

JEWISH LOUISVILLE

COMMUNITY

INSIDE:

Students at The Temple have been ‘Twinning’ with students in Israel

SEE PAGE 16

FRIDAY Vol. 51, No. 5 | May 30, 2025 | 3 Sivan 5785

# JCL Award recipients will be honored during the 2025 Annual Meeting on June 23

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

Recipients of the 2025 Jewish Community of Louisville Awards will be honored during the JCL's Annual Meeting Monday, June 23 at the Trager Family JCC.

The Blanche B. Ottenheimer Award – JCL's highest honor – goes to Teddy Abrams, the charismatic music director of the Louisville Orchestra. Other 2025 award recipients include Eric Goodman, Chan Kemper, Amanda Blieden, Samantha Simon, Kathy Luxemburger and Jean Moore.

*The Blanche B. Ottenheimer Award, which is the highest honor the Jewish Community of Louisville can give, is presented annually to a leader (or leaders) who have made a real difference – improving the quality of life in Louisville, in Kentucky and beyond. Ottenheimer was a Jewish Louisville community activist. In addition to serving as president of the National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section, she worked for passage of the city's Model Registration Law, which curbed corruption and led to cleaner elections.*

If you want to get an idea of what Louisville Orchestra Music Director Teddy Abrams has meant to this city, try asking former mayor Jerry Abramson.

"I had the pleasure of being on the orchestra board for many years," Abramson said. "He is not only a bright star in the music space, but he's a leader who has really thought through how best to bring this community together and then acted on his ideas. As a result of his insight, his commitment and his understanding of the community at large, we're a far

better place to live and raise a family."

Lots of Louisville Orchestra (LO) conductors vowed to be active in Louisville beyond the podium. Abrams, more than any of his predecessors, has actually followed through on his promises.

"He is by far the most engaged conductor, engaged in community affairs than we have ever had," Abramson said, "and as a result, because of his focus of bringing the community together through music, we're a better place."

Since arriving here in September of 2014 at age 27 – nine years after graduating from the Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music with a degree in conducting – Abrams has recast the Louisville Orchestra as an exemplar of the contemporary American symphonic ensemble. Indeed, the LO has a visibility on the national scale it never could boast in previous eras – not even during its heyday during the late 1940s and early 1950s, when it was renowned for commissioning works by some of the world's most celebrated composers.

"I feel trite to say that Teddy has been transformative for the city," said Cantor David Lipp of Congregation Adath Jeshurun.

"What he did with the orchestra is something I don't think I could have imagined before he came. He took it from a very much struggling organization, and made it really, in my estimation, the powerhouse, the artistic powerhouse of this community."

Perhaps no other conductor would have the notion – indeed, the chutzpah –



Teddy Abrams, Ottenheimer Award honoree for 2025 (Photo by Lauren Desberg)

to take the orchestra and superstar guest cellist Yo-Yo Ma to perform a concert inside Kentucky's Mammoth Cave. Yet they were on April 23, 2023 – and if you hadn't secured a ticket well in advance, tough luck.

Abrams, a gifted pianist and clarinetist when not wielding a baton, is also an accomplished composer. Big-time awards have come his way: Musical America's Conductor of the Year in 2022, and in 2024, the Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental Solo (partnering superstar pianist and Curtis classmate Yuja Wang).

Not bad for a guy born Edward Paul Maxwell Abrams in Berkeley, Calif. He was mentored, beginning at the ripe age of 12, by San Francisco Symphony Orchestra Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas.

"Teddy Abrams exudes warmth and ar-

See **ANNUAL MEETING** on page 4

# Shaping the Future of Jewish Louisville — Together

By Lenae Price  
VP & Chief Philanthropy Officer



When my husband Jordan and I moved to Louisville in 2011, we didn't know a single person. We had no family here and no real sense of what to expect. But within a few months Jordan was cast in a CenterStage production, and everything began to fall into place—as if this had always been where we were meant to be. It felt *bashert*.

Very quickly, the JCC became our home base. It's where we met friends who became chosen family, where our children began their Jewish journeys in the Early Learning Center, and where I found meaningful work supporting programs that brought joy, connection, and purpose to our community. Over time, Louisville truly became our home, and not just for us, but for our extended family, too. Because of this incredible community, 11 of our family members now live in Louisville. And just this month we celebrated our oldest daughter becoming a Bat Mitzvah, with our youngest headed to Jewish overnight camp for the first time this summer.

Some of you may remember me from my earlier years on staff, when I led fundraising for CenterStage and other initiatives, and worked alongside passionate lay leaders and colleagues to bring events such as the 125 Gala, L'Dor V'Dor, and Israel at 70 to life. In recent years, I've worked with corporations and non-profit organizations across the country, helping them clarify their messages and deepen their missions. Through it all, one truth has remained constant: When communities collaborate and lead together, anything is possible.

That's why I'm so excited and honored to return to the Jewish Community of Louisville (Jewish Federation and Trager Family JCC) in a new role as Vice Presi-

See **LENAE PRICE** on page 7

<b>Eric Goodman</b>	<b>Chan Kemper</b>	<b>Amanda Blieden</b>	<b>Samantha Simon</b>	<b>Kathy Luxemburger</b>	<b>Jean Marlowe</b>
<b>Ronald &amp; Marie Abrams Volunteer of the Year Award</b>	<b>Julie E. Linker Community Relations Young Leadership Award</b>	<b>Lewis W. Cole Memorial Young Leadership Award</b>	<b>Joseph J. Kaplan Young Leadership Award</b>	<b>Arthur S. Kling Award</b>	<b>Elsie P. Judah Award</b>

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# THE DASHBOARD

## Word of the Month

### Why should every Jew Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride Month?



D'var Torah

Rabbi  
David Ariel-Joel

The Temple commemorates national LGBTQ+ Pride month with many events, including our special 10th Annual Pride Shabbat on Friday evening, June 13 and Shabbat morning on June 14. Pride Shabbat at The Temple represents the first-ever Jewish Community Celebration of LGBTQ+ Pride month in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

As Kentucky's oldest and largest Jewish congregation and a founding member of the Reform Movement (Judaism's most progressive Jewish denomination), The Temple has always promoted the two central ideals in Jewish teachings: "Love thy neighbor" and "All people are created in God's image." Throughout The Temple's 182-year history, rabbis and lay leaders have been active in civil rights and in advocating for fair treatment of all people, including LGBTQ+ individuals. The Temple was Louisville's first and only Jewish congregation to have an LGBTQ+ rabbi. The Temple rabbis are active with the Fairness Campaign and have conducted same sex marriage rites since 1996 – including the first same sex marriage in the state of Israel. The Temple is a welcoming congregation and celebrates the contributions of all its members. The Temple rabbis hope that Pride Shabbat will help promote acceptance for and celebration of LGBTQ+ individuals in Louisville and throughout the region.

In March 1996, I performed a marriage ceremony for the first time in my life between two women. This was the first LGBTQ+ wedding in Israel. I did so out of a belief that recognizes the basic right of every person, as a person, to receive love from their partner, to live a life of partnership, and to establish a family. The right to marriage is one of the most basic human rights, and we find no room here for discrimination based on sexual identity and orientation.

That experience was the most religious and spiritual experience I have ever had. This was, I believe, due to the mature and special attitude of the couple towards Judaism and their wedding ceremony. The guests participated in the ceremony with excitement, in a way that reminded me of stories I had read about similar experiences among the "Jewish mystical community." All of this strengthened my recognition of the authentic religious-spiritual need of the LGBTQ+ community, not only for wedding ceremonies but for a positive religious experience in general.

The religious persecution, which continues to this day against LGBTQ+ people, is, in my opinion, the essence of human evil. In my opinion, evil inclination is doing evil to others. In the sexual context, it can be said that the evil inclination, or the urge to do evil, is expressed precisely in the suppression of sexuality, in sexual prohibitions, in the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of society in everything related to what happens in the bedroom

of our neighbors, who are mature and consenting adults. The evil inclination is at its peak when we persecute others, violate the rights of others, and judge the behavior of others based on what happens in their bedrooms. This voyeurism is the evil inclination at its most apparent form.

It is said of Hillel the Elder, the wisest of all Jewish sages, that when he was challenged to distill the entire Torah into a single sentence, he answered: "What is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary. Go study." (Talmud Bavli 31a)

And if we are talking about what is hated by us, let us ask ourselves, what is hated by us most of all? What could be more hated than intrusion into privacy in general, and its holiest place, the bedroom, in particular! Who among us is willing to have that private space peeped into? Who among us is willing to be judged by their actions in such a space?

Why then do we do to others what we hate?

Indeed, in doing so, we are transgressing the essence of the Torah, the commandment that summarizes the entire Torah! Let us try to remember this: "All human beings are created in the image of God, equal to one another and entitled to dignity and freedom. Any distinction that discriminates against people based on faith, ethnicity, color, gender, or sexual orientation is an attack on the image of God and God's presence in our lives." The Reform movement was the first major religious body in North America to embrace same sex marriages (already in 1996), and to ordain openly LGBTQ+ rabbis (already in 1985). We at The Temple are proud to continue that progressive tradition by advocating for full equality for LGBTQ+ individuals everywhere.

Pride Shabbat includes inspiring speakers, will be led by our LGBTQ+ members with both Temple Rabbis, and will have Shir Chadash and Voices of Kentuckiana (Kentucky's only LGBTQ+ choir) together with Jennifer Diamond, Avery Curtis, and Dr. Louie Bailey leading the music.

- Pride Erev Shabbat Service Friday, June 13 at 7:00 pm: speaker Aaron Guldenschuh, founder of Pride Shabbat at The Temple.

- Pride Shabbat Saturday, June 14: The day begins with a special Torah study at 9:00 am led by Rabbi David and Rev. Johanna Bos, followed by our Pride Shabbat Service featuring music by Shir Chadash and Voices of Kentuckiana and participation by LGBTQ+ Temple members. Stay afterward for a concert with Voices of Kentuckiana and a Shabbat Luncheon.

- Pride Pajama Party Saturday, June 14 at 5:30 pm: Bring your family for crafts, snacks, storytelling, and a brief Havdalah service.

- Kentuckiana Pride Parade Saturday, June 21 at 12:00 pm: Join The Temple in Nulu as we march to celebrate all LGBTQ+ individuals and families.

- All events are free and open to the public, including Shabbat morning services. Please RSVP for lunch.

Rabbi David Ariel-Joel is Senior Rabbi at The Temple

## Snapshots

On May 18, NCJW Louisville chapter held its 3rd Annual Advocacy in Action – Jewish Voice for Choice Award Breakfast event in support to protect and advance women's reproductive rights and healthcare justice in the commonwealth of Kentucky – guided by the Jewish values of tikkun olam, repairing the world, and kavod ha'briyot, respect for human dignity. This year's Sonia & Dr. Ronald Levine Voice for Choice Award honored Kim Greene .



## Candles

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

- June 1 @ 8:43 p.m. (Shavuot)
- June 6 @ 8:46 p.m.
- June 13 @ 8:50 p.m.
- June 20 @ 8:52 p.m.
- June 27 @ 8:53 p.m.

## Contacts

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

Send it along to *Community* at [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto: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](mailto:gshoemaker@jewishlouisville.org) or 502-238-2770.

Got an item for the *Community* eblast? Send it to [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@jewishlouisville.org).

## Deadlines

**Got a news item for *Community*?** Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Send in your news by **Monday, June 16** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on

**Friday, June 27.**

Submitting an item for *Community's* weekly eblast? Please submit it by Friday to [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto: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/](http://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/](http://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/](https://facebook.com/JewishLouisville/) or on Twitter, [twitter.com/JewishLouNews](https://twitter.com/JewishLouNews), for the latest Jewish news from Kentucky and around the world.

## Corrections/Clarifications

Have a correction? Send it to [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@jewishlouisville.org)



NEWS

Dancing, Dining, and The Derby

By ShinShinim, Kyla and Eden  
Guest Columnists

The month of May has been truly meaningful and amazing for us.

We started the month with an unforgettable experience: attending the Kentucky Derby, and WOW! We can confidently say it truly lives up to its name as the most exciting two minutes in sports, and we're so grateful to have had the chance to be there.

Our Israeli Story journey also continued, this time taking the project to public high schools, Ballard and Manual, as well as to the Trager Family JCC. It was wonderful to see the teens' interest in our stories and in learning about our beautiful country. It was also incredibly fulfilling to help expand Trager Family JCC members' knowledge about Israel and to showcase a different side of Israel than what's typically shown on social media.

Kyla went on a trip to Great Wolf Lodge with BBYO Teen Connect and had so much fun celebrating Shabbat and enjoying a cozy evening game night. Saturday was all about the water park, and the kids had an absolute blast! We were so happy to be part of such a great weekend.

To conclude our Cooking Culture series, in our final session we made Ashkenazi rugelach and Lotus spread. We loved sharing Israeli immigration stories, including some from our own families, and introducing participants to delicious cultural foods they may never have tried before. Exploring and teaching about the

many cultures within Israel was a terrific, heartfelt experience. Thank you to everyone who attended any of the four sessions. It was truly special.

We also celebrated alongside Jewish Louisville teens at the *We Will Dance Again* party, honoring the We Will Dance Again movement and Israel's Nova Festival, where so many people lost their lives on October 7, 2023. We had huge fun dancing, eating, playing games, and celebrating with everyone who joined us, as we recognized the strength and resilience of the Jewish people. The teens truly found a place in our hearts throughout the year, and we're so happy we had the chance to celebrate with them.

Another powerful moment this month was attending the screening of the film *October 8* at the Trager Family JCC. Viewing the film was an incredibly emotional and overwhelming experience. As Israelis, we lived through the early days of the war and continue to feel the reality of what's happening back home. Seeing what Jewish students on U.S. college campuses are going through made us appreciate our work here even more.

We want to send strength and love to all our fellow Jewish students out there. Never be afraid to be who you are, embrace your identity and always remember that you're never alone.

This month, we also wrapped up our activities with the preschools and Club J. We had such a great time this year teaching, learning, and having fun with the kids. It's hard to say goodbye, but we'll be so happy

to see many of them again at camp.

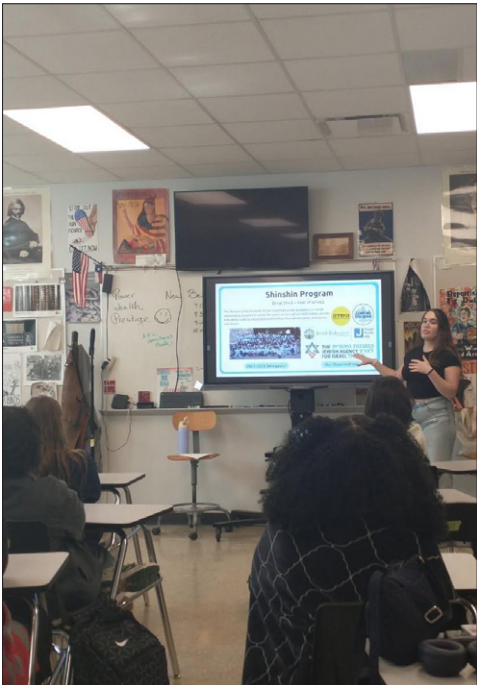
And now...even though Louisville's weather can't quite decide what season it is, we can definitely feel that summer's around the corner, and we couldn't be more excited to soon see the kids at Camp J and Camp Livingston. We're already hard at work preparing for the best summer ever!

Please don't forget to mark your calendars to attend the annual Israeli Street Fair on Sunday, June 8. It's going to be a huge celebration outdoors at the Trager Family JCC. We can't wait to see you all there!



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# NEWS

## ANNUAL MEETING

Continued from page 1

dor," musicologist A. Kori Hill wrote in a 2024 article titled, "I Care If You Listen."

"His clean-shaven face, halo of brown curls, and light, bespectacled eyes suggest a youthfulness that eclipses his 37 years and more than two decades of professional experience. But it's not just his image – it's his energy. In the past decade as the music director of the Louisville Orchestra, Abrams has approached his role as both an artistic leader and a community representative. Joining the ensemble in the aftermath of bankruptcy and a strike, Abrams canvassed – literally – to aid in the restoration of the orchestra's image."

"A lot of what I did was more like a politician," he told me in our recent Zoom interview, "just showing up and meeting people, listening to their stories, shaking their hands, inviting them personally to the orchestra, and running a kind of campaign for years until we had regained that confidence."

At the LO, Abrams has made a priority of "Creators Corps," in which composers spend an entire, salaried year in residence – and having their works performed by the orchestra in concert.

"One of the things that really frustrates me is, there are a lot of big institutions that go on and on about all their community programs," Abrams told his interviewer.

"Then, you look at the budgets and you talk to the people who run those programs, and they all feel like they're

strapped for attention, they're strapped for budget, they don't get the resources that they need... so we're trying to put our money where our mouth is when we say that we value that. We're putting the money there, we're applying for the grants, and really having the staff and the resources to execute these things effectively. This is a thorn in the industry's side – there's too much lip service to this stuff."

In an implicit nod to his Jewish heritage, Abrams has programmed works by Leonard Bernstein and others, combining them with scores by Black composers on a multi-year "Journeys of Faith" concert series. And earlier this season, he conducted Viktor Ullmann's Holocaust-era opera "Der Kaiser von Atlantis" at the Kentucky Center's Whitney Hall.

Indeed, the LO's roots can be traced to the former Y.M.H.A. (Young Men's Hebrew Association) Orchestra, which Louisville businessman Morris Simon had founded in 1914.

"From the beginning, his mantra was that the orchestra belongs to the entire city and made community service the highest priority," Louisville Orchestra board chairman Andrew Fleischman commented.

"His presence immediately changed the tone of the discussion about the LO in our city, but he did not stop there," Fleischman said. "His vision to serve the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky led to a state touring program that now takes the orchestra to every corner of the state, which is just starting its fourth year. He emphasizes the power of mu-

sic to bring people of different backgrounds together, which is of course a very powerful message right now."

JCL chair Beth Salamon put it this way:

"The impact Teddy has had on the Jewish community cannot be overstated. From the collaboration between Black and Jewish communities that he initiated to Holocaust education, Teddy has fostered connections and has created a more inclusive environment not just for the Jewish community, but for everyone in Louisville."

This year's **Ronald & Marie Abrams Volunteer of the Year Award**, whose extant namesakes exemplify community service, goes to **Eric Goodman**.



Eric Goodman

Paul Norman, Vice President and Chief Financial officer at the Federation and Trager Family JCC, has known Eric Goodman ever since Norman arrived in Louisville as CFO 3 ½ years ago.

"He's brilliant," Norman said, lauding Goodman's insights as a member of the Finance and Investment committees. "He isn't a silent committee member – he's a leader. Nobody asks as many questions as he does. He makes you better – he's made me better. I view him as a mentor."

Goodman has plenty to say about the future of Jewish education in Louisville.

"We really need to make sure the community is healthy far into the future by focusing on our kids – the next generation," Goodman told Community in 2021, when he chaired a planning committee organized by the Federation and the Jewish Heritage Fund. "We are really focusing on Jewish education for our youth," he added, "to make sure it is the best it can be and reach the most kids possible."

Four years later, Goodman continues to be at the center of such discussions. He's a member of the board putting together what's been dubbed JLE – short for the Jewish Learning Experience – uniting separate, disparate programs into what an April 2025 Community article described as an independent, "true community school."

Goodman – a former Chief Investment Officer of AEGON USA – was a member of Keneseth Israel Congregation when he encouraged fellow congregant Greg Moore to join the JCL Investment Committee, which Goodman chaired. Apparently, the advice stuck: Two years later, Moore – last year's recipient of the JCL's Lewis W. Cole Memorial Young Leadership Award – succeeded Goodman as committee chairman.

"Service to the community is motivated by a love of Judaism, Jewish culture, history and people," Goodman said. "And service to the community means applying your skills to the needs of the community. Since I'm an investment and financial professional by background, those areas are usually a natural entry. It's where my skill meets an obvious need."

As a member of Keneseth Israel Congregation, "my main volunteer contribution was as Chair of the Strategic Planning committee," Goodman said, "where I lead an extensive strategic re-

view several years ago. I've also been a supporter and occasional fundraiser for Birthright Israel, though never held an official position in that organization." Apart from that, "My main volunteer work outside of the Jewish community was as a Board member for many years for the Center for Women and Families."

"But serving the community can also mean bringing insights or ideas that you think will be crucial for its future, and selling those ideas," Goodman added. "That's what happened when I introduced myself to Jeff Polson and Linda Schuster (then-chair of the Jewish Heritage Fund) eight or so years ago and began promoting the idea of focusing resources on youth education, including Jewish Camp, Israel trips as well as traditional school."

"I eventually convinced others in the community as a member of the JHF board," Goodman said. "That may have been my most impactful contribution in retrospect. But I'll continue to try to help wherever I can."

**The Julie Linker Community Relations Young Leadership Award** is named for a Jewish leader who passed away unexpectedly in 1984, depriving the community of a friend. She chaired the Young Women's Division of the United Jewish Campaign and was vice-chair of the Major Gifts Division, of the Women's Division, and was vice-president of the Women's Cabinet of the Federation. This year's winner is **Chan Kemper**.



Chan Kemper

Growing up Christian in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Chan Kemper, didn't know terribly much about Judaism. But when she met Aaron Kemper and moved to her future husband's native Louisville in 2013, the roots of

her future Jewishness began to sprout.

"We were a mixed-religion couple when we got married in 2016," Chan Kemper recalled. The couple "had a child about a year later, but I'd always seen how important Judaism was to Aaron – to his personality and culture – the way he exists in the world," she said.

Not long afterward, she began studying with Rabbi David Ariel-Joel of The Temple, "not just the cultural moorings of Judaism," she recalled, "but the teachings of the Torah. Honestly, it was such a radically different way from how I'd grown up."

But maybe not all that distinct from the sensibilities of a young woman whose mother was a civil rights activist – a daughter who'd volunteered in the Peace Corps and – armed with a law degree from the University of Cincinnati – has more often than not worked in the not-for-profit or government sector. Currently she is Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg's Senior Advisor on Law and Public Policy.

"I've always been someone who feels that's a privilege and a duty to help" others, she said. "That idea really resonated with me."

"After I converted, I took the same beliefs I'd had about my existence in this world and applied it to the Jewish community in Louisville. I'm on the Jewish



## 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, June 23

Shapira Foundation Auditorium at the Trager Family JCC

5:30 p.m. Cocktails and Appetizers  
6:15 p.m. Meeting and Awards Ceremony

Please join the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC as we elect officers and new board members and celebrate honorees.

### Proposed Slate of Officers

Beth Salamon, Chair  
Chris Brice, Vice Chair  
Becky Ruby Swansburg, Vice Chair  
Jeff Goldberg, Treasurer  
Kate Latts, Secretary  
David Kaplan, Immediate Past Chair

**Nominees for New Board of Directors Members to serve a three-year term**  
Alan Linker

**Nominees to serve a second three-year term**  
Corey Shapiro and Kevin Trager

Appointed to serve on the Board of Directors in accordance with the by-laws:  
Rabbi Ben Freed, Louisville Board of Cantors and Rabbis  
Bill Altman, Jewish Community Relations Council

Additional nominations may be submitted by petition to [info@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:info@jewishlouisville.org), with a minimum of 36 signatures by JCL members in good standing at least 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

**RSVP** Adam Cohen, 502-238-2722 or [annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org)



# NEWS

Family & Career Services board and the Jewish Community Relations Council.”

“Chan’s been a great asset as we’ve formed our new executive group for JCRC,” Council director Trent Spoolstra commented. “She’s helping with our advocacy efforts, in what we want to promote going forward in terms of government affairs. And she’s been fantastic giving advice on everything from taking public positions to understanding and building consensus within our Jewish communities. She’s involved in other organizations across the city as well, so she’s super connected. I feel very lucky to have her on JCRC.”

Last year Kemper achieved another milestone: becoming a Bat Mitzvah. She and Aaron have two children: Tavi, 8 and Mika, 6. And while working for Greenberg is a challenging assignment, “regardless of what we’re doing, we’re committed to the values that underpin it. That’s been the guide stone I use as my North Star.”

**The Lewis W. Cole Memorial Young Leadership Award** is named for an organizer of the Conference of Jewish Organizations, the predecessor to the Federation. A committed Annual Campaign volunteer, Cole devoted his life to Jewish Louisville. This year’s winner is **Amanda Blieden**.



**Amanda Blieden**

From the time she was growing up in San Diego, Amanda Blieden has been steeped in Jewish life.

“It started with my mom,” said Blieden. “She was president of our synagogue and active in the Federation. Anything Jewish, she was involved.”

Like mother, like daughter.

“I interned at the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) when I was in high school,” Amanda Blieden said. “As a freshman I created a program to send the junior class to the Museum of Tolerance (in Los Angeles) to learn about the Holocaust, which continued as a part of the local curriculum. With that program I was lucky enough to win the Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Award. So, I’d say my focus was always Holocaust education and fighting antisemitism.”

No wonder, given the record of history.

“I have family who were killed in the Holocaust, and I have family who helped liberate concentration camps. My great uncle was a founder of AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee). So it’s in my blood.”

An alumna of Indiana University in Bloomington, Blieden later moved to Chicago, where she met and married Alexander Blieden. The two of them then relocated to Louisville, where her husband is president of Kaden Companies, a privately held commercial real estate company, and live with their two young sons. Both parents are active nationally with Jewish Federations.

“My career has always been in real estate” Amanda Blieden says. “I’m a CPA but I started in real estate accounting. That’s how Alexander and I met. I was in corporate finance in Chicago for a real estate company, and then here I worked for KFC in their development group.

Though much of her energy is devoted to helping raise her boys, Blieden is still an active volunteer amid Louisville’s Jewish community.

“I want to make sure with the boards I’m on that I am as active as possible and can make a difference,” she said. “I am truly honored and grateful to receive this award and hope to be a part of ensuring a thriving Jewish future here in Louisville.”

**The Joseph J. Kaplan Young Leadership Award** is named for a leader in Jewish education and president of the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA) – the predecessor of the Jewish Community Center. Kaplan encouraged people to remember Jewish Louisville in their will. The Award was established during his lifetime. This year’s winner is **Samantha Simon**.



**Samantha Simon**

“It was a complete surprise,” Samantha Simon says about news that she was the 2025 Young Leadership Award winner. “I had no idea.”

Asked why she was honored, Simon had to pause for a few seconds.

“I guess it’s because I’m trying to be very involved in the Jewish community,” she said. “I’m very passionate about it.”

Passionate and more than a little busy.

“I’ve been on a lot of committees the Federation’s been putting on,” Simon said. “I went to the conference for PJ Library; I utilize the Trager Family JCC; I attend events.” Simon’s family was a significant supporter of the Blieden Family Playground next to the Trager Family JCC. Going forward, she will take on an enhanced role with the Federation Women’s Philanthropy Committee.

Few people are so persuasive ambassadors.

“I’m welcoming and accepting of others,” she said, “and I like showing them around – not just pointing out where things are but being excited about things. I guess that’s being a leader.”

“When new people come in, I want them to feel that they, too, are part of the Trager Family JCC. If I’m hosting an event, I want to make sure they’re having a good time. I want to be a good host.”

Her husband, Jeff Simon, is an unstinting ally.

“She’s consistent and available,” he said. His wife “is positive, and she makes other people feel positive. She enjoys being involved. It gives her a human connection. She’s not doing it for herself. In the business world, we call it ‘servant leadership.’”

Fundamentally, “I’m not working towards a goal. I’m very proud of the Louisville Jewish community. It’s accessible, which it was not when I was living in Chicago. Here, everyone is looking for young people with open arms. They’re looking for the next generation, for engagement.”

**The Arthur S. Kling Award** honors the memory of a prominent Jewish Louisville leader, who served as president of the YMHA. He was instrumental in establishing the original JCC on Dutch-

mans Lane and founding the Bureau of Jewish Education and the Conference of Jewish Organizations, which ran the United Jewish Campaign. This year the award -- which recognizes outstanding performances by JCL staff -- goes to Trager Family JCC Accounting Director **Kathy Luxemburger**.



**Kathy Luxemburger**

For nearly three decades, Kathy Luxemburger has been steeped in dollar signs.

In her current role as Accounting Director of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC, she and her depart-

ment colleagues keep a close eye on “all the money that goes in or out, on the Annual Campaign, Membership, and the Early Learning Center.”

To get an idea of how Luxemburger’s brain works, consider the following factoid: “I thought it was fun to do practice tests in college.” Accounting students at Eastern Kentucky University, you’ve got a lot to live up to.

This is a woman whose dedication to purpose is astonishing – and not simply by virtue of time-in-service.

“Kathy is a consummate professional who leads by her longstanding work ethic, business knowledge, professional integrity and warm personality,” Sara Klein Wagner, President and CEO of the Federation and the Trager Family JCC, wrote in an all-staff memo. “She is a dedicated, passionate and unsung hero of the Finance and Accounting team who has won the respect and admiration of several prior CEO’s, Presidents, Board Chairs, CFO’s and staff for her expertise, wealth of knowledge and friendly personality.”

Luxemburger is kind of a detail freak. A friendly detail freak, but a detail freak nonetheless.

“I’m the type that will look for the penny,” she said. Chief Financial Officer Paul Norman “makes fun of me. And I’m like, ‘No, I am looking for that penny.’”

Still, obsessiveness extends beyond the quantitative realm.

“I would be remiss if I did not celebrate Kathy’s unwavering commitment as a number one U of L fan,” Wagner said, “who can frequently be seen at the baseball, football, and basketball stadiums rooting in her red team clothing – Go Cards!”

First given in 1974, the **Elsie P. Judah Memorial Award** was established to honor the late Elsie P. Judah, who was one of the founders of the former Golden Age Group. Judah, who died in 1972, left \$3,000 to the Jewish Federation as a bequest. At the request of her son, Clarence F. Judah, the Federation board of directors and endowment fund trustees approved the establishment of the annual award. This year’s winner is **Jean Marlowe**.

Asked what “doing service” means to her, Jean Marlowe has a simple yet eloquent answer: “Fundamentally, it’s just focusing on others besides myself.”

You can witness that focus in action on any given Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Trager Family JCC’s Kohn Family Town Square, where Marlowe



**Jean Marlowe**

supervises setup and serving for the popular senior lunches alongside Active Adult & Senior Program Director Dara Cohen.

“I kind of came in the back door,” recalled Marlowe, a twice-weekly volunteer at the Filson

Historical Society who was seeking an assignment to occupy the remaining three days of the week.

“I like to garden and I’m a cook, so I wrote to the JCC and offered to help either with their garden program or in the kitchen for their senior program,” Marlowe said. “Dara contacted me and said, ‘We really can’t do that because the kitchen’s too small, but why don’t you come hold newsletters, or help serve the meals.’ So that’s how I got started. And I found a real purpose in it.”

“She’s amazing,” Cohen said, “so thoughtful, considerate, warm, and kind. This is a volunteer job, but she treats it like it’s her career.”

Marlowe quickly realized how vital the communal meals were to their senior clientele – particularly as an antidote to debilitating isolation. “I read a statistic that loneliness in the elderly is as bad for their health as smoking two packs of cigarettes a day,” she said. “As I started getting involved, I saw I was doing something worthwhile, and that I was making a difference – even if I just sat down and listened to people, making them feel valued and cared for.”

Reality can be sobering.

“I’ve heard two different seniors say that the (lunch) is the only meal they get all day,” Marlowe said. “But for the majority of people, it’s the loneliness factor. I’ve heard over and over people say, ‘I don’t know what I would do if there wasn’t this program’ – it’s filling such a need for them. And when I leave that place, I feel happier than when I got there.”

For Marlowe, volunteering with the senior program has demonstrated a kind of universal welcoming.

“I am not Jewish, and that hasn’t made one difference,” she said. “I have always felt loved and accepted and part of the community. I’ve found the Trager Family JCC so open to people from all walks of life and from all different orientations. It’s just been a loving place for me.”

## See the Teen Award Winners on page 7

The Federation and the Trager Family JCC will hold its 2025 Annual Meeting on Monday, June 23 at the Trager Family JCC’s Shapira Foundation Auditorium. Join the Jewish Federation and the Trager Family JCC as we elect our officers and new board members, as well as recognize and celebrate our award winners. The evening begins with cocktails and appetizers at 5:30 p.m., followed by the meeting and awards ceremony at 6:15 p.m. RSVP to Adam Cohen at 502-238-2722 or email [annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org).



## COMMUNITY

**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 [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@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 June 16 for publication on June 25 and July 14 for publication on July 23.

**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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### EDITORIAL POLICY

**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 and letters to the editor to: [community@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:community@jewishlouisville.org).

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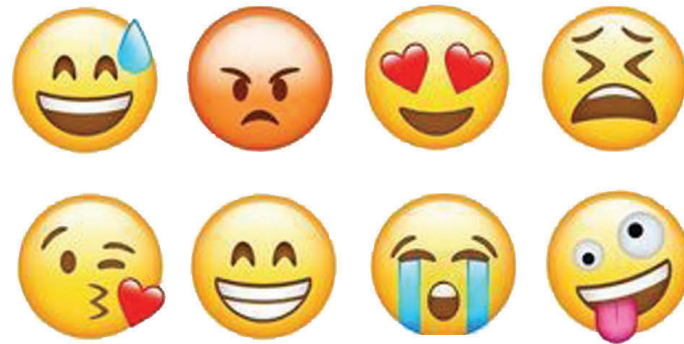
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## FORUM

### Symbols of America's 25-and-under generation



steve@greenberg-art.com **GREENBERG**

## Death, vitriol and finally, a declaration of humanity



### Mindful Ramblings

Andrew Adler

The murders of Sarah Lynn Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky outside the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. on May 21 were horrific enough: a pair of young Israeli Embassy staffers on the cusp of becoming engaged to be married, slain by a gunman firing 21 rounds from a 9mm semiautomatic pistol -- shattering the lives of two people and their families, and enveloping many of us in a renewed haze of sorrow.

That was gut-punch enough. But two days after the news broke, I made what may have been a tactical error: clicking on a Washington Post story posted on Facebook, giving readers further insight into what defined these two people. It was meant to be sympathetic yet dispassionate, more informative than opinionated.

My error wasn't so much in reading the Post's story as in scrolling through the hundreds of comments below. I don't consider myself naïve about the potential for unsettling expression on social media – certainly not anything to do with post-October 7 Israel. Having said all that, I was still struck/dismayed/sickened by the unabashed vitriol unfolding in front of me.

"He is a great man who raised a gun for truth and killed the killers of innocent Palestinians," read one comment

by one poster from Islamabad, Pakistan. "Just wait more is coming!" declared another, accompanied by a laughing emoji. "What a hero....every little bit helps," said a third.

Anyone has the right to voice opinion about how the Israeli government is prosecuting the war in Gaza. The deaths of innocents is more than distressing; in many instances, it is appalling. But when reasonable discourse disintegrates into irrational hatred, a boundary has been violated.

Never mind that Milgrim and Lischinsky were entirely unconnected to the war in Gaza. So they were Israeli employees – so what? Milgram, 26, was known for her commitment to reconciliation. She held a certification in Religious Engagement in Peacebuilding from the United States Institute of Peace – founded by Congress in 1984 as "a nonpartisan, independent organization dedicated to protecting U.S. interests by helping to prevent violent conflicts and broker peace deals abroad."

Lischinsky, 30, was born in Germany to a Christian mother and Jewish father. He considered himself a Messianic Jew, and whatever you think of that following, his commitment to Israel was unmistakable. He served in the IDF. And now he lies in a grave not far from Beit Zayit, a village west of Jerusalem where his family lives.

The gunman who extinguished their lives picked them at random – the first people he saw emerging from the museum on this May evening. He knew nothing about his victims, only that they were proximate. He fired round after round into his victims and then sat quietly among several museumgoers as he waited for the police to arrive -- shouting "Free, free Palestine!" as he was led away.

All that was left was to stain their memories, or to engage in conspiracy speculation verging on the bizarre ("A cruel operation ran by Mossad to counter Pro-Palestinian movement in the US"/"Wouldn't be at all surprised if Israel killed two of their embassy workers in a false flag operation just because they're desperate for some good PR and continued pretext to keep the genocide going.")

Still, it wasn't all grotesquerie and disinformation. A decent proportion of these 684 comments condemned the murders as an act of heinous, despicable violence.

"This is truly heartbreaking," one poster lamented. "Yaron and Sarah were both working towards such meaningful goals—building relationships and bringing peace. My thoughts are with their families and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time. We must continue to stand against hatred in all forms."

In that humane spirit, I'll leave you with words spoken by Cantor David Lipp during a brief memorial gathering on the morning of Friday, May 23 at the Trager Family JCC:

*Sarah and Yaron's work "was not about killing and was not about hate, but was about cooperation and building between Jews and Muslims and Israelis and Palestinians and Druze and Arabs. They imagined something better, and they worked towards something better."*

*"Let us stand on the shoulders of what they lived for, so that their dying will not just be a totally unnecessary and horrific tragedy for them and their peoples. I'd like us to take a moment of silence to imagine a world that these two young people were trying to bequeath to us."*

May their memories be for a blessing.

Andrew Adler is the Managing Editor of Community.



# FORUM

## LENAE PRICE

Continued from page 1

dent & Chief Philanthropy Officer. Because at its heart, this work is about all of us joining together to build something lasting, meaningful, and strong.

### What Philanthropy Really Means

Philanthropy often gets boiled down to fundraising, but in Jewish life, it's so much more than that. It's how we live out *arevut* (mutual responsibility). It's how we do *tzedakah*, not just as a generous act, but as a commitment to justice and community.

It's not just about making a donation. It's about showing up. It's a camp counselor who keeps in touch with their campers year-round. It's a volunteer who delivers a meal or helps plan a holiday event. It's families who give in honor of their grandparents, and donors who believe in the next generation. It's also what powers our Federation, our Trager Family JCC, and the many local and global programs that help Jewish life thrive.

### A Vision That's Rooted in Us

As we look toward the future of philanthropy at JCL, our approach is grounded in values and fueled by collaboration. We know the best ideas and the biggest impact come when we bring our heads and hearts together. Here are the three areas we'll be focusing on as we grow:

#### 1. Strengthening Relationships

Great philanthropy starts with strong relationships. Whether it's with donors, volunteers, participants, staff, or community partners, we're focusing on building meaningful connections—ones rooted in trust, gratitude, and shared purpose. Everyone has something to offer, and everyone deserves to feel seen and appreciated for it.

#### 2. Expanding the Circle

Our community is growing and evolving, and we want to make sure that everyone who wants to be part of Jewish life in Louisville feels welcome. That means reaching new and younger donors, engaging unaffiliated Jews, and inviting new voices to the table. Whether someone gives a gift, shares their story, volunteers on a committee, or shows up to help, there's a place for everyone in

this work.

### 3. Telling Our Story

We're lucky to be part of a community where incredible things happen every day, from a preschooler singing Shabbat songs in the lobby, a senior finding companionship over a weekly lunch, or a teen returning home from Israel with a stronger sense of identity. These stories show us how powerful Jewish life can be and how much of it is made possible through collective support. We'll keep lifting up these voices so everyone can see the impact they're part of.

### Moving Forward, Together

The Jewish Community of Louisville has built something truly special: a community that celebrates tradition, supports one another, and keeps showing up in moments of both joy and challenge. Philanthropy is what helps us keep that momentum going and ensures it's here for generations to come.

This isn't the work of one person or one department. It's a partnership with lay leaders, staff, donors, volunteers, rabbis, educators, parents, grandparents, and community members of all backgrounds. When we work together, we're not just raising funds, we're raising each other up.

### An Open Invitation

This community has so much to be proud of and so many possibilities ahead. As we move forward, we'll keep honoring the strengths that got us here while making room for new energy, new ideas, and new collaborations.

To everyone who has supported JCL with time, heart, or resource, thank you. To those who are just starting to explore how to get involved, we're ready to meet you where you are. Whether it's a conversation, a coffee, a shared project, or a new connection, you're invited.

Fourteen years ago, the Jewish community opened a door for me and my family. Now, the door is open for you and yours. Let's keep building something amazing—together.

With gratitude,  
Lenae Price  
Vice President & Chief Philanthropy Officer  
Jewish Community of Louisville  
[lprice@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:lprice@jewishlouisville.org)

## The 2025 JCL Award recipients include the following four teen honorees:

### The Joseph Fink BBYO Community Service Scholarship

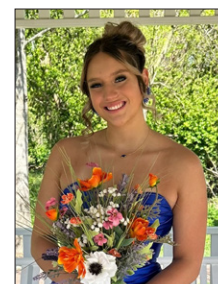


Noa Yussman

Joe Fink was passionate about the Jewish Community Center's Senior High program and served as a two-term president of B'nai B'rith Louisville Lodge No. 14. He was a member of the District Board of Governors for B'nai B'rith and was named B'nai B'rith Person of the Year. Locally, he served as the B'nai B'rith advisory chair at the JCC and served on the KIO Regional BBYO Board. He was also president of Hillel and was a member of the Jewish Community Center Board. When he died unexpectedly at a young age, his family and friends knew the best way to honor him would be to establish an endowment that would provide a partial-tuition college scholarship for qualifying BBYO members. The Joseph Fink BBYO Community Service Scholarship is presented to a senior who was an active member of their BBYO chapter and has performed a significant amount of community service during high school.

The Joseph Fink BBYO Community Service Scholarship goes to **Noa Yussman**.

### The Tony Levitan Award



Sarah Rothballer

Tony Levitan was a tireless community worker who was well known and respected throughout the city. He served as president of B'nai B'rith and was the main propelling force behind the B'nai B'rith Institute for Adult Jewish Education, in addition to serving as treasurer of the YMHA. The Tony Levitan Award is given to outstanding high school senior athletes who have demon-

strated exceptional character and leadership throughout their participation in team sports and Jewish communal events.

The Tony Levitan Award goes to **Sarah Rothballer**.

### The Stacy Marks Nisenbaum Award



Natalie Scaiewicz

Stacy Marks Nisenbaum was active in Louisville BBYO and had a special devotion to Jewish camp, even choosing a career in Jewish communal service serving as the Associate Regional Director of BBYO's Lone Star Region. To honor her memory, three friends established this camp scholarship to enable youth to attend Camp Beber or a national BBYO convention each year. The Stacy Marks Nisenbaum Award is presented to incoming high school juniors or seniors who are leaders in BBYO, strengthening and growing the program, while staying active at school and in the community at large.

The Stacy Marks Nisenbaum Award goes to **Natalie Scaiewicz**.

### The Ellen Faye Garmon Award



Levi Gladstein

The Garmon Award is given annually in memory of Ellen Faye Garmon, a teenager who died in July 1968 in a tragic accident. She was actively involved in Jewish life through BBYO and the Jewish Community Center. The Ellen Faye Garmon Award goes to incoming high school juniors or seniors who demonstrate leadership and are involved in their BBYO chapter and community, working to strengthen and grow both.

The Ellen Faye Garmon Award goes to **Levi Gladstein**.

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-Babylonian Talmud Taanit 23a



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protected

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The need is great, but together, the strength of our community is greater.



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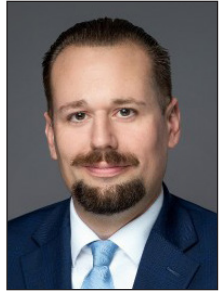
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# FORUM

## For Shavuot, a deeply personal flavor of revelation



JCRC

Trent  
Spoolstra

June 1 at sundown through June 3 at sunset marks Shavuot, the Jewish holiday that commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Shavuot has a special meaning for Jews by choice, because we read about Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David and arguably the most important convert in Jewish history. Of all the passages from Jewish texts, the Book of Ruth (Chapter 1:16-17) is by far my favorite. In the passage Ruth, at this point still a Moabite, declares her unwavering loyalty to her Hebrew mother-in-law Miriam and the Jewish people by saying, "Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." This verse signifies the declaration that all Jews by choice make in becoming members of the House of Israel. In fact, when deciding on my Hebrew name at the end of my conversion process, I purposely chose 'Liam' -- which means 'my nation' -- to mark the beginning of kinship with my new Jewish brothers and sisters.

Those who choose to convert to Judaism do so for a variety of reasons. For some, it may be because their spouse is Jewish, and they want to build a Jewish home. For others, it may be that they took a DNA genealogy test and discovered they have long lost Jewish heritage and want to complete a formal process to solidify their Jewishness. I thought I would take this opportunity to share more about my decision, especially given that this summer marks 10 years since I became a Jew.

In the fall of 2013, I began a spiritual journey. That year, Thanksgiving

and Hanukkah overlapped as I distinctly remember attending an inter-faith 'Thanksgivukkah' service at a local synagogue in Indianapolis where I am originally from and was living at the time. Over the course of subsequent months, I continued learning about Judaism and my interest only increased. By June of the next year, I had made the decision to officially pursue the conversion process. One may say it was bashert (destiny) when I contacted a rabbi upon arriving back to South Bend, Indiana for a year and he told me that just the prior week, he started an 'Introduction to Judaism' class for congregants who wanted to learn more as well as for those who were considering conversion. For the next nine months, our group met at the synagogue almost every Monday night to learn about the key tenets of Judaism.

Perhaps the one lesson that resonated most with me (and still does) was that becoming Jewish is not just about joining a faith but also joining a peoplehood. I was further amazed to discover just how diverse our 16-million-member mishpacha (family) is as we represent a wide variety of races, religious observances, customs, political leanings, national origins, and even food preferences. My conversion ended on July 27, 2015, when I went before a beit din and into the mikvah at Congregation Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah in Wilmette, Illinois to officially become a member of the House of Israel.

As I look back on the ten years since converting to Judaism, I feel incredibly blessed to have had so many amazing experiences. From volunteering for various Jewish Federations, to taking part in Hillel and Chabad as a graduate student, to visiting Israel three times, to working for the Anti-Defamation League, I have already experienced so much in my Jewish journey.

I have now had the pleasure of being JCRC Director for nine months, with the job of advocating for our Jewish community across the greater Louis-

ville area in key areas of education, government affairs, and coalition building. I find it particularly meaningful being a Jew by choice and having the opportunity to represent our people in building relationships with largely non-Jewish audiences. There is much I have learned since taking this position, particularly the quality and depth of community leadership. There is a long history in our community of strong volunteer leaders that have laid the path to the work being done today. Many of our current volunteer leaders are involved not only with our local community but proudly represent Louisville amongst many national Jewish organizations. With the JCRC restructuring process now complete, I feel very fortunate to be working with so many amazing volunteer leaders and have no doubt that our Jewish community is in good hands with the next generation leading it. In the days ahead, I look forward to continuing to partner with these remarkable members of the Jewish Community Relations Council to perform critical work such as standing up for those who have experienced antisemitism in their schools and workplaces, giving presentations to students and teachers about Judaism, advocating as a Jewish voice to elected officials, expanding access to

Holocaust education, and continuing to build coalition with other key communities.

Many of those who are born Jewish may ask themselves that, with all the trials and tribulations of being a Jew -- especially as of late with the recent rise in antisemitism -- why anyone in their right mind would want to join this tribe. While certainly a valid question, we, as Jews of choice, believe that even with the challenges of the current environment, we still consider it both an honor and a blessing to be a part of such a remarkable people. It is said, we all stood "shoulder to shoulder" at Sinai to receive the Torah; a truth no matter how we arrived there. On this Shavuot, when we commemorate that gift, I feel especially fortunate to be a member of the Louisville Jewish community, and it is profoundly rewarding to be part of the work that we are doing.

*Trent Spoolstra is the Jewish Community Relations Council Director at the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC. He welcomes you to contact him about community related issues at [tspoolstra@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:tspoolstra@jewishlouisville.org).*

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with Karen Horrell

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# SWIM SCHOOL

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# PICTURE THIS: YOM HASHOAH

On April 23, the community gathered at The Temple for the annual Yom HaShoah commemoration. This year's program was student-led with the theme, L'dor V'dor. Students from LBSY, JLAB, and St. Francis of Assisi school created artwork and led readings and candle lightings as they will carry the torch of Holocaust education into the future.

(Photos by Community Staff)



**Perform the Mitzvah of Hospitality:  
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**Louisville will have two new *ShinShinim* as members of our community from August 2025 - July 2026.**

*ShinShinim* are a select group of promising Israeli high school graduates who choose to defer their enlistments in the Israel Defense Forces so that they can spend a year as Israeli ambassadors in communities around the world.

Our *ShinShinim* need a place to call home and are relying on the warmth and southern hospitality of Louisville families.

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To learn more, visit  
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The Jewish community in Louisville is exciting, dynamic and friendly. Our volunteers and staff are here to welcome and connect you to the community resources to help make Jewish Louisville feel like home. Fill out our online form to tell us about yourself and your Jewish interests so we can match you with a suitable volunteer.



Scan the QR code or visit  
[jewishlouisville.org/shalomlouisville](http://jewishlouisville.org/shalomlouisville)  
to get registered!





# PICTURE THIS: YOM HAZIKARON



The community came together at the Trager Family JCC on April 29 for Yom HaZikaron - Israel's Memorial Day. Led by Louisville's ShinShinim, we honored Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror attacks.

Pictured below, the ShinShinim also led Zikaron Basalon, intimate gatherings to honor the lives lost in the Holocaust for Yom HaShoah. One was held at the Trager Family JCC for members of the AgeWell program. Another was held in a community member's home.

(Photos by Community Staff)



## Adult Swim Clinic

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- Non-member: \$150 + tax

Requirement: You must be able to swim on your own at least one lap.



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- Scheduled based on mutual availability between the swimmer and instructor

Interested in updates on our Adult Swim Programs? Email us at [swimschool@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:swimschool@jewishlouisville.org) for more information!



## KESHER SUNDAYS

A leadership development certificate program for 9th and 10th graders

Creating a connection (*kesher* in Hebrew) between future Jewish leaders and current Jewish leaders and organizations. Together, we will celebrate the leaders and the joy of the Louisville Jewish community.

Interactive sessions throughout the community may include topics like Jewish government, Jewish arts, and Jewish philanthropy and will meet on Sundays throughout the school year. The program may also include an overnight travel experience.

*Scan Here to  
Learn More!*



Interested in learning more?  
Scan the QR code or contact us at  
[keshersundays@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:keshersundays@jewishlouisville.org)



# PICTURE THIS: 9 TO 5: THE MUSICAL



CenterStage at the Trager Family JCC's production of 9 to 5: The Musical tells the story of three female coworkers who band together to get revenge on their sexist, egotistical boss.  
(Photos by Kathryn Harrington)



CenterStage  
at the Trager Family JCC

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TICKETS



### Auditions will be held June 22, 24 & 26.

For more details and information, visit [jcclouisville.org/auditions](http://jcclouisville.org/auditions).

AUDITIONS





# PICTURE THIS: CAMP COOL AGE

On May 15 and 16, the Trager Family JCC held its first ever Camp Cool Age! This program was a two day camp experience for grown ups, tailored to their interests. Active adults were invited to make jewelry with Surekha Kulkarni - founder of Beaded Treasures and Empowering Beads, make candles, learn self-defense with Sean Peoples, decorate wine glasses with Kyle Roemer, and so much more. We'd like to extend a big thank you to Trilogy Health Services for their sponsorship and support of this program. (Photos by Robyn Kaufman)



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## NEWS

# The resonance of memory: Adath Jeshurun's Classroom 121 honors eight Fallen Heroes

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

*There is a room at Congregation Adath Jeshurun whose walls bear testimonies of supreme sacrifice. These are their stories.*

It was just before dawn on Monday, March 19, 1945 when the lone plane appeared: a Japanese Yokosuka D4Y "Judy" swooping out of the clouds to drop a pair of 550-pound armor piercing bombs on the broad flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Franklin. Two enormous explosions rocked the warship, igniting gasoline-nourished fires and producing waves of decimation that would kill 807 sailors and wound 487 more -- more than half of the vessel's complement of 2,200.

One of those who perished was a 22-year-old gunner's mate from Louisville -- Seaman Second Class Robert Cyril Stern -- who'd enlisted three years earlier, not long after the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Soon afterward one of his younger brothers also signed up.

There was a third brother who, like his parents, could only watch as his older siblings went off to war. Donald Stern was nine when Robert left home; 12 when news of his eldest brother's death reached the Stern household.

By then it was April of 1945, the middle of Passover. "I was in junior high school," Don Stern, now 92, recalled, telling how his mother was in synagogue services as word filtered down to a select few. "They went and pulled her out of shul," Stern said, "and then they came and got me."

"My mother was never the same again -- she was emotionally fragile all of her life," Stern said. "It really did her in."

His father was attending to business at the family pharmacy, Stern Drugs, a profession Donald would eventually embrace as his own after serving in Japan during the Korean War. During the 1940s the Stern family lived above the store at 2700 Taylorsville Road, where suddenly the reality of wartime loss was in stark relief.

"It was surreal," Don Stern said. "I couldn't believe it for a while. I'd had a very short time to bond with that brother -- I was nine when he left. So there were three or four years when we'd pal around

together, but not much."

Details about Robert Stern's death emerged only sporadically. He'd been assigned to the Franklin after an initial stint serving on an oil tanker. The Franklin -- one of 24 Essex-class aircraft carriers that participated in WWII -- entered service relatively late in the conflict: early 1944. The ship fought in several of the Pacific Theater's biggest naval engagements, including the invasion of the Philippines and the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest battle in naval history.

On March 19, 1945, the Franklin lay a mere 50 miles off the Japanese mainland -- closer than any American carrier during the war. After the bombs struck the ship, only the heroic efforts of the surviving personnel onboard kept the vessel from sinking.

The precise circumstances of Robert Stern's death were never determined. He, like hundreds of his shipmates, was buried at sea. Posthumously he was awarded the Purple Heart.

His story is chronicled in framed documents and photographs on display in Classroom 121, located at the far end of the long corridor housing Adath Jeshurun's gift shop and administrative offices. Alongside are similar exhibits honoring fallen AJ veterans: all from WW II except for a single Vietnam-era soldier.

The installation was shepherded by Arnold Zegart, a longtime congregation member (and another pharmacist) who's made it his mission to keep those memories alive. The memorial grew out of the synagogue's 2013 renovation, a substantial project that provided an opportunity to rethink aspects of the congregation's mission.

For decades there had been a traditional bronze plaque with names of congregants who died during wartime. The plaque went missing during construction -- its whereabouts remain a mystery. Yet the dedicated memorial room, with its original documents and accompanying photographs of eight fallen soldiers, embraces an altogether greater scope of sacred memory.

*Forever Young* reads a tall inscription on the far wall, next to a furled American flag topped with a golden eagle. Below lies a thematic attribution, unmistakable in bold capital letters:



In Congregation Adath Jeshurun's Classroom 121, Don Stern looks at a framed memorial to his older brother, Robert Cyril Stern, who perished on March 19, 1945, when the aircraft carrier USS Franklin was attacked by a Japanese dive bomber and exploded in flames. (Photo by Andrew Adler)

*Dedicated to the SONS OF ADATH JESHURUN who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Often overlooked by history, but they shall never be forgotten.*

Zegart himself is a veteran, though at age 82 fell between two defining Asian conflicts. "I proudly served two years in the Army, but I was born lucky: too young for Korea and too old for Vietnam," he said. Enrolled in Purdue University ROTC, Zegart graduated as a newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, and soon found himself stationed at Denver's Rocky Mountain Arsenal, "where we made nerve gas and those M55 (chemical weapon) rockets we were prepared to send one-way to Russia. They ended up in Richmond, Ky. to be disarmed."

On this particular afternoon at AJ, guiding a visitor among the various framed tributes, Zegart's voice was tinged with a kind of hallowed wistfulness.

"I have great respect for these eight men who made the supreme sacrifice, because I feel like they are here in this room," he said. Even those who survived tended to retreat into silence. "I've found

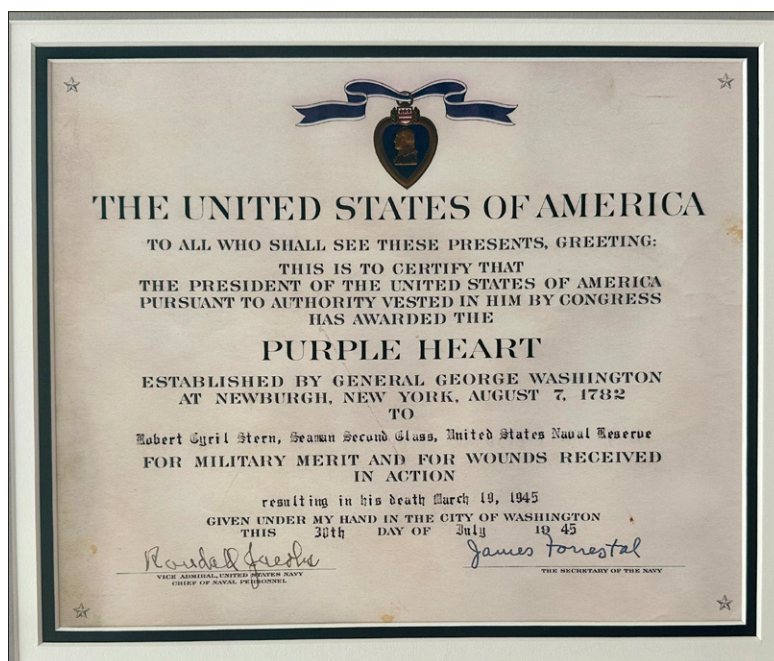
that someone who's been in combat almost never talks about it. It does something to him."

Zegart plucked an example from his own extended family. "I had an uncle who was a Marine in World War II, and he was in the thick of three of the worst campaigns in Marine Corps history. He was in the second wave at Tarawa -- the first wave was wiped out. He was at Saipan, and then at Okinawa as a forward artillery observer. He saw almost all of his best friends killed -- and he never would talk about it."

A multitude of Purple Hearts adorn the walls of Classroom 121. So too are telegrams announcing, in the terse vernacular of military officialdom, the death of a son, a brother, a nephew. Next to these are neatly typed letters of condolence, such as one addressed to David I. Wilson of 1426 South Fourth Street, dated December 22, 1944:

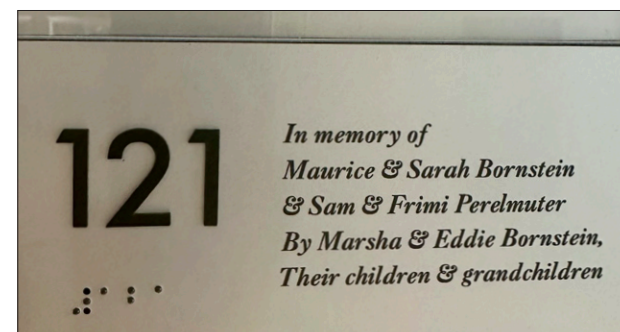
*My dear Mr. Wilson: At the request of the President, I write to inform you that the Purple Heart has been awarded posthumously to your son, Private First Class*

*Continued on page 15*



**Remembered in life, honored in death: At left: A Star of David marks the grave of Pfc. Daniel Wilson, killed in action in eastern France on October 6, 1944. Center: Robert Cyril Stern was awarded the Purple Heart, posthumously, after the aircraft carrier USS Franklin was bombed by a Japanese warplane on March 19, 1945. Right: Adath Jeshurun's Classroom 121, where eight former members are recognized as Fallen Heroes.**

(Photos by Andrew Adler)





# NEWS



**Adath Jeshurun congregant Arnold Zegart was the driving force behind a memorial to congregation members killed during World War II and Vietnam. (Photo by Andrew Adler)**

Continued from page 14

Daniel Wilson, Infantry, who sacrificed his life in defense of his country.

Little that we can do or say will console you for the death of your loved one... When the medal, which you will shortly receive, reaches you, I want you to know that with it goes my sincerest sympathy, and the hope that time and the victory of our cause will finally lighten the burden of your grief.

Sincerely yours,

[Secretary of War] Henry L. Stimson

A more personal account arrived a few weeks later on December 6, 1944, addressed to Hannah Wilson, Daniel's mother. It was written by 143rd Infantry Chaplain Charles W. Arbuthnot Jr.

"As spiritual advisor to the men, Daniel was one of 'my boys' and his friends and I share your loss... In the stress of war one is not permitted to tell very much. His burial place cannot even be divulged at this time.

Here is an extract from the official narrative: "Pfc Wilson, a rifleman in the third platoon in Company 'L,' was in the attack against a strong enemy

position in Eastern France on 6 October 1944. The third platoon had to cross an open space in the attack. Pfc Wilson was caught in the crossfire of an enemy machine gun and was killed instantly."

After Daniel's death he was interred with a fitting ceremony by a Jewish Chaplain. We all [stood] humbly with heads bowed before this soldierly example of the supreme sacrifice for a cause that must and will survive. To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.

Elsewhere Classroom 121's walls recount myriad acts of dedication and selflessness.

Two of the fallen soldiers had, by dint of timing and happenstance, escaped from Nazi Germany.

One was Fedor Herman Benjamin,

who was born on May 3, 1925, in the Prussian town of Beuthen. In 1938 his family immigrated to the U.S., making their way to Louisville two years later. Returning to Europe as an Army Pfc. to fight the Nazis, Benjamin was killed in action in Italy on March 7, 1945 -- barely two months before Germany surrendered. All of 19 years old, he now rests in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery.

Ernest Leopold Palm, a German national living with his family in Louisville, never made it back to his home country -- he died in a Florida plane crash in early March 1944.

Sergeant Palm, Who Begged Chance as Alien to Enter Army, Dies a Hero read a headline in the March 4, 1944 edition of The Courier-Journal.

"They wouldn't take Ernest Leopold Palm into the Army early in 1942 because he was a German alien," the paper's story began. "But he wrote letters pleading for a chance to repay the United States for giving haven to him and his family driven from their homeland by the Nazis.

"He described himself as 'the happiest man in the U.S. Army,'" the story continued, "when he was accepted as the first German alien to be inducted in the Fifth Corps Area."

The word "hero" certainly applied to 2nd Lieutenant Sidney S. Brownstein. He died during a training exercise at Fort Knox on November 22, 1943, when he threw himself on a live grenade a recruit had accidentally dropped, saving the lives of 20 soldiers. He was 30 years old.

Oscar Leo Sessamer, who spent much of the war stationed in England sorting

mail, was frustrated that he wasn't given the opportunity to fight the Germans. He got his wish early in 1945 when he joined Patton's Third Army, only to be killed on April 11 of that year -- less than a month before VE Day on May 8.

Stanley Sweitzer, a 1st Lt. in the Army Air Corps, was a senior at U of L's Speed Scientific School when he enlisted in 1942. Sweitzer died in his B-17 -- which its crew had named "Just Plain Lonesome" and endured for upwards of 20 missions -- on February 3, 1945, during a bombing run over Berlin. He was 23 -- a comparative elder next to so many teenagers.

Classroom 121 has a single more recent honoree: Michael J. Caller, a Marine Lance Corporal who was killed -- along with four fellow Marines -- during an early morning rocket attack in Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam on August 28, 1967.

Ordinarily stationed on Okinawa, "Caller was sleeping on a cot in his friend's hooch when the rocket attack began," an account of the incident related. "One of the projectiles came through the roof and Caller was killed instantly on his first night in Vietnam when a piece of shrapnel pierced [his] heart."

The young Marine was 19. In two more years, he would have been able to vote. Instead, his body was brought back to Louisville and interred in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery, where today he lies in the company of brethren whose lives, once brimming with possibility, were cut short by the arbitrary vehemence of war.



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St Matthews, Bloom	2:20 – 6:00 p.m.	\$527.00	\$612.00
Holy Trinity	3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	\$489.00	\$570.50
Hawthorne	3:20 – 6:00 p.m.	\$442.00	\$527.00
Field	4:20 – 6:00 p.m.	\$357.00	\$442.00

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# NEWS

## For these students in Louisville and Israel, 'Twinning' is a bridge to shared experience

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

Approximately 6,200 miles, seven time zones and two languages separate The Temple in Louisville, Ky. from ORT Roz middle school in Akko, Israel. Yet that considerable distance has melted away over the past few months, as students from The Temple's religious school have been pursuing an ongoing, mutually inquisitive relationship with their ORT Roz counterparts.

The two schools are part of the Global School Twinning Network, administered by the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership2Gether initiative. As one of 31 cities whose Partnership region is Israel's Western Galilee region, Louisville has long regarded Akko as a geographical kindred spirit. And if nothing else, the twinning process has confirmed that adolescents in America and Israel have a lot more in common than they do differences.

Having said that, it's important to note that the current Louisville-Akko twinning exchange is somewhat atypical. The threats from Hezbollah along the nearby Lebanese border presented some unique challenges.

"It's not been a regular year," Shiri Erlich, the Israel-based coordinator for Partnership2Gether Western Galilee, acknowledged recently via Zoom. "They started very late – in January, I think – because of everything that was going on. Most of the (Israeli) schools were not operating in person, so they were on Zoom."

Still, many of the core twinning dynamics endured. For Purim, the two student groups mailed each other *misloach manot* (apparently, candy counts as a universal language). They've exchanged letters -- actual, physical, handwritten correspondence.

"This is a project we truly think is important to keep," Yaffa Weitz, an eighth-grade teacher at ORT Roz who has devoted considerable energies to the program. Though the 2020 pandemic disrupted the normal course of exchanges, people like Weitz and Erlich are determined to maintain

post-pandemic momentum. "This is definitely something we look forward to making even bigger," she said.

The twinning project's origins go back more than two decades. At first, students from the Temple partnered with counterparts in Jerusalem. "I knew teachers there because that was the school I went to," explained congregation Senior Rabbi David Ariel-Joel. Eventually, however, he decided it made more sense to align the program with the existing P2G Western Galilee initiative, which meant pivoting from Jerusalem to northern Israel.

October 7 and its aftermath threatened to derail the project -- The Temple had been twinning with a school only four kilometers from the Lebanese border. Rocket attacks and the constant threat of incursions by Hezbollah rendered that arrangement untenable. Akko, about 35 kilometers from the border, soon emerged as a less fraught alternative.

From the get-go, technology was a vital ally in establishing and nurturing friendships between the American and Israeli students. Though today Zoom is the dominant conferencing platform, before the pandemic era Skype was the lingua franca of choice.

"I'll tell you a funny fact that I think by now people know about Israel," Rabbi Ariel-Joel said, "but didn't realize 23 years ago when we started. Two of the people I worked with here in Louisville said to me, 'But will they have Skype in Israel?' And I said, 'I'm not worried about Israel -- I'm worried about us.'"

"They were kind of taken aback. They thought this was my Israeli arrogance saying that. And the first time we did Skype with the school in Israel -- believe it or not, our system didn't work."

Fast forward to this past April 27, when The Temple's students marked their final religious school class of the year by Zooming with their Akko brethren. They'd seen several videos and digital slideshows of the Akko kids, but this was the first real opportunity for the two groups to meet in a

live setting.

"We'd had some letters, but now we got (an idea of) their personalities and what they were like," The Temple's Ellie Blake said.

Previously shared materials "didn't give us much context," said Claire Yoffe -- like Ellie, an eighth grader at Kammerer Middle School. "We saw a borderline of their personalities," Yoffe added, "but we really didn't get much information about them."

Further mutual enlightenment emerged during the April Zoom session, when -- after a quiz contest on Israeli history, personalities, and culture -- participants from each school logged in to individual Zoom breakout rooms. This was an opportunity to chat informally, and a chance for the Akko students to practice their English.

Both Ellie and Claire were paired with a fellow middle schooler, Hili. "It was really nice to talk to her about her experiences in Israel," Ellie said, "and although she doesn't live near the (Gaza) war area, we got to learn about how they're impacted every day."

"Later, after we talked to them on Zoom, we made a group chat" on WhatsApp," Ellie said, "and sometimes they'd bring up how they might not have school tomorrow because of protests related to the war."

Valuable as these remote-based contacts are, nothing beats meeting face to face. "I can give you an example," Weitz said. "I once took about eight students to Dallas, where there were great connections. When we left the kids were crying, exchanging emails and WhatsApp (addresses). I'm sure they're still in contact."

As in decades past, popular culture routinely transcends fixed geographical borders, not to mention backgrounds and languages. Where generations ago, it might have been Elvis or the Beatles who provided a commonality of experience, these days social media exerts its own kind of potent leverage. The Louisville and Akko students have posted on each other's Instagram accounts, and employed Zoom as a



Hili (at left) and friend, two students in Yaffa Weitz's ORT Roz middle school class in Akko, Israel, answered questions during a mid-May, 2025 Zoom session.

jumping off point to discover shared, unanticipated passions.

"One of the girls I talked to recently said she listens to Olivia Rodrigo (the 22-year-old singer-songwriter and actor), and I also listen to her," Yoffe said. "That was nice, because sometimes when you talk to people who aren't like you, you realize how similar that might be to yourself."

Zoom conversations between the two contingents presented their own set of challenges. Israeli children typically begin learning English in 4th grade when they're nine or 10 years old, so the 12-year-olds in Weitz's Akko class had limited fluency. But any spoken-language limitations receded in the face of the enthusiasm evident on both sides -- and the opportunity to embrace the venerable handwritten word.

"I expected the kids to go for the snacks and the lollies," instead Weitz said, "but they were really interested in the letters. That's when they asked us to have a WhatsApp group -- it came from them. We didn't think it was necessary, but they asked for it. That shows how there is a connection. I can't tell you if it will go on years from now, but we will continue next year, and I'm sure friendships will be formed."

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# NEWS

## The Israeli Street Fair returns Sunday, June 8 at the Trager Family JCC

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

The Israeli Street Fair is back, and for 2025 the Trager Family JCC's celebration of Israel's food, culture and heritage returns to the breezy outdoors. So plan on stopping by Sunday, June 8 from 12-4 p.m., when an ordinary parking lot is transformed into an evocation of Middle Eastern delights.

"We're back on the pavement," declared Tricia Kling Siegwald, Senior Director for Festivals and Special Events at the Trager Family JCC. Last year's event, dubbed the Israeli Arts & Culture Festival, was held indoors, a more modest event reflecting the comparatively muted mood prevailing after October 7, 2023.

For 2025, however, the fair will build on the success of the June 2023 event, which unfolded on a sun-splashed afternoon full of laughter and manifestations of delectably organized joy.

"We want to give a taste of Israel, with an environment like you'd walk in a market in Israel," said event chair Becky Admony. "You're going to feel the smells and the sounds, literally, of Israel."

Speaking of enticing aromas, this year's fair will include cuisines representing not only Israel, but of global scope. There will be food trucks including All Thai'd Up, Spinelli's pizza,

All Things Fish (tacos, fish sandwiches and hush puppies) and Prince Mediterranean, and of course, falafel -- plus a booth serving up samples of authentic Israeli desserts -- think ice cream with a dash of halvah, a drizzle of tahini and a dash of date honey.

"We're going to do it every hour -- just take, I don't know, 50 or 100 samples and just give them out for free."

Noshing is a big part of the Israel Street Fair, but it's far from the only enticement. Local DJ Aaron Thompson will play an ongoing smattering of Israeli music. At 1 p.m., cantors David Lipp of Adath Jeshurun and Sharon Hordes of Keneseth Israel will lead everyone in the Israeli national anthem, Hatikvah, followed at 1:30 p.m. by dancing led by ShinShinim Kyla and Eden.

And don't forget the Kids Zone.

"We'll have inflatables, a bounce house and an obstacle course," Siegwald promises. "There'll be face painting, and we have a lot of Israeli and Jewish arts and crafts. PJ Library will be present, and then we have the Dead Sea Mud Experience."

The *what*?

"It's a skin care product," Siegwald explained, making the somewhat self-evident point that applying it is a lot easier than scooping up a handful of mud from the actual Dead Sea in Israel (for the record, the lowest land-based point on

Planet Earth).

"I've been to the Dead Sea (so named because its extreme salinity means nothing can survive) many times," Admony said. "There's mud everywhere -- you just take it and put it over your whole body."

There will be no shortage of vendors at the fair. Examples include Etsy-based JewishDragonDesigns (think stickers) and MinxManxMonks (Seller note: "We are special needs parents to a beautiful ASD child whose needs prompted us to find a creative outlet to supplement our income and keep us close to home. The name of our home-based business honors our child through the use of the playful nickname we have given her, Minx Manx Monks").

Berry Best Farm out of Clark County, Indiana, and Hope Designs will offer herbs, flowers and handmade napkins -- plus driftwood art from Knot Just Wood.

Dazzling Designs promises a selection of handmade clay-bad bracelets. Atmosphere Bakery will provide macaroons, mini-cakes and cookies, and the Filson Historical Society will be on hand with Jewish and Israeli-themed items, plus information on becoming a member.

The fair will also feature its version of a *shuk* -- evoking a traditional Israeli marketplace where you can pick up some authentic Israeli spices and Louisville T-shirts (Hebrew-lettered, in case you're wondering how they fit in).

"It'll be like you're walking in a market in Israel," said Admony, herself an Israeli native. "You're going to experience the smells and the sounds -- giving you a taste of Israel."

Admony expects that -- with the fair returning to its original format this year -- people will be especially eager to attend.

"They're happy it's going to be outdoors again, as big as it used to be," she said. "I think there was a buzz when it was here two years ago -- and because the Trager Family JCC was brand new. And now we're an even bigger community."



The last Israeli Street Fair was held at the Trager Family JCC in 2023.

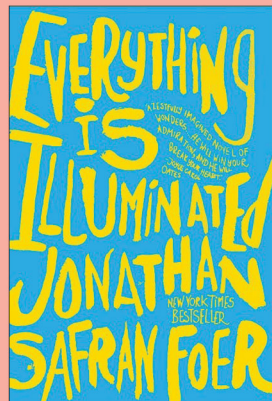


### P2G Book Club

"Everything is Illuminated" by Jonathon Safran Foer

Sunday, September 7

A young man named Jonathan Safran Foer sets out to find the woman who may or may not have saved his grandfather from the Nazis. Accompanied by an old man haunted by memories of the war; an amorous dog named Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior; and the unforgettable Alex, a young Ukrainian translator who speaks in a sublimely butchered English, **Jonathan is led on a quixotic journey over a devastated landscape and into an unexpected past.**



RSVP: [tinyurl.com/P2GSeptemberBook2025](https://tinyurl.com/P2GSeptemberBook2025)

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



### Hatikvah "Hope" Summit in Israel October 28 - 30, 2025

Join us for meaningful experiences in the Western Galilee: volunteer with local Israelis, learn about new initiatives, and meet heroes of resilience. Additional before and after travel opportunities available:

Pre-Summit: For those new to P2G and the WG region, October 26 - 28

Post-Summit add-on: October 31 - TBD

Young Adults Seminar: October 30 - November 2

For more information, contact Amy Fouts, [afouts@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:afouts@jewishlouisville.org).

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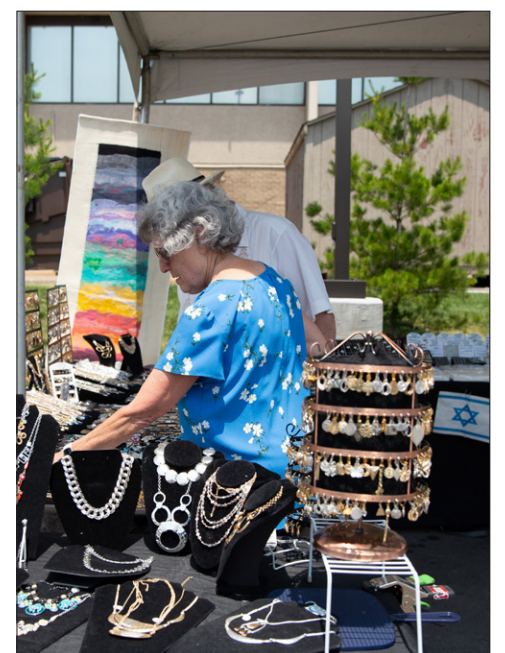
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# PICTURE THIS: JFCS MOSAIC AWARDS



The annual JFCS Mosaic Awards recognize refugees and immigrants in Greater Louisville who have impacted their community. They celebrate the diversity and accomplishments of these individuals as they help build the City of Louisville and the Commonwealth of Kentucky into a brighter, more inclusive place.  
(Photos courtesy of Mammoth Creative.)






# HAPPY HOUR

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Drinks and appetizers from MeeshMeesh on us!


Each attendee will receive 2 guest passes to the Trager Family JCC.

**JUNE 11**  
5-7 PM



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Join us for a fun evening of Mahjong, Rummikub, and Canasta!

*An adult only event*


**Wednesday, June 25**  
**6 - 8 p.m.**

Kohn Family Town Square  
at the Trager Family JCC



Enjoy a selection of light appetizers and refreshing drinks. Sign up as a team, or if you're coming solo, no worries, we'll assign you to a group.

**We can't wait to see you there!**



**Cost:** \$5 per person; \$20 for a 4-person team

Register at [jcclouisville.org/tiles-and-tasty-bites](https://jcclouisville.org/tiles-and-tasty-bites)

*\*Space is limited*





# PICTURE THIS: TEMPLE SHALOM TALENT SHOW

There was music, dance, feats of strength and more at Temple Shalom's Talent Show & Art Exhibition that unfolded on the afternoon of May 18, 2025.

(Photos courtesy of Temple Shalom)



Linda Klein and Aviv Naamani duet on fiddle and guitar.



Will Duvall on violin.



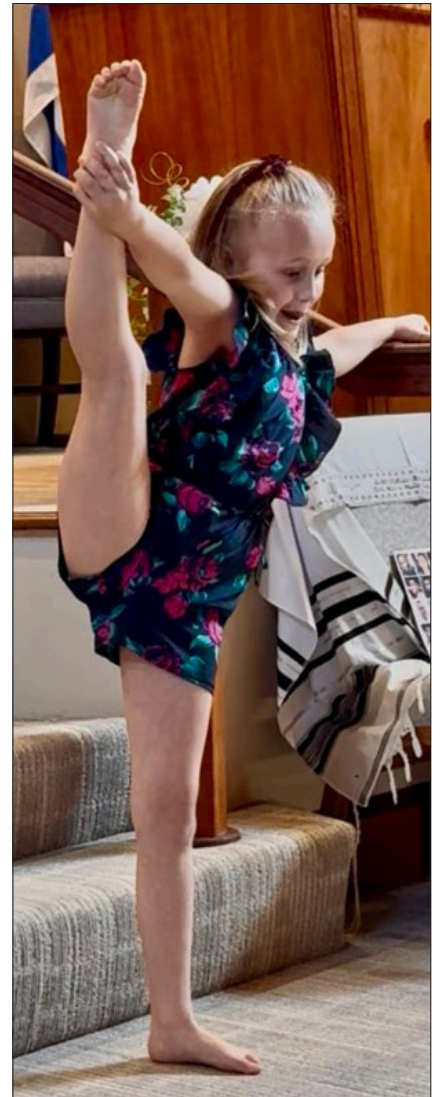
David Goad



Mark Smith on guitar.



Carol and Mick Savkovich on concertina and violin.



Emma Duvall dancing.

## Build Community with a Gather Grant

Gather Grants are a path to creating the most inclusive, vibrant and welcoming Jewish Louisville possible. The Jewish Federation is offering young adults (25-45) the opportunity to create their own Jewish experiences, through Gather Grants.

**WHO?** Young adults between 25-45 years old

**WHAT?** Subsidized programs, events and experiences that are Jewish in nature; think Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, or events bringing Jews together.

**HOW?** Submit an application today!  
Find the application at [JewishLouisville.org/nextgen](https://JewishLouisville.org/nextgen) or contact Daniele Hurwitz at [dhurwitz@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:dhurwitz@jewishlouisville.org) for more information.



## MUSIK GARTEN

Bring the joy of music to your child's life!

Join us for a wonderful  
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educational music class  
with Ms. Cathy Dreszer.

7-week Session  
beginning June 8  
at the Trager Family JCC

0-18 months: Sundays, 10:30-11 a.m.

19 months-4 years: Sundays, 9:30-10:15 a.m.

JCC Members: \$75 | Non-members: \$100



To register, scan the QR code and select  
the session you would like to attend.

Questions? Contact Carly Mason,  
[cmason@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:cmason@jewishlouisville.org).

Learn more at [jewishlouisville.org/pjlibrary](https://jewishlouisville.org/pjlibrary)





# JFCS, the Jewish Community: The Ties That Bind

With the 2025 JFCS MOSAIC Awards behind us, Jewish Family & Career Services now turns its attention to preparing for our Annual Meeting, on June 24 at 5 p.m. I hope that many of you join us to celebrate, and more importantly, learn about the important work JFCS is doing for Jews throughout the community.

From mental health counseling to food assistance, job coaching to elder care, we remain a vital support system for Louisville's Jewish community. These services would not be possible without the financial support and partnership with the Jewish Heritage Fund and the Jewish Community of Louisville (JCL).

Jewish Family & Career Services is a safe space where Jewish individuals can access services knowing that their Jewish Identity will be respected, valued, and incorporated into the very programs that meet their needs. JFCS operates from a position of Kavod (Respect), Chesed (Compassion), Kehilah (Community), Tzedek (Justice), and Avodah (Service), ensuring both the confidentiality and dignity of its clients.

The Brandeis Study of Jewish Louisville, conducted in 2021, highlights the basic human needs of Jews throughout Louisville and emphasizes that many individuals and families among us face hunger, poverty, mental health issues, and deficiencies in critical life needs. Based on what we know is true, JFCS is here:

- For the 14% of Jewish Louisville surveyed indicating that they have difficulty making ends meet financially, our food pantry provides their most basic need.
- For the 18% of Jewish Louisville that

are providing care for someone other than their child, we have our caregiver support groups and homecare services to provide much needed respite.

- For the 28% of Jewish Louisville that feels lonely and isolated weekly, we have a team of excellent social workers, psychologists, and professional counselors that are trained to assist adults, children, and families.

- For the 31% of Jewish Louisville households that have at least one family member with limited economic opportunities because of health or disability, our Career Counseling for adults and our Launch program for youth and young adults can assist in furthering your goals.

Our Sonny & Janet Meyer Food Pantry remains the only food pantry in our city offering kosher food items, ensuring Jewish families and individuals facing food insecurity don't have to compromise their values to nourish themselves. Two years ago, we opened a satellite kosher pantry at Shalom Towers so homebound seniors can keep kosher without needing to travel. Our annual Passover Food Drive collected and distributed food to ensure that families facing food insecurity enjoyed the festival and their home seders with kosher for Passover goods.

Along with our primary funding partner,



Dr. David Finke, CEO

Jewish Heritage Fund, JFCS participated in a Jewish Funders Network training called "On The Edge: How Orgs Can Better Engage Economically Vulnerable Jews." Recent nationwide research suggests that Jewish communal needs have become greater, with 20-29% of American Jewish households lacking the savings to survive an emergency expense. They do not have enough money in their savings to survive a \$400 emergency bill.

The Brandeis study made it clear that Jews live all over Louisville, not simply confined to the area around Dutchmans and Cannons. If we are going to engage non-affiliated Jews, those who face barriers or personal choices related to traditional affiliation, we must expand our geographic reach to meet their needs. We are deeply proud of our collaborative partnerships throughout underserved Louisville neighborhoods that have opened new avenues for impactful outreach. Our job is to meet people where they are – physically, emotionally, spiritually.

In addition to Jewish clients being served through comprehensive Family Strengthening services, JFCS provides additional support specific to our communal agencies.

JFCS presents a variety of topics with the Louisville Board of Rabbis, creating welcoming bridges between their congregational memberships and agency programming. We have accepted invitations to speak during or after Shabbat services at almost every temple or synagogue in Louisville on topics ranging from mental health, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and immigrant and refugee services. We want congregants to better understand the scope of services and programming that we offer to our community. We have "drop-in" hours at the Trager Family JCC and The Temple – Congregation Adath Israel Brith Shalom, and also offer rides to Shabbos services for members of our Jewish community.

We have increased our Family Mitzvah Program, Pledge 13 opportunities, and Shabbos Friends sites, helping Jewish teens, adults, and seniors stay connected to their roots through volunteerism and mentorship. JFCS has also teamed up with Rabbi Chottiner and Trent Spoelstra (JCRC) to support Jewish youth grappling with antisemitism and identity struggles. These programs give individuals the knowledge, strength, and ability to live out what it means to be a strong Jewish community.

And there is more coming in the next year, including a new project with the Jewish Community Relations Council helping us continue our focus on Jewish identity and dialogue. In addition, with assistance from an endowment at JFCS and local

and state opioid abatement funds, we will be increasing our programming to assist families to identify risk factors related to substance abuse and improve services for Jewish families that struggle in silence.

The JFCS Oral History Project has had 22 participants so far and is growing. The program preserves the personal narratives and collective memories of Jewish individuals and the Louisville Jewish history, offering valuable insights into their experiences and perspectives. How we have captured Jewish Identity through video interviews will be displayed at our annual meeting in June, and we will be training volunteers to help conduct these interviews across generations.

It is not just locally where JFCS' influence and expertise has been utilized for the Jewish Community. Earlier this year I was asked to co-chair the Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies' (NJHSA) national conference in Denver. During the national conference where over 500 people attended from the US, Canada, and Israel, I led a discussion highlighting the importance of interfaith collaboration. In addition, our Chief Program Officer was asked to serve on multiple panel discussions during the convention. This is a public and proud testament to national recognition of JFCS daily work throughout Louisville's Jewish community.

JFCS exists because of Tikkun Olam ("Repairing the World"). We don't assume who is or is not in need. We show up regardless - for Jews, for our neighbors, for anyone who walks through our doors. It leads us to achieve the realization of an agency that continues to be adaptive, vibrant, and relevant to the Jewish Community.

I invite you to join us on June 24 at 5 p.m. at JFCS for our Annual Meeting as we celebrate the "wins" of the past year, including our work with Jewish families, youth, and seniors — and unveil our exciting vision for the future. We invite you to learn more about how you can personally get involved as a volunteer or donor in helping members of our Jewish community. I invite you to serve as ambassadors of our good works, ensuring that all Jews know they have a friend in JFCS and that we will meet them where they are in life. Our Annual Meeting is open to all.

RSVP to JFCS  
Annual Meeting



Support JFCS  
Today



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\*Source: Republic Bank's Q1 2024 NPS® (Net Promoter Score) is 2.81 times the banking industry average when compared to the most recent Annual Qualtrics XM Institute U.S. Consumer Benchmark Study. NPS® is a common metric utilized by organizations to measure how they are perceived by their customers. See <https://www.xminstitute.com/data-snippets/xmi-ratings-nps-2023>.

**JOIN JFCS AT**

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MENTAL HEALTH FESTIVAL

**MAY 31, 2025**  
**ROOTS 101**  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM**  
**124 N 1ST ST. | LOUISVILLE, KY 40202**

**MORE INFO AT: [WWW.MINDFESTKY.COM](https://WWW.MINDFESTKY.COM)**

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# NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

## Louisville native and pediatrician Garth Meckler awarded Canada's King Charles III Coronation Medal



Garth Meckler

Louisville native and pediatrician Garth Meckler awarded Canada's King Charles III Coronation Medal

If you happened to be attending Shabbat morning services at Adath Jeshurun on June 4, 1983, you would have watched as a young man stood on the bimah and celebrate becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

That fellow was Garth Meckler, who'd go on to graduate from Princeton, earn an M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1997 and complete a residency in Pediatrics at the University of Washington in Seattle three years later. He'd gain a reputation as a leading specialist in pediatric emergency medicine, rising to Division Head of PEM at BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Fast forward to March of this year, when Canada's Heart & Stroke Foundation chose Meckler as the recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of (as the Foundation's announcement letter puts it) "your unwavering commitment to heart and brain health in Canada."

Foundation CEO president Doug Roth continued:

*King Charles III's Coronation Medal is a distinguished Canadian commemorative medal created to mark His Majesty King Charles III's coronation on May 6, 2023. This medal is a symbol of honour and gratitude, awarded to indi-*

*viduals who have made significant contributions to Canada, their province, territory, region, or community.*

*The King Charles III Coronation Medal, a circular silver medal bearing the effigy of His Majesty King Charles III, symbolizes the unity and inclusivity of all Canadians. It is a testament to your exceptional service and commitment to advancing heart and brain health across our nation.*

*Your passion and dedication to making a difference is truly inspiring. This recognition serves as a tangible reminder of how deeply valued and appreciated your efforts are, not only by this organization, but also by all those in Canada whose lives are touched by the lifesaving work we do together.*

## Lance Gilbert elected chairman of Louisville Downtown Partnership



Lance Gilbert

Lance Gilbert, Managing Partner of Net Results Group, LLC and a member of Congregation Adath Jeshurun, has been elected to a two-year term as chair of Louisville Downtown Partnership. The Partnership is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve Louisville's downtown by promoting the redevelopment, vitality, and economic growth of the greater downtown area.

Gilbert previously served on the boards of the Jewish Community of Louisville, the Jewish Community Center and Jewish Family & Career Services. He is an alumnus of St. John's University's Peter J. Tobin College of Business.

Currently in his 16th year as Net

Result Group's Managing Partner, Gilbert has vast experience in both the public and private sectors. Since 2006 he's served on the board of Louisville's Metro Housing Authority, where he is Vice Chair. He spent the years 2007 to 2013 on the JFCS board, serving on its Finance, Endowment, Governance and Strategic Planning committees. He's held senior positions at several companies, including Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. (1993-1996 as Director, Corporate Planning), and at Merrill Lynch & Co. (1987-1993 as Vice President & Divisional Chief Financial Officer).

He holds a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from NYU Polytechnic Institute. An avid golfer, he was a member of the team that captured First Place at the 2018 Republic Bank Players Challenge.

## Frank Schwartz to read from his memoir June 21 at Adath Jeshurun



Frank Schwartz

To fully appreciate why Frank Schwartz has written a memoir recounting his escape from Hungary amid the uprising of 1956, you need to know something of his backstory. It begins on October 23, 1956, when a group of university students in Budapest, Hungary launched a protest targeting the nation's Soviet-backed regime. Fifteen days later on November 7, Russian tanks and support troops ended the uprising – forcing some 250,000 Hungarians to flee their homeland.

Among those who fled was a nine-year-old boy named Perlstein Feranc,

who – after his family found refuge in Canada and his widowed mother married a man named Jack Schwartz – eventually adopted his stepfather's name. It was 1966 and Perlstein Feranc, refugee was now Frank Schwartz, U.S. citizen.

In 1974 Schwartz, armed with degrees in political science and literature from Brooklyn College, relocated to Louisville. Enrolling at the University of Louisville, he emerged with a master's degree in social work and was soon volunteering at Project Warm, rising to executive director in 2010. Later he began working with Cohousing Louisville, while becoming a stalwart presence at Congregation Adath Jeshurun. He was among Jewish Family & Career Services' 2022 Mosaic Award honorees.

Over recent years he's worked on his memoir, which he titled *The Kind Assistance of Strangers: My Family's Escape from Hungary, October 1956 – March 1957*. On Saturday, June 21, the former Perlstein Feranc will share excerpts and commentary at AJ following Shabbat morning services and a Kiddush lunch. Sponsored by the Julie Olson Shabbat Scholar Fund, his talk will begin at approximately 12:30 p.m. and is open to all.

To read his story before his talk, visit [www.adathjeshurun.com](http://www.adathjeshurun.com) and look for it on the home page beginning June 1.

## Jewish Federation offers a screening of October 8, prompting vital, spirited conversation

By Amy Joseph Landon  
Senior Director of Marketing and Communications

During challenging times, it feels natural to want to be around people and places that make you feel safe. Such has been the experience over the last few years, and the last 18 months, in particular. Amid rising antisemitism, Jews have been joining together more often and seeking ways not only to feel solidarity but also acting to combat hate. That act of being together was on full display with the Federation's showing of the film *October 8*.

With the limited screenings of the documentary film available in Louisville, many members of our community requested that Jewish Federation screen the film at the Trager Family JCC. The screening and follow-up discussion were held on May 19 before a sold-out audience in the Shapira Foundation Auditorium.

The film documented the protests that emerged immediately following the horrific attacks on Israel on Octo-

ber 7, 2023, both on college campuses and in the spread of the pro-Palestine and anti-Israel movements in the United States. The film shared important lessons on how social media helps spread misinformation and hate, and how the world's inaction following October 7 has worsened divisions among our student populations, and beyond.

After the film, JCRC Director Trent Spoolstra led a Q&A session with two college students: Elliot Gross who attends Columbia University, and Talia Sommer who attends Butler University. They spoke of the impact the fraught climate has had on their college experiences. Though their experiences were different, their common message was that even during these challenging times, they were still able to find a home within their Jewish communities on campus.

Elliot and Talia described attending Jewish holiday programming and finding their chosen families, building a vital support system for themselves. Both students also echoed that they found their most important conversa-

tions about this emotional topic to be one-on-one or in small groups. They both quickly learned that wading into the fray of protests only ends up dividing people further – in some ways a stark contrast to the content of the film.

Having seen the film both in the theater with a small group of staff and community volunteers and again at the Trager Family JCC, I was reminded of the importance of bringing people in our community together for conversation. There were some members of our community that expressed concern about the film, but the event still demonstrated one of the Federation's core missions: being a convener and encouraging lively, relevant, and respectful conversation representing a variety of viewpoints.

Amy Joseph Landon is Senior Director of Marketing & Communications at the Jewish Federation and the Trager Family JCC

## Advertise your business in Community!

For more information, call 502-418-5845, or email [lsinger@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:lsinger@jewishlouisville.org)

Trager Family JCC members receive a 25% discount on ad placements!





# AROUND TOWN

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

## Adath Jeshurun

The community is invited to AJ's next Shabbat Social Dinner Friday, June 6 after Kabbalat Shabbat Services. Come at 5:15 p.m. for Happy Hour before services which begin at 5:45 p.m. Beginning at about 7 p.m., Chef Sean Haggerty will serve an Asian-inspired menu of Hearts of Palm Salad, Ahi Tuna, Stir Fried Vegetables, and Pacific Rim Rice. Dessert will be a taste of Americana featuring ice cream with a toppings bar and brownie bites. The cost is \$15 per person; children under 12 are free. RSVP by May 1 at [www.adathjeshurun.com/reservations](http://www.adathjeshurun.com/reservations).

Adath Jeshurun is hosting a special family edition of their monthly Shabbat-Luck dinner Friday, June 20 as part of a Shared Shabbat with Keneseth Israel. We'll start the evening with a family-friendly Happy Hour (with mocktails) at 5:15 p.m., followed by Kabbalat Shabbat Services led by Rabbi Scott and Cantor Lipp. The Shabbat-Luck Dinner after services will feature both an adult entrée and a kid-friendly entrée, plus kid-friendly desserts and activities. Visit [www.adathjeshurun.com/shabbat-luck](http://www.adathjeshurun.com/shabbat-luck) for more details and to RSVP. All are welcome.

Saturday, June 21st at 10 a.m. after Shabbat Morning Services at Adath Jeshurun, Frank Schwartz will speak about his memoir, *The Kind Assistance of Strangers: My Family's Escape from Hungary, October 1956 – March 1957*. Join us at 10 a.m. for Shabbat Morning Services followed by a special Kiddush luncheon at about noon sponsored by the Julie Olson Shabbat Scholar Fund. Starting about 12:30 p.m., Frank will share excerpts from the memoir and answer questions. To read his story before his talk, visit [www.adathjeshurun.com](http://www.adathjeshurun.com) and look for it on the home page.

## Anshei Sfard.

Congregation Anshei Sfard has open study time every weeknight (Sun-Thu) from 7:45-8:30 p.m. All are invited to come and study with the Rabbi, with a friend or by yourself. You are welcome to study whatever topic you choose and have your personal questions about Judaism answered. Refreshments served.

Shabbos Davening at 9 a.m. including Rabbi's Parsha outline and sermon, followed by a delicious hot Kiddush. Every Wednesday night at 7:45 p.m., Judaism in Action. Current series: Laws of Shabbos. Talmud Trek Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. led by Rabbi Lederman. For more information, email [rabbilederman@ansheisfard.com](mailto:rabbilederman@ansheisfard.com).

Lessons to Learn Together Mondays

at 8 p.m. on the weekly Parsha.

Welcome back Sisterhood of Anshei Sfard. Annual Membership Fee is \$72 (membership not required to participate). Suggested donation per event is \$10. DIY at home kits will be available upon request after each event for members unable to join. Email [Jenniferd5748@gmail.com](mailto:Jenniferd5748@gmail.com) for more information.

Sisterhood Event line up:  
June 10: Star of David Macrame  
June 24: Mezuzah cookies  
July 8: TBD  
July 22: TBD

Annual Family Picnic  
June 29, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Brown Park Pavilion – Corner of Kresge Way and Browns Ln

## Chavurat Shalom

Our theme for June is music, music, music. Lunch will start at noon in The Temple's Heideman Auditorium, unless noted below, with our programs beginning at 1 p.m. All programs will also be available starting at 1 p.m. via ChavuratShalom-Zoom for those who need to join us remotely.

Thursday, June 5 - Misha Feigin returns to entertain us on piano and guitar. Lunch will include cheese quesadillas, Mexican-style rice, black bean and corn salad, fresh fruit, and Mexican-style chocolate mousse.

Thursday, June 12 - Brigid Kaelin will make her inaugural appearance at Chavurat Shalom and share her musical talents with us. Lunch will include salmon cakes, mashed potatoes, green peas and carrots, coleslaw, fresh fruit, and chocolate trifle.

Thursday, June 19 - Time for a summer sing along with our friend Beth Olliges. Lunch will include pasta and meatballs, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, and cookies & brownies.

Thursday, June 26 - Rabbi Matt will be our speaker and share, What Exactly is 'Jewish Music'? Lunch will include barbecue chicken, roasted potatoes, green beans, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and assorted desserts.

If you're not "a regular," please RSVP by 5 p.m. Tuesday if you'll be attending that week in person by calling or emailing Sarah at 502-423-1818 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

Are you an alum of Camp Tall Trees or Ben F. Washer at Otter Creek Park? Come relive those glory days of yesteryear with this fun and nostalgic program and wear your camp attire. There will be camp songs and cheers, "home movies," craft activities, and camp-based snacks such as s'mores. Hear from former counselors and schmooze with your fellow campers. This event will take place Sunday, June 22 at 2 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC.

## Jewish Family & Career Services

Join JFCS for MINDFEST  
JFCS is a proud community partner of MINDFEST "Mental Health Fair" on Saturday May 31, at the Roots African American Museum. Join us for a day of FREE community mind-strengthening, music, food, entertainment, art, yoga, panel discussions and more. Go to [www.mindfestky.com](http://www.mindfestky.com) for more information.

JFCS Annual Meeting Set for June 24, at 5 p.m. at JFCS.  
Join JFCS Staff and our Board of Directors on June 25 at 5 p.m. as we celebrate that past year of success at JFCS and look toward the future and the many lives JFCS can change for the better in the coming year. The event is Free and open to the public. RSVP requested at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4m5mte>.

## Jewish Federation of Louisville

The Federation and the Trager Family JCC will hold the 2025 Annual Meeting Tuesday, June 23 at the Shapira Foundation Auditorium. Officers and new board members will be elected, and recipients of this year's Jewish Community of Louisville Awards will be honored. The schedule is as follows: 5:30 p.m. Cocktails and Appetizers; 6:15 p.m. Meeting and Awards Ceremony. RSVP to Adam Cohen at 502-238-2722, or via email at [annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org](mailto:annualmeeting@jewishlouisville.org).

## Keneseth Israel

Join Rabbi Freed every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC for Jews & Brews to discuss the weekly Torah portion over coffee and cookies.

Keneseth Israel Congregation offers Daily Minyan services at 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 8:45 a.m. on Sunday at Adath Jeshurun, and 7:30 a.m. Monday and Thursday at Keneseth Israel. Minyan services are offered in person and on Zoom at [tinyurl.com/kiczoom](http://tinyurl.com/kiczoom). Join us for Shabbat services Friday at 6 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Shabbat and Holiday services are offered in person and via YouTubeLive at [tinyurl.com/KICyoutubelive](http://tinyurl.com/KICyoutubelive). Please visit [kenesethisrael.com](http://kenesethisrael.com) for more information.

## Louisville Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning

Melton's End-of-Semester Celebration Brunch  
Join Louisville Melton Sunday, June 22 at 11 a.m. at Adath Jeshurun for a delicious free brunch, catered by Chef Maureen Hartmann. All are welcome. Don't miss your chance to hear from Louisville Melton staff and faculty about new developments at Louisville Melton, some of the exciting programming coming in the 2025-2026 academic year, and an exclusive discount on next year's courses. The deadline to RSVP is June 15. Go online at <https://tinyurl.com/yzp244m6>.

Where Are the Prophets When You Need Them? An Interfaith Exploration taught by Dr. Melanie Prejean-Sullivan

As we traverse a time of anxious uncertainty, what some are calling a "socio-political predicament," we search for meaning and direction. Prophetic voices that could call our attention to important action seem to be silent. Authentic interpreters of the Divine seem few and far between. Where Are the Prophets When You Need Them? -- an original course designed and taught by Dr. Melanie-Prejean Sullivan, will examine all this and more. This course begins on July 10 and will meet on six dates throughout the 2025-2026 year. For more information and to register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/43u8zyaj>.

Modern Living: Maintaining Balance, co-taught by Cantor David Lipp and Rabbi Scott Hoffman

Would you like to meet and learn with AJ's new Rabbi? Rabbi Scott Hoffman and Cantor David Lipp will be co-teaching the new course Modern Living: Maintaining Balance this summer, beginning July 10. This 6-week course explores Jewish attitudes toward the many competing foci in our lives and presents Jewish approaches to finding balance amid the intensity of day-to-day living. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.adathjeshurun.com/melton>.

## Louisville Vaad HaKashrut

The following venues are supervised and certified by the Vaad: Trager Family JCC (Nancy Abrams Kitchen); Trager Family JCC Outdoor Café (Dive-in-Diner) Memorial Day-Labor Day; and Krispy Kreme, 3000 Bardstown Rd.

## National Council of Jewish Women -- Louisville Section

Advocacy Alert—SAVE Act  
The "Safeguard American Voter Eligibility" (SAVE) Act threatens our democracy by putting up barriers for millions of eligible voters to cast their ballot. Congress must protect the sacred right to vote and oppose



# AROUND TOWN

the SAVE Act. The House of Representatives passed the SAVE Act in April; it's critical that we make sure the Senate DOES NOT pass this discriminatory bill that will undermine the fundamental right to vote and weaken our democracy.

## Nearly New Shop

One way you can support NCJW's important advocacy work is by visiting our Nearly New Shop in the Mid City Mall, 1250 Bardstown Rd. We have everything from gently used designer outfits to great gifts for kids to housewares and furniture and everything in between. We're open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. All proceeds help to serve women, children, and families in the Louisville community.

## Temple Shalom

Shabbat Services, Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Temple Shalom welcomes the community to weekly Shabbat services. Note there will be no Saturday service June 21 due to Torah Study at the Trager Family JCC.

Let's Play Mahjong, Sunday, June 1, 1-3 p.m. at Temple Shalom

Come to a fun afternoon of mahjong. Players of any skill level--beginner, novice, or expert. fun. If you have never played before, this is a great opportunity to learn. Drinks and snacks will be provided. RSVP to 502-553-7232 or [jscorpio116@yahoo.com](mailto:jscorpio116@yahoo.com).

Repair Affair, June 7, approximately 9 a.m.

Repair Affair takes place June 7, and Temple Shalom has registered to help for its fifth consecutive year. This year, volunteers will pressure wash, caulk, weather strip, and stain the home of an older Louisville resident who is living on a limited income. If you are interested, please contact Tikun Olam committee at [averykolers@gmail.com](mailto:averykolers@gmail.com). The time frame is basically the morning to early afternoon; we work in the morning; New Directions, the NPO that runs Repair Affair, will bring lunch, which we eat on-site, and then we finish the work. If you can come for only part of the time, that's fine, too.

BLT: Bagels, Lox, and Torah Study at the J, Saturday, June 21, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome to study Torah with Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner as Temple Shalom comes to the Trager Family JCC. We will have bagels, lox, and juice along with study and lively discussion. Everyone from the community is invited. We will be meeting in the Trager Family JCC's Board Room. Please note that there will not be Shabbat morning services at Temple Shalom that day.

## The Temple

Adult education at The Temple continues weekly with Torah Study with

Rabbi David Saturdays at 9 a.m. For a full schedule and descriptions, please go to [thetemplelouky.org/adult-education](http://thetemplelouky.org/adult-education).

Come join Rabbi Matt for a special Tot Shabbat Friday, May 30 at 6 p.m. Our Tot Shabbat will be a monthly, 15-minute service with our youngest members in mind, but will also be a chance to meet other families. This event is open to all. After Tot Shabbat ends at 6:15 p.m., we will have a family dinner and will welcome all the families to stay for dinner. Tot Shabbat and dinner are free to attend, but if you plan to stay for dinner, an RSVP is required at [thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner](http://thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner), so we have enough food.

Join us Friday, May 30 for a family-friendly dinner at 6 p.m. and special Israeli Shabbat at 7 p.m. Please make your reservation for dinner by calling 502-423-1818 or registering online at [thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner](http://thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner). Dinner will include gluten and dairy free options and will be nut-free.

Join us Saturday, May 31 at 10:30 a.m. in our outdoor sanctuary (weather permitting) for our second Shabbark service. This pet-centered Shabbat morning service will celebrate our animal companions as we offer them special blessings, as well as take time to say a special pet kaddish for our pet companions that have passed. After service, we will have a paw-some doggie-bag Oneg Shabbark for pets and a special lunch for the humans. We will also have some booths featuring games for the pets, information on local rescues and shelters, and more. Shabbat services are open to all, but if you would like to attend the Oneg Shabbark and lunch, please RSVP with your name and your pet's name so we can make sure to have enough food. More info and RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/Shabbark](http://thetemplelouky.org/Shabbark). See you there and Shabbark Shalom.

Shavuot is traditionally considered to be the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Tikkun Leil Shavuot is the custom of staying up the entire night of Shavuot studying with the community to re-experience standing at Sinai. We look forward to study sessions Sunday, June 1 with Rabbi David on What is Shavuot About? at 6 p.m. and Rabbi Matt on Dayenu: How a Passover Song Teaches Us About the Experience of Awe During Shavuot at 7 p.m. Additionally, join us on Monday, June 2 at 10:30 a.m. for Shavuot Yizkor services.

Yaala and Rabbi David are honored to invite The Temple community to Haggai and Stephanie's wedding aufruf Friday, June 6 at 7 p.m. during Shabbat services. A dessert Oneg will follow the service. An aufruf is a traditional Jewish ceremony where

the wedding couple is called to get a blessing before their wedding.

It's Pride at The Temple. Join us for Erev Pride Shabbat Friday, June 13 at 7 p.m. with speaker Aaron Guldenschuh, founder of Pride Shabbat at The Temple, as we welcome Shabbat together. Saturday, June 14, the day begins with a special Torah study at 9 a.m. led by Rabbi David and Prof. Rev. Johanna Bos, followed by our Pride Shabbat Service at 10:30 a.m. featuring music by Shir Chadash and Voices of Kentuckiana (the only LGBTQ+ choir in Kentuckiana) and participation by LGBTQ+ Temple members. Stay afterward for a free Shabbat luncheon. Please RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/Pride](http://thetemplelouky.org/Pride).

Bring your kids Saturday, June 14 at 5:30 p.m. for a Pride Pajama Party with crafts, snacks, storytelling, and a brief Havdalah service. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/pride-havdalah](http://thetemplelouky.org/pride-havdalah).

The Temple will host a special Father's Day Shabbat Friday, June 20 at 7 p.m. as we honor all the fathers in our community.

Join Rabbi Matt Saturday, June 21 at 10:30 a.m. for our monthly Learner's Service and Lunch & Learn. In this discussion-based service series, we will be learning about the history and function of the blessings in the Shabbat Morning Service, translating them together, and learning some of the special melodies that accompany many of these prayers. At 11:30 a.m., directly after services, everyone is invited to a special Lunch & Learn to continue the conversation. The service and Lunch & Learn are open to all and no background knowledge is needed; this is a special opportunity to learn more about the Shabbat Morning Service. Lunch will be provided for the Lunch & Learn and is free for all, but an RSVP is required so we have enough food. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/learner](http://thetemplelouky.org/learner) or by calling 502-423-1818.

Join The Temple in Nulu as we march to celebrate all LGBTQ+ individuals and families at the Kentuckiana Pride Parade Saturday, June 21 at noon. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/pride-parade](http://thetemplelouky.org/pride-parade).

Join our favorite outdoor Rabbi while we trek through the beautiful trails of Kentuckiana with Hiking with Rabbi David. The next hike will take place at Big Beech Trail in Pope Lick Sunday, June 22 at 9 a.m. RSVP at [thetemplelouky.org/hiking](http://thetemplelouky.org/hiking).

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

## Trager Family JCC

Subscriptions are now available for CenterStage's 2025-26 season: *The Sound of Music* (in August), *Company* (in November), *Footloose* (in February) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (in May)

Say hello to our next season, coming to the Trager Family JCC this fall. As a season ticket holder, you can expect to enjoy a variety of benefits, such as saving 15% on tickets to MainStage productions and discounted prices for all other season offerings. Your subscription also ensures that you have guaranteed seats to some of the most popular and highly anticipated productions of the season. For more information and to purchase season tickets, you can call the CenterStage box office at 502-238-2797 Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. or visit the website at [jccloouisville.org/centerstage](http://jccloouisville.org/centerstage).

Musikgarten's summer session is coming up

A new seven-week session of Musikgarten classes starts June 8. This interactive and educational music class is led by Ms. Cathy Dreszer. Each session comprises six classes. Days and times for ages 0-18 months: Sundays, 10:30-11 a.m. Ages 19 months-4 years: Sundays, 9:30-10:15 a.m. Cost: JCC Members: \$75; Non-members: \$100. More information [jewishlouisville.org/pj-library](http://jewishlouisville.org/pj-library).

The 2025 Israeli Street Fair returns to its outdoor roots Sunday, June 8, 12-4 p.m. in the parking lot adjacent to the Trager Family JCC's Roth Family Education Center. There will be plenty of food -- from pizza to falafel to Thai and more -- plus music, dancing, craft displays and special activities for children (can you say "Dead Sea Mud Experience"?). Admission is free. For a full list of vendors and activities, visit [jewishlouisville.org/israelistreetfair](http://jewishlouisville.org/israelistreetfair).

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# LIFECYCLE

## Births

### Harvey Grant Rothchild

Debbie and David Perellis are excited to share the arrival of their grandson, Harvey Grant Rothchild, born on April 30, 2025 in Austin, Texas to Brooke and Brent Rothchild -- giving Hadley Mae the title of "Big Sister."

## B'nai Mitzvah

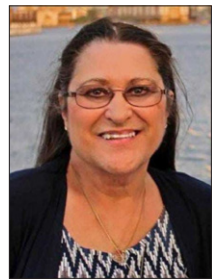


### Kimberly Norton

Kimberly Norton will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah Saturday, June 28 at 10:30 a.m. at The Temple. Kim is the proud mother of Alex and Ben and wife of Scott Norton.

A special thank you to Rabbi Matt, Rabbi David, Rabbis Rooks & Rapport, the late Rabbi Diamond and the entire staff at The Temple. The Norton family invites the community to Kim's Bat Mitzvah service and Kiddush luncheon immediately following.

## Obituaries



### Paula Kay DeWeese

Paula Kay DeWeese, born on April 6, 1954, in Richmond, Indiana, passed away peacefully on May 16, 2025, in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Paula was a cherished member of her family and a beloved friend to many. She is survived by her son, Evan (Paola) DeWeese; her brother, Randy (Juanita) Thomas; her sister, Patty York; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins who will forever hold her in their hearts.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Terry Lee DeWeese, and her parents, Harrison and Catherine Thomas. Their lasting love and guidance were integral parts of Paula's life, shaping the remarkable woman she became.

Throughout her life, Paula was known

for her vibrant spirit and zest for living. An avid reader, she found joy in the pages of books, transporting herself to different worlds and perspectives. Her love for traveling allowed her to explore new places, cultures, and cuisines, enriching her life with unforgettable experiences. Paula was also a skilled cook, sharing her culinary gifts with family and friends alike, always delighting them with her delicious meals. She enjoyed being outdoors, where she found solace and peace in nature, and above all, Paula treasured spending quality time with her family, creating lasting memories that will be cherished forever.

"In 1978, the Jewish Federation of Louisville had the good fortune of hiring Paula DeWeese as an executive secretary," Sara Klein Wagner,

President and CEO of the Federation and the Trager Family JCC, wrote in Community two months after Paula retired in April 2016. "If you ever dialed 451-8840, you would recognize Paula's melodic greeting with her unique draw 'Shalooooom, Jewish Federation.' Over 38 years, Paula supported the community, our professionals, our Board of Directors and our volunteers."

"She was the history of the agency," recalled Alan Engel, who was executive director of the Federation for much of Paula's tenure. "Board members had a lot of respect for her, and she had a lot of respect for them. Everybody loved her."

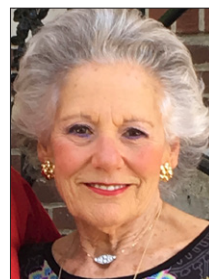
"Paula's career with the Federation and the Jewish Community of Louisville [was] a blessing for us all," Wagner said in her June 2016 Community column. "On behalf of the generations of people Paula helped with exactly what they needed, we know we would have been a mess without you."

A memorial gathering to honor Paula's life will be held at Newcomer Funeral Home, Southern Indiana, located at 3309 Ballard Ln, New Albany, IN 47150, on Saturday, May 31, 2025, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. This gathering will provide an opportunity for family and friends to come together to celebrate Paula's life, share stories, and offer support to one another during this difficult time.

Paula Kay DeWeese will be remembered for her unwavering kindness, warmth, and the love she shared with everyone around her. She leaves a legacy of love and fond memories that will forever be cherished.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be

made in honor of American Veterans to DAV - Disabled American Veterans (P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301).



### Constance "Connie" Patricia Fox

Constance "Connie" Patricia Fox, a woman of deep compassion, resilience, and unwavering dedication to helping others, passed away on

May 1, 2025, at the age of 83.

Born on September 18, 1941, Connie was the youngest of triplets born to Lester Hendricks Lipton and Margaret "Peggy" Einstein Lipton. She grew up in Detroit, Michigan along with her older triplet brothers (who were identical twins), Jim and Tom Lipton, both of whom preceded her in death. Connie also suffered the heartbreaking loss of her beloved son, Tony, in 2011.

Left to carry on her memory and celebrate her boundless love are her cherished partner and husband of almost 45 years, Jim Fox; adored son, John Handmaker (Trish); stepchildren, Steve Fox (Allie) and Alison Fox; and sister-in-law, Susan Lipton. As the quintessential grandmother to Darrah & Case Handmaker and step grandkids Mckenzie, Austin & Sarah Fox, showering them with love, platitudes, encouragement and celebration was one of her greatest joys in life.

Connie graduated from Mumford High School in 1959 and went on to study at the University of Michigan until 1964, before moving to Louisville, KY to start a family. While her primary career was spent perfecting the art of homemaking, she also worked locally at Byck's, Bacon's, and the Jewish Community Center, where she built lasting friendships and touched countless lives with her innate beauty, warmth and wisdom.

A woman of action and heart, Connie was active in the National Council of Jewish Women's Court Watch Project and other local initiatives throughout her life. In recognition of her dedication to domestic violence victim's rights, social justice and service, she received the Louisville Center for Women & Families' 2012 Woman of Distinction Award—a reflection of her tireless efforts to uplift and advocate for others.

Though not formally trained as a professional, Connie's true life's work was in service and helping others who have been impacted by the family illness of alcoholism and drug addiction. By helping others find peace and thrive in often toxic situations, Connie made a huge impact on thousands by sharing her experiences, strength, candid wisdom, counsel, and promise in order to help solve their common problems. Connie spent a lifetime helping others find hope amidst hardship and, in return, was enriched by countless friendships, abundant love and tremendous admiration.

Her legacy is one of beauty, grace, elegance, style, class, strength in the midst of adversity, courage, connection, and compassion—values she passed on not only to her family, but to the countless friends, neighbors, and strangers she welcomed into her circle of care and unconditional love. As they say, "everyone loves Connie."

There was a private immediate-family-only graveside service on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Keneseth Israel Congregation and The Temple. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all who had the privilege to know and be loved by her.



### Evelyn "Evie" Lou Cohen Rosen Topcik

Evelyn "Evie" Lou Cohen Rosen Topcik passed away on May 7, 2025, in Boulder, CO. She was born and lived in Louisville, KY, for 82 years, the only child of the late Dan Cohen, Devora Rosen, and Charlie Rosen.

In 1957, Evie was one of just 100 women accepted into Vanderbilt University, but instead chose to attend The Ohio State University, seeking a larger Jewish community. She went on to earn two undergraduate degrees and later a master's degree in Library Science from Spaulding University. At age 50, she began her favorite job -- librarian at Louisville Collegiate School.

Evie had a saying, "If you want something done, give it to a busy person," and busy she was. In addition to rais-

*Continued on page 25*

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# LIFECYCLE

Continued from page 24

ing three girls and working full time, she was deeply involved in her community. She was a devoted wife of a Shrine Clown, active with The OSU Louisville Alumni, the American Library Association, and Keneseth Israel Congregation. She visited the sick, and in retirement she joined a bowling league, volunteered at Our Lady of Peace, traveled the world, and was an energetic grandmother.

Evie was a fighter. She fought for education, gun control, and later the challenges of her dementia. Even as she fought this awful disease, she still had plenty of adventures, funny one-liners, songs to sing, and kisses.

She is preceded in death by her young daughter, Laura, and her beloved husband of 57 years, Charles Topcik. She is survived by her daughters, Carolyn (Kevin) Bleicher of Boulder, CO; Jeanne (Scott) Aronoff of Mason, OH, and Deborah Topcik of Washington, DC. She is also survived by her two grandsons, Andrew and Samuel Aronoff of Mason, OH, in addition to a niece and nephew and a hundred cousins.

Funeral services were held May 11th at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Keneseth Israel Cemetery. Donations in Evie's memory may be made to Keneseth Israel Congregation, Louisville Collegiate School library, or the library of your choice.



**Terry Angela Weiss, M.D.**

Terry Angela Weiss, M.D., peacefully passed away at her home April 17, 2025, after suffering for five months with incurable cancer. She is survived by her husband Morris; son Noah (Hanney) and grandchildren Solomon and Luther; son David Weiss; stepson, Daniel (Lorin), grandsons Zachary, Caleb, granddaughter Eliza and great-grandchildren Romi and Mia; John (Cristiane) and grandsons Max and Jack; and Michael (Ben); her brothers James Smith (Holly) and Michael Smith (Nelda).

Terry Angela was born June 30, 1956, to Wilma and Don Phillips in Oklahoma and raised in Riverside, California. She attended Ramada High School and was to play Juliet in Romeo and Juliet her senior year, but had to move to Tulsa, Okla-

homa, before the play was performed. She graduated from Central High School in Tulsa and started her pastoral studies at Oral Roberts University, where she met and married Thomas Mewborn. They had one son, Noah. She continued her religious studies at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville and was one of the early women to join the clergy of Episcopal Church. She later divorced Thomas Mewborn and joined the Council on Peace Making as its Director while attending Seminary.

Her peacemaking work began when the country was negotiating Nuclear Arms Agreements. Through this work, she met Morris, who was deeply involved with Physicians for Social Responsibility. She and Morris were married on May 31, 1985, and had one son, David. At the Council on Peace Making, she and her friend Janet Jernigan started the mediation program Just Solutions and began the first meditation program for the Family Courts in Jefferson County. She was Chair of the Annual Cherokee Triangle Art Fair for two years.

Her marriage to Morris introduced her to the importance of medicine and she entered Bellarmine University to complete the necessary science courses to attend medical school. At age 40, she entered the University of Louisville School of Medicine. After graduation and completing her training at the Department of Family and Community Medicine, she, with her friend and classmate Catherine Hammond, founded Deer Park Family Doctors, where she practiced family medicine for 20 years. In 2007, Terry was nominated as one of the Top Docs by Louisville Magazine and was a recipient of the Tower Award for Women Leaders from Presentation Academy in 2011.

Terry was known in the medical community as always making people feel special and was kind and caring to everyone. In addition to her intensive care of her patients, she found pleasure in learning Italian for her trips to Italy, during which she and her friend Martha Hasselbach attended cooking classes. One cannot think of Terry without knowing her love of Disney World and all of the wonderful times she had there with family and office staff. Lorri Sperry was with Terry throughout her entire medical practice and during her final illness.

A memorial service took place May 10, 2025, at the Church of the Advent in Louisville. Contributions may be made to the Church of the Advent or the charity of your desire.



**Kenneth "Kenny" Norton Zegart, M.D.**

Kenneth Norton Zegart, M.D. (Kenny), 85, of Louisville, KY, passed away at home surrounded by loving family on May 6, 2025, after a full life packed with many adventures. Born in Louisville, Kenny graduated from Atherton High School and the University of Michigan with B.S. and M.D. degrees. After an externship at Oxford University, England, he completed his internship and residency in Obstetrics/Gynecology at Philadelphia General Hospital. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves during the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged with the rank of Major.

In 1968, Zegart returned to Louisville to work at the Neighborhood Health Center and later developed a multi-partner practice, Louisville OB/GYN, where he delivered thousands of babies. He served as president of the Louisville OB GYN Society; a clinical professor at U of L; an advisor to the Reproductive Rights of KY PAC; a member of KMA, GLMS, ACOG, and Physicians for a National Health Plan. After completing the program for Health Care Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, he received a certificate from the Harvard School of Public Health.

He belonged to the Louisville Magic Club and the Society of American Magicians, delighted in magic performances for his grandchildren, played the sousaphone in the Doctors' Band, and had many motorcycle journeys on his modified 1994 FXR Harley-Davidson Police Bike.

Kenny partnered with Shelly, as she brought recognition to the quilts of Kentucky and was there for her many lectures and exhibitions, here and abroad.

A lifetime member of the University of Michigan Alumni -- Go Blue! -- he was a Board member of The Temple, a Kentucky Colonel, and Business Manager for Kentucky to the World. Kenny loved

tennis, traveling, fishing with his brother, sporting events, and driving big box trucks to New York to set up quilt show booths.

Zegart is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Shelly (Weiss) Zegart. The love they shared was undeniable, full of adventure, humor, and unwavering mutual support.

He is also survived by daughters Terri Zegart and Dr. Amy Zegart (Craig Mallery); four grandchildren: Alex, Kate, Jack Mallery, and Tim Seltz; brother Arnold Zegart (wife, Carol); sister-in-law Janis Baron Harrison and brother-in-law Jay Weiss, their families, and dog Spike who followed him everywhere. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry Zegart and Rosetta Zegart Handmaker; nephew Carey Zegart; brother-in-law Harvey Harrison; and adoring in-laws Judge David Weiss and Thelma Brody Weiss.

The family wants to especially thank "Team Kenny": Dr. Carmel Person, Larry Smith, Hosparus, Dr. Dawn Caster, Dr. Michael Kommer, Dr. Sunita Dwivedi, Dr. David Casey, Dr. Ganesh Rau, Rabbi Gaylia Rooks and Rabbi Josh Rapport, Ellen "Charters" Harrison, Carmelita Clay, and many colleagues and friends who were with him through this journey with great visits, conversations, laughs and meals that followed his strict kidney diet!

Kenny's legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched and the joy and generosity he brought to his family. While we mourn his passing, we celebrate the incredible man he was - our husband, father, grandfather, colleague, friend, and eternal source of joy.

His favorite quote: "If it isn't life-threatening, it's only details." In Kenny's honor, let's all share a laugh today. It's what he would have wanted.

A memorial service was held May 22, 2025, at The Temple. The family requests that any donations in Kenny's memory be made to The Temple ([thetemplelouky.org/donation](http://thetemplelouky.org/donation)), ACLU ([action.aclu.org](http://action.aclu.org)), or a charity of your choice.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF LOUISVILLE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES DONATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING:

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# NEWS

## Rampage and Rescue: An Israeli paratrooper's mission on October 7, 2023

By Andrew Adler  
Community Editor

It was to be paratrooper Matan Elul's last Shabbat of compulsory IDF service: October 7, 2023.

We all know what unfolded on that terrible day.

Elul had spent a year training to secure a slot in the elite 35th Brigade, earning the unit's coveted red beret with its distinctive winged-snake insignia. He became a navigator, while also tasked with evacuating wounded soldiers in combat zones.

With his three-year commitment approaching, Elul was considering his post-IDF options. "I wanted to travel and then try to apply to university," he recalled during a late April "Lunch & Learn" session for Jewish Federation of Louisville and Trager Family JCC staff. "So that was my idea after the Army."

Elul and several friends were poised to celebrate their IDF finales by vacationing in Amsterdam. On Friday night – October 6 – they engaged in revels that extended until 5 a.m. the next morning.

Less than two hours later, following a barrage of more than 5,000 rockets fired from Gaza, Hamas terrorists were overrunning the Nova Music Festival. The attacks quickly spread to nearby kibbutzim, with civilians and a small number of security forces battled against Hamas'

far superior numbers.

A coordinated response by the IDF was conspicuously absent. But word of the murderous incursions soon began reaching individual contingents, including Elul's.

Coincidentally, his unit had scheduled a training exercise for the next day, October 8. "Unit training is like mini war," he told his "Lunch & Learn" listeners. "We prepare as much as we can, because if there is a war, we'll be ready. So October 7 caught us in the best position we could be in.

There was one huge logistical problem, however: Elul's unit was based in northern Israel, reasoning that an attack by Hezbollah out of Lebanon was the likeliest threat. Nobody was expecting a significant threat from Hamas in the south, least of all a coordinated mass attack by thousands of well-armed terrorists pouring across the border between Gaza and Israel.

"Our Jeeps to evacuate people were stuck in the north, because that's where the training was," he said.

When initial reports of Hamas activity began filtering down to his unit, Elul and his fellow soldiers figured it was yet another isolated, relatively modest incident – one that would be neutralized by Israeli security personnel stationed nearby. "After one hour we didn't know anything," he said.

But then helicopters began arriving, and it quickly became apparent that something big and deadly was unfolding along the Gaza border.

"Our commander was saying, 'Okay, we have 500 soldiers, 500 warriors. Four hundred will go with the helicopters. The other 100 will go with the buses, because we have a unique mission: We evacuate.'"

A squadron of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters rose from the ground and headed south. The principal destination was Kibbutz Be'eri, with its approximately 1,200 residents, that was under mass attack by hundreds of Hamas terrorists from the al-Qassam Brigades.

The helicopters landed amid a chaotic scene – "smoke and misunderstanding," as Elul put it. Homes were on fire, streets – echoing with gunfire -- were strewn with the dead and dying. By the end of the day 132 Israelis, including 101 civilians, had perished. Dozens more were taken hostage.

But before reaching Be'eri, Elul's unit had to secure an approach road and its main junction. Then, around 2 p.m., his contingent of about 300 soldiers entered



Matan Elul spoke to Trager Family JCC and Jewish Federation staff about his experience on October 7, 2023 and its aftermath. (Photo by Robyn Kaufman)

the kibbutz proper.

With the unit's Jeeps still stuck in the north, Elul and his companions were doing whatever they can "to evacuate as many as we can." Fierce fighting was all around them – "a very hard, hard battle," he acknowledged.

The Jeeps finally arrived at noon the next day, October 8, accelerating the pace of the evacuations. "The feeling that we were doing something historic made us not think about ourselves," Elul said. "We felt like, 'If we can survive here, we can survive anywhere.'"

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# GLOBE

## Marcel Ophuls, French Jewish director of 'The Sorrow and the Pity,' dies at 97

By Andrew Lapin  
JTA

Marcel Ophuls, the acclaimed French Jewish documentary filmmaker whose landmark 1969 film "The Sorrow and the Pity" compelled France to confront its national shame over its collaborationist behavior during World War II, has died at the age of 97.

Ophuls had spent the last years of his life trying to raise the money to complete a new documentary that would have critically explored Israel and Zionism.

Over his long life and career the director made several films exploring historical guilt and complicity, often with a bold and provocative thesis and a willingness to prod his subjects into uncomfortable territory. He returned often to the subject of Nazi persecution, including with his Oscar-winning 1988 film "Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie," a biography of the Nazi war criminal.

Born in 1927 in Frankfurt, Germany, Ophuls was born into a show business family. His father Max Ophüls was a celebrated filmmaker; his mother Hildegard Wall was an actor. The family fled Germany for France in 1933, when Hitler came to power. But France under Vichy rule also proved dangerous, and the family spent a year in hiding before fleeing for the United States via the

Pyrenees and a brief stay in Spain.

Ophuls spent his teenage and college years in the United States, primarily in California, where he grew up in Hollywood and attended college at the University of California, Berkeley. The family returned to France in 1950, where his formative experience in Vichy France would prove a key artistic inspiration after he entered documentary filmmaking.

"The Sorrow and the Pity," which Ophuls made in 1969, hit French society like a ton of bricks. The four-and-a-half hour film explored in tireless detail, and in ways previously unknown or unexplored, the extent to which Vichy France played the role of willing Nazi collaborators — focusing largely on Clermont-Ferrand, a single city in central France. Not only a chronicle of big military actions, Ophuls also interviewed everyday French citizens, including a pharmacist whose answer to the question of what emotions he felt under Nazi rule provided the film's title.

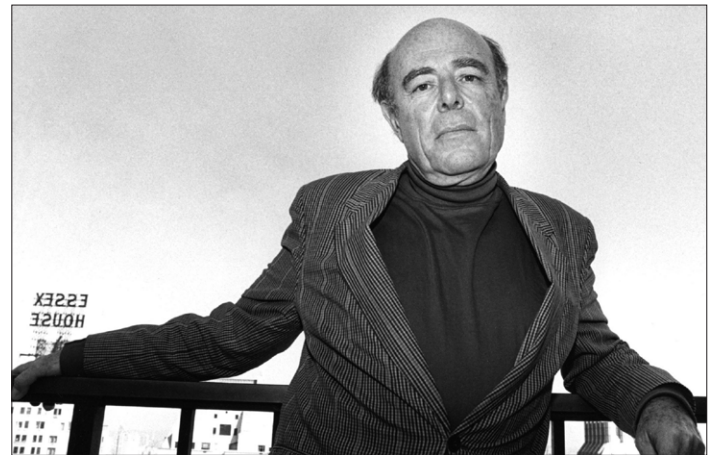
Though commissioned for French TV, the film was initially too controversial and barred from air. But it had an impact in theaters and entered the popular lexicon, most famously in Woody Allen's film "Annie Hall" a few years later, in which Allen's character frequently suggests to his date that they see it.

Ophuls' other films included the similarly controversial "The Memory of

Justice," which juxtaposed the Nuremberg Trials with American actions during the Vietnam War, and "Munich, Or Peace In Our Time," exploring the 1938 appeasement agreement between Hitler and Western powers that opened the door for further Nazi invasions. Before entering documentary, Ophuls was an assistant for Hollywood legend John Huston and directed a segment of an anthology film for French New Wave legend François Truffaut.

But in the last decade of his life, he sought to tackle the ultimate subject for Jews: the state of Israel. Together with Israeli director Eyal Sivan, Ophuls attempted to crowdfund to make "Unpleasant Truths," a film that promised to use the 2014 Gaza war to explore Zionism from a critical lens. French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, whose own views on Israel proved polarizing in his life, initially planned to help them make the film before backing out of the project.

In 2016 the pair released some in-



Marcel Ophuls poses for a portrait in the 1990s in New York City, New York. (Catherine McGann/Getty Images)

progress footage from the film, in which Ophuls journeys to Tel Aviv in the midst of the war to interview Israelis, including West Bank settler leaders, and other pro-Israel visitors who espouse racist views on camera. Ophuls himself, on camera, says Palestinians are living under "apartheid" and shares his belief that Jews should be "against nationalism." Explaining his vision for the documentary, Ophuls tells Sivan that Jerusalem "should be like Clermont-Ferrand in 'The Sorrow and the Pity.'"

The film was never finished.

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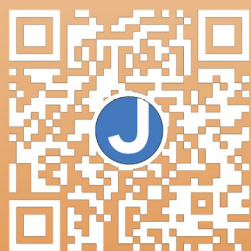
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