnessed.”

“I know that Hannukah in Israel is a little different than here and that there is less emphasis on gift giving but I loved the idea to bring a little light to these children during this difficult time.”

Tax deductible donations to the campaign can be made through the Alpha Epsilon Pi Foundation at this link: <https://bit.ly/LightsFortheKids>.



AJC Westchester/Fairfield

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO JOINED AND SUPPORTED

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New Report Reveals Disturbing Double Standard in University Responses to Oct. 7 and Antisemitism

A new report comparing statements issued by universities after Oct. 7 with statements issued by those same schools after George Floyd's murder in 2020 and the spike in Asian American attacks in 2021 reveals an alarming double standard. An AMCHA Initiative scientific analysis, released today, exposes that not only do the vast majority of school leaders fail to adequately address Jewish students' trauma and fear for safety and security, but they also employ a clear discriminatory double standard, showing far less responsiveness to Jewish students than to their African American and Asian peers.

"The harrowing October 7th massacre by Hamas generated intense shock, horror and trauma that reverberated throughout the global Jewish community. For Jewish students, this devastating event triggered a dual crisis: Coping with the immediate shock and trauma of the deadliest attack on Jews in their lifetime, and confronting fears of a surge in antisemitism on their own campuses – fears that have become a frightening reality as antisemitic incidents on campus, already at an all-time high, spiked 700% since the Hamas attacks," stated Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, AMCHA director and one of the report's lead researchers. "Our study revealed disturbing results: School officials responded to Oct. 7 with a blatantly discriminatory double stan-



Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

dard in comparison to their responses in the aftermath of similarly traumatizing events."

AMCHA Initiative's latest study, "Selective Sympathy: The Double Standard in Confronting Jewish Student Trauma and Antisemitism after the October 7th Massacre," critically examines the statements issued by nearly 100 college and university leaders following the Hamas attack. These statements were then compared to statements issued by leaders at the same schools in the wake

of traumatic events affecting Black students (the George Floyd murder in 2020) and Asian/Asian American students (the murders of six Asian women in Atlanta in 2021).

The first step in responding to trauma and ensuring security moving forward is acknowledging and accurately characterizing its source, noted the researchers. Considering the brutality and scale of the Hamas attack – unprecedented in the lifetime of every Jewish college student – an adequate statement of response should at least include an unequivocal condemnation of the attack and an acknowledgment of its perpetrator (Hamas) and terrorist nature, argued the researchers. In addition, they added, given the genocidal antisemitism at the heart of Hamas' founding charter, which includes a call for the murder of Jews worldwide, a statement clearly identifying the antisemitic motivation of the attack and an acknowledgment and commitment to increased support and security for Jewish students is essential.

Key findings in the report, however, indicate failed leadership and a double standard:

- While nearly 100% of statements unequivocally condemned the traumatizing incidents affecting Blacks and Asians/Asian Americans, only 65% of the post-October 7th statements condemned the attack, and 60%

of those statements accused Israel of perpetrating violence that harmed Palestinians or violated their civil rights. According to the researchers, this suggested moral equivalence likely diluted the sympathy and support felt by Jewish students.

- While 90% to 100% of leaders' statements acknowledged the emotional trauma suffered by their Black and Asian/Asian American communities following attacks targeting members of those communities, only 14% acknowledged the trauma of Jewish campus members, and only 5% offered support or resources.

- While 100% of statements named racism and anti-Asian hate as the motivator of their respective incidents, and more than 90% committed to addressing bigotry directed against Blacks and Asians/Asian Americans, only 4% of statements identified the antisemitic motivation of the Hamas attack (despite Hamas' public expressions of genocidal intent) and a mere 2% committed to addressing antisemitism.

According to the researchers, the double standard revealed in these statements is just the tip of the iceberg, indicating a pattern of discriminatory double standards when it comes to addressing antisemitism and protecting Jewish students. This is both

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Rob Mathes Honors Rabbi Mark Golub and Celebrates 30 Years of Holiday Concerts

The Rob Mathes Holiday Concert, a holiday tradition for so many, is celebrating an amazing 30 years of performing its annual holiday extravaganza this year with three concerts at The Performing Arts Center at Purchase College. Concerts are Friday, December 15, and Saturday, December 16, at 8:00 p.m., and a special matinee performance on Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are available at artscenter.org, and VIP seating in the first two rows of the orchestra are available through the concert's nonprofit beneficiary, Food Rescue US - Fairfield County at bit.ly/3PTsUSF or foodrescue.us/site/food-rescue-us-fairfield-county/.

Rob Mathes is an Emmy award-winning and Grammy-nominated musician who is a Greenwich, Connecticut resident. Rob is typically the genius behind the curtain, producing albums, orchestrating, and being a sought-after music director. However, his annual holiday concert, a cherished holiday tradition in the New York City/Connecticut area for 30 years, is when he shines on center stage, much to the joy of his ardent fans.

This year's concert holds a special place in Rob's heart. They are dedicated to Rabbi Mark Golub, a long-time supporter and cherished fan of the concerts who sadly passed away this year from cancer. Rabbi Golub's passion and enthusiasm for the concerts have left an indelible mark with his friendship and guidance to Rob over the years, and also inspired several Hanukkah-themed songs performed at the annual Holiday Concert that have become audience favorites.

"Rabbi Mark Golub was one of my musical muses when it came to including a bit of the Jewish faith into what started out as a fairly traditional Christmas Concert — and he was one of the reasons why we called it a Holiday Concert," said Rob Mathes. "Rabbi Mark Golub attended every year, and encouraged us to play long into the night. I sat down with him on numerous occasions and those conversations were the inspiration for some of my strongest songs of recent years. The Hanukkah songs I wrote in tribute to him include Light in the



Window and Too Many Stars, which we'll perform this year."

"This year's concerts will be extra special," noted Rob Mathes, who has had a busy year beginning in January with Sting and The Pittsburgh Symphony, then arranging strings for Bruce Springsteen, and a performance with Elvis Costello at the Gramercy. He is just finishing a year-long project, producing Melissa Errico's sequel to her critically acclaimed *Sondheim Sublime* record (picked by the New York Times as one of the 10 records to listen to in the wake of Sondheim's passing). Called *Sondheim in the City*, it features some of New York's finest musicians and will be out in early 2024. Rob is also gearing up to musically direct the 2024 MusiCares Person of the Year, the benefit gala held in Los Angeles GRAMMY week, this year honoring Jon Bon Jovi.

Rob Mathes and his Holiday Concerts are renowned for their unique take on holiday classics. The performances promise a blend of Rob's introspective singer-songwriter pop, with strong jazz and blues overtones, featuring original Rob Mathes holiday songs and classics with a signature Mathes twist. Joining Rob on stage is his all-star band, which includes Will Lee on bass, Billy Masters on guitar, Gunnar Olson on drums, Rick

Knutsen on keyboard, and the incredible horn section with Jeff Kievit, Tony Kadleck, Andy Snitzer, Aaron Heick, Mike Davis, and Jeff Nelson. R&B singers James "D Train" Williams and Vaneese Thomas are also fan favorites at the concerts, and of course, there is the Choir of Saints & Friends, that bring the spirit of the holiday season to many of the songs.

"It's hard to believe I've been putting on my Holiday Concerts for 30 years," exclaimed Rob Mathes. "We started this at a church on a hill in Greenwich

in 1993 and it has grown to become a holiday tradition for so many, and for that, I am eternally grateful."

Rob Mathes added, "The Performing Arts Center has become my 'home away from home' and I love coming back and taking the stage there."

In the spirit of giving, the Rob Mathes Holiday Concerts will once again, for the fourth year, support Food Rescue US - Fairfield County, a nonprofit organization that fights hunger and helps the planet.

To purchase tickets for the Rob Mathes Holiday Concert, visit artscenter.org. To learn more about Rob Mathes, visit robmathes.com, Facebook, and Twitter (X) @RobMathesMusic and Instagram @robmathes.music and youtube.com/user/RobMathesMusic.

Littman Krooks, LLP Partner Sworn in as President to the BOD of the Special Needs Alliance

Littman Krooks, LLP Partner Amy C. O'Hara, Esq., CELA®, was sworn in as President to the Board of Directors of the Special Needs Alliance, a national invitation-only organization comprised of attorneys dedicated to the practice of special needs planning, disability, and public benefits law on October 21. SNA membership is based on a combination of relevant legal experience in the disability and elder law fields, direct family experience with disability, active participation with national, state, and local disability advocacy organizations, and professional reputation.

O'Hara's practice is focused on the areas of special needs planning, estate and trust planning and administration, elder law, guardianship, and personal injury settlement consulting. She lectures frequently to professional and advocacy organizations and families on the importance of proper planning for families with special needs members, elder law, and trusts and estates.

She is recognized as a Certified Elder Law Attorney® (CELA) by the National Elder Law Foundation (NELF), the only organization approved by the American Bar Association to offer certification in the practice area of elder law.

Littman Krooks is the only law firm in Westchester County with three CELA® accredited attorneys.

O'Hara is a member of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), Elder Law and Special Needs Section, where she serves as vice co-chair of the Special Needs Planning Committee; a member of the NYSBA Trusts & Estates Section, a member of the American Bar Association, Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section, where she services as vice chair of the Special Needs Planning Committee; and a member of the Westchester County Bar Association. She also is President of the Board of Directors of Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that aims to improve the quality of life, independence, and the rights of all people with disabilities.

Amy C. O'Hara, Esq. of Littman Krooks is recognized as a Certified Elder Law Attorney® (CELA) by the National Elder Law Foundation (NELF), the only organization approved by the American Bar Association to offer certification in the practice area of elder law. To learn more about her, visit www.littmankrooks.com/attorneys/amy-c-ohara/.



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Westchester County Elected Officials Conclude Successful Solidarity Mission to Israel Organized by the Westchester Jewish Council

The Westchester Jewish Council (WJC) today announced the successful conclusion of the organization's mission to Israel for Westchester County elected officials to demonstrate Westchester County's strong and bipartisan support for the State of Israel in its right against terrorism. Led by Honorary Mission Chairperson, Westchester County Executive George Latimer, mission participants toured Kfar Aza to see the carnage from Hamas' acts of barbarism firsthand, met with the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, and spent time at Hadassah Hospital to offer comfort to the injured, among other meetings and site visits.

"The Westchester Jewish Council was created in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War in order to make sure the Westchester Jewish community was united with a central communicating and convening address. Now, more than ever, we are fulfilling our role and could not be prouder of this

Calendar of Events

**Menorah Lighting
Chabad**
101 Mamaroneck Avenue, Mamaroneck
December 13 at 5:00 p.m.

Featuring a giant menorah, latkes and donuts, and a gelt drop. Event is free of charge. Sign up to receive a free Beanie at chabad101.com/Mamaroneck. Visit Chabad101.com/chanukah



shabbat-tots-hanukkah/

AFYA Service Project
JCC Mid-Westchester
December 25, 10:00 a.m. -12:00 noon
All ages are invited to volunteer at our AFYA medical-supply sorting/packing event. Make a difference in the world! Teens will receive two hours of community service. The AFYA Foundation connects those who have medical supplies with those who need them, delivering hope and healing around the world. Visit <https://jccmw.org/event/service-project/> for details.



Chanukah On Fifth
Monday, December 11, 5:15-6:30pm
Join for a Glow in the Dark Chanukah spectacular!
At the Pelham Town House: 20 Fifth Ave Pelham
5:15PM: Chanukah Activities + latkes & donuts!
6PM: Performance by Neon Circus followed by the Grand Menorah lighting! Visit chabadpelham.com for more information.

Chanukah Menorah Lighting
Chabad of White Plains
Tibbets Park, White Plains
Monday, December 11, 5:30 p.m.
Grand menorah lighting, fire juggling show, Chanukah donuts, design your own donut, prizes, souvenirs and warm apple cider. Free event.

Solidarity Mission—in which our elected officials are demonstrating by their actions that Westchester stands with Israel." William H. Schrag, Council President

"For me this is a sobering trip. The land of many faiths - mine and others - always compels. But hearing and understanding the psyche of the region is more important. And we've heard compelling voices from every day people." Hon. George Latimer, Westchester County Executive

"Today we witnessed the devastation of the Hamas attacks of October 7 and visited injured soldiers at Hadassah Hospital. There is real pain in Israel. On a positive note, there is tremendous unity and commitment to stand and defend this beautiful country." Hon. Justin Brasch, President White Plains Common Council

"Words cannot fully capture the profound impact of this solidarity trip. Witnessing the after-

math of the Hamas attacks and visiting the wounded soldiers at Hadassah Hospital, I've been deeply moved by the resilience and spirit of the people of Israel. My experiences pale in comparison to those who have endured these attacks. Like the phoenix rising from the ashes, they will rebuild with unwavering strength, embodying a remarkable resilience that I deeply admire and respect." Hon. Margaret Cunzio, Westchester County Legislator.

"The Westchester Jewish Council created this mission to bring our local elected officials to Israel to meet and support hostage families, to console the victims of terror and to meet with Israeli leaders. Such missions deepen the understanding and relationship with Israel, our lone democratic ally in the Middle East." Elliot Forchheimer, CEO Westchester Jewish Council.

Members of the delegation from Westchester also spent time visiting the headquarters for hostages and missing persons and met with Israeli Opposition Leader, the Hon. Yair Lapid.

The delegation of elected officials from Westchester County joining WJC on the trip include (in alphabetical order): Hon. Justin Brasch, President, White Plains Common Council; Rabbi Men-

achem Creditor, Community Leader and Rabbi in Residence, UJA; Hon. Margaret Cunzio, Westchester County Legislator; Hon. Vedat Gashi, Chairman of the Board, Westchester County Board of Legislators; Hon. Ellen Hendrickx, Town Councilwoman, Town of Greenburgh; Hon. George Latimer, County Executive, Westchester County; Hon. Amy Paulin, Assembly Member, NYS Assembly; Hon. Yadira Ramos-Herbert, Council Member, New Rochelle City Council, Mayor-Elect City of New Rochelle; William H. Schrag, President, Westchester Jewish Council; Tali Strom, Senior Community Mobilizer, UJA; and Hon. Tyrae Woodson-Samuels, County Legislator, Majority Whip, Westchester County Board of Legislators.



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Democrat George Latimer Launches Campaign for Congress in NY 16

Westchester's Democratic County Executive George Latimer today formally launched his campaign for Congress in New York's 16th District. Latimer is no stranger to winning tough races, having won his current position by defeating MAGA Republican Rob Astorino, and winning tough contests throughout his over thirty-year career in public service from local offices to the state legislature. The district includes a large segment of Westchester as well as a smaller portion of the Bronx, although lines may change due to court-ordered redistricting in the coming months.

Latimer launched his campaign with a video titled "Real Progressive Results. Not Political Rhetoric" which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbKH-Q3b2cs>, in which he discusses his long history in the district and the work he has done to make lives better for the residents of Westchester and the Bronx. Throughout the campaign Latimer will be contrasting his record of solid progressive achievements on civil rights, the environment, abortion rights, gun violence prevention, infrastructure, LGBTQ+ rights, fiscal responsibility, housing, supporting Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism, and other issues, versus the incumbent's divisive and distracting approach to holding office.

"Our country is facing an existential crisis and our very democracy is at risk right now," said Latimer. "We need our voice in Congress to be someone who brings people together and delivers results on the issues that matter. We need someone who will listen to all voices, not just those who agree with him, and take those concerns seriously. We need someone more interested in progressive results than show-boating on social media. Those who know me know that I am and have always been that kind of elected official, and I look forward to talking to the voters about how we can all do better with new leadership in our Congressional district."

George Latimer is a lifelong Westchester resident who built his career in public service by delivering unparalleled progressive results for local residents. George's track record in making Westchester the most progressive County government in the state includes successfully cutting regressive taxes, fighting for civil rights and racial equality, defending a woman's right to choose, standing up to the NRA to keep guns off our streets, voting for marriage equality, and smartly investing a Green New Deal-style infrastructure projects across the County.



George Latimer

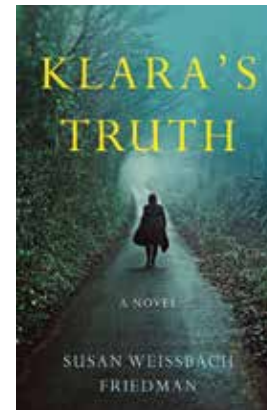
Westchester Author to Release Klara's Truth

When Klara Lieberman goes to Warsaw in search of answers about her long-ago-disappeared father, she ultimately discovers forgotten parts of herself as well and heals some deeply buried wounds.

Klara is forty-nine, single, and a professor of archaeology at a small liberal arts college in Maine; a contained person living a contained life. Then she receives a letter from her estranged mother, Bessie, informing her that her father, who has been absent from her life for the last forty-three years, is dead. Has been for many years, in fact, which Bessie clearly knew. But now the Polish government is giving financial reparations for land it stole from its Jewish citizens during WWII, and Bessie wants the money. Klara has little interest in the money, but she does want answers about her father. In Poland, Klara connects with extended family, begins a romantic relationship, and discovers her calling: repairing the hundreds of forgotten, and mostly destroyed, pre-war Jewish cemeteries in Poland. Along the way, she becomes a more integrated, embodied, and interpersonally connected individual with the tools to make peace with her past and, for the first time in her life, build purposefully toward a bigger future.



Susan Weissbach Friedman



Author and Westchester County resident, Susan Weissbach Friedman is a psychotherapist with a specialty in women's issues, family therapy, and trauma-focused therapy. A graduate of Hamilton College, Boston University's MSW/MPH program, and the Ackerman Institute for Couples and Families, she has also completed EMDR and Somatic Experiencing (SE) training in trauma therapy techniques and has been in a practicing clinician for more than twenty-five years. *Klara's Truth* is her first novel. Susan has been married to her husband for thirty years and has two daughters in their twenties. Originally from Long Island, she now lives in Westchester County, where she enjoys practicing yoga and mindfulness, going for walks in nature, listening to music, and spending time near the ocean.

"In her beautifully written and riveting debut novel, Friedman propelled me on a journey to post-WWII Poland where the ghosts of a once vibrant Jewish community haunted me. With great sensitivity, Friedman uses her experience as a social worker and therapist to show how a rejecting mother and hidden childhood sexual trauma froze Klara's heart and left her fearful of close relationships. I rejoiced as Klara gradually finds purpose and love in this engrossing family saga that I could not put down." —Florence Reiss Kraut, author of *Street Corner Dreams* and *How to Make a Life*.

"In *Klara's Truth*, themes of identity—personal, cultural, religious, and familial—are interwoven with echoes of intergenerational trauma. Klara finds her past . . . and herself. Thoroughly enjoyable from beginning to end!" —Stephanie Newman, PhD, clinical psychologist, adjunct professor of psychology at Columbia University, and author of *Barbarians at the PTA*, *Madmen on the Couch*, and *Money Talks*.

Klara's Truth by Susan Weissbach Friedman (April 2, She Writes Press, shewritespress.com)

The Value of Writing an Ethical Will

BY HEIDI R. WEISS LMSW, MHA, COORDINATOR OF THE WJCS ADDRESSING ALZHEIMER'S PROGRAM

Ethical wills are traditionally associated with a person's final days—expressing to your loved ones the values and life lessons you want to pass down to them. In contrast to typical wills, there is no money or property addressed but rather the wisdom and guidance you'd like to share with those you leave behind.

Over time, there has been a revival of sorts, and writing such a document is often viewed as a means of reflecting back on one's life, what you have stood for, and what you have valued through the years. In this more modern context, even how one chooses to express oneself in an ethical will has become less formalized. Your ethical will can include humor, anecdotes, hopes, and dreams. It can be recorded on video, so that not only your thoughts and values live on, but so do your voice and face. Some people express themselves through prose, and others through poetry. The point is to find what is most comfortable for you and go with it.

One of the important purposes of creat-

ing such a document is to, of course, share your blessings, values, spiritual experiences, ideas, beliefs, and more. The goal is to express what feelings you'd like to pass down and also to find what is accessible and helpful for you. That is because it is also hoped that YOU, the writer, will learn something about yourself as well during the process.

Some may ask, why should I write an ethical will? There are any number of reasons to do this. It may be to affirm the past and provide hope for the future. It may open a door to forgiving, or being forgiven, which can heal relationships. For some, it may be a spiritual experience, a legacy experience, and a cherished opportunity to let others know how much you love them and what they mean to you.

It may be useful to have some suggestions on first sentences or topics to get you started. You may want to read a few ethical wills to see how people have used this essential communication tool to share with family. To get you started, I offer you these suggested topics:

- These are the people who influenced me in my life.

- This is how I feel as I look back on my life.
- These are mistakes I have made that I hope you will not repeat.
- I would like to ask your forgiveness for...
- I forgive you for...

Some ways to personalize your ethical will: using special words to evoke memories (like Seder and kiddush), including family expressions, maybe in a foreign language, that 'speak' to your family, and sharing anecdotes to illustrate a point or experience.

An ethical will need not be finished in one sitting. It may take a number of times to sit with yourself and your thoughts to decide upon and fulfill what it is you want to share with your loved ones. When you are done writing, however, place your ethical will with all of your important documents so that you know it will be read by your family.

The Jewish Programs division of Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) offers a wide array of spiritual and cultural programming. To learn more, go to www.wjcs.com.

The next deadline for the January issue of WJL is December 18.



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Hadassah Welcomes Second Class of Evolve Leadership Fellows

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, is proud to announce the second class of Evolve Leadership Fellows, a two-year program launched in 2022. The goal of the fellowship is to identify young women who are dedicated to Hadassah's mission – to ensure Israel's security, combat antisemitism and advocate for women's health care – and have the skills needed to lead the organization into the future. To be selected for the program, each fellow has gone through an extensive application and interview process.

"We are thrilled by the success of the first class of Hadassah Evolve Leadership Fellows and delighted to welcome the second," said Hadassah national president Rhoda Smolow. "Especially during this time of crisis for Israel, we look forward to the positive impact our new fellows will have on Hadassah's future as we work toward tikkun olam, the repair of the world."

The new fellows are women in their 20s, 30s and 40s from around the country who work in a diverse range of professions, including fashion, civil litigation, elder care, engineering, marketing, risk management and Jewish communal life.

Said new Evolve fellow Sarah Popper, "As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, I feel passionately about advancing the critical causes Hadassah stands for. I hope the new skills I will learn through the fellowship will enable me to make a positive impact as a Hadassah leader in the future."

During their first year, the new fellows will meet with Hadassah's national leaders and experience Hadassah's programs and initiatives firsthand. The fellows will also participate in a series of leadership development workshops led by Hadassah's senior management team that will focus on how to inspire others to help advance Hadassah's mission.

The fellows are currently slated to travel to Israel in February. There, they will visit the Hadassah Medical Organization, the Israeli hospital system founded and owned by Hadassah, and hear from physicians working in various specialties. The group will also spend time with the residents of Hadassah's two youth villages, Hadassah Neurim and Meir Shfeyah. The campus-like communities, which provide a home, education and a wide range of support services to at-risk youth in Israel, have embraced Israeli families forced to flee their homes because of the war as well as teenage refugees from Ukraine.

In the second year of the Evolve Leadership Fellows program, each participant will commit to taking on a leadership position or special project in her Hadassah chapter. Members of the previous class of Evolve fellows have met with local legislators to advance Hadassah's public policy priorities, created social media campaigns to encourage younger women to get involved with Hadassah, and helped to produce chapter events. Other members of the previous class have spoken at Hadassah chapter and region board meetings and represented their chapters at community events, and three have joined Hadassah's speakers bureau.



Rhoda Smolow

Hanukkah: Shine the Light Brightly



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

In several discussions I've had recently, I've heard variations of the following:

I'm not putting my menorah (or Hannukiah) in the window this year.

I don't feel safe going to public Hanukkah celebrations.

I want to put an "I stand with Israel" sign in my front yard, but I'm scared.

Each time I hear this, it breaks my heart. But it also strengthens my resolve to stand strong as a Jew and Zionist, as we all must.

On the one hand, these reactions are understandable. As we celebrate the miracle of

Hanukkah, Jews across the United States and around the world are facing significantly higher incidents of antisemitism, in some cases, an over 400% increase.

Since Hamas' depraved terrorist attack against Israel on October 7, it seems the world has turned upside down.

The American Jewish community is reeling not just from the shock of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack but also from the explosion in domestic Jew hatred it has provoked. Antisemitic vandalism, harassment, intimidation, and violence, including an incident where Queens high school students rioted over a teacher attending a pro-Israel rally, have skyrocketed across the country. Personal relationships have been shattered by the realization that some friends support Hamas.

Let's be very clear: antisemitism, or Jew-hatred, is a tangible threat to Jews and the very fabric of democratic societies. It is not up to the Jewish community to address it alone – it is an issue for all of society.

And of course, as we have all seen in the news, antisemitism is not limited to the United States. While Americans have seen rising antisemitism in recent years, this level is uncharted

New Report Reveals Disturbing Double Standard in University Responses to Oct. 7 and Antisemitism

continued from page 3

particularly alarming and it explains the unprecedented levels of antisemitism erupting on college campuses, noted the researchers.

"Make no mistake, this is so much bigger than the post-Oct. 7 statements. Those statements are just a symptom of a much larger and deep-seated problem," stated Rossman-Benjamin. "School leaders who respond appropriately to group trauma affecting Black and Asian students, but who are unwilling to do the same for Jewish students - despite the legitimacy of their fears and anxieties and the current threats to their safety - cannot be trusted to keep Jewish students safe."

Based on a previous study conducted by AMCHA Initiative, the researchers believe the discriminatory double standard is rooted in school harassment policies that obligate administrators to respond promptly and vigorously to abusive behavior directed at "protected" identity groups, but allow administrators to ignore equally abusive behavior directed at students who do not fit into "protected" identity categories, or which is not believed to be motivated by animus toward a "protected" group. This is often the case for Jewish students targeted by anti-Zionist motivated harassment, who are frequently deemed ineligible for coverage under school policy since many administrators do not consider support for Israel an expression of a Jewish student's religious or ethnic identity.

"The problem is not that Jewish students don't fit into the 'protected' categories of their school's harassment policy," the researchers contend, "but rather, that they must fit into any category at all before getting the robust protection that all students

deserve, and that is an essential moral and fiduciary duty of every college and university – public or private – to provide."

The report acknowledges that while some schools, including Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania, have announced new plans to address rising antisemitism, these plans are unlikely to succeed unless schools can first acknowledge the egregiously unfair double standards they apply to Jewish students.

"Unless schools dismantle the discriminatory double standard at the heart of their current policies and establish new policies guaranteeing equal protection to all students, they are unlikely to halt the antisemitism that is spiraling out of control on their campuses," warned the researchers.

AMCHA Initiative is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to combating antisemitism at colleges and universities in the United States. The organization monitors more than 600 campuses for antisemitic activity, as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the U.S. government. AMCHA is not a pro-Israel advocacy organization, nor does it take a position on current or past Israeli government policies; criticism of Israel that does not meet the IHRA and U.S. government criteria is not considered antisemitic by the organization. AMCHA has recorded more than 6,000 antisemitic incidents on college campuses since 2015 which can be accessed through its Antisemitism Tracker.

<https://amchainitiative.org/report-double-standards-12-5-23pr/>

territory. For Europeans, it is heartbreakingly familiar.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen antisemitism increasingly become part of mainstream discourse, becoming ever more violent, and it must not become normalized. According to AJC's *State of Antisemitism in America* 2022 report, 43% of American Jews believe that antisemitism is a serious problem in the United States. However, antisemitism on our campuses and in the workplace has rarely been addressed. Many DEI trainers and officers do not know how to talk about Jew hatred, with many making comments that downplay or ignore Jewish hate.

College presidents should immediately and without equivocation, adopt the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) Working Definition of Antisemitism and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness) officers at K-12 schools, on college campuses, in the corporate world, and in government should work diligently to ensure that the Jewish community is invited to participate in DEI efforts.

Our campuses and workplaces should adopt the **IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism** as a clear framework for understanding the many manifestations of antisemitism, including debates about Israel's right to exist and Zionism. Only by identifying antisemitism in its most potent forms can our leaders in education, in the

workplace, and in government effectively combat it.

We must continue to stand up against hatred against Jews and Israel and AJC has resources available for you to use for your schools, university administrators, workplaces, and with government officials: ajc.org/IsraelHamasWar.

But here is the bottom line: we are Jewish, Zionist, and proud.

Put your Hanukiah in the window. Proudly display your "I stand with Israel" sign and t-shirts. Wear your Magen David. Wear your kippah. The story of Hanukkah is precisely the story we should be telling now. The enemies of the Jews tried for millennia to cower us, to use fear and depravity. This is nothing less than good versus evil and Israel and the Jewish people are on the side of right. Make no mistake, we mourn all innocent civilians. But Hamas is to blame for that.

On this Hanukkah, when we deeply mourn the over 1200 Israelis and foreign nationals killed by Hamas, and when so many of our brothers and sisters are still held in captivity by Hamas, we stand tall for and with Israel and the Jewish community around the world. It's the least we can do.

Am Yisrael Chai.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. Please join us at: westchester@ajc.org.

Do You Really Want to Be Trustee of Someone Else's Special Needs Trust?



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

As you likely know, we help many families plan for a family member with special needs. Special needs planning involves so much more than drafting documents. In order for any estate plan, but especially a special needs estate plan, to work, the trustee must act appropriately and carry out the wishes of the creator of the trust. Without a proper trustee, the estate plan is doomed to fail right from the beginning. It's been more than a decade since a very important New York case was decided regarding fiduciary duty and the importance of selecting the right trustee. We thought it would be a good time to review the lessons learned from this case.

By way of background, Sam was a severely disabled 16-year-old when his mother died. Prior to her passing, Sam's mother moved him into a residential school and prepared a trust for him. The trust would be funded with approximately

\$5 million when she died. The trust provided that distributions should be made for Sam's care, comfort, support, and maintenance.

The trustees were a very large NYC bank and the mother's attorney, who drafted the document and held himself out as an expert in planning for individuals with special needs. Unfortunately, despite his multi-million-dollar trust, Sam was largely forgotten about once his mother died. The trustees of Sam's trust made no distributions for Sam's benefit. No one visited Sam for five years and he continued to live at the residential school, paid for by his government benefits alone. Unfortunately, Sam's quality of life was not as good as it could have been.

At some point, the co-trustees were directed to account for their actions (or lack thereof) and a certified care manager was hired to attend to Sam's needs. Once the care manager was able to get Sam the proper tools and support system he needed (paid for by the trust), Sam's quality of life and functional capacity improved significantly. However, this case raises important questions about the obligations of fiduciaries, including institutional trustees, to beneficiaries with disabilities.

The bottom line: it is not enough to take good care of the money. The beneficiary's well-being is important, and a fiduciary must be (or get) familiar with the beneficiary's needs or there can be a breach of duty. As this case shows, a failure to spend the trust money to improve the quality of life of the special needs beneficiary can be a

breach of fiduciary duty. Thus, you should select your fiduciary carefully.

As co-trustees of Sam's trust, both the NYC bank and the attorney were serving as Sam's fiduciaries. Sam's trust gave his trustees absolute discretion to spend trust funds for the care, comfort, support, and maintenance of Sam. By failing to use the funds in Sam's trust for those purposes outlined in the trust, the trustees breached their fiduciary duties to Sam. Instead of working to improve Sam's quality of life, the trustees focused on managing the funds. The bank trustee proudly noted that they had grown the trust over the years. The attorney trustee pointed out that Mark's basic needs were provided. Meanwhile, both the bank and attorney collected generous fees. No one focused on visits to Sam, hiring caregivers or care managers, or otherwise trying to find good uses of the funds for Sam's benefit.

Sam's mother took great care in planning for her son. She found a place for him to live, found people to take care of him, and set up a trust for him. However, the plan was failing because the trustees were not doing their jobs. It can be hard to tell who a good fit is to be your trustee. What is important is picking someone responsible. You need to be able to trust them to carry out your wishes. This is especially important when planning for a person with special needs who may not be able to advocate for themselves.

A close friend or family member could be a good choice for your fiduciary. They likely care

about the person who needs services and may be more attuned to their needs. The downside is that they may not be familiar with fiduciary work. Your family and friends likely don't know all of the rules surrounding being a trustee. It's also a lot of work to serve as a fiduciary, and not everyone wants to do it. In fact, in Sam's case, his mother originally appointed her sister to serve as trustee and she declined or was unable.

You also can hire a professional to be your fiduciary. Institutions that offer fiduciary services are familiar with the rules and record-keeping required to be a good trustee. Institutions serving as trustees are also generally better at preventing emotional attachments from getting in the way of good decision-making.

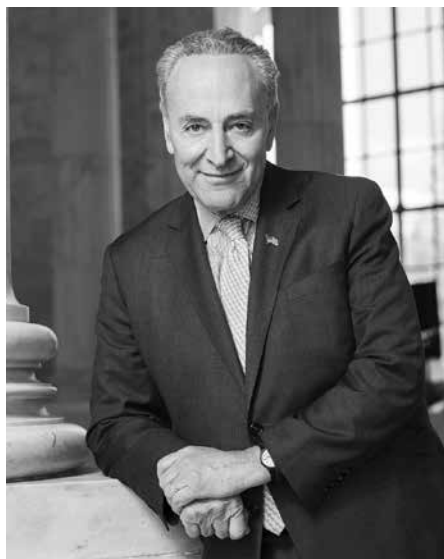
Regardless of who you choose, make sure that you trust them, that they are good at record keeping, that they are responsible, and that they, hopefully, won't forget about your beneficiaries.

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

Schumer Led Bipartisan Delegation and Personally Met with China's President Xi Last Month to Demand Immediate Action to Stop Fentanyl Coming to America

Following his personal meeting in China with President Xi Jinping last month, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer detailed how the new deal President Biden has struck with China to crack down on the scourge of fentanyl could be a major step forward to curb the opioid crisis in New York, but said now more than ever it is imperative to hold China accountable and ensure there is compliance with their commitments.

"The agreement President Biden has announced with China is a long overdue step which has the potential to help cut off the supply of fentanyl at its source and stop this drug before it ever enters our country and hits the streets of the Bronx, but now it is more vital than ever to hold China accountable for the commitments they have made," said Senator Schumer. "Fentanyl has wreaked havoc in New York and across America, with this crisis stemming in large part in China, where large chemical companies openly and illicitly sell precursor chemicals to buyers in places like Mexico, where it is manufactured and illegally shipped to our most vulnerable communities here in NY. During my visit to China last month we were pointed and direct with President Xi, I told him about the devastating impact I have seen the opioid crisis has on New York families. I am pleased to see China take what could be a major step forward to cut off the flow of fentanyl and I am going to be watching like a hawk for progress."



U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer

Specifically, Schumer explained China has said it will take new action to enforce its own regulations against the companies that make precursor drugs in a major step to potentially cut off the flow of this deadly drug. A similar notice to the industry in 2019 led to a drastic reduction in seizures of fentanyl shipments to the United States from China. Schumer said the U.S. also has information that that PRC police have taken law

enforcement action against Chinese synthetic drug and chemical precursor suppliers. As a result, certain China-based pharmaceutical companies ceased operations and have had some international payment accounts blocked. This probably represents the first law enforcement action against synthetic drug-related chemical sellers by Chinese authorities since 2017.

In addition, China and the United States will be launching a counter-narcotics working group to bolster law enforcement and information sharing to cut off the flow of precursor drugs and illicit fentanyl. The U.S. and China have both said they will also start working on an ongoing basis at the senior level to directly address this crisis and start working closely together to carry this initiative forward. In conjunction, Schumer said these long overdue steps have real potential to reduce the flow of these drugs into the United States and places like New York, and ultimately save lives.

Schumer added, "Too many lives have been lost, and too many others are at stake, especially here in New York. Today is a pivotal step forward in a decades-long battle and I will be fighting to hold China's feet to the fire and keep them accountable for their commitments to cut off the flow of fentanyl to America. I told President Xi that China taking steps to crack down on the sale of precursor chemicals would be a long overdue step to strengthening the relationship between our two na-

tions and hope to see continued results from China in the near future."

Illicit fentanyl is trafficked into the United States primarily from China and Mexico, and is responsible for the ongoing fentanyl epidemic in New York and across the country. China is the world's largest producer of illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and their immediate precursors. Some officials estimate that China is responsible for over 90 percent of the illicit fentanyl found in the U.S. From China, those substances are shipped primarily through express consignment carriers or international mail directly to the United States, or, alternatively, shipped directly to transnational criminal organizations in other countries like Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean where the drug is then manufactured.

In New York in 2020, 87.9 percent of all overdose deaths involved any opioid-involved synthetic opioids, predominantly illicitly manufactured fentanyl as described above. In 2022, New York City saw overdose deaths reach record numbers at over 3,000, predominantly driven by illicit fentanyl. Most recent county by-county data on the impact of the opioid crisis in New York can be found here. The additional enforcement and actions announced today will help tackle the spread of fentanyl directly by ensuring the chemicals used to make the illicit drug never reach its targets, cutting off the manufacturing of the drug before it can reach streets in communities across America.

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Westchester Jewish Life

Edward Shapiro, President and Publisher

es@shorelinepub.com

Helene Pollack, Emeritus Publisher

Joyce Farrell, Editor

joyce.farrell@shorelinepub.com

Cynthia Pena, Art Director

shorelineproduction@gmail.com

Mary DeYoung, Advertising Account Executive

mdeyoung.61@gmail.com

Lauren Levine, Advertising Account Executive

levinelaure@gmail.com

www.westchesterjewishlife.com

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