

JEWISH LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY

INSIDE:

'What we saw in Washington and why it matters for Louisville'

SEE PAGE 7

FRIDAY Vol. 51, No. 11 | November 28, 2025 | 8 Kislev 5786

Jewish leadership in an age of uncertainty: A digital roundtable

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

What do we mean when we invoke the word, "leadership"?

Google's AI engine came up with the following definition:

"The ability to guide, motivate, and influence others to work together towards a common goal. It involves setting a clear vision, making decisions, building trust, and empowering individuals to perform their best. While it can be a formal position, leadership is fundamentally about the actions one takes to enable a group to achieve what it couldn't accomplish alone."

But does this definition truly express what it means to lead, especially rising antisemitism and growing interest in participating Jews in Louisville, the nation and in Israel? Recently, we posed this question as a jumping-off point for a Zoom-based discussion among six of our Federation's principals.

The Roundtable consisted of two separate Zoom sessions. Participants in the first were:

Ralph Green, Past chair and current

JCL board member, and a member of Jewish Federation of North America's national board.

Bill Altman, Chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

Corey Shapiro, Legal Director of ACLU Kentucky, Treasurer, JFCS; board member of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC; Exec. Group member of JCRC; and board member and Policy Committee Chair, Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

Participants in the second Zoom session were:

Beth Salamon, Board Chair of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC, and a member of the National Council of Jewish Women National Board.

Melanie Maron Pell, Chief Engagement Officer at the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

Sara Klein Wagner, President & CEO of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC.

(Community Managing Editor Andrew Adler moderated – comments have edited for length and clarity)



So what about that notion of "leadership" -- does it apply to what we're facing right now?

Bill Altman

I think any definition of leadership has to start with context. Leadership arises in the context of the organization, or, in this case, the community, its goals, and its mechanisms to communicate and remain connected, even in the face of disagreement. Over time, leaders can help

See **ROUNDTABLE** on page 4

In Israel, celebrating connection, power and unshakable resilience

By Beth Salamon, board chair of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC; and Sara Klein Wagner, President & CEO of the Federation and the Trager Family JCC

Earlier this month, we had the privilege and the responsibility of traveling to Israel on two deeply meaningful missions. As leaders of the Jewish Federation of Louisville, we felt compelled to be present during a time when presence truly matters and accomplishes what words cannot. What began as two separate programs, a Partnership2Gether (P2G) journey to the Western Galilee and an experience with the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) became a single, powerful reminder of why showing up, listening, and being in relationship are among the most important

See **ISRAEL** on page 8

Educator Jessie Gindea brings energy and imagination to Louisville as executive director of JLE – the Jewish Learning Experience

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

Jessie Gindea's exceptionally deep experience as a Jewish educator can be summarized in three of her favorite words: joy, awe and gratitude. "Those are three concepts that guide everything I do in life," she says, dynamics she'll bring to her new position as Executive Director of Jewish Learning Experience – Louisville's multilayered, fundamentally reconceived framework connecting elementary, middle and high-school-age students with their Judaism.

"In the space of Jewish education -- especially in the world we live in right now -- we need to find the joy and awe in our traditions, our liturgy, in holidays and Shabbat, and in each other," Gindea said during a recent Zoom interview. "So, the

idea of being able to build spaces for joyful, awe-filled Jewish education is literally my dream job."

Her background and enthusiasm impressed JLE from the outset.

"We said it was going to be somebody who wanted to build into the community, who had the experience being involved with a startup," said Carol Jones, co-chair of the JLE board. "That requires a particular kind of energy and risk tolerance -- and Jessie has been part of things like that."

As applicants for the JLE spot were being vetted, Gindea's credentials made an increasingly stronger case for her candidacy.

"Jessie has an openness and curiosity, so her résumé rose quickly," Jones said. "She's very articulate, and she asked fan-

See **JESSIE GINDEA** on page 10

Teddy Abrams & Co. give Keshet Sundays high schoolers a fresh take on Jewish leadership

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

On a recent October afternoon, nearly a dozen high school students were gathered in the first-floor Fleischaker-Greene Community Room at the Trager Family JCC. They were waiting to hear from a pair of guest speakers: Sophia Fayne, a senior music therapy major at the University of Louisville School of Music; and Teddy Abrams, music director of the Louisville Orchestra – two articulate examples of a decidedly atypical approach to Jewish education.

Welcome to Keshet Sundays, where tradition and innovation thrive in stimulating coexistence.

Keshet Sundays ("Keshet" is a Hebrew



Louisville Orchestra Music Director Teddy Abrams, pictured at left, speaks to students attending a Keshet Sundays class Oct. 26, 2025 at the Trager Family JCC (Photo by Andrew Adler)

word meaning "connection") is a subset of JLE – Jewish Learning Experience, a fundamental reconsideration of how best to immerse young people in the wonder of their personal Judaism. The aim is to offer fresh alternatives to the

See **KESHER SUNDAYS** on page 26



THE DASHBOARD

Word of the Month

The Holiday of Chanukah - A Lesson in Jewish Unity



D'var Torah

Rabbi
Avrohom Litvin

I am writing these words while sitting among more than 5,000 of my fellow Chabad Shluchim at the International Conference of Chabad emissaries in New York. It is a sight that defies description. Rabbis and community leaders from every corner of the globe, from Alaska to Australia, from Moscow to Mumbai, all united in a single purpose: to bring light, warmth, and Jewish pride to every Jew, wherever they may be found.

This gathering itself is a living embodiment of Jewish unity. Each of us may come from a different community, speak a different language and face unique challenges, yet we are all bound together by a shared mission entrusted to us by the Lubavitcher Rebbe: spreading the light of Torah and mitzvos, and to prepare the world for the coming of Moshiach.

It is in this spirit of unity that I am writing to you about the upcoming holiday of Chanukah. This holiday is referred to as the Holiday of Light, which refers not only to the physical light of the menorah, but also to the spiritual light that illuminates the darkness found in this world. The Rebbe often emphasized that light is the most fitting metaphor for holiness, because even a small candle can dispel much darkness.

Yet there is a deeper message in the Chanukah lights which speaks directly to the theme of unity. The Talmud teaches that the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah menorah can be fulfilled in several ways. The most basic way is to kindle just one light each night for the entire household. A better way is for each member of the household to light their own singular light. Finally, the ideal way to celebrate which is the way universally followed in Jewish homes across the world: We increase the number of lights each night, from one on the first night to eight on the last.

This illustrates how individuality and unity coexist in Judaism. On Chanukah, every person lights their own menorah, indicative of their individual and personal relationship with G-d. Yet all the menorahs are lit *together*, at the same time, in the same home, shining out to the same street. Our individual flames do not compete with each other. On the

contrary, each individual light complements and strengthens one another. Together, they create a greater and brighter light from which all can benefit.

This is true unity. Not the erasing of differences, but the harmonizing of diversity. Jewish unity does not mean everyone must look, think, and act the same. Rather, it means that every Jew, with their own strengths and background, contributes their unique light to the collective flame of our people.

Chanukah celebrates that unity! The Maccabees stood united to continue to observe and celebrate Jewish life. Their courage and unity brought about the miracle of Chanukah. The few triumphed over the many and the weak over the strong, because they were united by their faith and their common purpose. That same light, that same unity, continues to sustain us and strengthen us today.

And so, as I sit here at this global convention, I cannot help but think about our own community in Louisville. We, too, are part of that same story. We may be small in numbers, but our community has a strong and shining heart. When we come together in unity, we connect ourselves to that same eternal flame that has burned in Jewish hearts for more than 2,000 years.

That is why I am so proud that this year, the Louisville Jewish community will be celebrating Chanukah with a free evening of Jewish unity and family fun at the Alpine Ice Arena on Wednesday, Dec. 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. It is more than just a celebration -- it is a statement. It says that we, the Jews of Louisville, stand together as one family. Whether observant or unaffiliated, young or old, whether our roots are in Eastern Europe, Israel, or right here in Kentucky — we are one people, united by one Torah and one destiny.

May this Chanukah inspire us all to bring more light, more love, and more unity into our homes and our community. And may our collective light hasten the ultimate light, the coming of Moshiach, when the whole world will be illuminated with the light and goodness and knowledge of G-d.

Happy Chanukah

Rabbi Avrohom Litvin is the longtime leader of Chabad of Kentucky

Snapshots



Rabbi Simcha Raphael visited Louisville over the weekend of Nov. 1-2, speaking about “Judaism and the Mysteries of Life, Death and Beyond.” Rabbi Raphael – Founding Director of the DA'AT Institute for Death Awareness, Advocacy and Training (with a beard and glasses), presented talks at the Archdiocese Historical Museum, Congregation Adath Jeshurun, the Rudd Heart & Lung Conference Center and the Trager Family JCC.

His visit was sponsored by Adath Jeshurun, the Trager/UofL Health Optimal Aging Clinic, the National Center to Encourage Judaism, U of L Healthcare, and the Archdiocese of Louisville. It was produced by the Kol Israel Jewish Renewal Community of Kentucky.

Candles

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

- December 5 @ 5:05 p.m.
- December 12 @ 5:05 p.m.
- December 19 @ 5:07 p.m.
- December 26 @ 5:11 p.m.

Contacts

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

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

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

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

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

Deadlines

Got a news item for Community? Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Send in your news by **Monday, December 15** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on

Friday, December 26.

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

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

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

Corrections/Clarifications

Due to an editing error, a story in the October issue of *Community* gave an incorrect last name for a former athletics director of the old Louisville YMHA. He was Maurice Richlin, not “Richmond.”

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

NEWS

After a trio of training sessions, the Year of Civil Discourse is officially under way

By Peyton Greenberg
Guest Columnist

This November, Jewish organizations across our community came together to launch A Year of Civil Discourse with Part One: Training in Constructive Dialogue workshops. The Year of Civil Discourse team includes Bill Altman (JCRC Chair), David Finke (JFCS CEO), Trent Spoolstra (JCRC Director), Courtney Evans (JFCS Director of Advancement), Rabbi David Ariel-Joel (The Temple), Rabbi Ben Freed (Keneseth Israel), and me. The YOCD initiative was made possible by the generous sponsorship of Marilyn Schorin. With the guidance of professional workshop trainer Michele Freed from Resetting the Table, we will hold our third and final session on Dec. 1. This means that more than 100 members of our Jewish community will have taken their initial steps of practicing constructive dialogue.

This training focuses on truly hearing one another: listening for meaning, honoring what someone is trying to express, and practicing kavod: respecting the person before they make their point. It's a simple idea,

but a transformative one.

One of the most powerful aspects of these sessions has been witnessing this transformation in real time. People who disagree deeply on difficult, emotionally charged issues sat across from one another - talking, sharing their stories, and connecting as human beings. In those moments, disagreements didn't disappear, but something shifted. Participants discovered unexpected common ground, even if that commonality was simply a shared willingness to try. That willingness matters. It's where trust begins.

Part One is only the beginning of a yearlong journey to strengthen our community's resilience. These workshops alone won't change the world, but they show our collective commitment to moving in the right direction. In a time when divisions can feel overwhelming, we choose to lean in and build skills, show up, and practice connection even when it's difficult. And that choice matters. Choosing to participate, listen, and stay in community, especially when it would be easier to step back, is the most important step toward real, lasting change.

What makes this effort beautiful is that it doesn't try to erase disagreement. Instead, it honors it. Our differences, our diversity of thought, and even our tensions are part of what makes us stronger. This first phase teaches us how to bridge those differences with curiosity and respect so we can grow together rather than drift apart.

I'll be honest: I struggle with this practice just like everyone else. But the point is to keep trying, because our community is worth trying for. Showing up, reaching out, listening deeply, and connecting with people we may not know is sacred work.

The more than 100 participants who invested their time and trust in this training should be truly proud of their engagement. From this group, a smaller cohort will move on to advanced facilitator development, helping lead our community toward deeper, more constructive conversations.

Throughout 2026, we'll host addi-



**YEAR OF
CIVIL DISCOURSE**

tional speakers, learning opportunities, and dialogue events -- open to the entire community -- to continue building on what we started in Part One. I hope even more of you will join us as we work toward a community culture that honors differences, puts people first, and celebrates the joy of coming together.

Peyton Greenberg is Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement Director at the Jewish Federation of Louisville

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CAMP J

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NEWS

ROUNDTABLE

Continued from page 1

the community build the trust necessary to identify and pursue common goals. Within the Jewish community's place in America and the world, I don't think this definition has that much relevance. Why not? Because leadership involving setting a clear vision, making decisions and focusing on an individual's performance is not that applicable to the times we face.

As I look at my own role as a leader within the Jewish community, what I'm focused on is making sure there is greater communication on diversity of opinions, identifying areas of agreement, and definitely building trust. So the outcome, for me at least is making sure we're talking to one another, listening to one another – and at this stage building consensus and trust so we can come together for a common goal.

Is there something intrinsic about leadership within a specifically Jewish organization?



Melanie Pell

The beauty of the Jewish world is that we are so hyper-organized, and there are so many Jewish organizations, that whatever flavor draws you to work in the Jewish world is there is something out there for you. Whether you want to work in a synagogue or JCC or an advocacy organization, or you want to raise money, or you want to work with young people -- we have all of it.

Sara Klein Wagner

I was in grad school at Brandeis working towards a Masters in Jewish Communal Service when I personally experienced what Melanie is talking about -- the breadth and nuance of countless layers of Jewish life we could be a part of professionally and devote our careers to. I've always looked at that as a gift. I feel as though I am paying back -- or paying it forward -- to the Jewish community, and for what it made me, growing up in Louisville.

Beth Salamon

I have such a different experience -- maybe it's just because I'm a lay leader,

and I don't think this was ever the path I ever saw myself on. I came to Louisville and NCJW reached out to me. It wasn't something that I had set out to do, and it was different, moving to a town with such a small Jewish community, as opposed to Philadelphia, where I grew up.

Melanie Pell

I actually stumbled into it too. I came out of law school looking for a policy role. And through a sort of happenstance, I became aware of an opening at the Chicago office of AJC. I didn't know what AJC was. I wasn't looking in the Jewish world, but I thought the work sounded interesting and I quickly realized, not only did I love it, but I loved the fact that it was a Jewish organization. And here I am, 25 years later: exactly where I need to be.

Ralph Green

Ultimately, though, the goal is to have a cohesive and as unified as possible, organization or community, to meet certain goals, to meet certain and to achieve certain agenda. You have to have an agenda in mind -- something to lead toward.



Corey Shapiro

Corey Shapiro

Skills that make us leaders in both worlds carry over. But one thing I thought of was empowering individuals. That's really important -- making sure people can communicate with each other and have difficult conversations.

The Year of Civil Discourse initiative now under way will go a long way in making that happen. Meanwhile, what about the notion of short-term vs. long-term goals?

Sara Klein Wagner

As leaders we have the responsibility and opportunity to be able to forecast what we see coming ahead, and try our best to paint a clear picture for our community. [It may be] a program, a service, or even perhaps something that's transformational for the community. What comes with the responsibility of being a leader is to be able to say, 'this is where we need to go, and this is how we're going to get there.' And I think you have to have some futuristic feel for where we might be going if you want people to

come on that journey.



Beth Salamon

Beth Salamon

One of the things that has made Louisville punch above its weight is how we've been innovative and forward thinking -- [as in] merging the JCC and the Federation.

Melanie Pell

If you're a lay leader, you have a finite amount of time and so need to think, 'What can I accomplish...where can I push the ball forward and keep things moving -- or is there something new we can create?' Whereas for Sara and me as professionals where we're in our jobs for a while, there might be a longer-term horizon -- with opportunities to think big.

Bill Altman

During my career in health care, I worked a lot with nonprofit organizations in an advocacy context...I think that the process of leadership is very similar in the sense that my role within my organization, and then within the healthcare field writ large in Washington and elsewhere, was to facilitate conversations.

I agree that at some point we need to mobilize around a core set of things that we're going to advocate for. But there's a real difference between facilitating community conversation and allowing views to be aired -- which is a goal in

and of itself -- and being an advocate. That's where it gets hard. At JCRC I do make my views known, but as a facilitator, I try to withhold that. And it's hard because I do have very strong views, so that's where I think leadership gets challenging. And, you know, to Ralph's point, at some point, we've got to mobilize around a vision. But that vision, I think, especially in these times, is being reformulated and reshaped, and it's very uncertain what that vision is or should be in the future.

The diverse challenges of contemporary Jewish Life require leadership flexible enough to meet the demands of the moment.



Bill Altman

[Within JCRC] we've convened -- by design -- an impressive group of people who have a range of views -- because you sharpen your own views by having them challenged. I've spent

a lot of my career, both in public health but also in the private sector, as an advocate -- and I'm a pretty good advocate. But that's a different role than a leader. It's critically important for the decision-making process to be given its due, regardless of what the outcome is.

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Trager Family JCC | Jewish Federation OF LOUISVILLE

NEWS

Continued from page 4

Corey Shapiro

One piece in that leadership definition that I didn't necessarily see, which I think is important in the Jewish world, is being able to speak for those who aren't speaking and enable others to have a voice. Sometimes there are members of the Jewish community aren't speaking, or the Jewish community itself isn't speaking out because we're in crisis.



Sara Klein Wagner

Jewish learning has always emphasized healthy and meaningful debate and deeper pursuit of understanding. As Jewish leaders it is also what makes us authentically us; as demonstrated by the strong partnership between volunteer and professional leaders. We are constantly learning from each other and seeking new and more perspectives from a diverse Jewish community. We must understand the changing needs and landscape when making decisions incorporating a mix of vision, fresh new ideas, historical memory, and trends in Jewish life - here, in North America, and around the globe.

Sara Klein Wagner

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Sara, you often emphasize being in anticipatory mode.

Sara Klein Wagner

Jewish communal life is about the

present and the future, about honoring and using the past to lift us up. So, if we're only living in the present and we're not concentrating on what is ahead, and being prepared in a proactive way, then we're not doing our jobs.

Melanie Pell

I think that's 100% correct, Sara. Because if we know anything, it's that we cannot presume that what worked yesterday is going to work tomorrow. We have to be self-critical enough to recognize that it's familiar and people may like it -- but we're not sure if we're actually achieving anything. Sometimes it means the relationships we were relying on may have changed.

How much of this is still being filtered through the lens of October 7, the two years of war in Gaza that followed, and the concurrent surge in antisemitism worldwide?



Ralph Green

October 7 was clearly a flashpoint. [It] brought out a massive amount of antisemitism that was latent but clearly there, and which is now being expressed a lot more openly -- which in a sense has brought us together as a community. [On the other hand,] actions of the Israeli government and the Israeli army have been a divisive [issue] among Jews, who, for whatever reason, have great

Ralph Green

disagreements as to what Israel should and should not be doing. And then, then there's been an awakening of a lot of Jews who are not involved terribly concerned, but who want to be involved. We have all these dynamics going at the same time, some pushing, some pulling, and we have to figure out how to harness that to strengthen our community.

disagreements as to what Israel should and should not be doing. And then, then there's been an awakening of a lot of Jews who are not involved terribly concerned, but who want to be involved. We have all these dynamics going at the same time, some pushing, some pulling, and we have to figure out how to harness that to strengthen our community.

Sara Klein Wagner

One thing that comes to mind is we're not the first people to be in leadership roles when the Jewish community is having a massive moment of change.

We're not alone. Every Jewish community across the globe is grappling with more than one thing at the same time. The level of energy and interest in connecting with Jewish life and other Jewish people right now is stronger than we've seen in years. We have a responsibility to fill that need, to give people the relevant, exciting, joyful experiences that they're looking for -- and at the same time acknowledge the hole and the heartache and the confusion or uncertainty generated by what's happening, both locally with antisemitism and across the globe, and with how Israel is going to manage 'the day after.' All of those things go into the pot together. That's what a family does when a family is struggling. We are able to be together, we teach swim lessons, we learn and grow together and we mourn and grieve and we acknowledge that we are a family that has disagreements.

One might say that Jews occupy a timeline brimming with uncertainty, but also opportunity.

Bill Altman

There's a need to recognize both institutional past and charting a [course] for the future. That's inherent in Judaism. We survived as a people because of our attachment to this story and this history and this practice. Yet Judaism has evolved from the destruction of the Second Temple through the history of our people. That's unique: not discarding the past, but recognizing that times change. I think we are at that juncture right now. We're in a discovery process of figuring out how we're going to chart a path forward.

Melanie Pell

"Our lay leaders are saying, 'Put me in, coach -- the world is nuts and I want to think I'm making a difference. Tell me what to do; give me something where I can take the reins.' We have all these people who are so eager to help and to do good.

Can we match that energy with the right kind of opportunity, so that we're meeting the needs of individual lay leaders -- and creating something great."

Beth Salamon

"It's hard...finding someone who has the capacity, but also the talent and confidence. Because I've talked to people who'll say things like, 'Oh, I don't think I could do that.' So you have to make people believe they can really lead, and give them the tools to learn how."

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COMMUNITY

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COMMUNITY DEADLINES

Deadlines for the next two issues of **Community** for copy and ads are December 15 for publication on December 26 and January 19 for publication on January 30.

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

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Community 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.

Email your comments and letters to the editor to: community@jewishlouisville.org.

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FORUM



At our Thanksgiving table, Israel always inhabited the emotional foreground



Mindful
Ramblings

Andrew
Adler

For as long as I can remember, Thanksgiving was the only holiday on the secular calendar that our family celebrated with what could be termed traditional authenticity. Each November my mother would revert to something akin to the Happy Homemaker, crafting a multilayered repast for the dozen or so people who'd fill the dining room of our Upper West Side Manhattan apartment.

Among our regular guests was one of my mother's two closest friends: Bilha Goodman, who lived two floors above us and was one of three families in our building with children approximately the same age – and who regarded one another more as blood relatives than mere unaffiliated souls.

Bilha grew up in Israel, served in the IDF and eventually found her way to the U.S., a geographical transition that did little to dampen her intrinsic qualities of self-expression. Bilhah was the quintessential Israeli: immensely proud of her heritage, passionate to the point of vehemence, and unabashedly Jewish.

She and my father had a running debate over the merits (or lack thereof) of successive Israeli governments. So, each Thanksgiving -- once the platters of holiday cuisine had been reduced to an after-

thought and our dining room table was rigged for battle – the spirited back-and-forth commenced.

My father, who grew up in a working-class Bronx neighborhood, was one of four children of parents who tended toward semi-rigorous Orthodox Jewish observance. Bilha, on the other hand, had a more secular background. It wasn't that she wasn't observant – her daughter and son were Bat and Bar Mitzvahed – it was simply that religion, as such, receded in comparative relevance.

Many Thanksgivings – dozens of them, in fact – played out amid this après-poultry dynamic. Well before I could appreciate the nuances of Israeli statecraft, defined by the impetus of Knesset maneuverings and the resulting peculiarities of coalition governments, I recognized that there was a fundamental disconnect between how such processes were accomplished in the U.S. compared what went on in Israel. Both nations were democracies, but Israel's dependence on strange alliances between radically opposing political parties was almost alien character. It wasn't simply that Israel was a parliamentary system. What made it so distinctive, perhaps, was that it functioned under the near-constant threat of destruction.

Year after year, Bilha and my father grappled verbally in friendly yet fierce argument. I was seldom sure about precisely what they were arguing about, only that the truth likely occupied a middle ground between them. Each of them believed unreservedly in the contemporary wonder that was Israel. My father, though until late in his life had never set foot in the country, considered himself a sort of citizen by proxy. He devoured

book after book about Israel's land, its history, its culture, and above all, the exceptional resilience of its people.

Not surprisingly, Bilha made frequent trips to her homeland. At least one of her siblings lived there, so there were family bonds to be nurtured. I know that my father envied her connection and yearned to share in something that remained beyond his grasp. I believe that their vociferous exchanges over the Thanksgiving table substituted for actually being there.

For decades, my father had tried to convince my mother to accompany him on a visit to Israel, but she would have none of it. Such an excursion simply was not part of her mindset. She was proudly Jewish, but it was a cool kind of pride. Unlike her husband, who like Bilha was unabashedly Zionist in temperament and belief, she preferred to maintain a degree of distance, politically and emotionally.

Once my father realized my mother would never travel with him to Israel, he went ahead and booked a two-week solo excursion. At the time he was about 60 with several heart attacks behind him, but nothing was going to stand in the way of him, at long last, planting his feet on the streets of Jerusalem and running his fingers along timeworn stones of the Western Wall.

He died in 1994, succumbing to cancer as I held him at home on a bright, late April morning. Thanksgiving was never the same after that. Bilha Goodman had nobody else who could muster the requisite argumentative intensity. With my father gone, all that was left was benign quietude.

Andrew Adler is Managing Editor of Community.

FORUM

What we saw in Washington and why it matters for Louisville



Philanthropy

Lenae Price

This month, I had the privilege of attending my first General Assembly (GA) of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). The GA brings together Jewish volunteer leaders, professionals, and community partners from across the continent to learn from one another, share best practices, and explore what the most pressing needs are for Jewish life now and in the years ahead. More than anything, it is a reminder that our local story is part of something much larger.

Louisville had a strong 13-person delegation that included Board Chair Beth Salamon, Ralph Green, Amanda and Alexander Blieden, Samantha Simon, Joanna Blieden, Chan Kemper, Melanie Pell, Kate and Allan Latts, and professional staff Sara Klein Wagner, Daniele Hurwitz, and me. Several volunteer leaders attended as recipients of this year's young leadership awards—Amanda Blieden (Joseph J. Kaplan Young Leadership Award), Samantha Simon (Lewis W. Cole Memorial Young Leadership Award), and Chan Kemper (Julie Linker Community Relations Young Leadership Award)—made possible through endowments created by the Kaplan, Cole, and Linker families. We are also grateful to donors who have established endowments that support professional development for staff, helping ensure our team can participate in opportunities like the GA. For a community our size, it was an extraordinary and meaningful group to bring to Washington.

"The GA was like a family reunion. Being with thousands of proud, committed Jewish leaders was incredibly affirming. Louisville represented our community so impressively."

— Melanie Pell

Moments That Moved Us

One of the most unforgettable moments of the GA came at the opening plenary, when four former hostages—Guy Gilboa Dalal, Evyatar David, Avinatan Or, and Noa Argamani—took the stage.

"When the four hostages entered the room, it was one of the most overwhelming feelings I have ever experienced. The entire room erupted in applause and did not stop. It was a profound moment of collective emotion and unity."

— Amanda Blieden

There were also moments of spiritual depth and personal reflection. Rabbi Angela Buchdahl's teaching left a lasting impact.

"As a Black woman who converted to Judaism and the parent of children who are joyfully Black and joyfully Jewish, hearing Rabbi Angela speak about identity and belonging resonated in a way that felt both personal and expansive."

— Chan Kemper

Standing Proud and Standing Together

Another deeply moving experience came during the American Jewish Committee (AJC) reception, where JCL Board Member Melanie Pell serves as AJC's Chief Engagement Officer. At this gathering, we heard from the parents of Yaron Lischinsky, who was murdered outside the Capital Jewish Museum alongside his colleague and girlfriend, Sarah Milgrim, both of blessed memory. They were shot as they left an AJC young professionals' event where participants had been working together to better understand the situation in Gaza and explore ways to support stability and humanitarian relief. Hearing Yaron's father speak about his son's life and legacy was heartbreaking and grounding, and it reminded all of us why it is essential to stand together with courage, compassion, and pride.

What We Learned

Throughout the GA, our delegation participated in both large plenary sessions with more than 2,000 attendees and smaller, more intimate breakouts on topics shaping Jewish life today. We heard from a wide range of voices, in-



Pictured, L-R: Chan Kemper, Daniele Hurwitz, Melanie Pell, Kate Latts, Sara Klein Wagner, Lenae Price, Samantha Simon, Beth Salamon, Amanda Blieden, Alexander Blieden, Joanna Blieden, Allan Latts.

cluding political commentator and author Dan Senor; Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, Immediate Past IDF Spokesperson; former U.S. Ambassador Rahm Emanuel; FOX News co-host Jessica Tarlov; journalist Olivia Reingold of The Free Press; Jewish media entrepreneur Zibby Owens; author and former speechwriter Sarah Hurwitz; Senators John Fetterman and Ted Cruz; JFNA's Chief Jewish Learning Officer, Rabbi Michael Uram (who is visiting Louisville in January); plus representatives from JFNA, AJC, The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), and others.

Several themes emerged across these sessions: the importance of creating welcoming and accessible Jewish spaces; strengthening Jewish identity for all ages; understanding how young adults want to connect today; reaching beyond our echo chambers to bring in a fuller range of voices; helping people stay connected to Israel during a challenging moment in history; and investing in civil society and bridge-building both within and beyond the Jewish community. These conversations offered tools and inspiration we can bring back to strengthen Jewish Louisville.

"Attending the GA with over 2,000 dedicated participants was truly inspiring. The collective commitment to Jewish continuity—locally and globally—was remarkable. We left feeling renewed and deeply connected to the Jewish people. Am Yisrael Chai."

— Kate and Allan Latts

Why This Matters at Home

For me, the GA reinforced just how essential our work is at the Jewish Federation. Our programs, partnerships, services, and moments of connection form a network of meaning, safety, and belonging that supports Jewish life every single day.

In conversations with leaders from across North America, I realized that being chosen to host our Western Galilee Partnership2Gether Conference of Communities and initiatives like Louisville's Year of Civil Discourse are special. Louisville's Jewish community has made a name for itself, and the momentum is building.

"At the General Assembly this year, when I told people that I represent the Louisville Jewish Community, I was met with excitement and comments like, 'I've

been hearing such great things about Louisville!' Word is getting out about what a special community we have, and it made me incredibly proud of what we are accomplishing together."

— Beth Salamon

What also became clear during the GA is that the kind of community we aspire to build—one that is welcoming, resilient, joyful, and forward-thinking—does not happen on its own. It takes ongoing partnership, leadership, and investment. The Annual Campaign is what makes this possible. It is the steady foundation that ensures we can respond to rising needs, expand programs that strengthen Jewish identity, support vulnerable community members, deepen our connection to Israel, and try bold new initiatives that others now look to as models.

Strong Jewish communities are built year after year by people who believe in their future and choose to invest in it with their time by volunteering, their talent by leading, and their treasure by supporting the Annual Campaign. Louisville's momentum is real, and the GA reminded me how important it is that we keep nurturing it together.

A Community Worth Celebrating

Attending my first GA gave me a deeper understanding of what it means to be part of a global Jewish community and an even greater appreciation for the strength of our local one. Our presence at the GA reflected who we are: a community that shows up, asks thoughtful questions, models curiosity and compassion, and cares deeply about the Jewish future. I returned home feeling proud, energized, grateful, and confident that Louisville is on a meaningful and forward-moving path.

The experience also made clear that we are part of something much bigger, and that Louisville is contributing to it in a real and respected way. I was proud to represent our community on the national stage—and even more proud of what we are building together every day here at home.

Lenae Price is Vice President & Chief Philanthropy Officer at the Jewish Federation of Louisville

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NEWS

ISRAEL

Continued from page 1

commitments we can make to the people of Israel and to each other. When we originally signed up for this trip, we did not know there would be a ceasefire underway. Friends back home asked if we were still going. The answer was yes. We felt it was important to go now more than ever.

Our first week was spent with the P2G Global Network in our partnership region of the Western Galilee. P2G is built on simple but profound principles: connection, shared identity, and mutual responsibility among Jewish communities in the United States, Israel and around the world. These relationships are personal. They are built through visits, shared projects, and the trust that grows when we truly know one another's stories.

For our group of six from Louisville, including three participants who had never before been to Israel, this trip felt like a natural continuation of the bonds strengthened this past summer when we welcomed our P2G community to Louisville for the Council of Communities. Additionally, we had the joy of reuniting with Eden and Kyla, our ShinShinim, who spent the year with us. We got to see Eden's high school, meet her family, and have a lovely day with Kyla in Tel Aviv.

Being in Israel during a ceasefire held its own kind of weight. There was relief, but also uncertainty. People exhaled, but

only partially, and we heard time and again that they were hopeful for the future. We also learned, much like the United States, about the great divisions and polarization within Israeli society and about how many Israelis are dissatisfied with their current government. Our partnership region feels particularly forgotten by their government, especially given the great needs in the region. The Western Galilee was on the frontlines of the war with Lebanon, and many communities and villages had to be evacuated during the conflict. They are slowly starting to return and are certain they will be able to rebuild.

Amidst it all, what mattered most was being physically present, hugging the people we had hosted months earlier, hearing their updates firsthand, and witnessing what daily life looks and feels like right now. There is a difference between reading the news and visiting a Bedouin village, a Druze community and a Kibbutz in person. There is a difference between hearing statistics and walking through a community that has been volunteering day and night, supporting displaced families, soldiers, and each other. Our P2G partners did not simply tell us about resilience; they demonstrated it to us in every corner of the Western Galilee.

We heard from our Israeli friends how meaningful it was that the partnership showed up for one another in good times and in hard ones. In one particular story, a soldier told us that he learned about

the partnership while serving in the war and how it sustained him to know that he had brothers and sisters across the ocean.

No trip to Israel would be complete without fabulous meals. We were told that Israelis show their love with food and we definitely felt the love by the insane amount of delicious food we were served. One of the most memorable evenings of the trip was our home hospitality meals from chef Uri, who cooked for our Louisville community in March, and from Toni, who is an

educator who worked with our twinning programs. At Toni's we were joined by a Druze doctor who serves as the deputy director of the Western Galilee medical center. They all shared their day-to-day trauma over the past two years. We will also never forget the passion expressed by a group of 18-year-old lone soldiers from the States and Canada who are preparing to join the IDF and made the decision to make Aliyah during the war because they believe in the Jewish people and Israel.

The second week of our trip, with the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), brought a different but equally powerful experience. As a member and board member of NCJW, we had the opportunity to meet incredibly courageous Jewish and Palestinian leaders and to bear witness to the impact of October 7th by visiting the NOVA music festival site and Kibbutz K'Far Aza. We visited Hostage Square where the posters of the hostages still remain, and where every week since the war began a vigil is held until the remains of every last hostage are returned home. We also heard from women leading trauma-response initiatives, legal advocates leading the way for gender equality in Israel, and grassroots organizers of women-led non-profits who are participating in NCJW's Connecting for Impact (CFI) initiative.

What we now know is a simple truth: In times of crisis, women are often the ones who hold communities together, rebuild, and lead.

Traveling to Israel at this moment was not easy, but it was deeply important. We returned with full hearts, humbled by what we witnessed and heard, and grounded in a clearer sense of purpose.

We came home reminded that the Louisville Jewish community is connected to a larger Jewish story. And we returned with profound gratitude: for our P2G partners who welcomed us like family, for our ShinShinim who continue to inspire us, and for the extraordinary women of NCJW's CFI whose leadership is shaping the future of Israeli society.

We are proud of the Jewish Community of Louisville for investing in these connections, for supporting our ShinShinim, and for understanding that our community is strengthened when we engage deeply with our partners in the Western Galilee and with organizations like NCJW. We are grateful to have represented Louisville in Israel during this critical time, and we return committed to strengthening these bonds in the months and years ahead.



Kyla, Julia Wall, Sara Klein Wagner, Amy Fouts, Beth Salamon, and Eden.



Members of the P2G Global Network including 6 participants from Louisville at the Knesset.



Sara Klein Wagner, Amy Fouts, Chef Uri and his wife.



Memorial at the NOVA music festival site



Memorial at the NOVA music festival site



Above and Right: Remains of Kibbutz K'Far Aza



NEWS

Partnership2Gether: Reconnecting, Reflecting, and Renewing Hope

By Amy Fouts
Partnership2Gether Coordinator

When I first started working for Jewish Louisville, I learned about Partnership2Gether (P2G) and its person-to-person connections with Israelis from Matte Asher and Akko in the Western Galilee. At the time, it felt abstract -- words on a website, not very tangible.

My perception changed in 2017 while on a Federation-sponsored trip to Israel. Our delegation spent our first night having dinner with Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian women from the Western Galilee. It was then that I met Sarit and her sister Sivan, and the "connection" part of P2G felt truly real.

Since then, with additional delegations visiting Louisville and greater participation in P2G programs, I have experienced meaningful one-on-one encounters with more Israelis and deepened my understanding of P2G: defined by real friendships built over shared experiences. What once felt like website language has become a central part of my life and community.

Fast forward to the P2G Hatikvah (Hope) Summit in Israel this past October. As soon as I booked my ticket, I messaged my friends, including Sivan: "I'm coming!" The replies were immediate. "The red carpet is ready," one wrote. When I asked what I could bring from America, the simple response was, "Just hugs."

My trip included three components: 1) the pre-Summit for first-timers, where Louisville had three new P2G community members in attendance; 2) the Hatikvah Summit itself; and 3) the Young Adult Seminar. The overarching theme throughout was Hope and Resilience, with an added focus on leadership for the Young Adult Seminar. During our time, we spoke with students, Nova survivors, bereaved families, families who were evacuated for 18 months, businesses owners, Druze community members, Arab Muslims, lone soldiers preparing to make Aliyah. We also saw the impact of the Louisville community's generous support at a newly built school for the Galilee Medical Center's pediatric department and a bomb shelter for students at Gan Toot, a Hebrew-Arab bilingual preschool.

First-time P2G participant Irene Sulyevich from Louisville shared, "We are amazed by the openness and warmth of Israelis, dancing with young soldiers or completing the drawing assignments under the close supervision of an 8-year-old. Everything here is saying, 'Breathe, relax, and live in the moment.'"

Julia Wall, visiting Israel for the first time, echoed these sentiments: "The most impactful part of the experience was the people. Engaging with so many different Israelis from across the Galilee, we talked and laughed, cried and were present. Being in their homes and experiencing a slice of their lives really gave me a sense of what it means to build bridges between Israel and diaspora Jews."

Besides reconnecting with old friends, I made new ones like Sivan's mother, who I'm now having weekly calls with so she can practice her English. And Michal, who joined P2G as a volunteer just a few months ago, reflected: "After such a difficult time for us as a country and as a people — wherever we are — the Young Adult Summit was emotional and inspiring. It made me reflect on what more I can do for other communities, and how strong we truly are when we stand together."

This trip reminded me of the enduring power of human connection. Across cultures, faiths, and challenging times, standing together—listening, learning,

and sharing—is how hope and resilience are nurtured. P2G isn't just for me; seeing the experiences of Julia, Irene and her husband Pavel, Beth, Sara and so many others showed that it's a network of friendships and support open to everyone, growing stronger with each connection.

Amy Fouts coordinates Partnership2Gether initiatives at the Jewish Federation of Louisville



Amy Fouts making plans with Sivan's mother, Ahuva, to practice her English



Irene Sulyevich and her husband Pavel help tend to a garden



Eyal Falah and Amy Fouts in 2018



Amy Fouts reunited with Eyal Falah and his wife, Hanan, in 2025



Sara Klein Wagner, Julia Wall, and Amy Fouts with Shahrazad in Akko Market



Beth Salamon enjoying some of the delicious food in Israel



Julia Wall at Regba School in the Western Galilee



Hostage Square



Beth Salamon, Amy Fouts, and Sara Klein Wagner, with Israeli volunteer, Tania Ronen



Pavel Sulyevich, Irene Sulyevich, Amy Fouts, Sara Klein Wagner, Beth Salamon, and Julia Wall at Rosh Hanikra, a Kibbutz in the Western Galilee

NEWS

JESSIE GINDEA

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tastic questions,” about such subjects as budgets, and how we envisioned working together. And she was really interested in hearing about the community’s diversity -- that we have multiple synagogues, and lots of unaffiliated people here.”

Fellow JLE co-chair Corey Shapiro is similarly enthused about Gindea’s selection, calling her “an extraordinary leader who will inspire students, families and the whole community.”

From her childhood summers attending Camp Young Judea through her most recent tenure as Lower School Director at Brooklyn’s Luria Academy Day School, Gindea has embraced her Jewish identity with passion and abiding curiosity.

She graduated in 2010 with dual undergraduate degrees from Columbia University (majoring in Near and Middle Eastern Studies) and the nearby Jewish Theological Seminary (B.A. in Modern Jewish Studies), going on to earn a master’s degree in Jewish Education from Hebrew College in Newton, Mass. through the Pardes Educator’s Program, and a master’s degree and Certificate of Advanced Jewish Studies from the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Early in her career Gindea taught 5th grade and middle school Judaics, was a synagogue religious-school teacher and Kadima advisor and spent four

years as Associate Director: Abroad Experiences at KAHAL: Your Jewish Home Abroad.

She’s done additional stints as the Senior Educator at Base Miami (a branch of Mem Global’s community-building initiative for young Jewish adults), Associate Director of Jewish Federation of North America’s National Young Leadership Cabinet, and spent a year as Interim Head of School at Miami’s Gordon School, a Jewish early childhood and Day School.

Gindea’s been at Luria Academy since August of last year, leading what her LinkedIn profile describes as “a team of 24 Lower School teachers while overseeing day-to-day operations and collaborating with the Educational Leadership Team to ensure cohesive, impactful programming,” with an emphasis on “fostering collaboration and active parental engagement.”

Married to Rabbi Adam Gindea, living in Brooklyn with their 10-year-old daughter and six-year-old son, her life sounds settled and satisfying. So, what’s the incentive to give it all up in favor of an untried gig in Louisville, Kentucky?

“It ignites me to build something,” she answers. “I love being able to be in a space where there is a gap, and we figure out how to fill it.”

Sometimes it’s within a Big Picture context.

“My *avodah* – my holy work in the world – is to make sure people know they belong as part of the Jewish peo-

ple,” Gindea says. “They’re part of this big, beautiful thing that we have. And if I, in any way, am able to help people understand what their path to meaning or their path to connection might be, then our collective story becomes a little fuller, another person finding their place helps ensure that Jewish history isn’t just preserved, but continually renewed in every generation.”

Working alongside young people, inside and outside classroom settings, has provided Gindea with perspective on “leaning into people’s skills, engaging them and allow their divine spark to shine.”

Louisville will give her the opportunity to do just that.

“One thing I’m excited about is getting to know the kids and their families,” she emphasizes, “being able to say, ‘What things are interesting to you? What makes you feel good when you’re talking about Judaism?’ [Because] when kids are at all different kinds of schools and have had a full day of learning, I want to make sure that the time dedicated to learning and connecting with Judaism is full of joy and fun and awe.”

Gindea recognizes that traditional approaches to Jewish education may not necessarily dovetail within contemporary realities.

“Hebrew school is a model that’s really hard in today’s world,” she acknowledges. And I think as a camp person, part of what excites me is the idea of being able to do something a little different – making sure it’s engaging and multisensory.”

And, literally, delectable.

“One of the best classes I ever taught was the weekly Torah portion., Gindea recalled. “We made a recipe based on the commentary every week, so I called it *Ta’ami Tanach* – ‘a Taste of Tanach.’ I did it with middle schoolers. One of my favorites was for Parsha Bereshit [Genesis]. In the beginning, there’s a commentary on Adam and Eve being made from the same spine, and G-d pulled them apart in that way.

“We had double-stuffed Oreos and asked, how do you really pull these apart? So we were able to dive into this



Jessie Gindea, pictured with her husband, Rabbi Adam Gindea, and their two children: son Matan, 6; and daughter Charlie, 10. (photo courtesy of Jessie Gindea)

commentary that otherwise may have felt like, ‘Okay, we’re sitting on task, we’re looking at this commentary...’ etc. Instead, it was a full sensory experience. And what was really cool was that by the end of the year, the kids were responsible for teaching the class each week. It was so fun.”

Call it a prime demonstration of Gindea’s teaching philosophy.

“There are so many pathways to find your own Judaism,” she said. “Kids learn in all different ways. I happen to love to eat, so food often becomes a big part of what I do. There are infinite possibilities for them to learn from: Are we going on field trips? Are we cooking? Are we going to a local nursing home and learning and singing together? It could be anything, and that openness feels really exciting.” “Identifying the right person for the JLE position involved a deliberate, multilayered search process. The JLE board partnered with the New York City-based recruitment firm DRG Talent, which brought deep experience in working with non-profit organizations. The

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Gindeas had come to Brooklyn from Miami only about a year earlier, and they weren't itching to make another big move so soon.

"But the more I heard about this position and the more I heard about the community -- and the more people I started to speak with" -- the prospect of relocating began to gain traction.

"You know that sometimes you make plans and God laughs -- well, this truly felt like, 'This is what I want to do: to have a community that is so open to change and so thoughtful about finding new ways to engage with Judaism,'" Gindea said. As she and her husband learned what qualities defined the city, "the more it felt like, 'Wow, I want my kids to grow up in a community that's so thoughtful and names the gaps -- and then does the work to figure out how to fix them.'"

For a young woman steeped in an amalgam of modern Orthodox and what might be termed "progressive" Judaism, shaping a novel pathway for Jewish education seemed an exquisite match of skill, imagination, and professional timing.

"To know there's a place where my experience and worldview can add to what this community already has, really felt like a calling," Gindea says. "I want to contribute and be part of something that's bigger than me."

"She's a creator and a builder," Sara Klein Wagner, President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and

the Trager Family JCC, said of Gindea. Her hiring -- made possible by support from the Jewish Heritage Fund -- means "we have this remarkable opportunity to invest and bring a full-time Jewish educator to our community."

Significantly, "with the way everything in our world is changing, we know our families and students need evolving services," Wagner stressed. "They need flexible programming. They need different entry points. They move at different speeds. We're fortunate to have found Jessie who can see an arc and the big picture of connecting with kids where they are."

Gindea's dynamic applied to much of her earlier work with Base Miami, which she and her husband established after moving to that city eight years ago.

"There had just been a Pew [Research] study that there were all these young Jewish professionals living in a neighborhood called Brickell, and nobody was connecting with them. So, we built a model that made sense within the bigger Base movement, and then also for our family.

Heady times, those. "Our daughter was two years old when we started," Gindea recalled, and she used to have two birthday parties: one for her kid friends and one for her grown-up friends, because we had people in our house six days a week. We built deep relationships with so many people who were seeking in all different ways. Knowing that we were a space that was

not judgmental in any way about how they connected or observed Judaism -- that they were welcome to belong exactly how they were at that moment -- was powerful for both of us."

And speaking of relationships, Gindea already has key Louisville allies in her corner.

"We said we're going to support you as your board," Jones promised. "We'll be here to help you raise money, to help you set policy, and oversee the work you'll be doing. But you are going to do it -- we're not going to micromanage you."

Meanwhile, Gindea and her husband have already bought -- unseen -- a home in the Highlands -- a neighborhood they toured during a single weekend

visit to Louisville.

Rabbi Gindea is Vice President of Base and Rabbinic Innovation at Mem Global, "so he gets to oversee the Bases all over the country," Jessie Gindea said.

They plan to move here in late December, happily anticipating the pleasure of an actual backyard. "In Brooklyn, it's like there is no space," she acknowledged with a laugh.

"Some of the values that are held in Louisville versus New York -- outdoor space, slowing down -- really speak to us," she said. "In the pathway of awe, being able to take my morning coffee outside just makes my day much better."

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PICTURE THIS: LION OF JUDAH LUNCHEON

Louisville's Lions of Judah gathered at Hotel Bourre Bonne on Sunday, November 9 for their annual event. Together, they celebrated new Lions and honored the Lions who have paved the way. Keynote speaker, Noa Fay, spoke with confidence as she shared her personal experience as a Jewish college student living on campus since October 7th and her ability to meet hate and antisemitism with empathy, courage and love.

(Photos by Kathryn Harrington)



Shellie Benovitz, Susie Benovitz Botwinick, Karen Abrams, Salli Coleman, Phyllis Florman, and Sarah O’Koon



Noa Fay



Shannon Rothschild and Kristin Shapira



Shannon Rothschild



Shane Shaps and Susan Callen



Karen Abrams and Shellie Branson, event chairs, with Noa Fay, Sara Klein Wagner, and Beth Salamon



Phyllis Florman and Marcia Roth



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A swim program for beginner and intermediate lap swimmers. Centered on refining and improving strokes or learning all four strokes from the beginning!

- Beginner and Intermediate Options
- Once a week
- Ages 18-75
- Improve your lap swimming with a coach
- Member: \$110 + tax
Non-member: \$150 + tax

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



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit jccloouisville.org/adult-swim-clinics



Other Adult Programs

- Accelerated Swim**
- 5 lessons in 5 days, Mon - Fri
 - All ages and skill levels
 - Multiple dates and times available

- Private Coaching**
- Available as single lessons or packages of 4, 8, and 12
 - 30 minute lessons, once a week
 - All ages and skill levels
 - Scheduled based on mutual availability between the swimmer and instructor



Interested in updates on our Adult Swim Programs? Email us at swimschool@jewishlouisville.org for more information!

PICTURE THIS: SHALOM LOUISVILLE BRUNCH



Shalom
LOUISVILLE



Jewish Federation[®]
OF LOUISVILLE

On Sunday, November 2, members of the community who are new or newish to the Louisville Jewish community gathered at the Trager Family JCC for a morning of bagels, shmear, and camaraderie. People of all ages were invited to make new friends and find connection in their new home.



CHABAD OF KENTUCKY & PROJECT FRIENDSHIP PRESENT

4TH ST LIVE! MENORAH LIGHTING

MENORAH LIGHTING FRESH DONUTS
HOT CHOCOLATE FESTIVE MUSIC BOWLING
BOUNCE HOUSE & MORE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 | 5:00PM
4th Street Live! and the Sports & Social Club

Let's Light Up the world

MAYOR CRAIG GREENBERG WILL LIGHT THE MENORAH AT 6:00PM!

JOIN THE LOUISVILLE JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR

Chanukah ON ICE

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 17
6:00-9:00PM
ALPINE ICE ARENA
1825 GARDINER LN,
LOUISVILLE, KY 40205

SUFGANIOT
LATKES
HOT COCOA

SKATING AROUND GIANT MENORAH
LIVELY JEWISH AND ISRAELI MUSIC
CHANUKAH REFRESHMENTS
FREE FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

CHANUKAH

@ THE PADDOCK SHOPS

PUBLIC MENORAH LIGHTING
Gelt, Gifts, Latkes,
Donuts, Music & More

THURSDAY, DEC. 18, 2025 | 7:00 PM
502-442-2208 for more info
FREE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

PICTURE THIS: SNOWFLAKE SHOPPE

On Sunday, November 23, the Trager Family JCC came alive as community members shopped in support of the Early Learning Center at the Roth Family Education Center. Nearly 60 vendors were on site for seasonal shoppers looking for the perfect gift.

(Photos by Robyn Kaufman)



Kids enjoyed visiting the PJ Library table and making their own Hanukkah themed bookmarks



Shoppers thoroughly enjoyed refreshing lemonade by Lorna's Really Good Lemonade



Snowflake Shoppe volunteers at the bottle pull table and the ELC Spirit Shop table. Both directly benefit the ELC.



The Gilded Quill, a mother and young son duo



Snowflake Shoppe sponsor, House of Colour, Middletown



Snowflake Shoppe sponsor, Shady Rays



Young artist, Leo Maris



Find Your Magic, a project by Maddie Behr to raise money to benefit her fund for CenterStage Academy scholarships



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

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

10-week Session
January 18 - March 29
at the Trager Family JCC

0-18 months: Sundays, 10:15-10:45 a.m.
 19 months-4 years: Sundays, 9:30-10:10 a.m.
 JCC Members: \$100 | Non-members: \$125

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

Questions? Contact Jordan Leanhart,
 jleanhart@jewishlouisville.org.

Learn more at jewishlouisville.org/pjlibrary






PHOTOBOOTH RENTAL

502-208-8954

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BIRTHDAYS | GRADUATIONS
WEDDINGS
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SCHOOL EVENTS | PROMS
LAUNCH PARTIES
CORPORATE EVENTS
FUNDRAISERS | CHARITY EVENTS

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PICTURE THIS: COMPANY: A MUSICAL COMEDY



J CenterStage
at the Trager Family JCC

COMPANY
A Musical Comedy

On the night of his 35th birthday, confirmed bachelor Bobby contemplates his unmarried state. Over the course of a series of dinners, drinks and even a wedding, his friends explain the pros and cons of taking on a spouse; the habitually single Bobby is forced to question his adamant retention of bachelorhood.

This Stephen Sondheim classic was a big hit with our patrons and had performances on November 6, 8, 9, 13, 15 & 16, 2025.

(Photos by Robyn Kaufman)

Company was sponsored by Zack & Yael Melzer.

CenterStage is supported by the Arnold J. Levin & Don A. Powell Fund for Ecumenical Outreach, the Kohn-Berman Endowment for the Arts Fund, the Irving Klempner Jewish Cultural Arts Fund, the Claire and Lee Lenkoff Orchestra/Conductor's Fund, Dr. Louis & Bea Brownstein Ringol Performing Artists Fund, Arthur David Kreitman Jewish Performing Arts Fund, Robert & Betty Levy Bronner Youth, Arts & Jewish Experience Fund, and the Marian Weisberg Youth Theatre Fund.



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one happy camper

OVERNIGHT CAMP GRANTS

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Jewish Overnight Camp Grants

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\$2,500 for 4 weeks or \$1,500 for 2 weeks
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\$2,000 for 4 weeks or \$1,250 for 2 weeks
- ✓ **Third-year grants**
\$1,500 for 4 weeks or \$1,000 for 2 weeks
- ✓ Additional financial needs-based assistance available

Application Process

- ✓ Visit JewishLouisville.org/Grants to learn more or complete a grant request form.
- ✓ Rolling applications. Awards will be sent directly to camp.

For more info, scan the QR code or visit JewishLouisville.org/Grants



Email questions to Alison Roemer at aroemer@jewishlouisville.org.






J CenterStage | **ACADEMY**
at the Trager Family JCC



Performances:
 Thursday, Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m.

Runtime: 30 minutes



Performances:
 Thursday, Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 21 at 2 p.m.

Runtime: 60 minutes

Purchase tickets and learn more at jcclouisville.org/academy



PICTURE THIS: AGEWELL THANKSGIVING

Nearly 150 members of our AgeWell community came together at Keneseth Israel Congregation on Wednesday, November 19 for a day of gratitude, community, and of course a delicious meal.

(Photos by Mackenzie Lynch)




JOIN US FOR THE
NEXTGEN HANUKKAH PARTY

December 20 | 7 p.m.
Evan Williams Bourbon Experience

DREIDEL GAMES, LATKES, & LIGHTS!

- Open to young adults 21+
- \$18 Registration
- Candle lighting at 7:30 p.m.

RSVP 

Scan the code or visit jewishlouisville.org/nextgen






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Team Kentucky!*

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TORONTO
August 2 – 7 for ages 13–17

**We're looking for
basketball players
for Team WildCards!**

Be Part of the Magic!
Join 2,000 Jewish teens
from across the globe for an
Olympic-style sports experience.



 Scan the QR code to
learn more and fill out
an interest form!

TEAM KY
JCC Maccabi Games®
Fueled by the Trager Family JCC

Informational Meeting | Thursday, December 11 | 6:15-7:30 p.m. | Trager Family JCC



For more information, contact:
Abigail Goldberg, agoldberg@jewishlouisville.org
jccloouisville.org/maccabi



NEWS

Your family treasure may find a home at the Filson

By Ann Glazer Niren
Guest Columnist



Ann Glazer Niren

Life at the Filson is busy, with programs, presentations, and donations— oh my! I recently had the pleasure of giving a talk to the women of Hadassah about their collection at the Filson.

I think everyone enjoyed the afternoon of education, investigation, and *nosh*. Hadassah is looking to grow its membership, so if you are interested in joining, please contact them at tinyurl.com/bdm4u52d.

In this month's column, I will explain how the donation process works, so you will know what to expect should you decide to offer a collection—from the first phone call or email to putting your materials on the shelf. It often begins like this: Someone contacts me and says, "I don't know what to do with my family's (*insert special heirloom here*)." Or perhaps, "My children don't want it, but I can't bring myself to throw these things away!"

Knowing that their family's treasures will be preserved permanently, in a climate-controlled environment where they will be lovingly cared for, brings some comfort to the person. With that first phone call or email, I get a preliminary sense of the items and some basic family history. We set up an appointment to meet, often in the donor's home, but occasionally here at the Filson. My goal is to make this process as easy as possible. If the donor lives outside of the Louisville area, then we make plans to ship the materials or for the donor to bring them in. If they bring in the items before they have been officially accepted, then they will need to fill out a Temporary Deposit Form, indicating that we are only holding the item(s) provisionally.

On the day of the visit, I record the item(s) and I often create an abbreviated family tree as well as take photos. I make these appointments as open-ended as possible, so that I can spend as much time as necessary, taking notes and learning about the family. Sometimes, if the potential collection is rather large, I may need two or more visits. I enjoy these sessions immensely, because I get to learn about other local Jewish families. "Connecting the dots" not only helps me understand the relationships, but it also allows me to frame their stories within the appropriate historical context.

Next, I will write a report which I will subsequently present to our Collections Management Committee. There are a few reasons why the curators do not make these decisions independently. I need to have additional insights from my colleagues who know so much more than I do. Also, in my case, as a member of the Jewish community, I am often too close to the situation and need the perspectives of my coworkers.

As I have gained more experience, I have a clearer idea of what kinds of items the committee is likely to accept and what we already possess. It is most helpful to have as detailed a backstory as possible, in addition to information about the various items, which is why we prefer that people do not simply leave things at the front door. If the items are not accepted, it is possible that they do not fit our mission statement, which relates to preserving items from Kentucky and the Ohio Valley. A collection that bears no connection to the area, writ large, will likely not be accepted.

If the items are accepted, then I notify the donor, and I create a Letter of Acknowledgement and a Deed of Gift, the latter of which is a legal document stating that the donor is officially gifting these items to the Filson. The donor signs the Deed of Gift and answers some related questions as to their preferences,

and then I pick up their collection. I then organize the items into their respective categories: manuscripts (essentially, paper-based items), photos, books, museum items, and audio-visual items. I make sure that the materials are in good condition; if they are not, they may need repair or conservation, or they may need to be returned. I do "pre-processing," which means giving back any duplicates, organizing items chronologically or alphabetically, depending upon the circumstances, and making sure that everything fits together. I log all the information into two different databases, tag and box them, and shelve everything. This process usually takes several months, if not longer, from start to finish. Then, another colleague catalogues the collection, eventually making it accessible to any researchers or visitors.

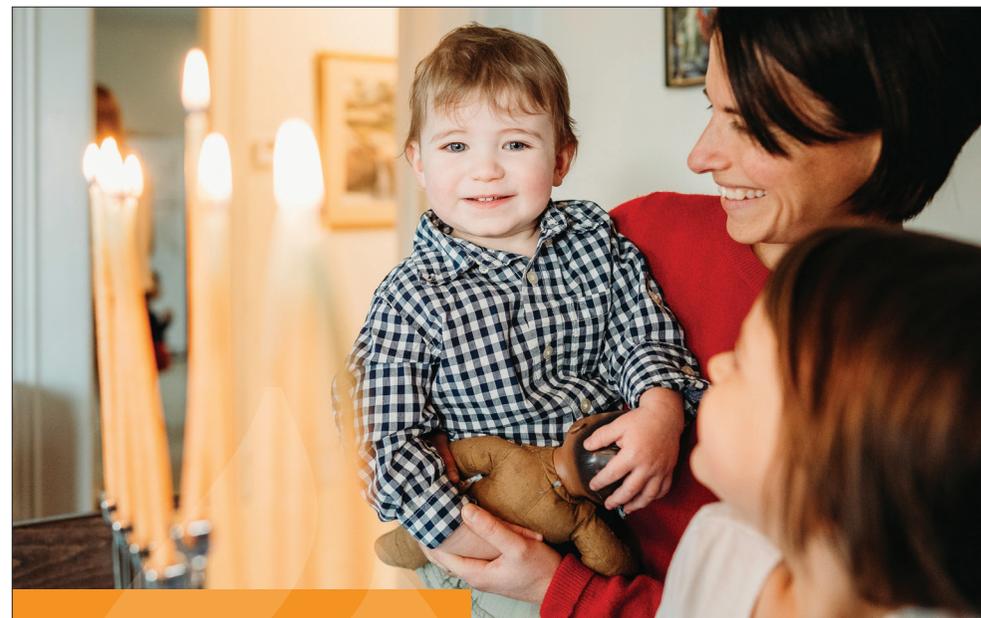
I'm sharing this information with you because sometimes donors think that their items will appear on our website immediately, either as a catalogue listing and/or as a digitized item. Please understand that we do not have the space or staff to digitize all our collections. However, once the item is catalogued, anyone looking for it, either online or in person at the Filson, will be able to lo-

cate it in our database.

You may be wondering what happens to these items once they are catalogued. They remain in wait for a researcher to utilize them, they may appear in an exhibit, or they may be featured in one of our print or online magazines. It's good for the items to be taken out occasionally, but it is not healthy for them to be exposed to direct sunlight for a long time or to be in an uncontrolled temperature environment; that's part of the reason why they came to the Filson in the first place.

After reading about this acquisition process, if you feel that you have something that would be a good fit for our Jewish Collections, please call me at 502-635-5083, ext. 243 or email me at aniren@filsonhistorical.org. Please do not throw it out simply because you can't think of a suitable home. Close to 15 Jewish families or institutions have already had their collection accepted, processed and shelved this year alone at the Filson --wouldn't you like to be Number 16?

Dr. Ann Glazer Niren is Curator of Jewish Collections at the Filson Historical Society



Join us in
Illuminating
the Future

As you celebrate the Festival of Lights, honor the spirit of Hanukkah by making a legacy commitment and leave a lasting impact on generations to come.



With a legacy gift, you ensure that the warmth of Hanukkah continues to spread its glow for future generations.

It's easier than you think! Contact Frances Skolnick at fskolnick@jewishlouisville.org to learn how to create your legacy.

PJ Library

Jewish Storybooks Delivered Each Month!

PJ Library sends curated, award-winning storybooks and activities to Jewish children from birth through age 12. The program sparks meaningful conversation and provides opportunities to explore and celebrate Jewish life together.

Sign Up today!
Scan the QR code using
your camera app!



For questions about PJ Library contact
Jordan Leanhart at jleahart@jewishlouisville.org.

Now More Than Ever: Why Your Support Matters in 2025

As 2025 comes to a close, we find ourselves in a moment that asks something important of all of us: to recognize the growing needs of our neighbors and decide how we as a community are going to respond.

Over the past year, JFCS has seen that growing need every day - not as headlines or statistics - but in the faces of people trying their best to build stability, dignity, and purpose in these uncertain times.

JFCS is founded for moments just like this. Our wraparound model of care ensures we meet people where they are and help them reach a place of long-term stability. Families coming for food support are also receiving counseling. Seniors requesting transportation are receiving help stabilizing their home-care assistance, allowing them to stay safe and independent longer. We've seen more of these stories over this past year, and it paints a larger picture of more of our neighbors hurting, stretched thin, and running out of options.

What makes this year especially urgent is the widening gap between need and available support. Federal resources that families have relied on for years are now facing significant cuts and interruptions, just as more people are seeking help. At JFCS, we're seeing this strain across nearly all of our service pillars. The Community responded to the immediate crisis at the Food Pantry when SNAP benefits were halted. But the need for all of our programs has increased and we are asking for your continued support.

Our Annual Campaign matters, now more than ever, because your generosity directly

touches the lives of people who are facing some of their toughest moments. Your support doesn't just fund a single program or address one crisis. It sustains the entire network of services that families, seniors, new Americans, and young people rely on when they have nowhere else to turn. It keeps JFCS steady in uncertain times and gives us the flexibility to respond immediately when our community needs us most, just as we did this year with the launch of our Immigrant & Refugee Services pillar, and again last month when federal SNAP benefits were at risk.

"The Community responded to the immediate crisis at the Food Pantry when SNAP benefits were halted. But the need for all of our programs has increased and we are asking for your continued support."

As we approach the final weeks of our Annual Campaign, we invite you to consider the Louisville we can build together. Will ours be a city where people fall through the cracks, or one where compassion is real, where help is accessible, and where neighbors stand together to create stability and hope?

Since 1908, JFCS has walked alongside this community through economic hardship, pandemics, and moments of great change. And in every era, people like you have stepped forward with generosity, courage, and a belief in what is possible when we care for one another.

We are asking for that spirit again today.



Volunteers at our recent Family Mitvah sorted and filled over 180 bags for families needing support for Thanksgiving. The Sonny & Janet Meyer Food Pantry has experienced an increase in requests for assistance beyond the usual seasonal increase JFCS regularly receives this time of year.

to help ensure that every neighbor, at every stage of life, has the chance to live with dignity and purpose.

Hope grows when we invest in each other, and in these uncertain times, our friends, our neighbors, and our community deserves hope.

Gifts to the JFCS Annual Campaign can be made easily and securely online by scanning the QR code at the right; or by phone by contacting Courtney Evans at (502) 322-1928.



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Pathways to Success

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR

RSVP At:

Equipping Louisville's Youth for Work & Life

Community Chat & Youth Career Fair for Louisville's youth - and those who support them - to explore opportunities, community resources, and practical tools that prepare young people for a confident start in the workforce.

December 9 | 5-8 p.m. | JFCS 2821 Klemmner Way

NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

Hadassah's local history given voice at the Filson

It was entirely fitting that members of the Louisville chapter of Hadassah found their way to the Filson Historical Society on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 9. After all, the Filson houses one of the region's most extensive repository of Jewish materials, including a comprehensive archive tracing Hadassah's activity in Louisville since the chapter's founding in 1919.

Ann Glazer Niren, the curator of the Filson's Jewish collection, acted as a combination lecturer and tour guide during a roughly half-hour presentation for her guests. Hadassah (its formal name is Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America) came into being in 1912. It was founded by Henrietta Szold (1860-1945), the eldest of eight daughters of a prominent Baltimore rabbi. Hadassah, by the way, is the Hebrew name for Esther, whose saving of the Jewish people from destruction is celebrated each year with the holiday of Purim.

Szold made *aliyah* in 1933 to what was then British Mandatory Palestine, helping to establish a hospital that remains one of Israel's most important medical centers.

Niren was introduced by Louisville chapter president Michelle Elisburg, who told how her great grandmother started Hadassah's Chicago chapter, and whose family is now in its fifth generation of Hadassah membership. She spearheaded the effort to transfer the Louisville chapter's materials to the Fil-



Members of Louisville's Hadassah chapter gathered at the Filson Historical Society on Sunday, Nov. 9 for a presentation on the chapter's history and to examine objects from the Filson archives. Pictured on the upper right are (L-R) chapter president Michelle Elisburg and Ann Glazer Niren, the Filson's curator of Jewish collections. (Photo by Andrew Adler)

son – “a safe place where, if people want to research, they're available.”

Call it a physical survey of more than 100 years of local chapter history.

As she did previously for National Council of Jewish Women – Louisville Section members, Niren provided chronology and context to the afternoon's Hadassah contingent.

“I'm thinking, ‘Don't you already know about your history?’” Niren said, adding that “it's probably a good thing to have a refresher. And for those of you who don't, then you're in the right place.”

There was a Powerpoint-driven slide show highlighting Hadassah's local activity, as well as lauding Szold's decidedly progressive intellectual curiosity.

“She wanted to be a rabbi, but of course (in her day) women were not

being trained as rabbis,” Niren said. Undaunted, Szold “did the curriculum at Jewish Theological Seminary on the (JTS administration's) condition that she was not allowed to be awarded *semikhah* (the term signifying rabbinic ordination). She was way ahead of her time.”

Niren outlined how three Louisville women – Minnie Isaacs, Betty Ades and Rebecca Linker – met Szold while attending a 1919 Zionist convention in Chicago – and who became the founders of Louisville's Hadassah chapter that very same year.

“They had their first meeting at the YMHA, and eventually the chapter “grew to 63 members and 19 unpaid ones,” Niren said. Since then, the chapter has seen sawed in numbers, ceasing operations as recently as 2005 because of waning participation, especially from present-generation women. Similar challenges continue to test the chapter's stability.

“You need younger people; you need succession,” Elisburg emphasized, acknowledging that “younger people aren't as interested in these kinds of organizations anymore.”

Still, attendees demonstrated plenty of interest on this particular Sunday, pouring over items from the Filson's Hadassah collection. Among them was a large white tablecloth embroidered with names and messages – perhaps the most tangible example of how personality and sentiment can be transformed into an object of resonant collective history.

Amid the joy of Hanukkah, Handel's 'Judas Maccabeus' comes to The Temple Dec. 17.

Lots of people have heard (or at least heard of) Handel's oratorio *Messiah* – forever joined to the hip of music history by virtue of its Hallelujah chorus. But among the composer's vast output in the form – some two dozen – there's one of special interest as we approach Hanukkah: *Judas Maccabeus*.

Louisville audiences will get a rare opportunity to hear the work performed Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at The Temple. Presented as part of the Derby City Chamber Music Festival, the performance is being sponsored by the Jewish Heritage Fund, with additional support from the Snowy Owl Foundation Inc. Congregational support is coming from The Temple, Adath Jeshurun and Keneseth Israel.

“I think the most important thing is that we, as Jewish people need something – like *Messiah* is special and done every year -- that is just for us,” says Louisville soprano Emily Albrink-Katz, who will be among the three vocal soloists participating in the Dec. 17 performance. Choristers will include the Choir of St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church.

Nicholas Finch, the Festival's founder and director, will conduct

“We'd love for this to become an annual tradition, telling the story of Hanukkah,” Albrink-Katz says, adding that the work will be presented in The Temple's smaller sanctuary. There will be cuts in Handel's complete score, which is customary in many performances of Handel's oratorios (*Messiah* being one of them).

“So it's not going to be super long – maybe an hour and a half,” she promises. Plus, there's is a personal connection.

“I'm not Jewish, but I'm raising Jewish children (two boys), and I'm married to someone who's Jewish (David Katz),”

Albrink-Katz says.

“I've been welcomed with open arms into the Jewish community,” she adds. “So to be able to tell this story with such high-caliber musicians in Louisville, and to give this gift to our Jewish community, is so meaningful to me.”

For more information about the Dec. 17 performance of *Judas Maccabeus*, go online at derbycitychamberfest.org/maccabeus.

Life & Legacy program reaches \$2 billion in overall commitments

Life & Legacy

ASSURE JEWISH TOMORROWS

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Life & Legacy program has achieved an extraordinary milestone: \$2 billion in legacy commitments.

“Life & Legacy assists communities across North America, through partnerships with Jewish federations and foundations, to promote endowment-building and legacy giving to benefit local Jewish day schools, synagogues, social service organizations, and other Jewish entities,” the program's announcement said.

“Over the last 13 years, Life & Legacy has bolstered 977 organizations in 75 communities with the training and support they need to secure legacy gifts, steward donors, and integrate a culture of philanthropy in their communities. Together, the Life & Legacy communities have [generated] \$2 billion in commitments, 44,000 signed legacy commitments, and 35,000 individual legacy donors.”

Life & Legacy's announcement noted that “already, \$316.8 million of this has been added to organizational endowment funds, providing lasting support that will grow over time. The rest is set aside in wills, trusts, retirement accounts, life insurance policies and other estate planning documents. These funds will be utilized by communities well into the future, shaping the communal life of North American Jews long after the signatories have passed.”

Perhaps best known for PJ Library – which each month sends more than 650,000 free Jewish books to families in the U.S. and abroad -- the Grinspoon Foundation has forged enduring connections across the Jewish landscape.

“We could not have reached this milestone without every single person who has pledged to support their local Jewish institutions after their lifetime,” says Harold Grinspoon Foundation president Winnie Sandler Grinspoon. “By giving these gifts, forward-thinking donors -- including 436 members of the Louisville community -- ensure that they are part of the future of these institutions, alongside the generations to come.”



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NICHOLAS FINCH, FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PRESENTS

THE MACCABEUS INITIATIVE: HANDEL'S "JUDAS MACCABEUS"

A NEW INCLUSIVE TRADITION FOR HANUKKAH

THE HANUKKAH STORY, TOLD IN MUSIC
BY THE COMPOSER OF "MESSIAH"

SPONSORED BY:



FEATURING:

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THE CHOIR OF ST. FRANCIS IN THE FIELDS
DR. KIRK RICH, DIRECTOR

AND MORE...

HANUKKAH PERFORMANCE -

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 2025, 7:30 PM

AT -

THE TEMPLE

CONGREGATION ADATH ISRAEL BRITH SHOLOM

5101 US-42, LOUISVILLE, KY

FOR INFORMATION AND TO RESERVE SEATS, PLEASE VISIT
DERBYCITYCHAMBERFEST.ORG/MACCABEUS



AROUND TOWN

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

Adath Jeshurun

Adath Jeshurun invites the community to join us for the next AJ Shabbat-Luck Dinner Friday, Dec. 5 after Kabbalat Shabbat services. Happy Hour starts at about 5 p.m. with tasty hors d'oeuvres, wine, and spirits. Services begin at 5:45 p.m. with dinner to follow at 6:45 pm. Commonwealth Catering will provide a tasty entrée (pescetarian) and we invite you to bring a side, salad, dessert, or other dish to share. All the details and a link to RSVP can be found at adathjeshurun.com/shabbat-luck.

Menorahs and latkes and dreidels, oh my! Hanukkah-palooza at AJ has all that and more. We're celebrating the first night of Hanukkah in style on Sunday, Dec. 14 from 5-7 p.m. In addition to a yummy, kid-friendly dinner from Chef Sean, there will be Hanukkah music and crafts, plus the ever-popular bounce houses. Bring your own menorah and we'll all light the candles and sing the blessings together. The event is free for Adath Jeshurun members and AJ Preschool families. Cost for others is \$10/person. RSVP by Monday, Dec. 8 so we have plenty of latkes and jelly doughnuts for all. Visit adathjeshurun.com/hanukkah for more information and to make your reservation.

Adath Jeshurun is hosting an American Red Cross Blood Drive Tuesday, Dec. 16 from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Visit adathjeshurun.com and look for the Blood Drive icon to sign up.

Who doesn't love a little friendly banter? Sunday, Dec. 21 at 6 p.m. -- the eighth night of Hanukkah -- join us for a "light" take on the famous comic debate that began nearly 80 years ago at the University of Chicago. Enjoy a festive Hanukkah-themed feast by Chef Maureen Hartmann as Mark Klein and Bruce Tasch face off—latkes vs. hamantaschen. Jewish food, Jewish humor -- what better combination? Reservations opened Nov. 21 for AJ members and Dec. 1 for the community. Visit adathjeshurun.com/hanukkah for more information.

Save the date for a festive weekend honoring Cantor David Lipp and Rabbi Laura Metzger for 30+ years of leadership, music, and wisdom. Saturday, Jan

17, 2026, Adath Jeshurun will honor Rabbi Metzger with a special Shabbat Morning Service and Kiddush Lunch beginning at 10 am. On Sunday, January 18, 2026, AJ will host an evening of hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and entertainment in honor of Cantor Lipp.

Anshei Sfard

Congregation Anshei Sfard has open study time every weeknight (Sunday-Thursday) 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 are served.

Shabbos Davening at 9 a.m. including Rabbi's Parsha outline and sermon, followed by a delicious Kiddush. Every Wednesday night at 7:45 p.m., Judaism in Action. Current series: Laws of Shabbos, every Saturday night at 7:15 p.m. Talmud Trek Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. led by Rabbi Lederman. For more information, email rabbilederman@ansheisfard.com.

Our Community and Family Events committee is in full swing. Keep an eye out for our calendar of events for 2026. Contact Carla at Carla@Ansheisfard.com for reservations and details.

Welcome back, Sisterhood of Anshei Sfard. Annual Membership Fee is \$72 (membership not required to participate). Email Jenniferd5748@gmail.com for more information.

The Men's Club is ready for you. Stay tuned for more fun events for next year. \$72 Annual Membership Fee. (membership is not required to participate).

Sisterhood Event line up:
Nov. 18 – Origami

Community Events line up:
Dec. 7 at 11:30 a.m.
The Standard Club, 8208 Brownsboro Rd
Speaker – David Sussman (includes free lunch)

Chanukah Party
Paid Dinner and Paint your Own Ceramics
Dec. 15 at 6 p.m.
The Standard Club, 8208 Brownsboro Rd

Chabad of Kentucky

Chabad of Kentucky will light Kentucky's largest public menorah at 4th Street Live on Sunday, Dec. 14 from 5-7 p.m., with the actual menorah lighting taking place promptly at 6 p.m. Mayor Greenberg will be honored to light the first candle and share holiday greetings.

There will be an additional menorah lighting Thursday, Dec. 18 at 7 p.m. at Paddock Shops, 4055 Summit Plaza Drive.

Chavurat Shalom

This month we'll work on some core body strengths and enjoy beautiful music. Lunch will start at Noon in The Temple's Heideman Auditorium, unless noted below, and our program will start at 1:00 pm. All programs will also be available starting at 1 p.m. via ChavuratShalomZoom for those who need to join us remotely.

Thursday, Dec. 4 - Derby City Dragons fitness instructor Ellen Jacobs will share their Buff Bones bone health program with us. Lunch will include hoisin salmon, roasted cauliflower, couscous, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and assorted desserts.

Thursday, Dec. 11 - Saxophonist Mike Tracy, retired Director of the Jamey Abersold Jazz Studies Program at UofL, will entertain and teach us at the same time. Lunch will include a sandwich platter, white chili, pasta salad, fresh fruit, and chocolate cake.

Thursday, Dec. 18 - Pianist Nada returns with another beautiful program. Lunch will include vegetable lasagna, ratatouille, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, and triple chocolate brownies.

Thursday, Dec. 25, Jan. 1 and Jan. 8 - No Chavurat Shalom while we're hibernating over winter break.

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 sarah-harlan86@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.

Jewish Family & Career Services

Did you know JFCS offers mental health counseling for individuals, families, and couples?

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Jewish Federation of Louisville

Kesher Sundays -- Welcome to the NEW Jewish High School Experience Kesher Sundays combines engaging classroom learning with real-world field experiences alongside inspiring Jewish professionals. Explore your Jewish identity, values, and sense of purpose while diving into topics like justice, leadership, community, and legacy. This is your chance to grow, contribute, and shape your vision for the future—of yourself and your community. The experience will culminate in a meaningful project that puts your learning into action and creates real impact.

The program is open to all Jewish High School Students and will meet twice per month. To register, go online at tinyurl.com/bdmj26zy.

A project of the new JLE – Jewish Learning Experience.

Keneseth Israel

Jews & Brews
Join Rabbi Freed every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC for Jews & Brews. Enjoy coffee, cookies, & Torah. Please note: There will be no Jews & Brews on Dec. 31.

Hanukkah Helpers

Looking for a Tikkun Olam project? Come be a Hanukkah Helper! Drop off any gift card (eg to a restaurant, a store, a Visa card, etc.) and we will make sure it gets to a family in need, now through Dec. 22.

Torah Yoga
Thursday, Dec 4 – 6:30 p.m.
Come along with Cantor Hordes as she



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AROUND TOWN

takes you through the Sun Salutations and meditations on Torah. Suggested donation is \$10 to the Cantors Fund. Some yoga mats will be available, but please bring your own if you have one.

Community Ice Skating

Wednesday, Dec. 17 at 6 p.m.
Join the entire Jewish community at Alpine Ice Arena (1825 Gardiner Ln.) for an evening of skating, Hanukkah treats, & lots of fun. Free for everyone; no reservation is required.

Hanukkah Speakeasy

Thursday, Dec. 18, 6-9 p.m.
Join us in the speakeasy at the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience (528 W. Main St.). Enjoy a bar, latkes, light hors d'oeuvres, music, and Chanukiah lighting. Must be 21+ w/ID. Strict 120-person limit for this experience - first come, first served. RSVP at tinyurl.com/KISpeakeasy \$10/adult - covers the first two alcoholic drinks and unlimited sodas, latkes, and fun.

Jews & Brews: After Hours

Saturday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m.
Join Rabbi Freed at his home for the Hanukkah installment of Jews & Brews: After Hours. Free for everyone; no RSVP required. Free beers, latkes, nosh, and Torah. Call the office for the address.

Shared Shabbat at AJ

Saturday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m.
Join KI and AJ as each congregation visits the other to share Shabbat services.

Hanukkah Carnival

Sunday, Dec. 21 - 3-5 p.m.
Come kick off Hanukkah at our family carnival. Enjoy bounce castles, crafts, & Hanukkah treats. Free for everyone.

Men's Club Annual Pasta Bingo

Thursday, Dec. 25 - Dinner at 5 p.m.; Bingo after services.
\$25 KI Men's Club members / \$30 non-members / \$5 children 6-12; ages 5 & under free

Pasta dinner (marinara or Alfredo), salad, garlic bread, dessert. Games, prizes, a raffle, and more. Reservations required by Friday, Dec. 19. Contact the office 502-459-2780 or email Men'sClub@KenesethIsrael.com.

Tot Shabbat

Dec. 13 and 27
Come join us on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 11 a.m. for our Tot Shabbat. Experience fun renditions of our favorite Shabbat melodies by the tots in our community.

Shabbat Shalom Club

Join us every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. for our Shabbat Shalom club - a space for kids grades K through 5 to experience Shabbat every week - as they learn Torah, play board games, and learn the beautiful melodies of Shabbat songs.

Kol Israel Jewish Renewal Community of Kentucky

Saturday Dec. 20 - 6 PM
Annual "A Hanukkah of Light and Unity" A very special Hanukkah Oneg and Dinner of Self reflection of our Jewish Commonality and sharing traditions with our Baha'I, Buddhist, and Christian friends.
Location: Archdiocese Historical Mu-

seum, 424 S. Fifth St.. Free but reservations are required by texting 502-277-0555 or KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Monday, Dec 1 at 8 p.m.

Community-Wide Jewish Meditation: "Inner Peace for Challenging Times" Gather with Jewish Communities around the country to experience inner spaciousness and healing. Free and open to all. To register for the Zoom link, call or text 502-277-0555 or by emailing KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Saturday morning, Dec 13 and 27

Please join us as we celebrate Shabbat as "Adat Ha'Araphel- Congregation of the Cloud" on Zoom or Facebook.

Join many of our Jewish Renewal leaders for our innovative, musical and inspirational service. We gather at 10:15 a.m. for greeting and schmoozing on Zoom. The service will begin at 10:30 a.m. sharp. Call or text 502-277-0555 or via email at KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Louisville Vaad Hakashruth

The Louisville Vaad HaKashruth held its annual meeting on Nov. 17. The following officers were elected without opposition: President: Steven Goldstein; Vice President: Larry Kaplin; Secretary: Sharon Czerkiewicz; Treasurer: Myrle Davis.

Recently, the Vaad sent its annual fundraising letter to members of the community asking for support for the upcoming year. Our twin missions are supporting the availability of kosher food in Louisville and maintaining the only mikvah in Kentucky. This year we are beginning a long overdue renovation of our mikvah. If you'd like to make a donation: tinyurl.com/55m76rte.

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

Montessori Torah Academy

Pre-Chanukah Family Fun Day

Sunday, Dec. 7, 2-5 p.m.

Free Event

Join us for a joyful afternoon filled with light, laughter, and hands-on holiday fun. Families of all ages are invited to celebrate the spirit of Chanukah with games, crafts, music, and festive treats. RSVP requested: bit.ly/47YzjUz.

MTA is Hiring a Toddler Lead Teacher
Montessori Torah Academy is growing, and we're looking for a warm, dedicated Toddler Lead Teacher to join our team. This role offers the opportunity to shape young lives in a setting that is both Torah-rooted and Montessori-inspired.

If you love working with children, believe in the power of curiosity and independence, and want to be part of a supportive school community, we'd love to hear from you.

Apply today or share this opening with someone who might be a great fit at montessoritorah.org/our-team/join-our-team.

National Council of Jewish Women -- Louisville Section

Join Us in Our Important Work
Though the Nearly New Shop is now closed, NCJW Louisville is not slowing down. We are excited to carry forward our work together, advocating for women, children, families, marginalized groups, and individual rights and freedoms, just like we've been doing for the past 130 years. If you're not already involved, please join us—whether you're interested in reproductive rights advocacy, voter engagement, organizing NCJW get-togethers, bringing smiles to the faces of kids served by Gilda's Club, or other NCJW projects, we would love to have you join us in our meaningful and impactful work. Please reach out to Executive Director Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org or 502-458-5566 and let us know how you'd like to get involved.

NCJW, Louisville Section College Scholarships

Did you know that NCJW, Louisville Section has a scholarship fund administered through the Community Foundation of Louisville? We're honored to help offset college expenses by awarding scholarships to Jewish students pursuing undergraduate degrees. For more information, see the details below or contact Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org.

Description: The National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarship assistance in the form of grants to help defray college or university expenses of students who are of Jewish faith.

Eligibility: Jewish faith; Resident of Kentucky or Southern Indiana; Student must have completed at least one semester of college or university; Cumulative college GPA of at least 2.5. Must demonstrate financial need. The General Scholarship Application, which includes the National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship, opens Dec. 1, 2025, and will close March 2, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST. The application will be available via the Community Foundation of Louisville's website: tinyurl.com/yc32jju8. Scholarships are renewable.

2026 Mah Jongg Cards

It's time to order your National Mah Jongg League 2026 Mah Jongg cards and support your NCJW section at the same time. Prices are the same as last year: \$14 for standard print cards and \$15 for large print cards. We'll be taking orders now through Jan. 30, 2026, so call the NCJW office at 502-458-5566 to order your cards today. An online order form will be available soon.

Temple Shalom

Last Mah Jongg of 2025: Sunday, Dec. 7, 1-3 p.m.

Players of all levels, including beginners, are welcome. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to Janet Naamani at 502-553-7232.

Artist-in Residence Mark Rubin Dec. 12-13

Mark Rubin, the "Jew of Oklahoma," will speak about the Museum of Southern Jewish Experience Friday, Dec. 12, as part of Kabbalat Shabbat starting at 6:30 p.m. Mark is a well-known Southern musician and songwriter whose

genres range from Klezmer to Bluegrass to Folk to Jazz and everywhere in between. More information to come about the concert.

Beginner's Hebrew (Ivrit) Class, Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m., starting Dec. 3
Want to learn Hebrew? Temple Shalom has the class for you! Beginner's Hebrew will start Wednesday, Dec. 3, from 4-5 p.m. at Temple Shalom. Rabbi Jacowitz Chottiner is teaching. To reserve your space, RSVP to the rabbi at rabbi@templeshalomky.org.

BLT (Bagels, Lox, and Torah), Saturday, Dec. 20 at 10:30 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC

All are welcome as we nosh and study the weekly Torah portion with Rabbi Jacowitz Chottiner. Discussion is lively; you are welcome to bring your own Tanakh or use one that we provide. Upcoming dates are Jan. 17 and Feb. 14, also at 10:30 a.m. Please note: There will not be services at Temple Shalom when there is Torah study at the Trager Family JCC.

Shabbat Services, Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

All are welcome at our weekly Shabbat services. Friday nights are streamed on YouTube. Call the office at 502-458-4739 for more information.

The Temple

The Temple invites congregants to attend Shabbat services Friday nights and Saturday mornings. More information at thetemplelouky.org.

Adult Education continues at The Temple. Torah Study with Rabbi David is on Saturdays at 9 a.m.; Temple Scholars is on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. with Rabbi David and 10:45 am with Rabbi Matt; and Monday night classes include Hebrew Bet with Rabbi Matt, Text Study with Rabbi David, and our next semester of Intro to Judaism with Rabbi David. The Intro to Judaism Class is a wonderful way for people who are considering becoming Jewish, interdating, and intermarried couples to learn together about Judaism. For a full schedule and descriptions, please go to thetemplelouky.org/adult-education for more information.

The Temple invites congregants to attend Shabbat services on Friday nights

Continued on page 22

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AROUND TOWN

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and Saturday mornings. More information at thetemplelouky.org.

After the huge success of WRJ's Rosh Hashanah-themed cookie decorating event, we can't wait to see everyone at our upcoming Hanukkah Cookie Decorating Party, led by the talented Kim Norton, coming up on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Heideman Auditorium. This super fun and creative event is open to everyone from Kindergartners on up (please note that we are not providing babysitting, so use your best judgment on whether everyone you're bringing can comfortably participate). We'll provide everything you need; we just ask that you bring your cookie decorating enthusiasm. There's no cost to attend, but we will gratefully accept donations to our annual Hanukkah Brighteners mitzvah project and non-perishable items for the Sonny and Janet Meyer Food Pantry. At the end of the party, you'll get to take home the cookies you decorated or share some or all of them with The Temple's Caring Committee to deliver to home-bound Temple members. Please RSVP no later than Dec. 4 to thetemplelouky.org/decorate or by emailing Sarah Harlan at sarahharlan86@gmail.com.

Join Rabbi Matt and NextGen Louisville for a Young Adult Hanukkah Celebration Sunday, Dec. 7 from 2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. at Flame Run Glassworks (815 West Market St). Participants can create their own hand-blown glass sun-catcher, enjoy refreshments, and menorah lighting. Intended for ages 21 - 40, this event is free of charge. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/yahanukkah.

Come join Rabbi Matt and Ellen Shai-kun to get Hanukkah ready with Tot Shabbat Friday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. Our Tot Shabbat will be a monthly, 15-minute service with our youngest members in mind, and will provide an opportunity to meet other families. This event is open to all. After Tot Shabbat ends at 6:15 p.m., we'll welcome all the families to stay for dinner. Tot Shabbat is free, but if you plan to stay for dinner, please RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner.

Join us for a family-friendly dinner Friday, Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. and Erev Shabbat Services at 7 p.m., led by our Grade 5 students. Dinner is \$5 for Members who register by Dec. 9 and \$10 at the door. Non-Members are \$18 per person; children 12 and under are free. Please make your reservation by calling 502-423-1818 or registering at thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner.

Join us for The Temple Brotherhood Annual Hanukkah Celebration Sunday, Dec. 14 at 5 p.m. This wonderful event will feature The Temple Brotherhood Dinner with 1,000 Latkes and Troop 30 Volunteers, Photo Booth Sponsored by WRJ/Sisterhood (and shopping at the WRJ/Sisterhood Gift Shop!), Arts and Crafts Activity from Trager ECEC, Family Hanukkah Menorah Lighting (bring your hanukkiah) - candle lighting begins at 5:15 p.m., a Hanukkah Attire Competition, and more. Come and celebrate the Festival of Lights. Please make your reservations by calling 502-423-1818 or registering at thetemplelouky.org/hanukkah.

thetemplelouky.org/hanukkah. Free for children 12 and under, free for Temple Members with RSVP by Dec. 2, \$10 for Temple Members with RSVP after Dec. 2; \$18 for non-members and guests.

This December, the Derby City Chamber Music Festival, in collaboration with the Jewish Heritage Fund, Congregation Adath Jeshurun, Keneseth Israel Congregation, and the Temple Congregation Adath Israel Brith Sholom, are presenting what we hope to be a new tradition every year for Hanukkah - a production of Handel's oratorio Judas Maccabeus. Handel, the composer of "Messiah" (with its famous "Hallelujah" chorus), wrote an equally stunning masterpiece celebrating the victory of the Maccabees and the miracle of Hanukkah - a work that has largely been neglected and ignored until now. With transcendent music performed by musicians who include the Temple's own soprano Emily Albrink-Katz - we hope to establish a new and inclusive holiday tradition, both for the Jewish community and for our community at large. Come witness a musical retelling of the great Jewish story of affirmation and victory to a wider audience this Hanukkah, Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Temple. More information at derbycitychamberfest.org/maccabeus.

In honor of our 1843 Charter and to honor the man who quite literally created the foundations of Reform Judaism upon which our movement stands, please join us for a special Founders' Day and Isaac Mayer Wise Classical Shabbat Friday, Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. This historic Reform service will feature music from the Classical Age of Reform Judaism and will be led from the Sinai Edition of the Union Prayer Book.

Join Rabbi David Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 6 p.m. for a special Chinese Dinner and a Movie, featuring The Art of Waiting. Liran and Tali, a couple in their thirties who dream of having a child together, are one day told that they will have to undergo fertility treatments. What seems simple at first turns out to be very complex. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/chinese-dinner.

Please join the Mitzvah Makers Thursday, Dec. 25 at 2 p.m. as we make sandwiches that will be given to the Louisville community in need. Before the event, please bring donations to The

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Temple to help us with this tikkun olam project including: bottles of water, individual bags of chips, loaves of bread, and sandwich bags. Additionally, if you have small hotel/sample size toiletries (shampoo, bars of soap, lotion, mouthwash, toothbrushes and toothpaste), please bring those as we will be making bags to hand out. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/sandwich-making.

Trager Family JCC

Mazin Art Exhibition 2025 Closes Dec. 7 on the Dennis & Judith Hummel Family Gallery Wall

The Mazin is a regional juried annual Art Exhibition of 2-D and 3-D art, open to artists in the United States age 16 years or older. The exhibit is designed to foster an appreciation of today's visual art, reflecting the breadth of artists' creative vision.

Club J Before & After School Program Registration is open for the 2025-2026 school year

Club J is a before & after - school program set in our fun Camp J environment run by our Camp J Staff. Children enrolled in Club J will play games, participate in a variety of activities each week, receive homework help as needed, and get to spend time with their friends.

Transportation is available from the Trager Family JCC to these schools: Field and Alex R. Kennedy; transportation is available from these schools to the Trager Family JCC: Bloom, St.

Matthews, Holy Trinity, Field and Hawthorne.

Learn more by going online at jcclouisville.org/clubj.

University of Louisville Ekstrom Library

Through February 2026

Jewish Artists of Louisville Series, featuring Multi-Media Works by Rabbi Laura Metzger

The Jewish Studies Reading Room, Ekstrom Library, 3rd Floor.

Rabbi Laura Metzger of Congregation Adath Jeshurun is also an accomplished artist, working in pen-and-ink alongside various flavors of complementary media. "Drawing teaches you to see," she explains in an Artist Statement -- and beginning at the end of this week, you can view a selection of her works as part Louisville Jewish Artists Today -- an ongoing series of exhibits in the Jewish Studies Reading Room of the Ekstrom Library on UofL's Belknap Campus. The series is organized and guided by Natalie Polzer, a professor in UofL's Department of Comparative Humanities.

"Constant discovery thrills me," Rabbi Metzger says, adding: "I hope, in looking at these pieces, you see something in a way that's new to you."

WELLNESS WALKERS

Trager Family JCC | AgeWell

DEC. 1 AND 15, 10 A.M.

Active adult walking club meeting every other Monday. Meet friends, stay active, and explore Louisville!

This Month's Location: Oxmoor Mall
Registration is Free

STAY WARM, GET MOVING, & SHOP FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Scan to Register
OR VISIT JCCLouisville.org/Walk

LIFECYCLE

B'nai Mitzvahs



Sadie Julia Golden & Rebecca Isobel Golden

With immense pride and joy, we are delighted to share that our daughters, Sadie Julia Golden and Rebecca Isobel Golden, will be called to the Torah

as B'not Mitzvah on Saturday, December 6, at 10:30 a.m. at The Temple.

Sadie and Becca are seventh graders at Louisville Collegiate School who bring their own unique light to everything they do. Sadie has a passion for field hockey and squash, and she enjoys engaging with the world through KUNA and KYA Youth Assemblies. Becca also plays field hockey and squash, and her love for storytelling shines through in the many theater productions in which she takes part.

When they aren't busy with school, sports, or theater, the girls love nothing more than spending time together - whether it's sharing laughs on the couch watching *The Simpsons* or *SNL*, or simply enjoying time with family, including their little brother, Rhodes.

For their mitzvah project, Sadie and Becca have chosen to combine their love of squash with their caring hearts by organizing a friendly tournament to benefit Alex's Lemonade Stand and childhood cancer research. Their hope is to make a difference while doing something they truly love. If you've ever played racquetball or tennis, or if you're simply looking to try something new, we warmly invite you to join this family-friendly event on Sunday, December 14 in support of a cause close to their hearts. <https://www.alexlemonade.org/2025/squash-for-a-squeeze>.

We warmly invite our congregation, family, and friends to join us in celebrating this very special moment in our daughters' lives, and to continue the joy with us at the Kiddush luncheon following services.

With love and gratitude,

Matthew Golden and Micah Daniels

Noah William Hill

Noah William Hill will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, December 13, at 10:30 a.m. at The Temple.



Noah is the son of Kelly and John Hill, and the brother of Andrew and Brooke Hill. He is the grandson of Susan-Jane Berson^{z"l}, Fred Berson^{z"l}, and Jean and John Hill. Noah is a seventh grade

student at Kammerer Middle School, where he excels both in the classroom and on the field as a member of the cross-country, soccer, and track teams. He loves spending time with friends, cheering on the Ohio State Buckeyes and Miami Hurricanes, attending University of Louisville athletic events, building imaginative Lego creations, and singing with Dan Nichols at camp.

A proud member of the Louisville Jewish community, Noah has been a lifelong congregant of The Temple, which has served as a cornerstone of his Jewish journey. Thanks to the generous support of The Temple and the Jewish Federation, Noah has enjoyed many unforgettable summers at Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI) - his happy place and spiritual home.

For his mitzvah project, Noah is hosting a movie night fundraiser to enable other children to also experience the joy and growth that Jewish summer camp at GUCI provides.

Obituaries



Sharon Pepperkorn Smith Berry

Sharon Pepperkorn Smith Berry, 79, of Lebanon Junction, died on the evening of October 28, 2025, in Louisville, Kentucky, surrounded by her

family. She was 79 years old.

Sharon and her twin sister, Faye, were born on December 7, 1945, to Samuel and Sophia Pepperkorn. Her parents and sister preceded her in death.

For 28 years, Sharon, with her signature braids, safely guided generations of Bullitt County children as a beloved school-bus driver. She devoted herself to every creature, great and small, supporting local shelters and spoiling her

own pets. Sharon raised and, for many years in a row, won Grand Champion Turkey at the Kentucky State Fair for their breed perfection, lustrous feathers, and impeccable presentation.

Sharon is survived by her husband, David Berry; her children, John Silva, Gordon Smith, Shane Smith, and Kim Magee; her grandson, Caleb Magee; as well as many cousins and extended family.

Funeral services were held November 2 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery.

In memory of Sharon, donations may be made to The Arrow Fund, a non-profit that rescues, rehabilitates, and rehomes animal victims of extreme torture, abuse, or neglect.



Beth Branson

Beth Branson, age 88, passed away peacefully in her sleep on November 18, 2025, at The Willows at Springhurst in Louisville.

Beth grew up in Maysville, Kentucky, and graduated from Maysville High School. She is a happy graduate of Disney University and was especially proud to graduate from Sullivan University later in life as a grandmother of six.

Her happiest years with Dick, her beloved husband of more than 63 years, were spent at their dream home in Doe Valley, Kentucky, where deer roamed outside their window each day. Together, they traveled the country in their RV, visiting 48 states! But above all, Beth's greatest joy was found in making Dick laugh.

Beth was an unusually warm and loving person and saw the beauty in people, nature, art, reading, eating out, and traveling. Her true gift was how she made others feel. Her friendships were deep and meaningful and lasted everyone's lifetime. Whoever was with her always felt special and welcomed by her. Everyone always had the feeling that Beth loved and cared for them. She was kind, considerate, thoughtful, and loving. She was always sweet and pleasant to be around and never had a negative word about others.

She was preceded in death by her husband Dick, parents, Joe and Mary

Silverman, and her sister Phyllis.

She loved her family with all her heart and is survived by three children, Shellie Branson (Ralph Green); Dennis Branson (Cherie) and Jerry Branson; six grandchildren, Jordan Green (Abby), Alex Green, Eric Green (Jae), Zachary Branson (Lyanne), Christopher Burke, David Branson and Sam Branson; three great-grandchildren Genevieve Green, Rhodes Green, and Elena Branson-Valdez; a dozen exchange students and foster children she embraced as her own, and countless cousins who universally cite her as their favorite relative. It felt good just being in her company.

Funeral services were held November 20, 2025, at Herman Meyer & Son. Interment was held privately. Memorial gifts may be made to Cantor David Lipp's Discretionary Fund at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Louisville and Hosparus Health of Louisville.

May Her Memory be for a Blessing.



Helen Friedberg Friedman

Helen Friedberg Friedman, beloved mother, grandmother, and Louisville icon, passed away peacefully on October 28, 2025.

She was born on June 4, 1948, in Louisville, Kentucky, to Norman and Carolyn Friedberg.

A proud graduate of Atherton High School, Helen went on to attend Stephens College, where she cultivated her lifelong love of learning, creativity, and connection. Her passion for baking, first sparked in her own kitchen, blossomed into a remarkable career. As the founder of Desserts by Helen, she transformed her homegrown hobby into a thriving Louisville institution. From its humble beginnings, Helen expanded her bakery to three retail locations and a wholesale production facility, bringing her signature desserts to celebrations across the city. Her cakes, cookies, and confections became a beloved part of the Louisville community, an enduring reflection of her warmth, artistry, and dedication.

Beyond her professional success, Helen's greatest joy was her family. She was a devoted wife to the late Ira Felsen,

Continued on page 24

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LIFECYCLE

Continued from page 23

caring sister to Bette Friedberg, and most of all, a loving mother to Judi Quirke (Patrick), Craig (Sarah), and Grant (Hallie), and an adoring grandmother to Parker, Madeleine, and London. She was also a proud aunt to nieces Linda Schuster and Lori Gaman. She cherished every moment spent with them, filling their lives with love, laughter, and, of course, delicious desserts.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband, Ira; her parents, Norman and Carolyn Friedberg; and her sister, Harriett. Her spirit will live on in the countless lives she touched with kindness, generosity, and a sweetness that extended far beyond her baking.

A celebration of Helen's life was held at The Temple on October 30. The family encourages friends to honor her memory by sharing a dessert with someone they love, just as Helen did so beautifully throughout her life. Donations may also be made to The Temple or The Center for Women and Children



Benita Lynn Jacobs

Benita Lynn Jacobs, 47, passed peacefully in Louisville, KY, on November 17, 2025, surrounded by her loving family.

Born on February 28, 1978, Benita graduated from Seneca High School and later attended Jefferson County Technical College.

She was preceded in death by her cherished father, Sidney B. Jacobs. Benita is survived by her daughter, Taylor Lynn Jacobs (Brian Alvey); her son, Gerald Wayne Jacobs; her grandchildren, Matthew and Lillian; her sisters, Barbra M. Jacobs, Jennifer R. Davis, and Rhonda Viers; as well as her dear friends and caregivers, Miranda Stewart, Myleah, and Marissa.

Funeral services were held November 19, 2025, at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial at Keneseth Israel Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Janet and

Sonny Meyer Food Pantry at JFCS.

Benita will be deeply missed, but her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.



Valentina Milzon

Valentina Milzon (maiden name Leznik) was born in 1930 in Novokonstantyniv, a small Jewish-Ukrainian village in western Ukraine. She was the middle of five siblings. As

a young child, she narrowly survived the Holodomor famine of the early 1930s. Years later, she would recall her childhood wish — to see bread on the table without feeling the desperate need to eat it.

In 1941, her life was once again upended by World War II and the Holocaust, forcing her family into years of fear and displacement. One of her most haunting memories was standing on a train platform in Kyiv and seeing the cruel smile of a Nazi pilot as he descended to kill the evacuees. Together with her mother and younger siblings, Valentina fled east into Russia and eventually to Tajikistan, where she again came close to losing her life during the brutal winter of 1942.

After the war, the family returned to Ukraine. In 1957 she married the love of her life, Zakhar Milzon. Together they endured many challenges, including the freezing -50°F winters of Siberia in the early 1970s, where Zakhar worked in the military. In 1994, after decades of antisemitism and discrimination, the family made the difficult decision to leave everything behind and immigrate to the United States as refugees — starting anew for the sake of their children and grandchildren.

In this new chapter, Valentina became the heart of her family's life in America. While her children worked and studied long hours to build their futures, she devoted herself entirely to caring for and raising her grandchildren. This selflessness defined her. She never

thought of her own comfort before that of others, always finding ways to make someone else's day brighter, easier, or happier.

When people think of Valentina, they remember her smile — a smile that didn't just light up the room but made others smile in return. She was gentle and kind, always ready to welcome, to help, to listen. Yet beneath her warmth was remarkable strength. She held her family together through the hardest times and was someone you could always rely on. She turned strangers into friends and left lasting impressions wherever she went. Her cooking was legendary — friends of

her grandchildren would often ask to visit just to taste her borscht or dumplings.

Words can never fully capture who Valentina was, but everyone who knew her felt the depth of her kindness and generosity. She lived with an open heart and gave freely of herself every day of her life.

She is survived by her two children, Svetlana and Gennady; three grandchildren, Tanya, Sergey, and Dima; and four great-grandchildren, Aiden, Galina, Anabel, and Tikhon.

Funeral services were held November 4, 2025, at The Temple Cemetery.



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GLOBE

Polish officials criticize Yad Vashem's post on social media, days after US official rejects Polish complicity as 'grotesque falsehood'

By Philissa Cramer
JTA

The new U.S. ambassador to Poland, Thomas Rose, has ignited debate after delivering a speech in Warsaw calling the idea of Polish complicity a "grotesque falsehood" on par with antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Meanwhile, Polish government officials criticized a post by Israel's Holocaust memorial about the Holocaust in Poland, in a sign of renewed pressure over public characterizations of Poland's role in the Holocaust.

Speaking last week at the annual convention of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Rose denounced what he said was "the slander that Poland somehow bears responsibility for the crimes committed by others."

The idea of Polish complicity, which the Polish government rejects, had "poisoned relations between Jews and Poles, between Israel and Poland and between the United States and Poland for decades," said Rose, the Jewish former publisher of the Jerusalem Post who was confirmed to the ambassadorship on Oct. 7.

"For decades, Poland has suffered a grave historic injustice, the persistent belief that Poland shares guilt for the barbaric crimes committed against it. It's a grotesque falsehood and the equivalent of a blood libel against the Polish people and Polish nation," he said, using a term that typically refers to an antisemitic lie that has spurred violence against Jews. "No nation fought longer or suffered more, which is why applying a debtor-creditor relationship between Poland and the world for a genocide perpetrated by others on its soil against its people is historically false, and I believe

morally scandalous."

Rose was repeating ideas that he had laid out during his confirmation hearing over the summer — which themselves marked a departure from the stance the State Department took during the first Trump administration.

In 2018, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson issued a rare rebuke of the Polish government's decision to criminalize — and potentially punish with prison time — expressions of blame against Poland for crimes that the government maintained had been exclusively carried out by Germans.

The State Department did not respond to a request for comment about whether Rose's speech in Warsaw reflects an official U.S. position.

While hundreds of Poles are recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" for their roles in protecting Jews during the Holocaust, there is a wide consensus — including from Polish institutions in the past — that many other Poles participated in the mass slaughter that claimed 3 million Polish Jews, nearly 90% of those who had lived there before the war. Poles also killed Jews returning to their village after the war, in an incident seen as a symbol of Polish complicity.

Earlier this year, Polish voters elected a right-wing Holocaust revisionist historian as president. Karol Nowicki comes from the Law and Justice Party, which promotes historical narratives about Polish victimhood and resistance to the Nazis, while delegitimizing research on Polish antisemitism or Poles who killed Jews.

While the prime minister does not come from the Law and Justice Party, it holds a crucial role in governance in Poland, seen as a bulwark for U.S. interests in the region against Russia.

Rose said he hoped his speech leads to further discussion of how Poland has been maligned in Holocaust history. Sharing his speech on X, he wrote, "Yesterday evening, I began a conversation that—I hope—will contribute to correcting a very unfair historical narrative about Poland."

On Sunday, a second dustup took place, as Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum posted on X about the yellow stars that Polish Jews were forced to wear.

"Poland was the first country where Jews were forced to wear a distinctive badge in order to isolate them from the surrounding population," Yad Vashem tweeted.

Radosław Sikorski, Poland's minister of foreign affairs, responded with a request for a correction: "Please specify that it was 'German-occupied' Poland, @yadvashem," he wrote.

Polish officials from across the ideological spectrum shared in the criticism. "Poland didn't exist at that time, after it was raided by Germany and Russia. Its territory was partitioned and incorpo-



Thomas Rose, U.S. ambassador to Poland, speaks at the gala of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, Nov. 19, 2025. (Screenshot)

rated to the Third Reich and the USSR," a left-wing lawmaker, Anna-Maria Żukowska, said in a tweet that tagged the Israeli embassy.

Both Yad Vashem and its chairman, Dani Dayan, Yad Vashem's chairman, soon responded acknowledging the concerns. "Yad Vashem presents the historical realities of Nazism and WWII, including countries under German occupation, control or influence. Poland was indeed under German occupation," Dayan wrote. "This is clearly reflected in our material. Any other interpretation misreads our commitment to accuracy."

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NEWS

KESHER SUNDAYS

Continued from page 1

usual means of engaging teens, organized over two sessions per month over an eight-month academic year, September through April.

As the program description puts it: “The first session will take place at the Trager Family JCC and be a discussion based on a theme. The next session will be a field experience, where students will have the opportunity to learn from Jewish leaders in fields throughout our community.”

“What is Jewish Leadership?” was October’s theme, and first up on this day was Fayne, a young woman not much older than the Keshet Sundays students seated around her.

“I’m originally from California – the Los Angeles region,” Fayne said by way of introduction, “so everybody was like, ‘Why would you come to Louisville?’”

Her answer was simple and practical: Music therapy is a highly specialized area of study, meaning “only around 60 schools in the US offered it when I was applying,” Fayne explained.

“Two of them were in California, and I was like, ‘I love California, but I need to experience something new, to go outside my comfort zone,’ so that’s why I decided to apply to out-

of-state schools,” she said. “I think it’s what’s helped me grow as a person, and I love UofL’s music program – it was the best fit for me.”



Noah Klein

A quick round of student intros followed, and then it was time to delve into relevant particulars. “I guess the first place to start would be talking about what the Jewish community is like at UofL,” said Noah Klein, an assistant principal at Seneca High School serving as Keshet Sundays interim director (Brooklyn, NY educator Jessie Gindea has been hired as the JLE’s permanent head).

“I always love it when I get that question,” Fayne said, “because that was obviously something I was looking at when applying to schools. I was already very narrowed down because of my major, but I knew it was important to me – do they have a Hillel or some type of Jewish organization on campus?”

Still, Fayne’s progress in that arena was incremental. “During my first couple of years at UofL, I wasn’t involved in Hillel. I took a major step back in Judaism, because I was so focused on school and other priorities I had made outside of being Jewish.”

Then came that unforgettable, horrific day.

“October 7 was kind of a wake-up call for me,” Fayne acknowledged, recalling how not long afterward she encountered a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel protest on campus, and began hearing increasing calls for BDS – Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions.

Fayne was a member of UofL’s student government, and witnessing efforts to draft a bill in favor of divestment became the impetus for her to reclaim her essential Jewish identity.



Sophia Fayne

“It was at that moment that I looked around and I was like, ‘Nobody is going to stand up for Jewish students,’” she said. “I looked at myself and thought, ‘I need to say something.’ So, I stood up -- and luckily, that bill was not passed.”

“That summer was when I started to live in Louisville full-time,” she said, “and I made promises to myself to start going to temple again.” Soon, Fayne was forging connections with the Jewish Community Relations Council and its director, Trent Spoolstra, plus “other people involved with the Jewish community who were trying to help Jewish students at UofL.”

Fayne also deepened her relationship with the campus chapter of Hillel.

“There’s a small group of people at Hillel, but there are so many Jewish students at UofL, and so many facets at UofL for you to be Jewish and to be a safe student,” she said. Not to mention, “people who care about who you are and the religion behind you that makes you who you are.”

It was, to be sure, a demonstration of leadership the Keshet students weren’t likely to forget. Standing up for what she believed in “has been really empowering for me,” Fayne told them. A few minutes later, Klein asked his Keshet students to recall how Cantor David Lipp had visited

a previous session and spoke about another leader – Moses – along with guests Abigail Goldberg and Sara Klein Wagner.

“One of the things Cantor Lipp talked about was standing up for those who are voiceless,” Klein said, “but also standing up for those who are your allies. And we talked about ‘situational leadership,’ when Abigail said, ‘I was never going to be a youth director of anything,’ and Sara was saying, ‘CEO of the JCC was not on my life path.’”

And yet, it was.

“Situations arose, and they stepped into that moment,” Klein said. “We talked about how sometimes that becomes a whole job. Sometimes situational leadership is being the right person at the right time to say the right thing.”

That leap of relative faith, Klein told his students, was nothing less than “poignant.”

“Where you’re all sitting, no matter what grades you’re in, leadership is tough – and stepping into spaces that aren’t always friendly is tougher,” he said.

And always remember, Fayne added, that “sometimes the loudest people in the room aren’t the majority. You have to be aware of how what I’m about to do is going to affect everyone. Because even though those loud people might seem like the big majority, they’re really not. And at the end of the day, you’d rather help people who maybe are afraid to speak up for themselves.”

While she was talking, Abrams had come into the room, taken off his bicycle helmet, and slipped quietly into a chair.

“Okay, we’re going to transition a little bit,” Klein said. “I’d like to introduce Teddy Abrams. He is the conductor of the Louisville Orchestra, a fellow Jew, and as promised, one of the things we’re going to do is to talk about how careers and Judaism sometimes can intertwine. And when we find those spaces where our faith and our careers intersect, it makes our jobs and our lives that

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NEWS

Continued from page 26

much more interesting.”

Abrams set the tone by tossing out a few questions most teenagers have heard at least once in their lives:

“How many of you feel like you know what your parents want you to do with your lives? How many of you have parents that would be happy if you did, literally anything. How many of you have parents that would be happy if you did something that was aligned with a certain sense of success in the traditional sense – lawyers and doctors – you know, the Jewish trope?”

A few hands went up. Abrams went on. “What if you join the Peace Corps or Greenpeace and went off for five years – maybe making no money but, you know, saving the planet. Would you feel supported?”

This was all a lead into a bit of verbal autobiography, beginning with a confessional:

“I can’t speak much to the Jewish part of my life,” Abrams told his young audience. “I’m not deeply religious. I’m proud of my heritage, or at least I think – as George Carlin said – I’m happy about my heritage. I think if I’m around a lot of Jews, I tend to be way more secular,” Abrams observed. “But if I’m around a bunch of Gentiles, then I get way more Jewish. So being here, you’re probably going to get one side of me.”

Abrams recounted how he grew up in Oakland, California, one of three brothers whose father who “came from a liberal Reform Jewish family, but which was very serious about the elements of religion that they practiced” – and whose blond-haired mother hailed from California’s San Fernando Valley, the daughter of parents who were decidedly unserious about the tenets of formal religion.

“I think she rebelled against them and tried to live as much as she could as a non-Jew,” Abrams said, “and we were caught in a kind of tug-of-war between both our parents. “My dad really wanted me to get a bar mitzvah, so he would take us to temple. My mother tried to pull us away from that side of our family’s history.”

Abrams related his familiar professional narrative: studying at Philadelphia’s Curtis Institute and with his mentor Michael Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. “I heard my first orchestra concert when I was nine and he was conducting,” Abrams recalled, “and within five minutes I’d decided I wanted to be a conductor.”

Jews, Abrams told his Keshet Sunday listeners, became prominent in the entertainment field in large part since many other professions were closed to them. “Music has always been a big part of Jewish culture,” he explained, “partly because it’s the primary art form we practice.”

Likening the role of an orchestra conductor to that of a “servant leader,” Klein asked Abrams, “What intersections do you see between (leadership), your job and your faith?”

“One of the most beautiful things about Judaism,” Abrams replied, “is that because we’ve usually been on the receiving end of oppression, and on the receiving end of people’s hatred and misunderstanding, it’s forced us to use [its] ideology as a shield, to provide us with a sense of who we are.”

“Those are important values,” he acknowledged. “But I think there’s something way beyond that applies to anybody in any spiritual condition: If you have a privilege, if you’ve been given something, you have to share it. You don’t own anything. I don’t own anything. Your talents are not your own. You understand, even your money, your land, it’s not your own. If you have some kind of power, you’re supposed to extend that power until it evens out in society.”

There was more, much more, that Abrams spoke about eloquently. And when he finished (“my soapbox,” he quipped) and asked if there were any questions or comments, he couldn’t resist making one final comparison: between the Jews and Jackie Robinson – major league baseball’s first black player.

“He knew he had to hold himself to such a high standard, Abrams said. “He couldn’t just be any baseball player.”

“It’s like us,” Abrams declared. “We can’t just be any young people in America right now. You know what? People hear the stereotypes, and they start believing them. We’ve all heard people slip and say something racist and nasty, right? So we have to hold ourselves to such a standard that it’s beyond scrutiny. Nobody can say that we act in the ways that people have held against us for all these years. That means we have to be even more generous. We have to be even more caring and thoughtful and inclusive. Because, you know, those are the very things that we are sometimes told we are not.”

It all comes down to refusing to be cowed by prejudice, to be crushed by the weight of ignorance. Witness the experience of Noa Chottiner, the daughter of Lee and Rabbi Beth Jacobowitz Chottiner, who on this Keshet Sunday afternoon shared a telling anecdote:



Noa Chottiner

“Last year during my first year of high school, I befriended this Muslim girl,” she recalled. “A couple of weeks later, when she heard that I was in support of Israel, she decided that she couldn’t be my friend anymore. And I said, ‘All right, you don’t have to support Israel. That’s

all right. I know I do.’

“I told her that we might have different beliefs, but I don’t think they should get in the way of our friendship,” Chottiner said. “I offered to keep the friendship, but she walked away from it, and that really hurt me. I could’ve been nasty and rude to her, but I chose not to. Every day when I walked past her in the hall, I still gave her a smile and said, ‘Hi.’ I chose to be kind, because I feel like, when they go low, you need to be the bigger person.”

Meanwhile, Abrams vows that one day he’ll make his formal entry into Jewish manhood – the one studied for back in Oakland but never quite managed to achieve.

“I’m planning to do a big Bar Mitzvah,” he promised his Keshet Sunday listeners. “Actually, I’m going to make a one-man musical, where the Bar Mitzvah is inside the musical. There will be the whole thing – a Torah portion and everything. And the after-party will be the post-Bar Mitzvah party.”



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