

FRIDAY Vol. 49, No. 11 | November 24, 2023 | 11 Kislev 5784

# With their homeland at war, three Israeli-Americans ponder what's ahead

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

On a recent Friday morning, Keren Benabou, Yuval Friedman and Becky Admony – each of whom grew up in Israel before immigrating to the U.S. -- sat down at the Trager Family JCC to share what it means for the nation they cherish to be at war. Each brought different life experiences to the table: Benabou and Friedman served in the Israel Defense Forces, while Admony – whose family had settled on the West Bank as Orthodox Jews – became an ICU nurse. All three now live in Louisville. They were interviewed by *Community* Managing Editor Andrew Adler on Nov. 10, 2023 – the 35th day of war between Israel and Hamas following the atrocities of October 7. What follows below are extended excerpts from that 90-minute session, lightly edited for length and clarity.

## Tell us a bit about your backgrounds

**Keren Benabou:** I grew up in Ashdod, a beautiful city on the Mediterranean. I like to tell people it's right between Gaza and Tel Aviv, so missiles are not something we're foreign to, unfortunately. My entire family is

in Israel, other than my husband and our girls who are here. My family came from Morocco to Israel in the '60s, so all of our culture, hospitality, everything, is related to Arab countries.

**Becky Admony:** I'm from Memphis – my parents made Aliyah when I was four years old, moving to Jerusalem in 1983. And then, after a year, they decided to move to the West Bank. So in 1984 we moved to (the settlement of) Shilo. Back then, there was peace – we used to even go shopping with Palestinians. I remember that as a child. And then stuff got rough. I moved to the United States in 2006 after I married my husband, and we've been here ever since. I have four sisters, and they all have a lot of kids – my grandparents have 34 grandkids. So we're a very big family.

**Yuval Friedman:** I was born in Afula in the northern part of Israel. I actually grew up most of my younger life abroad. My father was a diplomat, so we spent four years in South Africa,



Three Jewish community members who grew up in Israel gathered at the Trager Family JCC on Nov. 10, 2023 to offer deeply personal perspectives on the war against Hamas.

Pictured (L-R): Keren Benabou, Becky Admony, Yuval Friedman

then back to Israel, and then five years in Argentina and back to Israel, where I did high school and afterwards joined the IDF. So I think I have a perspective that a lot of Israelis don't, because I already felt what it's like growing up as a Jewish Israeli abroad. Antisemitism in Argentina and South Africa was prevalent. But we grew up with it as sort of, 'Oh, yeah, by the way, this is how things are. They're idiots. We live; we're strong; we're okay.' And being from Israel was different from being an American Jew. When you're from

See **ISRAELI-AMERICANS** on page 23

# Louisville has raised more than \$1.5 million for Israel

In Washington, D.C., a declaration went out: *Hineni – Here I Am*



Sara's View

Sara Klein Wagner

As a people, the Jewish past abounds with joy and the most devastating and unthinkable tragedy. October 7 has now become part of the fabric of our history. We cannot yet absorb the magnitude of suffering of the victims: in Israel, in the diaspora and in the world. What we do know is that our bond with our community in Israel is stronger than what existed on October 6. Our destinies as Jews -- whether Israelis or Americans -- are inextricably threaded together as family. Because of those sacred bonds, we are also compelled to act.

October 7 is now part of our collective Jewish story, yet its aftermath is just beginning to unfold. Jewish Louisville declared *Hineni, Here I am*, on October 10 when we gath-

See **HINENI** on page 5

# For younger Jews seeking war news, social media can be a boon or a quagmire

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

Let's say you're an older teenager or a young adult, and you're looking for the best place to get news about the ongoing conflict in Israel. Where do you turn to first? Your friends? Social media? Maybe your parents?

It's easy to get overwhelmed. At any given moment on any given day since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, there are hundreds – if not thousands – of associated reports, commentary,

videos, podcasts —the dizzying plethora of contemporary communications. The question then becomes: how do you parse what you're consuming? How do you know which sources of information you can trust, and which should be regarded with considerable skepticism?

"I would say the majority of where I get my news from is related to Jewish identity," says 24-year-old Lauren Schipper, who works in the administrative offices of Keneseth Israel Congregation. "So I have a lot of friends

See **SOCIAL MEDIA** on page 27



Pictured (L-R): Lauren Schipper and Ken Schuck (Photo by Andrew Adler)

# For the 2024 Annual Campaign, it's all about impact

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

In one sense the Jewish Federation of Louisville's 2024 annual campaign is unlike any other – how could that not be true, given the horrific events of October 7. Yet in another respect – and even more significantly – the initiative is continuing as it always has: stepping up to address the myriad needs of the Jewish community in Louisville, Israel, and various points in between.

See **IMPACT** on page 16





# THE DASHBOARD

## Word of the Month

### Voices of Israel



D'var Torah

Rabbi David  
Ariel-Joel

Jews are a people who know very well what to do when the Jews are in trouble. We have a lot of experience in this. Our tradition teaches us that one of the things we need to do in times of trouble is to cry out, to shout, to scream. Maimonides calls it one of the ways of repentance: to scream and not to accept atrocities and terror as the way of the world! This is not a moment of, "it is what it is." This is a moment when we should awaken ourselves, shout and cry out, and let everyone hear our screams.

At this overwhelming time in Israel, people are hurting. However, resilience and the power to redeem and recover were found, too. Among the reactions is poetry, freshly written and translated here. We know that poetry - everywhere in the world - is a way to reflect, share comforting words, and recover.

Poetry speaks in ways that regular words do not. Poetry penetrates our souls. These beautiful poems shout and scream, expressing our rage and our sorrow in ways that enter everyone's souls. I am in awe of the amazing poetry being written these days in Israel and want to share these two amazing poems with our community.

Sense of loss is not easy, but I hope that together we can provide comfort.

#### Kadish

Asaf Gur (Translated by Heather Silverman, Michael Bohnen, Rachel Korazim)

Yisgadal V'yiskadash Shmei Raba  
And no one came  
Many thousands called Him on  
Shabbat morning  
Crying His name out loud  
Begging Him with tears just to  
come  
But He ceases from all His work  
No God came  
And no God calmed  
Only Satan Celebrated  
uninterrupted  
Dancing between kibbutzim and  
the slaughter festival  
And our correspondent goes on to  
report  
All while sobbing  
Saying there is a burnt baby  
And there is an abducted baby  
There is an orphaned baby  
And there is a day-old baby

Still linked to his mother's body by  
the umbilical cord  
He hadn't even managed to find  
out his name  
What will be inscribed on the tiny  
headstone  
With a single date for birth and  
death  
This is what the kibbutz looks like  
after Satan's visit  
Turning the broadcast back to the  
studio  
Quiet now they are shooting  
They are also launching rockets  
And there is no government  
And there is no mercy  
Just the screaming and the  
pictures  
That will never leave the mind  
The seventh of October  
Two thousand and twenty three.

#### A Good Day

Tal Shavit

I want to manage all the war  
rooms  
To Mobilize all the supply chains  
I want to take care of all the  
children  
of all the single mothers  
and those who are gone  
I want to turn myself into  
protective vests  
for all the fighters  
Turn myself into iron domes over  
the heads  
of all the girls  
all of them.  
To sustain all the families  
That were evacuated  
That were broken  
That were crushed.  
Return all that is lost  
Bring back all who are kidnapped  
I want to collect all the donations  
and deliver them to their  
destinations.  
To pass all the messages  
To make all the sandwiches  
To oversee all the efforts

But on a good day  
I manage  
Sometimes  
To Breathe  
To Drink  
Sometimes  
To call loved ones.

On a good day  
I manage  
Sometimes  
To cry.

David Ariel-Joel is Senior Rabbi at  
The Temple

## Snapshots



Volunteers handed out gelt, oversaw dreidel games, read Hanukkah stories and shared songs with children and adults alike at this year's Festival of Trees & Lights at Slugger Field. The event benefits the "Just for Kids" Transport Team at Norton Children's Hospital. Honi Goldman chaired the Lights committee this year and gives credit to the late Jerry Berman and the late Dr. Richard Wolf for recognizing that this event was an important way to share Jewish traditions and culture with children and families in Louisville during the holiday season.

Pictured (L-R): Marc Smith giving out Hanukah bags of dreidel and gelt; Cathy Dreszer leading Hanukkah songs; Rabbi Gaylia R. Rooks teaching the dreidel game; Julie Kling and Honi Goldman.



## Candles

Here are the candle-lighting times for Shabbat in December:

- Dec 1 @ 5:05 p.m.
- Dec 8 @ 5:04 p.m.
- Dec 15 @ 5:06 p.m.

- Dec 22 @ 5:08 p.m.
- Dec 29 @ 5:13 p.m.

## Contacts

Got a story idea? A letter? A gripe? A kudo?

Send it along to *Community* at **community@jewishlouisville.org**.

Not getting your paper? Want to subscribe? Putting your subscription on hold? Gayle Shoemaker can handle

all circulation questions. She can be reached at **gshoemaker@jewishlouisville.org** or 502-238-2770.

Got an item for the *Community* eblast? Send it to **community@jewishlouisville.org**.

## Deadlines

**Got a news item for Community?** Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Send in your news by **Monday, December 18** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on **Friday, December 29**.

Submitting an item for *Community's* weekly eblast? Please submit it by Friday to **community@jewishlouisville.org**. The eblast is sent out every Monday afternoon.

## Read Community Everywhere...

We have you covered, Louisville – online. *Community* stories are posted regularly at **jewishlouisville.org/community/** or scan the QR code below.



That also is where you can find breaking news ahead of our print deadline.

Maybe you like the look of a real paper without the, er ... pa-

per. Then check out *Digital Community* at **jewishlouisville.org/community/community-newspaper/print-version/**.

If you read on the run, *Community's* social media is just the thing. Follow us on Facebook at **facebook.com/JewishLouisville/** or on Twitter, **twitter.com/JewishLouNews**, for the latest Jewish news from Kentucky and around the world.

## Corrections/Clarifications

Last month's *Community* misidentified one of the Mazin Art Exhibition artists as "Susan E. Brooks with her daughter." The photo is actually of Sue Huttenlocher and her daughter, Gail.

Have a correction? Send it to **community@jewishlouisville.org**



# HERE FOR *Israel*

**We were able to respond to Israel's critical needs on Oct. 7 because we were there on Oct. 6 and the days, weeks, and months prior.**

Before any emergency dollars were raised or distributed, it was the Jewish Federation of Louisville's Annual Campaign and our strong partnerships with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), that made it possible to respond immediately.

Our response to the war in Israel has been a testament to the collective strength, resilience, and unity that your generosity allows us to demonstrate every day.



**Jewish Federation of Louisville is Here For Good.**

But good doesn't just happen on its own. It comes from you and your dedication to the promise of a flourishing Jewish future – locally, in Israel and around the world.



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# NEWS

## Southern Indiana churches will host “A Night to Honor Israel” Nov. 30

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

Each year since 2007, a group of Southern Indiana churches have combined for “A Night to Honor Israel,” raising funds to benefit a nation close to the hearts of many of their congregants. And it’s fair to say that few, if any, are as heartfelt about that country as Rebecca Reel.

Founder and director of Reel Ministries, Reel regards Israel as, quite literally, a sacred trust. Her formidable energies are a major motivator for this year’s tribute evening, slated for Thursday, November 30 at 6 p.m. at the Windell Ag. Building, 341 S Capitol Avenue in Corydon, Ind. The event will offer music and presentations by area Jewish and Christian figures, with a keynote address by Kirby Calhoun of Christians United for Israel.

The event is billed as “an expression of solidarity between Christians and Jews on behalf of Jerusalem, the State of Israel and the United States of America.”

For Reel, who was raised in Texas as an atheist before embracing Chris-

tianity at age 16, Israel is intensely personal. Interviewed recently at a Jeffersonville, Ind. coffee shop, wearing a Star of David pendant engraved in Hebrew with the Shema, she recalled the genesis of what has become a powerful, enduring relationship.

“I started reading my Bible and just fell in love with Israel,” she says. “I felt a calling to learn about my Hebrew roots.”

Reel visited Israel for the first time in 1994. One year later she led the first of what would be numerous educational group trips there. How many times has she traveled to Israel? “I’ve lost track,” she says. “Maybe 30.”

Why such a tug?

“I don’t have the words to describe it,” she says. “Because it’s the land of the book, the people of the book. If you love the book, you’re going to love the people in the book and the land of the book. I’ve been working on Israel’s behalf ever since I was about 16 years old. It’s a pleasure. It’s an honor. It’s a joy.”

“A Night to Honor Israel” – which counts among its key organizers Pastor Tim Williams of God’s Church in

Corydon -- is part of a weeklong revival meeting at the Corydon Fairgrounds comprising eight participating congregations.

The November 30 program will include several representatives from Louisville’s Jewish community.

Funds raised at the event will benefit the Federation’s Emergency Israel Campaign, and Christians United for Israel (each will have its own donation envelopes). And after the formal program, there will be time for “food and fellowship.”

Because this year’s event takes place in the shadow of the October 7 attacks by Hamas, “it’s made it much more important to the Jewish people and to us as well in the Christian community,” Reel says. “It will be more sobering and somber rather than the usual big celebration. It’s hard to celebrate when families and children are being held as hostages.”

“I love Israel,” she reiterates. “I love the Jewish people, and I want to do everything I can to stand with Israel, especially at this time.”

Indeed, Rebecca Reel isn’t shy about displaying her allegiances for any and

all to see. “For many years I’ve been flying an Israeli flag and an American flag in my yard,” she says. “And I don’t intend to take them down.”

### Want to go?

For more information about “A Night to Honor Israel” on Nov. 30, email Leon Wahba at [leonmwahba@aol.com](mailto:leonmwahba@aol.com)



Rebecca Reel (Photo by Andrew Adler)

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## Jewish Lou

### Are you part of an interfaith family?

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Our recent Community study of Jewish Louisville underscored the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors reflected by the wide spectrum of Jewish-identifying individuals in the Louisville region.

The results are illuminating – charting a path toward creating the most inclusive, vibrant, and welcoming Jewish Louisville possible. **We are currently gathering a group of interfaith families for a think tank** to share ideas and help shape where we are going.

**Interested in participating?**

Scan the QR code and let us know a little about yourself.

[JewishLouisville.org/502.0](http://JewishLouisville.org/502.0)

Questions? Contact Alison Roemer, [aroemer@JewishLouisville.org](mailto:aroemer@JewishLouisville.org)



# FORUM

## HINENI

Continued from page 1

ered as a community. We said *Hineni* on November 14 when dozens of us traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the historic March for Israel. And hundreds of you have already said *Hineni* -- *Here We Are*-- contributing to the Israel Emergency campaign which has now surpassed our goal of \$1.5 million for humanitarian needs in Israel.

These generous dollars make a difference every second, every minute, every hour, every day, for a lifetime. We've helped 20,600 people gain access to updated communal bomb shelters and distributed more than 48,000 food packages -- including 2,600 food deliveries made to Holocaust survivors. And nearly 110,000 volunteers have been mobilized to fulfill medical and food insecurities in Israel.

Last week I traveled to Washington to be with 290,000 others in a collective call to Bring the Hostages held in Gaza Home, and to stand against rising antisemitism and hatred here and around the world. While in D.C. I listened to Natan Sharansky, who 36 years ago organized the March for Soviet Jewry. Remembering how

we'd gathered like this before, I felt comfort in not being alone. Within that massive crowd I ran into people I knew and people I felt an immediate connection with, but more importantly I felt safe and I felt at home -- the same way I feel when I visit Israel.

Back in graduate school, a professor once taped two signs to the wall -- "Israel is the Center of Jewish Life" and "American Jewry is the Center of Jewish Life" -- and asked that we stand closest to which of the two statements resonated more with each of us. We wrestled with the reality that it's okay to have differing opinions. But during the D.C. rally, it was clear that those choices don't matter now; they disappeared for me.

Instead, I saw the faces of family members of hostages. Indeed, the pain they carried as they handed out posters of sons, daughters, fathers and mothers reminded me that the center of Jewish life is where each of us is at any given moment. It dwells in the homes of Israelis who live near the border with Gaza, with young people who worked for peace and who attended a music festival. It lives for the more than 200 souls in captivity as hostages -- and yes, it lives in every one of us.

In 1987 I graduated from college

and headed to Brandeis University to begin a master's program in Jewish Communal Service. As part of my field placement at Harvard Hillel I staffed the student Soviet Jewry committee, which included sending busloads of students to D.C. in what would become -- until last week -- the largest-ever gathering of Jews in America. Standing on the National Mall 36 years ago we cried as one: "Let my people go!" And the walls did come tumbling down, as one million Soviet Jews were allowed to begin new lives in Israel, the U.S. and around the globe.

The story did not end there. Operation Exodus -- the Jewish communal response for resettling these refugees -- raised funds that changed and saved lives. Last week, standing on the National Mall, seeing the families of hostages and trying to absorb the changes that will now unfold for our children and grandchildren, is why I am so proud to join you all in saying *Hineni: Here I Am*.

Sara Klein Wagner is President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC

## Louisville Stands with Israel



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**Community** is published monthly by the Jewish Community of Louisville, Inc., 3600 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville, KY 40205-3216.

USPS #020-068 at Louisville, KY.

The Jewish Community of Louisville is a nonprofit organization. \$26 of your pledge is for a subscription for **Community**.

For more information, call 502-459-0660, fax 502-238-2724, e-mail [jcl@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:jcl@jewishlouisville.org) or check out the website [www.jewishlouisville.org](http://www.jewishlouisville.org).

POSTMASTER – Send address changes to **Community**, 3600 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville, KY 40205-3216.

### COMMUNITY DEADLINES

Deadlines for the next two issues of **Community** for copy and ads are December 18 for publication on December 29 and January 15 for publication on January 26.

**Community** publishes Newsmakers and Around Town items at no charge. Please include your name and a daytime telephone number where you can be contacted in the event that questions arise. **Community** reserves the right to edit all submissions to conform to style and length requirements.

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**Community** accepts letters to the editor for publication. All letters must be of interest to the Jewish community or in response to an item published in the paper. They must be no longer than 300 words in length and signed. Name, address and daytime phone number must be included for verification purposes only.

**Community** reserves the right to refuse to publish any letter, to edit for brevity while preserving the meaning, and to limit the number of letters published in any edition.

To submit items to Newsmakers, Around Town or Lifecycle, please email them to [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@jewishlouisville.org).

Email your comments to: **Community**, Letters to the editor, [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@jewishlouisville.org).

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## FORUM



## The debilitating tyranny of the Absolute



Mindful  
Ramblings

Andrew  
Adler

One of the best things about editing *Community* is that I do so from a cubicle just a few feet away from Matt Golden's office. Matt, as you probably know, is the director of the Jewish Community Relations Council and a gregarious fellow whose ideas are almost always worth noting, and often worth borrowing. So what follows is my take on something Matt has spoken about again and again over recent weeks: the decided lack of *nuance* when we talk about what's happening in the Middle East, historically and at present.

We Americans tend to be absolutists in our discourse. We strive to occupy either one side or the other, warily acknowledging the presence of some middle ground that might temper the noise that tends to reduce arguments to so much inflammatory posturing. Nowhere is this more apparent than in our nation's political debate – or what passes for debate. Identity politics has polarized the overall atmosphere to such a degree, lots of us stake out positions and then hang onto them regardless of evidence that might persuade us to move in some other

direction. We seem to revel in the vernacular of dysfunction.

Many of us don't cope terribly well with complexity. That becomes a significant problem when dealing with the Middle East, because few areas of the world are mired in so much confusion, misinformation and distracting rhetoric. The region's history is long and laborious, with tracks and sidetracks, confoundings and contradictions. Yet again and again, the perceived reality is framed as "them" or "us" -- in other words, you're either with us or against us. It's an inherently defeatist choice.

All this was true long before the horrific events of October 7, but Hamas's murderous attacks on Israeli civilians has thrown the issue into especially stark relief. It is virtually impossible to seek out authentic contexts of Israeli-Palestinian relations when the surrounding atmosphere is white-hot. The overriding goal of obliterating Hamas in Gaza makes broader discussion seem almost petty in comparison. All that matters is what's happening today, tomorrow, and maybe the day after that. There is scant opportunity for reflection, for pondering history, and for coolly analyzing prospects beyond immediate military objectives.

Some of this is bound up in a kind of anti-intellectualism. This is particularly apparent in American politics, where the Academy is frequently mocked and derided as elitist, exclusionary and irrelevant. Too many conservatives love to trash the

Ivy League – never mind that both Ted Cruz and Ron DeSantis are Harvard Law School alums. Clerking for a Supreme Court Justice, once regarded as a coveted badge of honor, is now looked upon by outsiders as something vaguely suspicious.

Current campus realities are depressingly strident, verging on ugly. It's fine to have pro-Palestinian demonstrations – after all, the right of free speech and political dissent is among the most foundational of American values. But when those same demonstrations and rallies devolve into calls for the destruction of Israel amid chants of, "From the River to the Sea," nuance and beneficial discourse is shoved aside by hatred – sometimes raw, sometimes percolating under the surface – but unmistakably present.

Emotions can easily rule the day in circumstances like these. The deaths of Israeli civilians, and the deaths of civilians in Gaza, rend the heart. The atrocities committed by Hamas must not go unanswered, so the IDF moves further and further into a territory Israel gladly relinquished not so long ago. Protesters scream "genocide!" in feverish cacophony, typically without considering the true implications of that word. Such is the dynamic we live by these days: the comforting, unquestioning simplicity of the absolute. If we're not careful, it may be our undoing.

*Andrew Adler is Managing Editor of Community.*



## FORUM

## How are you doing right now?



JCRC

Matt Golden

Over the past 40 days or so, I have had the opportunity to be in a lot of places. I have attended gatherings and I have spoken to groups. I have given talks on the Israel-Hamas war to everyone from 6th graders to members of senior lunch programs. I have met with students and administrators to respond to issues at schools and universities that have arisen in the wake of October 7. I've worked to address community desires for information, for inclusion and gathering. I say this only to let you know that in the last 40 days or so, I've talked to a lot of people.

As much as I can, I try to ask people, "How are you doing right now?" The responses are as individual as the individuals I talk to: Rage, fear, and despair. Arrogance. Vindication. Longing, loneliness and disconnection. Hope, bravery and a renewed sense of identity. Some responses give me hope for humanity; others do not. But there is no "one" perspective, just a rawness of feeling and a willingness to share.

The children I have talked to seem to be feeling it the worst. I spoke with a college kid who doesn't understand why her friends from other affinity groups won't talk to her. I spoke to a Jewish peacenik high school kid whose classmate from a different religion likes to show her videos from TikTok and then blame her for what the Jews are doing. Many of the kids I spoke to were intimately aware of what is happening at other high schools and colleges across the country and are in

fear that their school will be next. They are doom-scrolling.

But the strangest encounter I had was while serving as a panelist at a local church that hosted a discussion about the war. The audience was decidedly pro-Palestinian and included some Hamas apologists. When one of the panelists began by stating that most of the atrocities "claimed" by the Israelis were false and made up, the crowd responded with applause. Specifically, according to this panelist, no babies were harmed, no one was raped, and most of the casualties were soldiers, not civilians. Deaths were the product of the IDF, not Hamas. After the clapping subsided, my colleague and I, both of whom knew civilians killed in the massacre, pushed back on that narrative. We explained that denying anyone's trauma in this moment damages any attempt for a meaningful peace. To no avail. I must admit that the clapping surprised me.

At the end of the panel discussion, we were asked to stay around and answer questions. A Christian woman from the church and her husband came up to me. She did not have a question. She demanded that I join her in calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. I responded by explaining that Qatar's efforts to have a five-day pause with a return of hostages could turn into a meaningful step toward an end to the deaths of civilians.

She scoffed and said, "That's just like you people. You're losing your mojo."

"What do you mean by 'you people' and 'mojo,'" I asked? "By 'you people,' you mean Jews, don't you?"

She said, "I mean you're a Zionist and your propaganda's not working anymore. You'll see," she said, ominously. She and her husband walked away without answering me. While only a couple people were around to hear her, I'm sure

her statements would have likely drawn applause. I did not need to ask her how she was doing right now—she told me.

**"If you have listened all your life [to those] who have filled your brain and the marrow of your bones with [a] doctrine, it has settled into you because of that accustomed habit."**

So, why did I go to such a place?

In 1263, the most preeminent scholar of his time, a Rabbi named Nachmanides was ordered by King James of Aragon to attend the Disputation of Barcelona. His command from the King: defend Judaism in the face of Christianity with a "trial." The Church Court would be on hand to decide who was "right" between the two religions. The only thing the Rabbi demanded was the freedom to speak freely. The arguments lasted for five days. Amazingly, at the end of the "trial" the King awarded the Rabbi a prize, saying he "defended an unjust cause nobly." Not surprisingly, however, the Dominican Order claimed victory and Nachmanides's wish to speak freely didn't last very long. The next month, the Rabbi was forced by the King to leave his home in Spain, never to return. The good news is that he moved to Jerusalem and founded the Rambam synagogue, the second oldest syna-

gogue still active in Israel.

I am no Nachmanides, as most of you who know me will attest. But I bring this moment of history forward for a particular reason, because there is something this 13<sup>th</sup> century Rabbi said during the Disputation that should be foremost in our minds almost 800 years later. He spoke about the power of intractability and the expectation that everyone will see things your way. "If you have listened all your life [to those] who have filled your brain and the marrow of your bones with [a] doctrine, it has settled into you because of that accustomed habit." In short, not everyone sees the world as we might. We have to remember that fact -- even as we hear people clapping at the sound of the denial of atrocities.

What did I learn most from serving on this panel? That indoctrinated people—of any side—will never find a new solution to an old problem. They will resort to what is in the "marrow of their bones." There is never a space to ask the question of "how are you doing right now," only enough room to hear the applause from an echo chamber. In that failure, divisions can only grow wider.

You will never find me excusing Hamas and the allies that allowed them to murder, rape and kidnap. That is in *my* marrow. But if there was ever an opportunity to figure out a peace, it is right now. Let's come up with a plan.

*Matt Golden is a lawyer and the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council. In his opinion, the JCRC is the most august body in the Jewish Community, seeking justice and doing tikkun olam. He is admittedly very partial and biased in this regard. He invites comments, suggestions or good stories at [mgolden@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:mgolden@jewishlouisville.org).*

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# PICTURE THIS: KRISTALLNACHT

Members of Louisville's Jewish community gathered Nov. 9 at Temple Shalom to mark the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht – the Night of Broken Glass – when Nazis and their supporters unleashed a massive pogrom against Jews across Germany.

The somber evening -- taking place in the shadow of the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas against Israel -- included remarks by Rabbis Beth Jacowitz Chottiner of Temple Shalom, David Ariel-Joel of The Temple and Ben Freed of Keneseth Israel Cantors David Lipp of Adath Jeshurun, Lauren Adesnik of The

Temple and Sharon Hordes of Keneseth Israel were among those who summoned distant memories through the power of song.

Fred Whittaker gave an account of Kristallnacht while a contingent of his students from St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School looked on. Young people shared their thoughts, as did 102-year old Holocaust survivor Ann Dorzback afterward. And as a poignant epilogue, attendees rose from their pews to recite a collective Kaddish in memory of those who suffered and perished during that terrible night and beyond.



**Pictured (L-R): Top Row: Noa Chottiner and Holocaust survivor Ann Dorzback; Gregory Rahming, Cantor Sharon Hordes, Cantor David Lipp and Cantor Lauren Adesnik. Bottom Row: Fred Whittaker with his students from St. Francis of Assisi School; Rabbi David Ariel-Joel; Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner.**  
(Photos by Robyn Kaufman)

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# PICTURE THIS: COMMUNITY SOCIAL AT THE POINTE



A sold-out crowd turned out Sunday evening, Nov. 12 for a Community Social at The Pointe in Louisville's Butchertown neighborhood. Organized by the Louisville Council of Jewish Congregations, this first-ever event was an opportunity to chat, laugh and do a little networking. There was an extended trivia contest, lots of food and drink, plus many children gathered with their families for an evening of good fun. Thanks to the Jewish Heritage Fund for making it all possible.

Pictured (L-R): Top Row: Eli Wasser holding his daughter, Tehilla; Barry Barker, Shevvy Baker, Judy Olsen, Walter Olsen and Jake Wishnia; Karen Abrams and Sandra Chack. Bottom Row: Shane Shapps, Rachael Schwartz and Michelle Brooks; Craig Lustig, Joanie Lustig and Russell Bird; Michelle Bornstein, Stephanie Shaikun and Melissa Roth. (Photos by John Fitzgerald)



## CenterStage at the Trager Family JCC ACADEMY



**Grades K-3**

Thursday, Nov. 30 at 6:30 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 2 at 6:30 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2 p.m.



**Grades 4-8**

Thursday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.

**Purchase tickets and learn more  
at [jcclouisville.org/academy](https://jcclouisville.org/academy)**





# PICTURE THIS: MAJOR GIFTS EVENT



Am Yisrael Chai. We are Here for Good. We are Here for Israel. We are Here for the Jewish Future. The 2024 Jewish Federation of Louisville Major Gifts & Ben-Gurion Society event kicked off the Annual Campaign on Wednesday, Nov. 15 at the Trager Family JCC. The evening featured special guest speaker David T. Brown, Vice Chair of Jewish Federations of North America’s Board of Trustees, who recently returned from Israel, plus a live Zoom message from Doron Krakow, CEO of JCC Association of North America, who spoke from Tel Aviv.

Pictured (L-R): Row 1: Linda Engel, Marcia Roth, Alan Engel and Marie Abrams; Event Co-Hosts Michael Salamon and Jeff Tuvlin; Ralph Green with Event Co-Hosts Jeff and Jennifer Tuvlin; Karen Abrams, Shannon Rothschild, Julie Ensign. Row 2: Mayor Craig Greenberg, Steve Trager and Maxine Rouben. Row 3: Sarah O’Koon and Karen Weiss; Felice Sachs and Susan Callen; Jenny Johnston and Elizabeth Kaplan. Row 4: Guest Speaker David T. Brown, Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) Board of Trustees Vice Chair with Max Shapira, Event Co-Host Kate Latts and Sara Klein Wagner. (Photos by Jolea Brown)



# Hanukkah Celebration



Monday, Dec. 11  
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Trager Family JCC

Join us for latkes, donuts, crafts, games, gelt, PJ Library story time, and live music featuring Lost Tribe!

This event is FREE & open to the community!



To RSVP, Scan the QR code or visit [jewishlouisville.org/hanukkah2023](https://jewishlouisville.org/hanukkah2023)





# PICTURE THIS: WASHINGTON, D.C. MARCH

## Marching for Israel with joy, pride and hope

By Abigail Goldberg  
For Community

I had the incredible privilege to attend the March for Israel in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, November 14.

I traveled to D.C. with my mom, Deborah; my brother Noah; my friends, Yuvi and Tracey; and my Federation colleague, Alison Romer. We were booked on a 6 a.m. flight Tuesday morning -- anticipating that flight was only the beginning of my feelings of excitement and joy and Jewish pride. I barely slept the night before. I wasn't scared one bit to travel for a public display of solidarity, hope and pride for a Jewish future in the U.S. and in the State of Israel.

People kept asking me before I traveled, "Do you feel nervous or

scared for obvious safety reasons?" No. Not at all. As I walked through the Louisville airport, sat in my seat on the plane, made my way through Dulles airport, boarded the Metro and walked along the streets of Capitol Hill -- I was wearing my sweatshirt emblazoned with the word LOVE and a Jewish star. While on the Metro, people felt free to ask us questions about where to go for the March, and I felt confident answering them because I knew they had my back and I had theirs.

As we arrived at the National Mall, with my Israeli flag tied around my neck, I felt nothing but joy, security, hope and pride to be attending this alongside nearly 300,000 of my closest friends and family. The music, the singing of *Hatikvah*, hearing to the names of loved ones kidnapped by Hamas read aloud, listening to our

Senate and Congressional leaders speak -- and Omar Adam, Matisyahu, and others perform -- these were some of the sounds that filled me, and those around me and around the world listening, with hope.

I bumped into friends I knew from New York, North Carolina, and Cincinnati who I'd met through work, and ran into old friends from Jewish sleepaway camp I hadn't seen in years. Attending the March, I felt like I finally was able to do something positive in response to the atrocities that occurred in Israel on October 7 at the hands of Hamas. The only other time I have felt this secure to be Jewish in a public display was at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. But there in Washington D.C., I could feel that same sensation of being surrounded by Jews and non-Jews, all of whom were there for a common reason,

expressing our love for the State of Israel, our love of being Jewish, and standing in solidarity to honor those brutally murdered by Hamas and the hostages still in captivity, fighting to BRING THEM HOME.

Tuesday, November 14 will stay with me for the rest of my life. I continued to wear my Israeli flag while leaving the Mall and riding the Metro back to the airport, still wearing that same LOVE sweatshirt with the Star of David all the way back to my home in Louisville. I'm proud to be Jewish 10 times more than anyone may hate me for it.

AM YISRAEL CHAI!

Abigail Goldberg is teen director at the Jewish Federation of Louisville



A contingent from the Jewish Federation of Louisville was among the nearly 300,000 people attending the Nov. 14 "March for Israel" on Washington, D.C.'s National Mall. The 3 ½-hour rally, which demonstrated the power of Jewish unity, featured remarks by prominent figures from the national and international Jewish community, plus deeply moving testimonies by family members of Israeli hostages held by Hamas -- with the collective call to "Bring Them Home Now!" Members of the Louisville group also met with Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell, who held up a sign declaring that "Louisville Stands with Israel."





## GLOBE

## Three-quarters of American Jews fear Israel-Hamas war is making their communities less safe, poll finds

By Ben Sales  
JTA

Large majorities of American Jews are worried for their safety amid Israel's war with Hamas and believe antisemitism is on the rise, according to a new poll.

And the vast majority of American Jews support military aid for Israel. Most Americans overall also support military aid for Israel, the poll found. The Jewish Federations of North America, which commissioned the poll, had initially included data about whether respondents approved of President Joe Biden's Israel policy, but later said that data was inaccurate.

According to the poll, which was published Thursday, 75% of American Jews are either very or somewhat concerned that the war will cause issues in terms of security and safety in their communities. Nearly three in 10 said they knew of "physical acts of violence or acts of hate" against Jews in their communities.

Ad 72% of Jews said antisemitism in their local communities has increased over the past few weeks. Zero percent believe it has decreased. Most Jews also believe antisemitism will continue to increase.

The poll, conducted by Benenson Strategy Group, is the first measure of the sentiments of American Jews since Hamas invaded Israel on Oct. 7, sparking a war in Gaza in which Israel has vowed to de-

feat the terror group. In the weeks since the war began, law enforcement agencies and Jewish security groups have documented a spike in antisemitic acts. Earlier this week, a Jewish man near Los Angeles died following a confrontation with a pro-Palestinian protester.

Asked to describe how they feel or the climate in their local community since the war started, 32% of Jews responded "tense," 21% said "uncomfortable" and 20% said "scary." Sixteen percent of Jews said it felt "normal."

A broad spectrum of Jewish groups have come out in support of Israel, pressed the Biden administration to support its military campaign and staged rallies on behalf of Israel and the hostages held by Hamas. Jewish groups are planning a large rally in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday to drive home those messages and speak out against antisemitism.

At the same time, a small number of Jewish groups have delivered statements and staged a series of large rallies and actions calling for a ceasefire and placing blame for the conflict on Israel, which they have accused of "genocide."

The poll did not ask about the particulars of Israeli policy or the war. The words "Gaza," "hostages" and "ceasefire" do not appear in its questions. But Eric Fingerhut, the CEO of the Jewish Federations, said the poll results show that those demonstrations do not represent most Jews or

Americans.

"We know that large majorities of Americans support Israel in its fight against terror, and it's important not to let a vocal minority warp that view," he said in a statement.

The poll was taken from Oct. 29 to Nov. 1 and reached respondents via text message. It included 3,777 American adults, including 2,199 Jews. The margin of error was approximately 1.5% for the overall sample and 2% for the Jewish respondents.

The survey found that 85% of Jews and 53% of Americans overall have been following news about the war closely. An additional 15% of Jews are following the war news somewhat closely.

Regarding U.S. military aid to Israel, 73% of Jews said it's very important and 14% said it is somewhat important, versus 13% who said it's not too, or not at all, important. Among U.S. adults overall, 60% say it is important and 40% say it is not.

The survey also found that both Jews and Americans overall feel there is significant prejudice in the United States against Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Palestinians. Two-thirds of Jews said there is "a lot" of discrimination against Jews, and an additional 26% said there is some, for a total of 92%. Likewise, 78% of Americans overall said Jews face a lot or some discrimination.

In addition, approximately 75% of Jews



Supporters of Israel protest near the U.S. Capitol, Oct. 13, 2023. (Daniel Slim/AFP via Getty Images)

said Arabs as well as Muslims face discrimination in America, and 66% of Jews said Palestinians face discrimination. Majorities of Americans overall also said those groups face discrimination.

Jewish respondents have felt less secure over the past month, with 42% saying they have worried for their personal safety very much or all the time during that period, and an additional 30% saying they are somewhat worried. And 74% of Jews said there is a lot of antisemitism in the United States today; 86% say there's more antisemitism than there was five years ago.

Jews who wear Jewish symbols were twice as likely to say they worried for their personal safety "all the time."



### Please Join Us!



#### P2G Book Club

Discussion about *Red Sea Spies: The True Story of Mossad's Fake Diving Resort* by Raffi Berg with guest speaker Gidi Shapira, who took part in Operation Moses – Evacuation of Ethiopian Jews through Sudan.

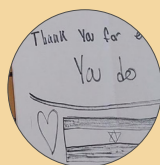
More Information and RSVP: [jewishlouisville.org/p2g](https://jewishlouisville.org/p2g).

To gather in person for the Zoom, with refreshments, contact Amy Fouts.

**December 3, 2023, 1 p.m., Zoom**

#### Cards for Soldiers

Our friends on the ground in Israel are baking and sending cakes to soldiers. Submit digital messages and drawings of support to accompany the cakes.



Send submissions to Amy Fouts, [p2g@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:p2g@jewishlouisville.org).

For more information about upcoming trips to Israel, contact Amy Fouts, [p2g@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:p2g@jewishlouisville.org)



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## LET'S CELEBRATE HANUKKAH!



**DEC. 13 • 7 P.M. • WEST SIXTH IN NULU**

Candlelighting with Rabbi Ben Freed at 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy latkes, appetizers, and desserts from Cold Smoke Bagels.

Complimentary drink ticket with Registration.

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It's the season of giving! The Jewish Federation's Annual Campaign supports events and engagement opportunities for Jewish Young Adults. The campaign ensures the continuity Jewish connections and celebrating the joys of our Jewishness. We invite you to participate if you can to support our Jewish Community, as we fulfill our Here for Good mission in Louisville – and in Israel.





# JFCS Is Planning For The Future

## JFCS Unveils New Three-Year Strategic Plan

For over 115 years, Jewish Family & Career Services has maintained an unwavering commitment that all in Louisville should live with dignity and purpose.

JFCS' programs and services look different than when it was founded in 1908, but the values that guided the agency then remain the cornerstone of its work today. JFCS continues to serve the community with Kavod, Chesed, Kehilah, Tzedek, and Avodah (Respect, Compassion, Community, Justice, and Service).

JFCS continues to grow and adapt to meet the most immediate needs of the community to ensure they can live with dignity. Its recent response to the conflict in Israel and Gaza highlights this adaptability. JFCS extended support to several Jewish organizations and groups focusing on the mental and emotional well-being of staff, and to parents on discussing the conflict with

their children. They also immediately began offering free counseling to anyone – regardless of faith or cultural background – who might need support, knowing the barrage of news, information, and social media content would be upsetting and triggering to many.

When someone supports JFCS we want to make sure they know the impact they are having on the community,

~ Dr. David Finke, CEO

Over the years, JFCS has evolved and adapted to the dynamic needs of the Louisville community to ensure that its programs and services make the most lasting and positive impact on as many of our friends and neighbors as possible.

JFCS recently unveiled a comprehensive Three-Year Strategic Plan that will not only guide the agency's efforts for the next few years but also give the community and stakeholders a clear sense of JFCS

purpose and direction as the social service arm of the Jewish Community.

The plan is the product of months of thorough analyses, collaboration and engagement with experts, introspection and careful consideration and input by staff, stakeholders and the JFCS Board of Directors.

"We're excited to unveil this to the public," said Mike Fine, JFCS Board President. "We feel it builds on our strengths, addresses our challenges, and sets a clear course through which JFCS can evolve to meet the changing needs of those we serve."

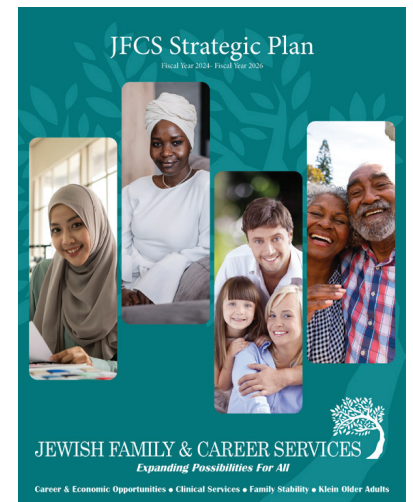
JFCS's Strategic Plan allows for adaptability to changing circumstances, ensuring the agency is strong internally, clearly and effectively communicates our mission externally, and have a clear vision for how we remain sustainable for the future. The plan also clearly and effectively communicates the agency's mission externally.

"Sharing our Strategic Plan with the community is not just about informing them," said Dr. David Finke, JFCS CEO. "It's about creating collaborative

and transparent environment that builds trust in the agency "so we can increase impact across Louisville."

Ultimately, the strategic plan will allow JFCS to expand possibilities for all that are involved, Finke said, from staff, board of directors, volunteers, clients, and donors.

"When someone supports JFCS we want to make sure they know the impact they are having on the community," he said.



The plan is available on JFCS's website at: [jfcslouisville.org](http://jfcslouisville.org), with a download feature.

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Do you need support caring for an aging loved one?

**Dec. 5**  
**6 p.m. at JFCS**  
Louis & Lee Roth Family Center  
2821 Klempner Way

**Empowering Caregivers:**  
**Supporting Aging Loved Ones**

Our next Community Chat will focus on the physical, emotional, and practical challenges caregivers face in their vital role in providing essential support, and compassion to elderly family members, or friends and the resources available to them in our community.

Our Panelists



**Amanda Davis**  
National Family  
Caregiver Coordinator  
KIPDA Area Agency  
on Aging and  
Independent Living



**Mauri Malka,**  
LCSW  
Senior Director of  
Programs  
JFCS



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SCAN TO RSVP

Jewish Family & Career Services  
**COMMUNITY CHAT**  
SERIES



**We Need A Volunteer With A Truck**

Seeking a volunteer with a truck to help with weekly Dare to Care pick ups for the JFCS food pantry.

Contact Avery Markel at (502) 709-9198, or email her at: [amarkel@jfcslouisville.org](mailto:amarkel@jfcslouisville.org).

Powered in part by the Jewish Federation of Louisville



## Communication: It's Much More Than A Game

“Communication.”

Sounds like such a simple word, right?

Yet, the ability to communicate (or lack thereof) with others has been the driving force behind the creation and destruction of ideas, families, communities, and even nations throughout the ages.

Effective communication is what turns decent people into extraordinary ones.

It's what sets great leaders apart from mediocre ones.

And it's one of the core values we want to impart to the next generation.

So when I was deciding on a game for the staff to play during one of our staff in-services, I jumped at the opportunity to arrange a communication activity. I later played this same game with the students, who loved it as much as the staff.

Everyone sat in a large circle. I told players to write down a sentence about anything they'd like and pass that sentence along to the player on the left. That player would take a new sheet of paper, draw a picture of the sentence, and pass it along to the person on the left, who wrote a sentence about what they thought the picture was. The cycle repeated until the message was returned to its original owner.

Suffice it to say the message had warped and changed in many funny ways along its journey through the room. In the context of a game, this was hilarious and comically entertaining. In real life, however, miscommunications can have unintended results. We used the opportunity to strategize what to do about avoiding those results and how to create a school with good communication habits.

This got me thinking about the communications Hashem (G-d) has sent us throughout the ages.

We know that historically, the Chanukah story occurred at a time when there was no longer direct prophecy, aka communication, in Israel.

This made it a time ripe for existential miscommunications between Hashem and His People.

*In the context of a game,  
this was hilarious and  
comically entertaining.  
In real life, however,  
miscommunications can  
have unintended results.*

Does Hashem still love us?

Does Hashem still want us to continue along the path outlined in the Torah?

Do we still have a uniquely special role to play in history?

These were questions the Jewish people had to grapple with collectively as a nation.

Then along came the Greeks. The very fabric of our heritage, tradition, and faith was torn away from us by a foreign nation that forbade us from all Jewish practices. Our people were brutally forced to accept a foreign culture against their own will. The communication from the Greeks was clear – your way of life is no longer relevant. Move on.

But we know, that isn't how the story ends.

Hashem showed us that with His help, we can accomplish great things. He allowed a small team of righteous warriors to defeat a massive army - an unprecedented victory in antiquity. He allowed a small jug of oil to last long enough for us to know that we still matter to Him. He showed us through His actions that we still have our special mission in history.

Chanukah is about listening to messages and communications from the One Above.

Hashem continues to communicate with us in 5784. His communications are loud and clear.

A small flame, a small idea, is growing here in Louisville.

It is the idea that every child counts.

That every child has a special role.

That children thrive in an environment where they're given the right degree of educational challenge.

And this idea is working. It's a flame that is growing brighter and brighter. It's one we are grateful to be a part of.

I continue to be excited about the communications Hashem has in store for us.

I hope you are too.

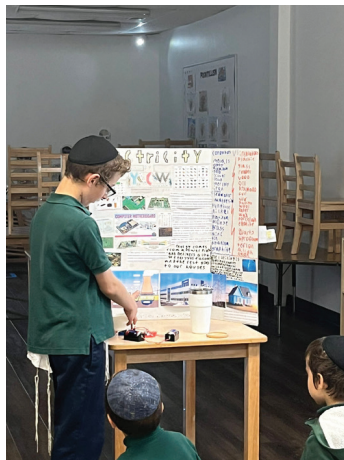
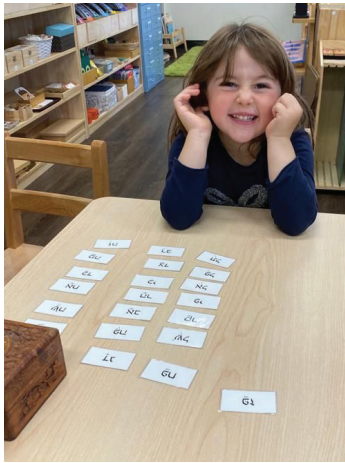
Wishing you a Chanukah full of light, inspiration, and joy.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Shmuel Meyers



# Snapshots



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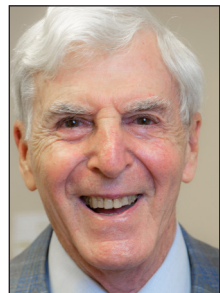
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# NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

## Dr. Jimmie Strull is U of L dental school's 2023 Alumni Fellow



Dr. Jimmie Strull

N. James Strull has been named the 2023 Alumni Fellow at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry.

Strull -- known to pretty much everyone as "Jimmie" -- graduated from the dental school in 1962, going on to complete a residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at U of L in 1965. Shortly afterward he established Strull Oral Surgery, a practice that now includes his son, Gregory -- another U of L dental school alum.

Strull has been a longtime School of Dentistry faculty member, and in 1994 was named its Teacher of the Year. A member of Congregation Adath Jeshurun, he's been married to Nancy Strull for 62 years.

## Rabbi Nachshon Siritsky joins the Louisville Board of Rabbis and Cantors



Rabbi Nachshon Siritsky and Avram Kahn

Rabbi Nachshon Siritsky (he/they) has been accepted onto the Louisville Board of Rabbis and Cantors as spiritual leader and Rabbi on behalf of Kol Israel Community of Kentucky -- which describes itself as the only Renewal Judaism Congregation in Kentucky.

Rabbi Siritsky's participation will allow KICK to expanding its schedule of regular services to once a month via Zoom and through in-person gatherings for Friday night Shabbat services and light dinners. Dubbed *Meditation, Music, and Movement*, the first of these will take place Nov. 24 and continue into December.

Formerly a rabbi at The Temple, Rabbi Siritsky now lives in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia.

## IMPACT

Continued from page 1

Fittingly, the theme of this year's campaign is "Here for Good." Its double meaning is clear: generations of giving and support have fostered a definite sense of permanence. At the same time, contributions make it possible to do the good work that sustains and grows a community.

"I would frame the conversation this way," says Federation president and CEO Sara Klein Wagner. "The annual campaign is critical to the Louisville Jewish community, and has been for the almost 90 years we've been around."

Nothing demonstrates this as persuasively as what followed the October 7 attacks by Hamas in Israel. Within days, Jewish Federations of North America launched an unprecedented \$500 million emergency campaign to aid Israel. So far JFNA has raised more than \$659 million -- with Louisville contributing \$1.5 million to the overall effort. "That wouldn't have been possible if the giving infrastructure wasn't already in place," Wagner says. "It's allowed us to move nimbly and focus our energies where the needs were greatest."

Meanwhile, there is a whole range of ongoing demands that must be met year in and year out. In this regard, "the annual campaign is more important than ever," Wagner emphasizes.

"You need the annual campaign so we can plan ahead, budgeting for our future so we can expand programs and better serve people who've come to know us," she says. "The one thing we don't want to do is stand still."



That impact imperative is making its mark. "I'm impressed that the Federation supports the gamut of ages from young childhood through elder care, an especially lonely and difficult stage of life for so many," says Ranen Omer-Sherman, who directs the Jewish Studies program at the University of Louisville and is advisor to the campus's branch of Hillel.

"At U of L, a public university with such a small Jewish demographic, support for Hillel is vital," Omer-Sherman says. "And desperate Jewish communities in Ukraine, which one hopes are not forgotten in the current conflict between Israel and Hamas, need the Federation's international support more than ever."

You'll find similar sentiments at Jewish Family & Career Services.

"The funds we receive from the Federation are unrestricted, so we're able to apply those as needed," says JFCS CEO David L. Finke.

"For example, since October 7 we started a new project where I'm helping (Federation Regional Security Advisor) Stuart Lowrey when he's talking to preschools, and school directors, staff and parents about how to talk with your kids about physical and emotional safety," Finke says. "One of our larger programs is for older adults, and we have a partnership with the (Trager Family) JCC where we cross-refer back and forth, so (Federation) funding allows for that as well."

A glance at the thriving weekday senior lunch program shows how successful that partnership has become.

"We have a very close relationship with Dara Cohen (the Trager Family JCC's director of senior programs)," says Mauri Malka, Senior Director of Programs at JFCS. "Dara works with clients we sometimes refer to her, because we identified that they someone needs socialization through those group activities."

Wagner can point to all that, and much more, to illustrate the breadth of Federation initiatives. But what would she say to someone who tells her, "Hey, I just gave to the emergency campaign -- isn't that enough?"

"I'd thank them for stepping up to help Israelis in trauma recover and rebuild from this tragedy," she says. "I'd remind them that the annual campaign is entirely separate, and that when they support it, they're helping make Louisville a better place to live for themselves and their families, and yes, continuing to support Israel."

She might also remind them that unlike JFNA's emergency campaign -- which requires immediate payment in full -- the Annual Campaign gives donors until the end of 2024 to fulfill their pledges.

It all comes down to being part of something that, in so many ways, genuinely matters. "So we ask people to continue to stretch for the Annual Campaign," Wagner says, "and do what they can in their hearts and souls to help those who need us right now."

To donate to the Annual Campaign, go online at: <https://tinyurl.com/3u5u92we>

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*Sending my appreciation thanks for all the wonderful programming for us seniors*

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## GLOBE

# Birthright cancels Israel trips for December, citing security concerns during Gaza war

By Andrew Lapin  
JTA

Birthright Israel has canceled its trips that had been scheduled for December due to safety concerns from the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, reportedly the first time in its history the group has pulled programs due to war in the region.

A Birthright spokesperson told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency the group expects to resume trips soon. The nonprofit's CEO Gidi Mark told eJewishPhilanthropy that the trips could resume before the end of the year if the situation in Israel becomes "more stable."

Launched in 1999, the organization's free trips to Israel for Jewish young adults have become a staple of

many Jews' college or post-college experiences, though participation in the program has waned in recent years. Funding for the organization has also been jeopardized after losing some major donors in recent years. The only previous time the organization has canceled trips was at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During previous periods of violence in the region, in 2014, 2015, 2018 and 2019, Birthright continued trips as scheduled but altered them to avoid violent areas, according to eJewishPhilanthropy. That meant, in 2019, that trips briefly avoided visiting the same Gaza border communities that were massacred on Oct. 7 of this year. The Kibbutz Movement, which represents some of those communities, criticized Birthright at the time for its decision, saying the move ran contrary to Zionist values.

Last month the organization had denied rumors of the December trips' cancellations to JTA, saying that they were still on schedule. Birthright typically schedules many winter tours to Israel for college students starting in mid-December.

In the meantime, Birthright is getting hands-on with the current conflict in other ways. The organization is now running

a program to bring alumni back to Israel to volunteer in agriculture and donation centers while the country's workforce is being redirected to the war. Those joining in are part of a wave of volunteers looking to fill in the gaps in the country's agriculture and other industries. Unlike its regular Israel trips, participants in this program are required to buy their own flights and travel insurance.

Though the organization normally bills itself as not political, Birthright also launched a social media campaign to encourage alumni to share positive posts about Israel to combat anti-Israel sentiment on social platforms in the wake of Oct. 7. Noa Bauer, a marketing executive for Birthright based in Israel, told JTA last month, "I think this is the time for Birthright to make sure that every alumni stands up for Israel."



Participants of a 2018 Birthright trip for adults ages 27-32 visit the Masada fortress in Israel. (Courtesy of Ashley Inbar)



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This Chanukah, there are many ways to support Israel and its people, but none is more transformative than a gift to Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency medical system. Your gift to MDA isn't just changing lives — it's literally saving them — providing critical care and hospital transport for everyone from victims of heart attacks to casualties of rocket attacks.

**Join the effort at [afmda.org](https://afmda.org) or call 866.632.2763.**



*An Evening for  
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**With Special Guest, Dana Gordon**

Jewish entrepreneur, mother, jeweler,  
and founder of *Dana Rebecca Designs*

Q&A moderated by Shane Shaps

*Wednesday, November 29, 2023*

Work the Metal, Room 4  
1201 Story Ave, Louisville, KY 40206  
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Desserts & Cocktails

#### Co-Hosts

Julie Ensign, Robin Miller, Maxine Rouben, Julie Strull,  
Becky Ruby Swansburg, Betsy Prussian, Susan Rudy,  
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*A Jewish Federation of Louisville Annual Campaign solicitation event.*

**RSVP to [afouts@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:afouts@jewishlouisville.org)**



# AROUND TOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the community.)

## Adath Jeshurun

Adath Jeshurun invites you to Hanukkah-palooza! Join us Thursday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. for a fun-filled first night with crafts, activities, bouncy houses, and Hanukkah songs. After minyan at 5:45 p.m., we'll light the candles and enjoy a latke dinner (and sufganiyot, of course). Please RSVP at [www.adathjeshurun.com/reservations](http://www.adathjeshurun.com/reservations) by Dec. 1.

Saturday morning, Dec. 16 at 10 a.m., Adath Jeshurun will welcome Jeremy Dauber, author of Jewish Comedy: A Serious History and Mel Brooks: Disobedient Jew as their Shabbat Scholar. Dr. Dauber will deliver the D'var Torah during services and will speak after a Kiddush Lunch sponsored by the Julie Olson Shabbat Scholar Fund. All are welcome.

Also Saturday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m. Adath Jeshurun will welcome Jeremy Dauber to speak about his book Mel Brooks: Disobedient Jew. This biography, part of the Yale University Press Jewish Lives series, is "a spirited dive into the life and career of a performer, writer, and director who dominated twentieth-century American comedy." Jeremy Dauber is the Atran Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture at Columbia University. He also serves as Director of Columbia University's Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies. Funding provided by The Charles & Jean K. Erskine Fund of Congregation Adath Jeshurun and the Jewish Heritage Fund Endowment. This event is open to the public and tickets are \$5 per person. Make your reservation at [www.adathjeshurun.com/jeremy-dauber](http://www.adathjeshurun.com/jeremy-dauber).

## Anshei Sfard

Classes are held weekly by Rabbi Simcha Snaid: A Night Kollel Ahron V'Leah – open learning from 8 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday for anyone to come & learn; Spice of Life, Wednesday 7 p.m.; Discussion on the timeless lessons from Mishlei – the Book of Proverbs, Sunday mornings 7:45 – 8:30 a.m.; Talmud Trek II, Sunday 9:30 a.m. Women's learning Sunday evenings 7:30-8:30 p.m.

## Chabad of Kentucky

Chabad of Kentucky is pleased to announce that all services are now being held at the Camp J building at 3700 Dutchmans Lane (formerly Congregation Anshei Sfard). We extend our thanks to Jewish Family & Career Services for allowing us to use their building to hold services during the summer. We also extend our thanks to Jewish Community of Louisville for allowing us to use the Camp J building and we invite the community to share in all our services, classes and programs.

Chabad of Kentucky will light a public menorah at 4th Street Live, on Dec. 10 with Kentucky's largest Menorah, and a lighting service with Mayor Craig Greenberg. The event

will be held from 5-7 p.m. with the actual Menorah lighting to take place promptly at 6 p.m.. The program will include free bowling, a bounce house, and traditional holiday treats. In addition, this year's Menorah lighting will be part of a joint program comprising Chabad, Project Friendship and the City of Louisville's Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, to benefit children of gun violence.

Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m., Chabad will sponsor an outdoor grand Menorah lighting at the Paddock Shops, 4055 Summit Plaza Drive. The festivities will include Jewish music with singing, dancing, holiday treats and Jewish pride. Each person is invited to add their personal light to this celebration of light over darkness. Rabbi Chaim Litvin calls it a chance to "warm your body with hot chocolate and warm your soul with unity and pride." The event is free to the entire community. For more information, contact Rabbi Chaim at [Rabbi-chaim@chabadky.com](mailto:Rabbi-chaim@chabadky.com).

## Chavurat Shalom

Two of our favorite performers will join us this month. Lunch will start at Noon in The Temple's Heideman Auditorium and our program will start at 1:00 pm. All programs will also be available via ChavuratShalomZoom for those who need to join us remotely.

Thursday, December 7 - Harpist Jessica Hyden will share her beautiful music with us. Lunch will include hoisin salmon, roasted cauliflower, couscous, asian style slaw, fresh fruit, and assorted desserts.

Thursday, December 14 - Our favorite accordion player, Mike O'Bryan, will perform. Lunch will include vegetable lasagna, ratatouille, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, and triple chocolate brownies.

Thursday, December 21, 28, and January 4 - No Chavurat Shalom while we're hibernating over winter break.

If you're not "a regular," please RSVP by 5 pm Tuesday if you'll be attending that week in person by calling or emailing Sarah at 502-212-2038 or [sarahharlan86@gmail.com](mailto:sarahharlan86@gmail.com).

Chavurat Shalom is a unique opportunity for Jewish senior adults to meet socially and share ideas. Chavurat Shalom is funded through the generosity of the Jewish Heritage Fund, The Temple, The Temple WRJ/Sisterhood, The Temple Brotherhood, NCJW, and many other generous donors.

## Filson Historical Society

Join the Filson Historical Society for these upcoming events! For more information, registration, and membership visit [www.FilsonHistorical.org](http://www.FilsonHistorical.org).

Thursday, Dec. 7, 6-7 p.m.: David A. Jones, Always Moving Forward: A Memoir of Friends, Family, and Building Humana. Humana co-founder, David Jones lectures on his new autobiography depicting his profound im-

pact on American healthcare as well as his love and engagement for his hometown. Available in-person or via zoom. (Free for Filson Members, \$15/Non-members)

Sunday, Dec. 17 3-5 p.m.: Jazz at the Filson: A Holiday Jazz Party. Join us for a Holiday Jazz Party featuring songs by Tony Bennett played by the original Dick Sisto Seelbach Trio, the Tri-Tones, made up of Sisto, Tyrone Wheeler on bass, and Jason Tiemann on drums. Songs of Love and Peace will prevail and make for warm a holiday party. Refreshments included. (\$30 for Filson Members, \$35/Non-members)

## Jewish Family & Career Services

The next JFCS Community Chat, Empowering Caregivers: Supporting Aging Loved Ones will take place Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 6 p.m. at the Louis & Lee Roth Family Center (2821 Klempner Way). Join us as our panel of experts discuss the practical challenges caregivers face in their vital role providing essential support, and compassion to elderly family members, or friends. Attendees will learn about resources available to caregivers, and ways we as a community can support caregivers in their often unsung role. JFCS's Community Chat Series are panel discussions featuring experts and activists who discuss pressing needs and topics affecting Greater Louisville. The Community Chat Series is free and open to the public but an RSVP is requested for planning purposes. RSVP online at <https://tinyurl.com/yw5nx46n>.

Following months of collaboration, introspection, and careful consideration by staff, stakeholders and our Board of Directors, JFCS is excited to announce its Three-Year Strategic Plan. We believe this plan sets a clear course for JFCS to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing community landscape and continue Expanding Possibilities For All in Greater Louisville for many years to come. We welcome you to see the plan at: [www.jfcsloouisville.org/strategic-plan/](http://www.jfcsloouisville.org/strategic-plan/).

The conflict in Israel and Gaza, with its profound impact on countless lives, has left many individuals in our own community grappling with grief, loss, and emotional distress. JFCS is offering a FREE mental health counseling session to anyone in the community who may be struggling regardless of faith or cultural background. Our therapists are trained to address various aspects of grief, from loss of loved ones and friends to the trauma of witnessing violence and destruction, even if only seeing these things on social media or the news. Contact JFCS at [www.jfcsloouisville.org](http://www.jfcsloouisville.org) or by calling 502-452-6341.

## Jewish Federation of Louisville

A group of southern Indiana churches are combining for A Night to Honor Israel Thursday, Nov. 30 at 6 p.m. at the Windell Ag. Building, 341 S. Capitol Ave. in Corydon, Ind. This fund-raising event will include music and presentations by several area Jewish and Chris-

tian figures, plus a keynote address by Kirby Calhoun of Christians United for Israel. The evening is described as "an expression of solidarity between Christians and Jews on behalf of Jerusalem, the State of Israel and the United States of America." For more information, please email Leon Wahba at [leonmwahba@aol.com](mailto:leonmwahba@aol.com).

NextGen Louisville is inviting you to celebrate Hanukkah on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at West Sixth NuLu, 817 E. Market St. There will be Candlelighting with Rabbi Ben Freed at 7:30 p.m. Enjoy latkes, appetizers, and desserts from Cold Smoke Bagels. A complimentary drink ticket comes with Registration. And since it's the season of giving, we'll have pledge cards available to donate \$18 or whatever you are able to the Jewish Federation of Louisville's Annual Campaign. We invite you to give if you can to support our Jewish Community, as we fulfill our Here for Good mission in Louisville - and in Israel. Register at [jewishlouisville.org/nextgen](http://jewishlouisville.org/nextgen).

*Are you part of an interfaith family? We want to hear from you.*

Our recent Brandeis University-led Community Study of Jewish Louisville underscored the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors reflected by the wide spectrum of Jewish-identifying individuals in the Louisville region. The results are illuminating – charting a path toward creating the most inclusive, vibrant, and welcoming Jewish Louisville possible. We are gathering a group of interfaith families for a Virtual Think Tank on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. to share ideas and help shape where we are going. Interested in participating? Please RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/2arvekrd>.

The Jewish Federation of Louisville encourages all to visit and share a new website portal created to inform, provide donation information and encourage all in our community to Act Now for Israel. This website page is updated almost daily with resources. Please visit [www.jewishlouisville.org/ActNowforIsrael](http://www.jewishlouisville.org/ActNowforIsrael).

#BlueRibbonsforIsrael has been launched by the Jewish Federations of North America. The blue ribbon symbolizes support and solidarity for the safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas terrorists in Israel. It symbolizes solidarity with the hostages, their families, and all who care about their safety. Wearing a ribbon publicly unites you with people of all religions, races, nationalities, ethnicities, ages, and generations and demonstrates for the people of Israel that they are not alone and that good people across the globe are with them and their families during this dark time. Learn how to make your own blue ribbon or purchase ribbons from Amazon by visiting [blueribbonsforisrael.org](http://blueribbonsforisrael.org).

We had such a great response to our recent food drive that we're making it an ongoing project. Please join the Jewish Federation of Louisville in supporting the Sonny & Janet Meyer Food Pantry with donations of non-



# AROUND TOWN

perishable foods, personal care items and cleaning supplies. All items can be dropped off at any time at the Trager Family JCC in the Food Drive bin near the Kohn Family Town Square.

## Keneseth Israel

Keneseth Israel Congregation offers Daily Minyan services at 6:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. Sunday, and 7:30 a.m. Monday and Thursday. Minyan services are offered in person and on Zoom at [tinyurl.com/kiczoom](https://tinyurl.com/kiczoom). Join us for Shabbat services Friday at 6:00 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Shabbat services and Holiday services are offered in person and on YouTubeLive at [tinyurl.com/KICyoutubelive](https://tinyurl.com/KICyoutubelive). Please visit [kenesethisrael.com](https://kenesethisrael.com) for information.

Jews & Brews takes place every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC.

## Kol Israel Community of Kentucky

With the ongoing participation of Rabbi Nachshon Siritsky, KICK is expanding to offer regular events once a month via Zoom for international online visitors, alongside in-person gatherings for Friday night Shabbat services and light dinners. The next of these *Meditation, Music, and Movement* sessions takes place Dec. 8 – the Second Annual *Shabbat of Light and Unity*, which will be led jointly by Rabbi Siritsky on Zoom and special local guest. For more information, email [KollIsraelKy@gmail.com](mailto:KollIsraelKy@gmail.com) or call 502-341-1595.

## Louisville Melton School

How often do we stop and acknowledge the time-honored highs and the lows of our lives as Jews? Highs and Lows: Communal Days of Joy and Sorrow, a brand new 6-week course, will be offered in two formats: Tuesday evenings 6:30-8 p.m. via Zoom taught by Cantor David Lipp, and Thursdays, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in-person at Adath Jeshurun, taught by Rabbi Laura Metzger. The cost is \$179, which includes textbooks. Register and find out more at <https://tinyurl.com/3yej8jr3>. Scholarships are available; email [sisham@adathjeshurun.com](mailto:sisham@adathjeshurun.com) to apply.

## Louisville Vaad HaKashruth

The following venues are supervised and certified by the Vaad: Trager Family Jewish Community Center (Nancy Abrams Kitchen) and Krispy Kreme, 3000 Bardstown Road.

## Moishe Pod: Louisville

The Moishe Pod: Louisville is a part of the international non-profit organization Moishe House, which aims to bring together young adult Jewish communities from around the world. Moishe Pod: Louisville is open to all young adult Jews regardless of observance level. It will be hosting three free events a month to bring the young adult Jewish community together in a welcoming environment. For more information or to pass along suggestions for an event Moishe Pod might host, email [moishepod.louisville@gmail.com](mailto:moishepod.louisville@gmail.com).

Hanukkah is just around the corner!

Join the Pod on November 28th at 7:00 p.m. for a Margarita filled arts and crafts night to make your own Chanukiah! RSVP at [tinyurl.com/MPArtsKrafts](https://tinyurl.com/MPArtsKrafts).

## National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section

Grab your tiles, Mahjong cards, and your friends, and join us for National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section's annual, fun Mahjong Mania Event on Sunday, December 3, from 1:30-4:30 pm at the Trager Family JCC. All levels of mahjong play are welcome, and snacks will be provided. Registration is \$12/person. Please register by November 28, either online: <https://ncjwlou.org/events/2023-mah-jongg-event-pre-order-2024-cards/>, via email to [office@ncjwlou.org](mailto:office@ncjwlou.org); or by phone at 502-458-5566. If paying by check, make payable to NCJW, Louisville Section and mail to NCJW, Louisville Section, 1250 Bardstown Road, Suite 26, Louisville, KY 40204.

## Temple Shalom

The community is welcome at Temple Shalom's Shabbat services: Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Services are led by Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner and members of the congregation.

## The Temple

It is December, and that time again to go shopping for all your Hanukkah and holiday needs at the WRJ/Sisterhood Gift Shop. Visit its Facebook page at [facebook.com/wrjtemplegiftshop](https://facebook.com/wrjtemplegiftshop). To make an appointment, please call Sheila Lynch at 502-896-9736, Marlene Ornstein at 502-291-5699, or Karen Waldman at 502-425-4360.

Adult education continues at The Temple begins! Text Study with Rabbi David and Beginning Hebrew with Mark Goldstein are on Monday nights; Temple Scholars on Wednesday mornings with Rabbi David and Cantor Lauren; Song Circle with Cantor Lauren on the second Thursday each month; and Saturday Torah Study with Rabbi David starts at 9 a.m. on Zoom and in person will be every Saturday. For a full schedule and descriptions, please go to [thetemplelouky.org/adult-education](https://thetemplelouky.org/adult-education) for more information.

Our next semester of Intro to Judaism begins Jan. 8, 2024 featuring Jewish Holidays. The Intro to Judaism Class is a wonderful way for people who are considering becoming Jewish, interdating, and intermarried couples to learn together about Judaism.

The Temple invites congregants to attend Shabbat services on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. More information at [thetemplelouky.org](https://thetemplelouky.org).

We have expanded our Pickleball times at The Temple! Join us for this FREE and exciting way to stay active. Registration opens every Friday for slots the next week. Mondays from 5 - 7 p.m., Tuesdays from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and Tuesdays from 5 - 7 p.m. At least two of the four players need to be members of The Temple. Be sure to sign the waiver

and bring your own ball and paddles. Register online at [thetemplelouky.org/pickleball](https://thetemplelouky.org/pickleball).

Dr. Clint Nowicke is a pediatric psychologist who works with kids and their grownups on how to talk about big, important topics. Please join us for a Little Kids, Big Topics: Talking to Children About War (and Other Big Things) session on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. in the Levy Great Hall of the Klein Center to learn how to discuss the war in Israel with young kids all the way through adolescence. You'll also learn how to recognize traumatic stress in children as well as developmentally appropriate strategies for managing big emotions. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/big-topics](https://thetemplelouky.org/big-topics).

Join Bailey, Dan, and the growing group of young adults as we celebrate Hanukkah, drink craft beer, and do arts and crafts on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. for Young Adult Hanukkah Craft Night. To RSVP, email Bailey and Dan at [baileyanddan@thetemplelouky.org](mailto:baileyanddan@thetemplelouky.org).

Join us for our Temple Annual Hanukkah Celebration on Dec. 10 at 5 p.m.! This wonderful event will feature The Temple Brotherhood 1000 Latke Dinner and Latkes with Troop 30 volunteers, Hanukkah Hootenanny with The Temple Tunes, Arts and Crafts led by The ECEC Parent Committee and The Religious School, Family Hanukkah Menorah Lighting (bring your hanukkah), and more! Come and celebrate the Festival of Lights with your fellow Temple Members. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/hanukkah](https://thetemplelouky.org/hanukkah).

Join the Louisville Gay Men's Chorus as we ring in the holiday season at this fun and family-friendly concert on Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. Come hear as we return to the concert stage at The Temple. This year we will be hosting two concerts to allow more opportunities for everyone to participate. For more info, go to [thetemplelouky.org/gay-mens-chorus](https://thetemplelouky.org/gay-mens-chorus).

Don't miss our Chinese Dinner and a Movie on Sunday, Dec. 24 at 6 p.m. We will be watching the Israeli film, *Noodle* (2007). The film is a touching comic-drama in which two human beings, as different from each other as Tel Aviv is from Beijing, accompany each other on a remarkable journey that takes them both back to a meaningful life. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/chinese](https://thetemplelouky.org/chinese).

Please join the Mitzvah Makers on Monday, Dec. 25 at 2 p.m. as we make sandwiches for the Louisville homeless community. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/sandwich-making](https://thetemplelouky.org/sandwich-making). Before the event, please bring donations to The Temple to help us with this *tikkun olam* project including: bottles of water, individual bags of chips, loaves of bread, and sandwich bags. Additionally, if you have some small hotel/sample size toiletries (shampoo, bars of soap, lotion, mouthwash, toothbrushes, and toothpaste), we will be making bags to hand out.

## Trager Family JCC

Join us for a Hanukkah Celebration on Monday, Dec. 11 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC. There'll be latkes, donuts, crafts, games, gelt, PJ Library story time, and live music featuring Lost Tribe. This event is FREE and open to the community. RSVP at [jewishlouisville.org/hanukkah2023](https://jewishlouisville.org/hanukkah2023)

CenterStage Academy is back with two upcoming productions at the Trager Family JCC. *Winnie the Pooh Kids* (Grades K-3) will be performed Thursday, Nov. 30, Saturday, Dec. 2 at 6:30 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2 p.m. *Cinderella Youth Edition* (Grades 4-8) arrives Thursday, Dec. 14, Saturday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 17 at 2 p.m. To purchase tickets, visit [jcclouisville.org/academy](https://jcclouisville.org/academy).

Are you age 13 to 18 years old and want to learn about Interpersonal and Leadership Development, Civic Engagement, and how to participate in a Social Justice Action Project? Then consider joining the Neighborhood Youth Board at the Trager Family JCC. We're looking for youth to represent Metro District 8 who are Louisville residents with a connection to District 8, are willing to attend mandatory, bi-weekly meetings, and who commit to serving a minimum of one year. You can apply and learn more by going online at [jcclouisville.org/NYB](https://jcclouisville.org/NYB). Sponsored by the Trager Family JCC and Louisville's Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods.

All Trager Family JCC members are invited to join one of its many fitness classes, sign-up for personal training, join a basketball, futsal or pickleball game, or the new running club. Visit [jewishlouisville.org/the-j/health-wellness](https://jewishlouisville.org/the-j/health-wellness) more information or email Member Services Director, Amy Stephen, at [astephen@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:astephen@jewishlouisville.org). For those interested in memberships, visit [jcclouisville.org/youbelong](https://jcclouisville.org/youbelong) or email [membership@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:membership@jewishlouisville.org).

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# LIFECYCLE

## Obituaries



### Syrl Ardis (Cohen) Charn

Syrl Ardis (Cohen) Charn, "Mama Syrl," passed away at age 84 on October 29, 2023, at the Masonic Home Sam Swope Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

She is survived by her children, Michael Kleinman (Sharon) and Dorrie Zimmerman (Justin Horn), sister Bonnie Loeser (Alan), grandchildren Joel and Allison Zimmerman, Jon and Monica Kleinman, Cory Zimmerman and Lauren Carney, Sam and Rachel Kleinman and great-grandchildren Edward Zimmerman, Jacob Kleinman and Leo Kleinman, cherished nieces, nephews, cousins, loving extended family and friends.

Syrl graduated from Atherton High School and attended the University of Louisville. She was a career Executive Secretary, trusted typist for a Brigadier General, and assisted in the production of Adath Louisville: The Story of a Jewish Community. Syrl was an accomplished artist whose calligraphy and illustrations publicized many charitable organizations. She also volunteered in the office of Temple Shalom, where she was a member, and was the co-chair of the Chesed Shalom Committee with her friend of blessed memory Sue Karr. Syrl was a miracle melanoma survivor, whose tissue donations and experimental treatment helped in developing the melanoma vaccine at the Brown Cancer Center. Above all Mama Syrl was a selfless, loving, funny, kind and wonderful human being who lived for her family.

She was predeceased by her husband, Leo Charn, son Eddie Zimmerman, and granddaughter, Cari Kleinman.

The family thanks Christina at the Masonic Home Sam Swope Center for her wonderful care.

A graveside service was held at the Adath Jeshurun Cemetery, 2926 Preston Highway, on November 1, 2023, at 1:00 PM EDT. Expressions of sympathy can be made to the Cari Kleinman for the Children Fund at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Louisville, Kentucky, or St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis,

Tennessee.



### Linda Lee Cohen, MD, MPH

Linda Lee Cohen, MD, MPH, was born on August 22, 1938, in Louisville, KY, and passed away on October 20, 2023, in Rockville, MD, at age 85. She was the daughter of Dr. Armand E. Cohen and Jean Kohn Cohen.

She was a graduate of the University of Michigan and Columbia University Medical School and spent her entire career in the public health field. During her tenure with the U.S. Public Health Service, she helped numerous hospitals in the state of Louisiana to meet Medicare standards. She worked for many years as a medical device regulator for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, focusing mainly on ophthalmological devices.

Dr. Cohen held many leadership roles in Toastmasters International and helped to establish 27 Toastmasters clubs in the Washington, DC area. She was a past president of Chapter 1892 of National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) in the Rockville-Silver Spring area in Maryland. As she liked to say, she enjoyed helping people.

Her parents and her sister, Carol Cohen Roberts (Harry) predeceased her, as did her niece, Karyn Cohen Harden (Jerry). She is survived by her nieces, Lori Cohen Hall (the late Mark Hall) and Wendy Sue Cohen, of Louisville, KY; Nancy Cohen Wasserman (Michael) of Oklahoma; and Terri Cohen Baker (Michael) of Berea, KY. She is also survived by her companion, Edward Lee Gonzague, of Rockville, MD.

Graveside services were held on Monday, October 30, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at The Temple Cemetery. Memorial donations honoring Dr. Cohen may be made to Toastmasters International.

Funeral services were held 12:00 p.m., Monday, November 6th at Herman Meyer & Son, Inc, 1338 Ellison Avenue with burial to follow in Keneseth Israel Cemetery. The family would like to thank the staff at Baptist Health Louisville and at Story Point Senior Living for their care of Marilyn during these last few months. Expressions of sympathy may be made to the charity of your choice.

### Marilyn Levine Niren

Marilyn Levine Niren, age 82, passed peacefully in her sleep in the early morning hours of Saturday, November 4, 2023, after a lengthy illness. She was an incredibly loyal individual, who loved her family and friends more than



anything. Marilyn graduated from Atherton High School, attended the University of Louisville and graduated from Spencerian College. She moved frequently because of her husband's job, while working as a secretary.

In 1976, they returned to Louisville, where she worked for nearly three decades at the Jewish Family and Career Services as office manager, continuing to volunteer for that organization after her retirement. She was a member of Keneseth Israel Congregation and its Sisterhood, the Jewish Community Center and the National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section.

Marilyn is predeceased by her parents, Kate and Joe "Yush" Levine; her brother and sisters-in-law, Howard and Debbie Levine and Roz Levine. She leaves behind, her husband of 61 years, Charles; two sons, Howell of Louisville and Lee of Elizabeth, New Jersey; two daughters-in-law, to whom she referred as her daughters, Ann and Rachie. Marilyn is also survived by seven grandchildren, Tamar (Daniel), Shimon (Mikayla), Moshe, Avraham, Meir, Pamela and Amy; and three great-grandchildren, Yonatan, Tehilla and Adira.

Funeral services were held 12:00 p.m., Monday, November 6th at Herman Meyer & Son, Inc, 1338 Ellison Avenue with burial to follow in Keneseth Israel Cemetery. The family would like to thank the staff at Baptist Health Louisville and at Story Point Senior Living for their care of Marilyn during these last few months. Expressions of sympathy may be made to the charity of your choice.



### Diane Stahl

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved wife and matriarch, Diane Stahl. Diane died on October 28, 2023, peacefully surrounded by her loving husband and other members of her family.

Diane was born on a crisp winter morning toward the close of World War II, on January 14, 1945 in Louisville, Kentucky, to Jean Schwartz and Joseph Cohen. She was predeceased by her younger brother, Raymond Cohen, whom she loved dearly.

During her formative years, Diane was a member of Keneseth Israel Congregation in Louisville, Kentucky. She attended Seneca High School and the University of Kentucky.

Diane married the love of her life, Peter G. Stahl on February 26, 1967, and they proudly raised three beautiful children, Kevin, David, and Melissa in Columbus Ohio. Diane and Peter are longstanding members there of Congregation Tifereth Israel.

Diane instilled in her children and grandchildren a deep sense of compassion for others. As a young curly-haired girl in a pink and white striped uniform, Diane volunteered at University Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky, bringing solace to the indigent with her transformative smile and her deep empathy. As a young mother, Diane delivered Meals on Wheels with her babies, demonstrating to them what is truly important in life. For 35 years, Diane worked at West Central School tending to the needs of children with developmental disabilities. In her golden years, not even the pandemic could deter Diane and Peter from delivering goodies to the members of Tifereth Israel during Purim.

Diane is survived by her loving husband of 56 years, Peter, and their three children, Kevin, David, and Melissa (Damro). She is also survived by their spouses, Karen, Tattiana, and Nathan, respectively. Diane's legacy of love and compassion will continue through her darling grandchildren, Benjamin, Ethan, Jacob, Eliana (Ellie), Noah, Eli, and Samantha (Sammy), who deeply mourn the physical departure of their dear Bubbie.

As we bid farewell to our beloved Diane/Wife/Mom/Grandmother/Bubbie, we remember the joy that she brought to all of us while traveling the world with her dear Peter, cruising, teaching us her recipes, keeping in close connection with decade-long friends, and loving us all, unconditionally. We love you, always!

In lieu of flowers, donations in Diane's memory may be made to Congregation Tifereth Israel ([www.tiferethisrael.org](http://www.tiferethisrael.org))

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## Dr. Howard Stone

Dr. Howard Stone, 83, was summoned to his eternal reward on November 7, 2023, in Louisville, Kentucky. He was born on December 19, 1939, to the late Samson and Elsie

Stone in Brooklyn, New York.

For thirty-two years, Dr. Stone provided compassionate pediatric care to thousands of Kentuckiana children, including those whose parents were once patients as well. Parents travelled from near and far to bring their children to Dr. Stone's office, and children were equally eager knowing that a lollipop was waiting for them at the end of each visit. Halloween was a particularly festive time for Dr. Stone. Dressed in crazy costumes, Dr. Stone provided laughs and joy to the children being seen that day, as well as the scores of children that stopped by his office for a smile, a photo and a treat.

Dr. Stone met his wife of 57 years, Sharon Leah Loeb Stone, at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, where they both worked. After completing his residency, Dr. Stone served in the United States Air Force and then relocated to Louisville, where he practiced pediatrics until 2003. During retirement, Dr. Stone enjoyed receiving calls from former patients and parents who continued to seek his medical counsel long after Dr. Stone had hung up his stethoscope. Dr. Stone and his wife, Sharon, frequented antique shops, and flea markets rescuing Judaica, and proudly displayed these found treasures in their home. Jetsetters in retirement, they enjoyed cruising the Caribbean and circling the globe, punching off bucket list items along the way. Dubbed his second act, Dr. Stone took immense pride in helping care for his grandchildren.

Dr. Stone was a lifetime member of the Jefferson County Medical Society and a Kentucky Colonel. He served as a board member of the Louisville Vaad HaKashruth (the kosher supervision agency), was an active member of Congregation Anshei Sfard, where he served as President. During his tenure, Dr. Stone presided over the sale of the congregation's Dutchman's Lane property and subsequent relocation. His leadership ensured the continued existence and vitality Louisville's only orthodox Jewish synagogue.

Dr. Stone is survived by his sister Carolyn Casden; sons Benson (Marlena), Rubin (Eliandry), and Louis (Cecilia) Stone; grandchildren Sara-Shifra (Aryeh) Ness, Elisa, Samson, Steven, and Sophie Stone; Alvin and Abdiel Vargas Cabrera; Dear friends Toby Horvitz, Joan Mueller, Paul Tackett, Julie Artrip, Richard and Joyce Herde. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sharon Loeb Stone, and brother, Dr. Benson Stone.

The family would like to thank the medical professionals at Norton Women's and Children's Hospital, and Hesperus Health for their compassionate care during Dr. Stone's final days.

Funeral services were held at 12:00 pm, Thursday, November 9th, at Herman Meyer & Son, Inc., 1338 Ellison Avenue, with interment to follow in the Anshei Sfard Cemetery. Expressions of sympathy may be made to Congregation Anshei Sfard in Louisville, Kentucky.



## Harvey Weingarten

Harvey Weingarten, 89, of Louisville, Kentucky, passed away Monday evening, October 23, 2023. He died comfortably with his family at his side.

Born on November 25, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, Harvey was a veteran. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from New York University and was a successful businessman. As president of Kentucky Coin, he built the company into a major regional distributor during the video game craze of the 1970s and 1980s.

Harvey loved silly jokes, crossword puzzles, golf, his morning coffee, and relaxing in the sun. Most of all, he loved spending time with his family.

Harvey leaves behind his wife, Francine; three children, Steven (Julie) Weingarten, Andrew (Lee Ann) Weingarten, and Nanci (John) Whitsett; 9 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; 15 granddogs, a grandhorse, and a grandtortoise.

A visitation was held at noon, Thursday, October 26th, at Herman Meyer & Son, Inc., 1338 Ellison Ave., followed by a funeral service at 1:00 p.m. Burial will be in The Temple Cemetery. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the Brown Cancer Center.



## Josie Zeman

Josie Zeman, 82, of Montclair NJ passed away on Oct. 31 after a brief illness. She was predeceased by her parents Michael and Evelyn and brother Robert, as well as a long list

of feline companions. She is survived by her daughter Evie Task and son Aaron Task, grandchildren Davida, Abraham, Zevin and Clementine, cousins Peter, Mary Ann, and Andrew Zeman, and sister-in-law Ann Zeman.

Born in Long Branch NJ and raised in West Hartford CT and Louisville KY, Josie was a prolific writer and voracious reader -- a true lifelong learner. Her career in journalism began at the Louisville Courier-Journal, where she interviewed a young Cassius Clay, followed by community volunteer and freelance roles with other outlets around the country as she and her former husband moved to Maryland and Florida before permanently settling in Parsippany NJ. Her return to full-time work began in the late 70s at the NJ Jewish News in East Orange, where she was a reporter and editor. Her work for Jewish organizations continued at American Jewish Committee and Hadassah in NYC. At AJC, she became a public relations expert, proudly crafting everything from press releases and articles to speeches for former CEO David Harris, who was referred to by the late Israeli President Shimon Peres as the "foreign minister of the Jewish people."

In the mid-1980s Josie moved to Hudson County, where she once again reinvented herself, diving in to her new communities as a participant in community theater productions and as a member of the Hoboken synagogue. Her pride and joy early in retirement was a regular column in the Jersey Journal called

Just Josie, which covered interesting senior citizens in and around Jersey City. She was often stopped by strangers who thanked her for highlighting their parent or other relatives' artistic endeavors or community involvement, and she was never at a loss for additional subjects.

Josie's move to Montclair almost 20 years ago was prompted by her son's return to NJ from CA with her first granddaughter, Davida. Josie's final 'reinvention' was her favorite, as she became a devoted Nana and once again found her new community. She walked everywhere, joined the Y, where she swam and took exercise classes, and became an active member of The Write Group, where she focused on memoir writing. She also participated in and ran mul-

multiple book clubs and joined Congregation Shomrei Emunah, where she found a host of new friends as well as a spiritual home. She valued Shomrei as she began her own version of Hebrew school as a senior citizen. She also continued to write and edit as both a volunteer and paid freelancer, working on multiple books in recent years.

Josie was celebrated at Jewish Memorial Chapels and interred at King Solomon Cemetery in Clifton in a private ceremony. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in her honor to the American Cancer Society, Congregation Shomrei Emunah, or the charity of your choice.

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# NEWS

## ISRAELI-AMERICANS

Continued from page 1

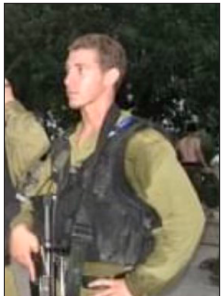
Israel, if you encounter antisemitism (elsewhere) you're used to growing up in a country full of Jews -- you're very proud and strong, so you don't really care too much when you notice anti-Israel sentiments, because you know that Israel's got your back at the end of the day. You're going back to Israel, and everything's okay. The crazy part is that my family back home, right now under a war, is more worried about me being here in the states as a Jewish person. (My mother) was worried sick about me here in Louisville, when they're getting rockets shot at them.

**We're seeing an increasing number of pro-Palestinian protests and demonstrations against Israel's actions in Gaza, including several on the University of Louisville campus. What's your take on these?**

**Benabou:** Let us be clear, and I think I can speak for the three of us, and for many Israelis and many, many Jews. We are pro-Palestinian. We are pro-life, pro-human rights. But these people are not pro-Palestinian -- they are anti-Israel and actually anti-Jews. That's what people in America and in the entire world need to understand.

**No parent wants their children to go off to war**

**Friedman:** There's a saying, "When you grow up, hopefully we'll have peace and you won't have to go into the military."



Yuval Friedman

**When did you first learn of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks?**

**Friedman:** My mom was flying to Greece that same morning for a birthday trip with her three best friends. So I figured I'd shoot her a text tell her to have a good trip. But then when I got my phone, I noticed on the extended family chat that everyone is blasting messages checking if my mom's cousins are okay. They're checking up on them every five minutes: 'Are you guys okay? Is the army there? Are the police there?' Then I read through all the WhatsApp messages with my extended family, and I realized they were under attack by terrorists, and that this has been going on for a few hours.

So I text my other cousins who live an hour north of Tel Aviv and say, 'What's going on?' And they just said, 'We have no idea. This is insane -- we're all in shock -- there are terrorists everywhere in the cities around Gaza' And as the day went on we realized how big a deal this was.

My mom's cousin lives (not far from the Israel-Gaza border), and her husband was out of town. Luckily, she and her two kids were able to close themselves in their safe room. But as things were getting worse and worse, she would text us and say 'We're still okay. We can hear shooting' Then it turned into, 'They're right outside our house'



Keren Benabou speaking at the Solidarity Gathering held at the Trager Family JCC on October 10.

and then, 'I think they're inside. We can't talk anymore; we'll update you later.' And then silence for a few hours. That was the worst part because we didn't know if they were alive or not. Luckily the terrorists didn't get to them -- but at least 50 of their friends who lived next to them were murdered, and a few more were taken into Gaza and are still hostages. My cousin's husband, who's a kibbutz member, was responsible for organizing all the funerals for the kibbutz. They had about 50 funerals in a week, just going from one to another.

**It must be emotionally fraught living in the U.S. while Israel is grappling with such a terrible threat.**

**Admony:** Of course I want to now live in Israel. But I can't roll the dice back. I have four kids; it's more complicated. Our money's here. It's not that easy just to pack up and go. Especially as my kids did not grow up in Israel, in this environment. But yes, I would want to be in Israel right now. I would (even) live in the Gaza Strip -- because of how I grew up and who I am. (Recalling violent incidents while growing up on the West Bank) I have nightmares today. Those are the reasons I became an ICU nurse. I saw so much death as a child I wanted to investigate it, because nobody really took care of us, or talked to us. So I wanted to be as close to death as I could. Then I escaped, in some ways, from Israel. But even today I have nightmares of (terrorists) killing us and burning our house.

**Israel has always lived in the shadow of terrorism. But not like this.**

**Benabou:** Hamas is different. That's why we keep saying that Hamas is ISIS. It's not just a slogan, Hamas is backed by Iran, a horrible terror organization. It's not like there's no Hamas in the West Bank -- there is, but not like in Gaza. I served in the West Bank, and Becky's settlement was under my responsibility. But there are levels of terrorism, levels of attack -- from throwing stones or firebombs, to shooting, to kidnapping, to what we see now. You're coming to kill someone because of their religion, or because of their nationality.

We always knew Hamas was a ter-

rible terror organization -- and what it's doing to Israel is what it's doing to their own people in Gaza. They took a beautiful Gaza Strip that Israelis lived in and grew the best vegetables, the best herbs, the best flowers, everything. When we left in 2005, we brought all Israelis outside of Gaza for peace. We left the houses, the greenhouses, everything -- and Hamas destroyed it. Then we realized even more that they don't care about their own people. They don't care about Palestinians. All they want is to eradicate Israel. They want to kill all the Jews, and then they're going to come for the West.

**Israel has set out to utterly obliterate Hamas. Is this a realistic goal, and if so, what will take its place in Gaza with its 2 million residents?**

**Friedman:** That's the biggest question, because Hamas isn't just in Gaza -- it's supported and indoctrinated and funded by huge powers. So even if Hamas is physically eradicated from the Gaza Strip, they're going to have pockets everywhere, and Iran and Qatar and all the other players are going to always have influence. So eradicating Hamas, or an Islamic Jihad group that's going to support something like Hamas, is going to be impossible.

The other issue is that even if Hamas is completely eradicated in the Gaza Strip, it's not just Hamas that hates Jews and Israel. They've been indoctrinating people in Gaza for decades, teaching antisemitism and hate for Israel and the glory of martyrdom, in elementary schools. And let's not talk about the Egyptians, who've never opened their border to the Gazans. The point is even if Hamas and all the official Hamas activists

are eradicated...you're going to have a whole new generation of radicalized individuals. How long is it going to be before these people organize? That's the question of the century.

**Admony:** I don't think it will ever be like it was before -- (Gazans) coming into Israel to work is going to be very problematic. I'm not sure if it's ever going to happen again...The fact is that Israel was given to us by the U.N. So we live there now, and from now on we have to figure out how to get along and live peacefully with the Palestinians.

**Benabou:** We all wonder what the day after is going to look like in Gaza. But what choice do we have? Because this is not even 75 years of hate. This is thousands and thousands of years of hate. From the beginning of time, Jews have had to fight people who didn't want us there. So now that we have a country that a lot of people don't think we should have, it adds just one more to the fight for our right to exist.

I hope there is a bigger plan because we are just a single people living in this world wanting peace. I hope that the professionals out there who are making decisions about the attacks, and the goal of eliminating Hamas, also have a plan for how to help the Palestinians rebuild their lives. Whatever it looks like -- whether it's rebuilding their infrastructure, giving them support -- I don't know what it's going to look like. But it has to be 'You're accepting our existence,' first and foremost. And if you accept our existence because we accept yours and we want to help you, then we are all going to work together to build a better future for the Palestinians and the people in Gaza.



In this photo from 2005, Becky Admony is pictured at right next to two fellow ICU nurses at the Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon, Israel

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## GLOBE

# Why ADL chief Jonathan Greenblatt is praising Elon Musk as advertisers flee X over antisemitism

By Ben Sales and Jackie Hajdenberg  
JTA

Advertisers have been dropping off the social network X this week after its owner, Elon Musk, called an antisemitic post “the actual truth.”

It was the exact pressure tactic that the Anti-Defamation League had recommended almost exactly a year earlier to fight hate on the platform, then known as Twitter. And given the Jewish civil rights group’s CEO’s response to Musk’s post endorsing the antisemitic “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory, one might have expected it to follow suit.

“It is indisputably dangerous to use one’s influence to validate and promote antisemitic theories,” ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt wrote on the platform.

Yet even as companies including IBM, Apple and Disney are pulling their ad dollars in protest, the ADL is continuing to buy ads on X — and Greenblatt has shifted to praising Musk, this time for what he says is a meaningful effort to fight antisemitism.

Musk had written another post, saying that two phrases common to pro-Palestinian protests — “decolonization,” and “from the river to the sea” — “necessarily imply genocide.” He added that users would be suspended if they posted “clear calls for extreme violence.”

“This is an important and welcome move by @elonmusk,” Greenblatt responded on X. “I appreciate this leadership in fighting hate.”

Musk has been sparring publicly with the ADL for months, at one point blaming it for rising an-

tisemitism and threatening to sue it for billions of dollars. Now, the latest whirlwind chapter in that saga — Greenblatt’s quick shift from condemning to praising the billionaire social media mogul — has created a whiplash moment for the Jewish world.

On Monday the State Department’s antisemitism envoy suggested that she opposed Greenblatt’s stance, while a member of one of the ADL’s advisory boards called the about-face “embarrassing.”

“The damage was done,” Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt remarked about Musk’s first tweet during a Monday briefing with Jewish media. “The endorsement of the Great Replacement theory was very harmful.”

Lipstadt added that she disapproved of what she saw as any attempt to “mitigate” Musk’s earlier tweet, without criticizing Greenblatt directly. “You can try to mitigate, but once you open the pillow, it’s like chasing the feathers,” she said.

Greenblatt told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency he didn’t regret his praise for Musk. Praising people when they take what the ADL sees as the right steps, he said, is part of his job fighting antisemitism. Musk’s tweet and his own praise of it, Greenblatt told JTA, came following a private conversation between the two men in which Musk previewed his vow to suspend users who call for violence.

“I will call out Elon Musk and X, like every other platform, when they get it wrong. And I will credit Elon Musk and X and every other platform when they get it right,” Greenblatt said Monday. “One



Under Elon Musk, the social media platform X has been at the center of several antisemitism-related controversies. (Ludovic Marin/Pool/AFP via Getty Images/Design by Mollie Suss)

doesn’t negate the other. It was not that, ‘this happened, therefore that wasn’t bad,’ or ‘that was bad, therefore we can’t see the value in this.’ Quite the contrary.”

During their conversation, Greenblatt said, he did not press Musk for an apology for the post the billionaire wrote on Wednesday, which Greenblatt had called “indisputably dangerous.”

Musk was replying to a user who wrote, “Jewish communities have been pushing the exact kind of dialectical hatred against whites that they claim to want people to stop using against them. I’m deeply disinterested in giving the tiniest s— now about western Jewish populations coming to the disturbing realization that those hordes of minorities [they] support flooding their country don’t exactly like them too much.”

The post was an endorsement of the Great Replacement theory, which posits that Jews are orchestrating the replacement of white

populations in Western countries via the mass immigration of people of color. It was the theory cited by the attacker in the 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting.

Musk responded, “You have said the actual truth.”

Greenblatt joined a loud chorus in condemning that post. Other Jewish groups, including the American Jewish Committee, harshly condemned it. Later in the same thread, Musk went after the ADL itself, saying the group “push[es] de facto anti-white racism.”

Greenblatt acknowledged the attacks on his group. “I don’t take any of that personally,” he said. Despite Musk’s public attitude about the ADL, Greenblatt called their meeting “extremely promising.”

Greenblatt noted that he believed Musk “still has work to do. He is not, if you will, in the clear.”

But, he added, “We saw a change

*Continued on page 25*

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# GLOBE

Continued from page 24

in what he said on Friday, and that was noteworthy." He said the ADL was buying ads on X, and in response to major firms suspending their ad spending, said companies "need to make their own decisions about where they want their brands to be placed."

He said, "I hope that the other social media companies follow X's leadership on this."

His handling of Musk is not sitting well with some supporters of the ADL. Peter Fox, a member of the group's NextGen Advisory Board in New York, wrote in the Forward that Greenblatt's praise of Musk was "baffling and frankly embarrassing." He added, "Aligning with someone like Musk, who repeatedly dabbles in conspiracy theories and white nationalist rhetoric, is a misstep that undermines the ADL's credibility and core principles."

Following Musk's endorsement of the "Great Replacement" theory, more than 100 Jewish activists called out Musk for "spreading the kind of antisemitism that leads to massacres."

Michelle Goldberg, a Jewish columnist for the New York Times, noted that Israel's Diaspo-

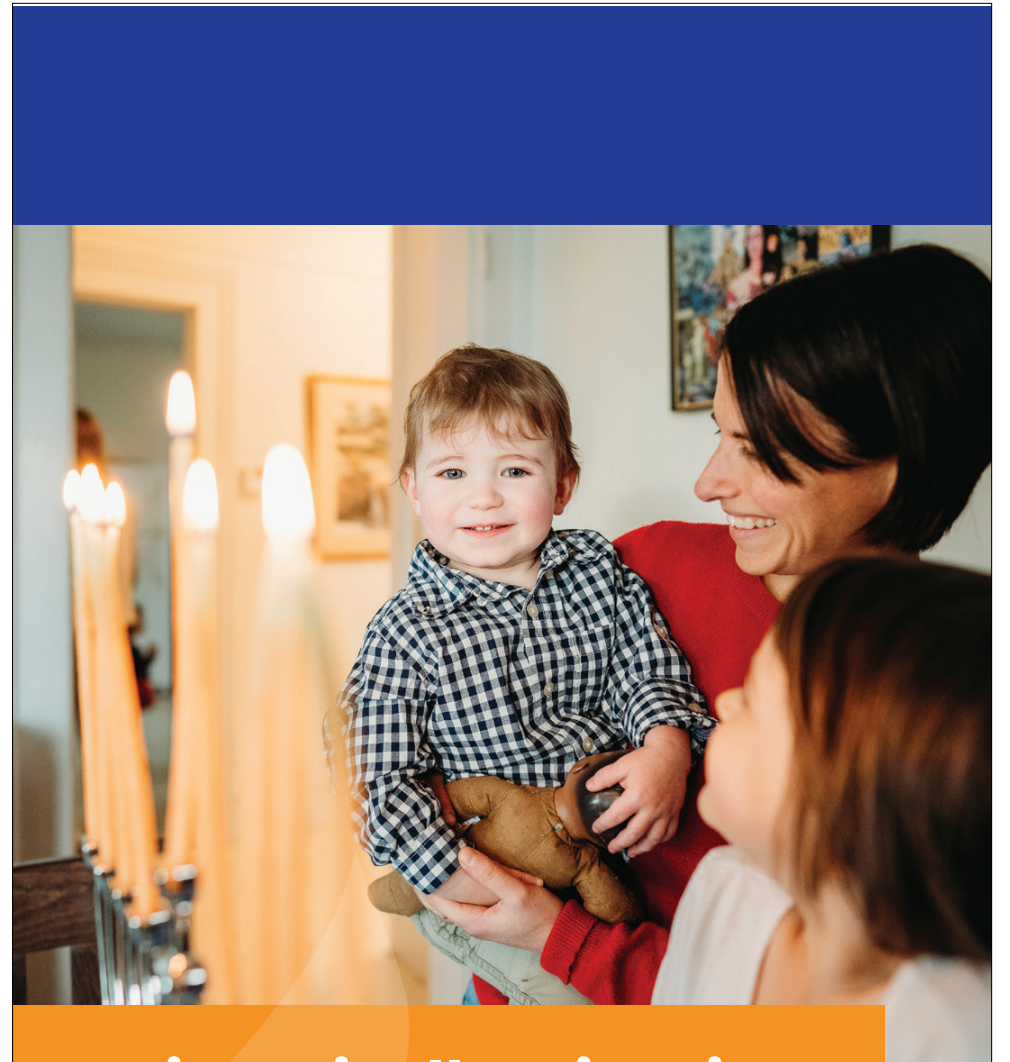
ra minister, Amichai Chikli, also thanked Musk for denouncing the pro-Palestinian language. "It's hard to figure out who is behaving more cynically, Musk or the Jewish leaders who are koshering him," she wrote in a column on Monday.

Greenblatt acknowledged the criticism.

"At the end of the day, I understand that everyone might not agree with what I did," he said. But he told JTA that he wasn't concerned that his positions on Musk would harm the ADL's reputation.

"The ADL has been around for 110 years. We don't play for any particular team," he said. "Our job is to protect the Jewish people. I don't make the decisions I do based on how do I think this affects our, quote, 'reputation.' I do it based on, am I able to keep our community safe?"

*Ron Kampeas contributed reporting.*



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# NEWS

## Jewish sponsor withdraws from National Book Awards after learning of authors' plans for Israel ceasefire statement

By Andrew Lapin  
JTA

At least one Jewish sponsor of one of the oldest and most prestigious literary awards in the United States is pulling out of Wednesday's ceremony after learning that some of the nominated authors plan to issue a statement urging a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, drawing yet another line in the sand at a cultural organization over Israel.

The controversy at the National Book Awards follows similar ones at the 92NY, Artforum and several book and film festivals at which statements and protests critical of Israel have resulted in institutional blowback and occasionally firings and resignations.

Zibby Owens, who leads the book publishing, bookstore and media company Zibby Books, announced her intent to pull out of the ceremony in a Substack post Tuesday. She wrote that a "source" had tipped her off that "all the nominees of the awards had gotten together as a block and decided to use their platform when winning speeches to promote a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel agenda," and said she wrote to the National Book Foundation expressing her concerns.

While saying "I don't believe in censorship," Owens wrote, "I wanted the NBF to prevent a bullying atmosphere where speeches could be used to intimidate

based on religious views." She specifically cited the phrases "Free Palestine" and "From the river to the sea" as ones that would be harmful to Jews, though she later told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency she did not know whether the nominees planned to use them.

After failing to receive these assurances from the foundation, she made the decision to pull her sponsorship. At least one other sponsor, Book of the Month, would not be attending the event but planned to continue to "support" it, according to The New York Times. Owens had just begun sponsoring the festival the year before but has donated in previous years.

The Times, speaking to at least one of the nominated authors, reported that they had planned to call for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip during the awards ceremony. The author, fiction finalist Aaliyah Bilal, said the writers would stand behind a single person reading a statement, and that they wanted to be "sensitive to all of the antisemitism going on in this moment." The National Book Foundation has sent a notice to the remaining sponsors and attendees alerting them to the possibility of political statements at the ceremony.

"I acted on the information I had been given," Owens told JTA via email. "I had asked for an assurance that should any anti-semitic rhetoric surface that the NBF would have an action plan around that.

None was forthcoming." Owens also said she would have wanted more advance notice from the foundation about the protest, and an indication "that while political speech is tolerated, hate speech will not be."

Owens is Jewish and was a recent "36 To Watch" honoree at the New York Jewish Week, a sister publication of JTA. Her decision was met with mixed reactions on her Substack.

"Pulling support from this event over a pro-Palestinian sentiment under the presumption that it would be antisemitic by default does not seem to me like an act of heroism," Jewish comedian Josh Gondelman commented. "It feels like a withdrawing of solidarity from members of the literary (and human) community who are also experiencing real pain."

Among the National Book Award finalists is nonfiction author and Palestinian human rights activist Raja Shehadeh, author of "We Could Have Been Friends, My Father And I: A Palestinian Memoir." Shehadeh's book is a portrait of his father, activist Aziz Shehadeh, an early proponent of Palestinian statehood and a moderate voice within Palestinian politics who was stabbed to death in 1985; Raja has long maintained that Israeli police failed to thoroughly investigate the murder.

Owens said she didn't object to Shehadeh's memoir being shortlisted.



Neil Gaiman and Art Spiegelman attend the 73rd National Book Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on November 16, 2022 in New York City. (Dia Dipasupil/Getty Images)

"The judges make decisions based on the quality of the work, which is as it should be," she said. A handful of other finalists, including Bilal and children's author Huda Fahmy, were nominated for books about Islam.

Calls for a ceasefire in Gaza have grown among artists, activists and some politicians as Israel's continued bombardment of the region, more than a month after the Hamas massacre of 1,200 Israelis, has claimed thousands of lives. International groups have called the situation a humanitarian crisis, while the Israeli military has said it is singularly focused on dismantling Hamas.

Last year's National Book Awards bestowed a special honor on Jewish "Maus" author Art Spiegelman, whose graphic Holocaust memoir was in the middle of a nationwide book ban controversy.



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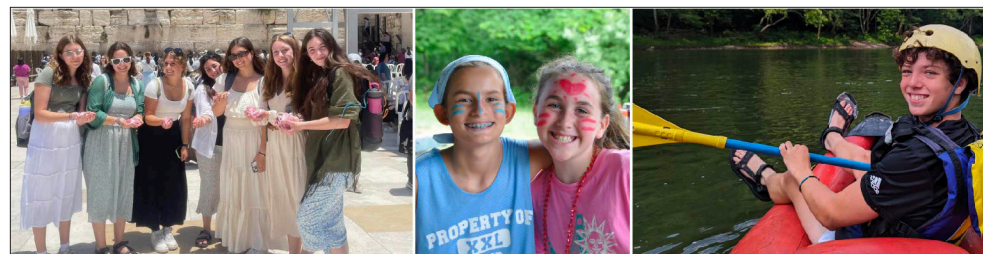
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# NEWS

who live in Israel, or the Jerusalem Post or the Times of Israel, or something along those lines. I try to stay away from CNN or other places like that, because they have a little bit of bias, especially when it comes to reporting things before we have the facts. I usually stick with Israeli or other Middle Eastern sources that have more boots on the ground."

Social media is often the driving dynamic in how news about the war is consumed. Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly known as Twitter) and their close online cousins -- optimized for mobile consumption on a smart phone -- prospect of quick and easy information digestion that may or may not provide an informed view of what is actually going on.

For every teenager or twentysomething who takes the time to read through a Thomas Friedman column in the New York Times, there are likely dozens and dozens of others who opt instead for presentations that may be insufficiently balanced, or truncated to the point of distortion. It is challenging to obtain sufficient perspective and depth on issues as complex as those raised by the war against Hamas. And since for many young people the most precious commodity is time (or their lack of it), the temptation to consume information in small packages is as compelling as it is constant.

Another issue is that social media platforms structure their feeds according to particular algorithms, which are who users engage with most frequently. Instead of presenting a variety of viewpoints a generous sampling of sources, a given platform can devolve into a kind of echo chamber, encouraging users to hew closely to existing beliefs -- what is often called "confirmation bias."

Having said that, some users may simply prefer such implicitly curated content, especially as it can shield them from content they may find irrelevant or offensive. Any perusal of X, for example, reveals abundant, deeply repugnant antisemitism. It can be the same on platforms that appeal to younger users, typified by Instagram and TikTok. Little wonder, then, that young people would just assume avoid being bombarded with that kind of ugly, potentially triggering material.

"Social media has been kind of a terror hole," laments Ken Schuck. A 29-year-old who paints and teaches dyslexic children how to read, he occasionally peruses Reddit, but otherwise prefers sources like Tablet magazine and the Shalom Hartman Institute, a leading center of Jewish thought.

Indeed, "fair and balanced" can be a

decidedly relative ideal. Schipper freely acknowledges that she has no desire to seek out viewpoints she considers patently outrageous. Few people, not the least her, would regard Hamas's slaughtering of civilians somehow worthy of occupying one boundary in a civilized debate "I guess my opinion of a balanced view would mean giving each side equal weight," she says, "and I don't really think that's appropriate here."

Similarly, "we can't escape the fact that whatever comes out of Gaza is filtered through the lens of Hamas," Schipper says. "So if you're giving equal weight to both sources, you're giving a terrorist group the same weight as an actual government institution."



**Eric Cohen**

Still, it's not impossible to identify social media sources that present themselves as exemplars of objectivity. "I follow an account on Instagram called RocaNews (@ridethe news)," says Eric Cohen, 23, an Environmental Studies major at Bellarmine University. "It's a nonpartisan, independently based news organization started by a bunch of young guys. I've been following them for about three or four years now. I like him because they don't pick a side."

All too often, social media posts about the war tend to be absolutist in one way or another. "It's dangerous to get into a mindset where I'm right/you're wrong," Cohen says. "You get into a cycle where you find a new source that reinforces your belief system, so you just keep falling over and over again -- and that's how your brain gets skewed in the wrong direction."

As for TikTok, which is largely controlled by the Chinese government, Cohen would just assume look elsewhere. "I don't like where it comes from, and I don't like the kind of culture it creates. I really try to stay away from it."

It's not all gloom and doom regarding TikTok, however. "I think there were lots of independent journalists that use TikTok as their platform to share information," says Abigail Goldberg, director of teen engagement at the Jewish Federation of Louisville. "Whether it's first-hand experiences, whether they're congresspeople or representatives in government for using that platform to share their experiences and their insight. I know there are civilians that are using TikTok as a platform for activism. So it's not just 20-second soundbites,

because there is a constant stream of communication through these apps."

Significantly, Goldberg points out, teens and young adults active on the platform might well absorb more information about a given subject in video format compared to a text version "TikTok allows three, five and 10 minute videos," she says. "If someone's explaining not just the gist, but the high points of an article, you can get just as much information in that three-minute video as you can reading an article -- and a lot of students nowadays are opting to scroll on TikTok, so that's what they're reading."

Goldberg adds: "NBC, CNN -- I see Anderson Cooper pop up on my TikTok feed quite often. Mike Huckabee also popped up in news clips, so you see the right and the left. But it depends. Your algorithm has a huge play about what you see online. I choose to post a lot in support of Israel. So my Instagram algorithm is going to show me many things and many different activist bloggers and journalists, people in general who are also pro-Israel."



**Violeta Higuera**

live in Israel how it's going."

Recently, she attended a meeting led by Matt Golden -- director of the Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council -- who spoke about the history of Israel through the centuries, insight into what's happening now, and crucially, "how to respond to things people say to us" that may be sharply provocative, Higuera says. She mentioned Rabbi David Ariel-Joel of The Temple as another of her trusted sources.

"A lot of the time it's like, 'what do I believe?' I see all these graphic things on Instagram -- are they true or not? So what Rabbi said to us was really helpful."

This past summer Higuera visited Israel, an experience that provided valuable context she can draw on as the Hamas war unfolds. "Before I went to Israel, I didn't feel like I had the right to have an opinion," she says. "I would get my news from Instagram, but when I went to Israel, I had my own experiences, and I met Israeli friends."

Try as she does to stay above the fray of churning information and

misinformation, sometimes Higuera can't avoid being drawn into unwanted online confrontation -- references to "from the river to the sea" on Instagram, for example. Elsewhere, "I had to block this girl because she was posting the most graphic things. It would be seven in the morning, I'd be scrolling through my friends' Instagram stories, and there would be the bloodiest things ever."

Another poster questioned whether Israel was fully justified in how it is responding to Hamas. "He made it seem like it was a bad thing," she says. "I realized that a lot of people just aren't educated on what it actually means."

As with other users of social media, content in one's feed "depends on what you click on to like," Higuera says. Sometimes "you get the fake ones, and you have to pick them out. I haven't gotten to tick-tock because I know if I look at it once, my whole feed is going to be filled with what I don't want. It's the same with Instagram. If I see something interesting on someone's story, I'll click on them. But I also get emails from Route One, the (Trager Family) JCC and others like BBYO -- they put out a weekly update."

It may simply be that the unprecedented nature of Israel's war challenge makes online collisions inevitable.

"When I post my opinion online," Goldberg says, "I know that I'm opening the door for other people to either agree or disagree, to start a conversation or start an argument with me. And I also know that when people post their opinions on Facebook, you have to know the audience you're connected to."

"I read a lot of comments on Instagram posts," she says. "And half the time I choose not to engage. If you see antisemitism online, absolutely say something to stop that. If someone is just posting their blatant opinion saying, 'I support Palestine because I don't support the death of innocent children,' that's fine. That's your opinion. You're allowed to post that. But if I see something online that says, 'Death to all Jews; Death to the State of Israel,' I'm absolutely going to engage with that. I feel it's important as a Jewish American, someone who's proud to be Jewish, if I see hate online, I'm going to try to stop it, or at least make my voice known."

"But often, you're not going to change their opinions by engaging in conversation," Goldberg acknowledges. "So you also have to know where the line is. Can I engage them in conversation, or am I going to start an argument and they're never going to change their minds."

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