

KALEIDOSCOPE

JEWISH LIFE IN UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY

FALL/WINTER 2019

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**Community Set to Explore
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a Contemporary Lens**

Steven Skybell (of the Yiddish Fiddler on the Roof) and Jazz Rabbi Greg Wall (with band Zion80) are among the highlights in a year of community programs and events.



Federation for Jewish Philanthropy
OF UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY



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Services	Summary
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Goldstein Rehabilitation Center	Short term care post hospitalization
Assisted Living Residences	1-bedroom apartments and memory care studios for individuals and couples. Meals, fitness center membership and access to campus activities.
Friedman Home Care Agency	Skilled nursing services, licensed nurses, therapists, companions and aides; hourly and live-in
Chaifetz Family Hospice	Palliative care, pain management, emotional, spiritual and bereavement support
Outpatient Therapy	Physical, occupational, and speech therapy; exercise programs
Home Together®	Adult family living and foster homes; arranges caregiver support in your home
Institute on Aging	Geriatric assessment, care management, the Center for Elder Abuse Prevention
Private Physician Practice	Geriatric primary care medical services
Senior Choice at Home®	Membership based program delivers full range of in-home and nursing home care plus care navigation
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KALEIDOSCOPE: *Jewish Life in Upper Fairfield County* is published semi-annually by the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County.

Federation Board Chair: James Sugarman
Executive Editor: David I. Weisberg
Editor: Cynthia Mindell

Federation encompasses the communities of Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Georgetown, Monroe, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Rowayton, Southport, Stratford, Trumbull, Westport, Weston, and Wilton.

Guided by our Jewish values of *Tzedakah* (righteous giving), *Chesed* (loving kindness), and *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), we work together to meet vital needs at home, in Israel, and around the world, and to cultivate a vibrant and inclusive Jewish community, now and for future generations.

With your support, our Federation improves and saves lives at home and around the world through financial support to partners including:

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From the Lens of David Weisberg



This past summer, I had the remarkable experience of listening to an old part of me functioning in a new home.

I had gone to Pittsburgh to become a living liver donor, knowing that I would be donating two-thirds of one of my major organs to someone I didn't yet know. But not until after the surgery, after I had met my recipient Joe, and after a microphone was put to his abdomen so that I could hear the power of my 50-year-old liver bringing new life to another person, did I have the perspective to fully grasp the wonder of what had happened, the magic of experiencing a central part of my existence functioning in a new environment.

For thousands of years, a common set of rituals, laws, and customs have been the lifeblood of our Jewish community. It's why I can walk into a synagogue in Ukraine, not sharing a common language to have a conversation with anyone else in the sanctuary, and yet I can participate side-by-side in the same prayers that my great-grandparents would have recited there a century ago.

While over the course of countless generations, the settings in which our practices have been lived have changed dramatically, the pulse and rhythm of those traditions continue to beat strongly.

I am excited that this year, our Federation will be joining together with many of our congregations and other Jewish and civic organizations to explore ancient Jewish traditions through a contemporary lens as part of a year-round, community-wide programming framework that we are calling *Judaism: A 2020 Vision*.

Throughout the year, we'll take a journey together to experience the evolving

landscape of Jewish life, from the integration of Klezmer music with Afrobeat grooves, to the intersection of the story of Noah and the great flood with the modern-day challenges of climate change, to new modalities for Jewish prayer, to exploring how ancient Jewish law applies to contemporary issues.

In this issue of *KALEIDOSCOPE*, you will learn more about the expanding schedule of programs and events that are part of this exciting *Judaism: A 2020 Vision* schedule, which all kicks off on Wednesday, Sept. 18 with a fantastic concert at The Acoustic in Black Rock with renowned Klezmer

Afrobeat band Zion80, featuring our very own "Jazz Rabbi" Greg Wall.

As with last year's successful *Common Threads* series, I want to encourage you not only to attend *Judaism: A 2020 Vision* programs, but, just as importantly, to make a point of attending programs in venues that you might not normally find yourself, from a congregation that is not your own to a 20-minute drive to another part of our community. Not only do I think you'll find our *Judaism: A 2020*

Vision programs to be enlightening and fun, but there's something special about working together to weave an integrated Jewish community.

In that way, the lifeblood of Jewish traditions, rituals, and customs can not only bring us together with our ancestors of a hundred or a thousand years ago; they can just as importantly bring us together with our neighbors across town.

Enjoy reading.

"While over the course of countless generations, the settings in which our practices have been lived have changed dramatically, the pulse and rhythm of those traditions continue to beat strongly."



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Congregations and Federation Develop New Paradigm in Integrated Community

At the end of a full-day retreat for congregations coordinated by the Federation to discuss common challenges related to engagement, one local rabbi referred to the gathering as “paradigm-shifting.”

Sadly, just four days later, when the tragic shooting occurred at the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha Congregation in Pittsburgh, this new dynamic was put into action, as congregations from throughout Upper Fairfield County came together to stand in solidarity for a special service at TCS in Westport with over 1,000 community-members in attendance.

The building-blocks that were put into place last fall, however, have already had major impact, going well beyond the ability to stand together in sadness, and instead reshaping the ways in which the Federation aims to provide support to congregations and weave an integrated Jewish community.

“Our Federation and our community will be stronger, and our collective impact can be greater if our congregations are

Common Threads program series, which included 16 congregational partners, and *KALEIDOSCOPE* magazine, which, thanks to its congregational partners, is mailed to approximately 9,000 Jewish households throughout Upper Fairfield County.

Local synagogue leaders are taking notice and recognizing the value of this new paradigm.



“The team at Federation is committed to working closely with our synagogue communities and leaders to elevate our work and our mission.” - Rabbi Evan Schultz, Congregation B’nai Israel, Bridgeport



stronger,” says Federation CEO David Weisberg. “In that regard, it’s incumbent upon us to provide meaningful support that strengthens our congregations.”

The shift, Weisberg explains, has moved from providing small program grants to congregations to building cross-community structures where the Federation can create economies of scale that truly move the needle for synagogues.

This new approach was implemented in the wake of the Pittsburgh tragedy, when Federation brought together congregations to discuss security needs and then engaged a year-round community-wide security consultant to provide training services to any congregation interested in opting in to the process. Twelve congregations chose to receive training services, with the cost of the consultation funded in full by the Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation.

Recognizing a common need for engagement training for congregational professionals and volunteers first identified at last October’s retreat, the Federation coordinated a four-session Engagement Institute last spring, bringing together 39 participants representing 12 congregations. The institute received rave reviews from participants, with seven congregations now opting to participate in a six-month Federation-funded consultation on small-group engagement strategies.

All of these efforts build upon the partnership forged between the Federation and congregations on new endeavors such as last year’s



Rabbi Evan Schultz of Congregation B’nai Israel in Bridgeport says, “I have found these partnerships extremely valuable and beneficial for our communities. The team at Federation are committed to working closely with our synagogue communities and leaders to elevate our work and our mission.”

Mark Block, executive director of Congregation Rodeph Sholom in Bridgeport comments, “The engagement between Federation and congregations helps to grow a more cohesive community where we can come together on issues of mutual concern like safety and security, and how to better outreach to unaffiliated while serving our current members.”

Judaism: A Vision

KICKOFF CONCERT WITH KLEZMER-AFROBEAT ALL-STARS ZION80

Featuring "Jazz Rabbi" Greg Wall of Westport

Jewish music collides with Afrobeat! Spiritual, grooving and endlessly exciting... this is essential Jewish music for the 21st century. "A truly soulful experience" - *New York Times*

Wednesday, Sept. 18, 7:30 PM

The Acoustic, 2926 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport

Tickets: \$10

REGISTER shalomct.org/judaism2020

FILM - *Fiddler: A Miracles of Miracles*

Harold Prince, Sheldon Harnick, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and more share the origin story and staying power behind the musical that became an international hit. Post-screening talkback with special guest Steven Skybell, who plays "Tevye" in the National Yiddish Theatre Folskiene's Yiddish production of *Fiddler on the Roof* on Broadway

Monday, Oct. 28, 7:30 PM

TCS, 30 Hillspoint Road, Westport

TICKETS \$15 - stamfordjcc.org/filmfestival

In partnership with the Jewish Film Festival of Fairfield County/Stamford JCC

Judaism, Addiction and Recovery: A Spiritual and Faith-Based Approach

An intimate discussion with author

Rabbi Rick Eisenberg

Wednesday, Oct. 30, 7:30 PM

Congregation B'nai Torah, 5700 Main St., Trumbull

INFO 203-268-6940 / office@bnaitorahct.org

A Flood of Ideas: A Symposium on Noah, the Great Flood, and Climate Change

A panel of interfaith clergy and scientists discuss the Noah story and its connection to the modern-day challenge of climate change

Sunday, Nov. 3, 3:30-6 PM

Sacred Heart University, East Building Auditorium West Campus, 3135 Easton Tpke., Fairfield

RSVP shalomct.org/judaism2020

In partnership with Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County

What Does Judaism Say About...

Join Rabbi Marcelo Kormis for a look at modern-day issues such as homosexuality, racial discrimination, and space travel through a Jewish lens - monthly from September through May. For specific dates and topics: shalomct.org/Judaism2020

Tuesdays, 8 AM: 9/17, 11/5, 12/10, 2/4, 3/17, 4/14, 5/5

Congregation Beth El Fairfield, 1200 Fairfield Woods Road, Fairfield

INFO 203-374-5544 / office@bethelfairfield.org

Bridging Divides: Songs for Unity and Healing

Renowned Jewish musician Billy Jonas leads area clergy and community partners of many faiths in a concert of vision, hope, and unity.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 8 PM

Temple Israel, 14 Coleytown Road, Westport

RSVP JFuchs@tiwestport.org

Chanukah Modern Mosaics Workshop

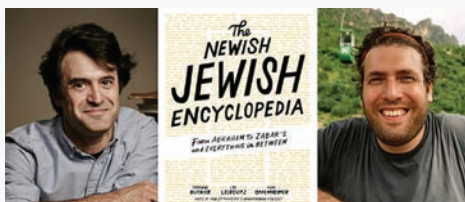
Learn about the ancient art form of mosaics with local artist Laura Dicker, and create a modern Chanukah mosaic piece.

Sunday, Dec. 8, 10:30 AM

Temple Shalom, 259 Richards Ave., Norwalk

Fee: \$10/person | **REGISTER** 203-866-0148 /

admin@templeshalomweb.org



The New Jewish Encyclopedia

Join authors Mark Oppenheimer and Liel Leibovitz, hosts of *Tablet* magazine's wildly popular "Unorthodox" podcast, for an irreverent and thoroughly modern introduction to Judaism - from Abraham to Zabar's and everything in between.

Wednesday, Jan. 8, 7:30 PM

The Westport Library, 20 Jesup Road, Westport

REGISTER shalomct.org/judaism2020

In partnership with The Westport Library and The Jewish Book Council

"Bob Dylan's Jewish Music" with Rabbi Stephen Karol

Sunday, Jan. 26, 3 PM

Congregation Shir Shalom, 46 Peaceable St., Ridgefield

INFO 914-523-4010

From the Margins to the Center: The Transformative Power of Inclusive Torah

Join Lauren Tuchman, the first-ever blind woman to enter the rabbinate, to explore inclusion of Jews with disabilities in all aspects of Jewish life.

Sunday, Jan. 26, 10 AM

Congregation Beth El-Norwalk,

109 East Ave., Norwalk

INFO 203-838-2710 /

office@congbethel.org

Here All Along

Sarah Hurwitz, former speechwriter to Michelle Obama, discusses her memoir, *Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life* - in Judaism, the keynote address for our community-wide Taste of Torah evening of adult Jewish learning.

Saturday, Feb. 1, 7 PM

Congregation Beth El Norwalk,

109 East Avenue, Norwalk

REGISTER shalomct.org/judaism2020



CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019-2020

300 Ways to Enliven, Enrich, and Modernize Your Seder

Sunday, Mar. 1, 9:30 AM

Temple Shalom, 259 Richards Ave., Norwalk

REGISTER 203-866-0148 /

admin@templeshalomweb.org

No fee; includes breakfast

Repairing the World...One Magic Trick at a Time Featuring Arthur Kurzweil

Wednesday, Mar. 29, 3 PM

Congregation Shir Shalom, 46 Peaceable St., Ridgefield

INFO 914-523-4010

Catbird: The Ballad of Barbi Prim

Cantor Barbara Ostfeld, the first ordained woman cantor in Jewish history, shares her memoir.

Sunday, Apr. 19, 12 noon

Temple Shalom, 259 Richards Ave., Norwalk

REGISTER 203-866-0148 /

admin@templeshalomweb.org

An Afternoon of Klezmer with Radio Klez

Sunday, June 7, 3 PM

Congregation B'nai Israel, 2710 Park Ave., Bridgeport

INFO 203-336-1858 / info@cbibpt.org

Jewish Pride: Celebrating the Rainbow of Humanity

Explore both the ancient Jewish roots of LGBTQ+ equality and the work that still remains to be done.

Sunday, June 14, 4 PM

Temple B'nai Chaim, 82 Portland Ave., Georgetown

INFO 203-544-8695 / tbc@templebnaichaim.org

COMMUNITY READ

kaddish.com by Nathan Englander

A sharp, irreverent tale of a son who makes a diabolical compromise that brilliantly captures the tensions between tradition and modernity.

Join us for an exploration of *kaddish.com*, moderated by professional

book-discussion leader, Kelle Ruden.

Monday, Feb. 24, 5 PM - Fairfield University, Canisius Hall, Room 8, 1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield | Special guest: Prof. Ellen Umansky

Sunday, Mar. 1, 3 PM - The Westport Library, 20

Jesup Road, Westport

REGISTER shalomct.org/judaism2020

Nathan Englander delivers the Diane Feigenson Lecture in Jewish Literature, sponsored by Fairfield University's Bennett Center for Judaic Studies:

"Guilt, Memory, and the Beta-God: Nathan Englander on *kaddish.com*"

Thursday, Mar. 5, 7:30 PM

Fairfield University, Barone Campus Center Oak

Room, 1073 North Benson Road, Fairfield

INFO 203-254-4000, ext. 2066 /

bennettcenter@fairfield.edu



Check shalomct.org/Judaism2020 for updates!



Weaving Common Threads into Judaism: A 2020 Vision



What happens when Jewish traditions, rituals, and culture collide with modern-day perspectives, issues, and modalities? Join us on a year-long exploration to discover a fascinating array of responses and uncover more thought-provoking questions, as the Federation kicks off a new community-wide initiative, **Judaism: A 2020 Vision – Ancient Traditions through a Contemporary Lens.**

The series follows on the heels of last year's innovative *Common Threads*, a journey through our diverse ancestry and shared heritage through programs hosted by 23 partner congregations, Jewish agencies, and civic organizations. Some 1,500 community-members from throughout Upper Fairfield County gathered over the year to enjoy a wide array of offerings, including film screenings, lectures, musical programs, and culinary demos.

Federation CEO David Weisberg believes that the Common Threads series was a great model for success. "We've heard two observations that make us most proud of this programming framework," Weisberg says: "the number of participants who attended programs outside of their congregations – often traveling across Upper Fairfield County to do so – and the likelihood that every program in the *Common Threads* lineup drew more participation than it would have if the same program were to be held independently. We have great confidence that *Judaism: A 2020 Vision* can build on that success in weaving integrated community."

While the complete *Judaism: A 2020 Vision* event schedule is still evolving, some highlights have already been solidified.

On Wednesday, Sept. 18, the series will kick off at The Acoustic in Bridgeport with a concert featuring Klezmer-Afrobeat band, Zion80, featuring local rabbi/jazz saxophonist extraordinaire, Greg Wall. Zion80, which has performed for huge festival crowds around the world, explores Jewish music through the lens of Afrobeat rhythms, and has been hailed by *The New York Times* for creating "a truly soulful experience."

On Monday, Oct. 28, the Jewish Film Festival of Fairfield County will partner with TCS for a special screening of the highly-touted new documentary *Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles*, which explores the *Fiddler on the Roof* story through contemporary issues. As a special addition to the event, the screening is followed by a talkback with Steven Skybell, starring as "Tevye" in the current National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene's Yiddish production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The integration of an ancient Torah story and a significant current concern will be the centerpiece on **Sunday, Nov. 3** for *A Flood of Ideas: A Symposium on Noah, the Great Flood, and Climate Change*. Co-presented by the Federation and the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County, the afternoon event will explore the similarities and contrasts between the Noah story in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim cultures and will feature a panel of

"We have great confidence that Judaism: A 2020 Vision can build on that success in weaving integrated community."

scientists discussing whether there was a great flood, whether there could be a future great flood, and how climate change and sea-level rise might be mitigated. Held at Sacred Heart University, the program will be broadcast across the county by Jewish Broadcasting Service.

Programs and events will be added throughout the year to the *Judaism: A 2020 Vision* schedule, which can be found on the Federation's website at shalomct.org/Judaism2020. Anticipated program additions range from exploring Jewish ritual through yoga, meditation, and kirtan chanting modalities, to examining contemporary events and issues – from organ donation to tattooing – through ancient Jewish law.

Check shalomct.org/Judaism2020 for updates!



Three Young Families Share Shabbat

By Monique Lions-Greenspan, PJ Library Coordinator

Sharing challah over a Friday-night Shabbat dinner-table is a great opportunity to engage in Jewish life and build community. Our Federation aims to support families with young children to create social connections by supplementing the cost of hosting a dinner and bringing people from across the community to Share Shabbat.

There are many different ways of observing this incredible weekly holiday, and we don't subscribe to any singular idea. Please observe Shabbat in a way that is meaningful to you and your family! Our next Share Shabbat is planned during Sukkot, on Oct. 18 at a Westport home. Want to attend a dinner? Want to host a dinner in your home? We'll help pay for it! Contact monique@jewishphilanthropyct.org.

To date, three families have generously opened their homes on Shabbat to friends and community-members, with warmth and joy. The experience has been rewarding for all participants.

Here is a beautiful letter that we received from Gwen Lopez-Cohen, host of our July 12 Share Shabbat.



Dear Monique,

We really enjoyed hosting on Friday night and I would highly recommend the experience. Our guests arrived at around 5 PM, two families who signed up. Laura and her husband, Michael, have an adorable 2-year-old boy, Ian; and Dina and her husband, Eric, have two cute boys, Asher (2) and Rafael (7 months).

We spent some time in our back yard where the kids fed our pet chickens and took turns playing on a play rollercoaster toy – both Asher and Ian were sweet and Joshua, our 5-year-old, helped out the younger boys. I really enjoyed getting to know both families – Laura is working on a PhD and Dina is a pediatric cardiologist at Yale – a huge coincidence to meet another doctor mom, and we know a third doctor mom in common who I will connect with Dina.

At around 6 PM, we sat down for dinner; as you can imagine, with so many little ones, our time for dinner was short. Everyone shared in lighting the Shabbat candles, saying Kiddush, and saying a prayer over the bread. We had a quick dessert and then the younger kids were starting to get tired and we all said good night. We will hopefully get the kids together again at the Levitt Pavilion in Westport for a children's concert.

I was talking with a friend and Federation board-member and brainstorming the need for more opportunities for working moms to connect with each other, and also noted that both families we hosted have an interfaith component. I was not raised Jewish and can relate to feeling new to the community: my mom is ancestrally Jewish and I adopted Jewish observance when I got married. I think that children's programming is a more inclusive way to bring families together.

Thank you for this opportunity – it is nice to step outside of our usual congregation and meet other families in the community with similarly-aged kids. We will look for more upcoming PJ Library events to participate in.

Sincerely,
Gwen Lopez-Cohen
Westport



Merkaz

40 Years of Educating Jewish Teens



Every Tuesday evening for the past 40 years, Upper Fairfield County Jewish clergy and educators devote their time and talent to the local Jewish teen population. That's the time reserved for Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies, where thousands of kids have come together to study and socialize since 1979. "Center" in Hebrew, Merkaz serves as a hub of Jewish teen life, sparking learning and conversation around an endless array of subjects from the BDS movement and U.S.-Israel relations to LGBTQ+ inclusion, from Jews and superheroes to Holocaust oral-history projects, from Torah and the Big Bang Theory to Jewish views on the afterlife, to yoga, meditation, arts, and much more. Students engage in community-service programs like Better Together, which pairs teens and senior adults at Jewish Senior Services, and "Soul Food," a look at the Jewish response to hunger through text study and food drives.

As Merkaz kicks off its next 40 years, the program welcomes aboard a new congregation – Temple Israel in Westport. "We are delighted to partner with Merkaz in order to expand our programming opportunities for teens at Temple Israel," says Rabbi-Educator Elana Nemitoff-Bresler. "The variety of programs, as well as the community aspect, will add much to our Teen Collective!"

Learn more at merkazct.org.



Federation Israeli Emissaries Build a Life-Long Bridge

It began as a “Why not?” conversation in a Westport living room in 1998. That’s when Sandy and Larry Lefkowitz, together with then-Federation director Bob Kessler and a visiting representative from the Jewish Agency for Israel, decided to host a small group of young Israelis as a way to more fully connect the Federation community with Afula-Gilboa, its Jewish Agency-assigned sister region in Israel.

Fast-forward 20 years, and what started as a pilot program in a single community has spread throughout the Americas, Europe, and South Africa. Today, 210 Israeli teens defer their military service to spend a gap year helping to strengthen personal and communal relationships between Israeli and diaspora Jews.

Each August, the Federation welcomes four of these recent high-school graduates

from Afula-Gilboa (or environs) who serve as “ambassadors” in our community. Not only do the emissaries bring Israel-themed activities to religious schools, preschools, adult-education programs, and Jewish Senior Services – as well as public high schools – but they are embraced as full community-members.

“Last year, we were so lucky to have Eyal Marom so easily integrate into our community,” says Seth Golub, who joined TCS in Westport as director of education in 2018. “Not only did he make a lasting bond with our students, teens, and congregants; he solidified a true love for Israel within our congregation.”

Rabbi Jim Prosnit, who recently became rabbi emeritus of Congregation B’nai Israel in Bridgeport after a 29-year tenure, points to one especially meaningful aspect of

the program: the lasting relationship that develops between the emissaries and their host families.

“Many of our congregants who have hosted have maintained connections with ‘their’ emissaries long after the gap-year experience here,” he says. “On our recent congregational trip to Israel, we invited former emissaries to meet with us and it was just terrific to spend time with them again.”

To date, close to 300 Upper Fairfield County families have hosted an emissary, creating life-long bonds that deepen connections to Israel – from travelling to share family weddings and b’nei-mitzvah to weekly WhatsApp video calls.

Westporters Joyce and Ken Backman and their two children hosted Rotem Rotner in 2017, a three-month experience that planted



Scott & Linda Sharkey and their extended family celebrate Passover with their emissary, Shay, and her family from Israel.



Emissaries Yarden, Yuval, and Lidor prepare a feast for a host family.



Emissary Rotem Rotner (2nd from R) with Joyce, Katie, and Ken Backman in Baltimore.



Art and Claudia Cohen and their daughters, Cassie and Amanda, visit with Itamar in Israel.





the seeds of an enduring friendship between the two families.

“Inviting Rotem into our home improved our lives in innumerable ways,” Joyce says. “To start, we now have such a strong connection to Israel. Whenever we travel there, we have dinner with Rotem at her parents’ home, and we also hang out with the other Federation Israeli Emissaries from Rotem’s year. Over the summer, Rotem was in the U.S. as part of her Israeli military service, and we all drove to Baltimore to spend a few hours with her. But the best part of the program is that our only daughter, Katie, who is a year younger than Rotem, now has someone she calls a sister.”

Gesher is the Hebrew word for “bridge.” The Federation’s Israeli Emissary Program serves as a living bridge, bringing recent high school graduates from Israel each year to serve in our community, teaching in religious schools, working with organizations, and bonding with families and people of all ages. This program, which now operates across the world with 210 young emissaries this year, was started 20 years ago here in Upper Fairfield County. Simply put, the Federation Israeli Emissary Program is our community’s gift to the Jewish world. This fall, our Federation is launching the Gesher Campaign, aiming to raise \$500,000 in five-year pledges to build a bridge to ensure our Federation’s Israeli Emissary Program is sustained through its 25th year. To learn more about how you can be part of the Gesher Campaign, email fjp@jewishphilanthropyct.org or call (203) 226-8198.

Meet the Federation Israeli Emissaries 2019-2020



1. Ido Yaaran
2. Noya Ben-Or
3. Hoshen Peretz
4. Ella Cohen

*Read the Emissaries’ bios
at shalomct.org/emissaries.*

WANT TO VISIT THE REAL ANATEVKA?

Join us on a special trip to experience the Jewish history and Jewish community renaissance of Ukraine in June 2020.

- **Visit historic synagogues and sites in Kiev and Odessa**
- **Meet leaders of the Ukrainian Jewish community**
- **See how our community makes a difference in supporting our extended Jewish family**
- **Explore your own Jewish roots**

**For more information, contact
dweisberg@jewishphilanthropyct.org**



**Thinking about Chanukah shopping?
Want to give a gift that makes a difference?**

**Visit our Federation's
online gift-giving portal at:**

tzedakahshop.com

Where change comes with every purchase.



Celebrating Global Traditions – Our Common Table

From the keynote conversation between food writers Leah Koenig and Liz Rueven to a diverse exhibit hall; from the Israelis-in-CT Hebrew Book Fest to the authentic Ethiopian *buna* coffee ceremony... along with cooking demonstrations, breakout sessions, and of course, tasty and authentic Jewish foods from around the world, this year's Southern CT Jewish Food Festival truly had something for everyone.

More than just a celebration of global Jewish culinary traditions, the day was a celebration of community and Jewish values. With the assistance of the amazing Zero Waste volunteer team from the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, a full-day festival with approximately 500 participants resulted in only a half-bag of trash.

Stay tuned for Federation's springtime food festival – with an unexpected twist!



Kristallnacht and Forgiveness: Bridgeport Meets Wetter, Germany on Screen



Bridgeport resident Harry Weichsel has an extraordinary life story.

As a 5-year-old growing up in a small German village, he hid under his grandparents' bed to avoid the mobs on Kristallnacht, the pogroms of November 1938 that marked the start of the Holocaust. He would eventually escape Nazi persecution with his mother, but the rest of his Jewish family would not survive the war.

Born Helmut Kutsch to a Jewish mother and Christian father, the boy was 9 when he and his mother, Flora, made their way to Bridgeport. There, Flora married Ernest Weichsel, a fellow German-Jewish refugee, who adopted the now-Americanized "Harry."

Fifty years later, Harry returned for the first time to his ancestral village of Wetter. He reconnected with his father's Christian family and his mother's childhood friend, and befriended the mayor. He saw the old synagogue, now used by a farmer as a stable.

"I wrote to the mayor that I'd like to raise the funds and have the synagogue restored – not as a synagogue, because there are no Jews left – but as a community center with a small section dedicated as a memorial and museum," Harry recalls. "The mayor wrote back, 'It's a great idea, but if it should happen, it's not up to Americans to come and do that; it would be the responsibility of the people of Wetter.'"

Eighteen years later, the restoration was complete.

In 2008, on the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, Harry was invited back to Wetter for a commemoration program, along with other Jewish survivors and their descendants. Filmmaker Micah Brandt met

him there and chronicled events over the five-day period.

The resulting documentary, *Robbery of the Heart*, follows Harry as he tries to reconcile with his past, while the Wetterans try to come to terms with a series of antisemitic attacks in their town during the commemoration.

The film is the centerpiece of the Federation's community-wide program marking the 81st anniversary of Kristallnacht, on Nov. 7 at Congregation Beth El Fairfield. Filmmaker Micah Brandt will present the film.

For Harry Weichsel, the message of the film is forgiveness, a philosophy that began to take root during his childhood in Bridgeport. One incident in particular cemented his open-mindedness.

"I had a friend whose grandmother would laugh and mumble something every time I came to his house. Sometime after my bar-mitzvah, at Rodeph Sholom, my friend finally told me: 'She's saying you killed Christ.' I said, 'Tell your grandma I didn't do it,'" Harry recalls. "Even at an early age, whenever I was in a group of people and someone was German and they realized I was a German Jew, I saw them become a little defensive; I felt the conversation change a little bit. I started to realize that no more did I kill Christ than these Germans of today killed my relatives – they inherited the guilt put on their shoulders by those who came before them. I really feel that so much of the anger, hatred, and bitterness throughout the world are a continuum of hatreds from generation to generation to generation."

Federation's Community-
wide Kristallnacht
Program featuring
Robbery of the Heart film
screening and talkback:
Thursday, Nov. 7, 7 PM,
Congregation Beth El
Fairfield, 1200 Fairfield
Woods Road, Fairfield

Open to the community
free of charge

shalomct.org/kristallnacht

Learn more about the
film and watch the trailer:
robberyoftheheart.com

Where Our Collective Tzedakah Goes

Our 2019 Jewish Federation allocations reflect the 2nd year of a significant evolution to our allocations process, with four allocations subcommittees focused on determining how best to maximize the impact of our community's collective tzedakah. Allocations from the annual campaign and other sources were directed to the following organizations and programs:



Community Programs: Federation Israeli Emissaries, PJ Library, Books2Connect, Book Buddies, Community Programs & Events (including Common Threads, Food Festival, TzedakahFest, Jewish Book Council, and many other programs)

Israel & Overseas: Jewish Federations of North America, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Project Keshet – FSU, Sarah Herzog Emunah Sarah Herzog Children's Center, Beit Singer Children's Home, Ethiopian National Project, Haifa Rape Crisis Center, Lamerhav

Social Services: Circle of Friends, Friendship Circle, Schoke Jewish Family Service, Jewish Senior Services, Keshet Project, LifeBridge Community Services, Positive Directions

Youth & Teens: BBYO, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, Carmel Academy, Ezra Academy, JCC of Greater New Haven Day Camp, Jewish High School of Connecticut, Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies, Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy

Congregational Partnerships: including year-round security consulting and the Federation's Engagement Institute for congregational professionals and volunteers

Jewish Peoplehood: Anti-Defamation League, Birthright Israel, Carl & Dorothy Bennett Center, Fairfield U., Hillel UConn Storrs, Jewish Broadcasting Service, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Jewish Federations Association of Connecticut

Thursday Night Fever

Dancin' queens and kings of Upper Fairfield County gathered at The Acoustic in Black Rock to boogie down at Federation's first-ever Disco Night. Co-chaired by Jackie Madwed and Mindy Siegel, the upbeat evening raised \$1,000 for music and dance programs in our partnership region of Afula-Gilboa, Israel.



Co-chairs Mindy Siegel and Jackie Madwed with Federation CEO David Weisberg

Rabbi Even Schultz sings "Love Train"

Jewish Community Resource Directory

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Bridgeport

Congregation Bikur Cholim
2365 Park Ave.
(203) 981-4458
Orthodox

Congregation B'nai Israel
2710 Park Ave.
203-336-1858 | welcome@cbibpt.org
cbibpt.org
Reform

Congregation Rodeph Sholom
2385 Park Ave.
203-334-0159 | mblock@rodephsholom.com
rodephsholom.com
Conservative

Jewish Senior Services
4200 Park Ave.
203-396-1001 | sshulman@jseniors.org

Fairfield

Congregation Ahavath Achim
84 Senior Place
203-372-6529 | office@ahavathachim.org
ahavathachim.org
Orthodox

Congregation Beth El Fairfield
1200 Fairfield Woods Road
203-374-5544 | office@bethelfairfield.org
bethelfairfield.org
Conservative

Georgetown

Temple B'nai Chaim
82 Portland Ave.
203-544-8695 | tbc@templebnaichaim.org
templebnaichaim.org
Reform

Norwalk

Beth Israel Chabad of Westport/Norwalk
40 King St.
203-866-0534 | bethisraelct@gmail.com
bethisraelct.org
Orthodox

Congregation Beth El-Norwalk
109 East Ave.
203-838-2710 | office@congbethel.org
congbethel.org
Conservative

Temple Shalom
259 Richards Ave.
203-866-0148 | admin@templeshalomweb.org
templeshalomweb.org
Reform

Ridgefield

Chabad Jewish Center of Ridgefield
27R West Lane
203-403-5372 | chabadridgefield@gmail.com
chabadridgefield.com

Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester
and Fairfield Counties
46 Peaccable St.
203-438-6589 | office@ourshirshalom.org
ourshirshalom.org
Reform

Trumbull

Congregation B'nai Torah
5700 Main St.
203-268-6940 | office@bnaitorahct.org
bnaitorahct.org
Conservative

Westport

Beit Chaverim Synagogue of
Westport/Norwalk
85 Post Road West
203-227-3333 | office@beitchaverim.com
beitchaverim.com
Modern Orthodox/Traditional

Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of
Fairfield County
P.O. Box 82
Westport, CT 06881
203-293-8867 | info@humanisticjews.org
humanisticjews.org

Temple Israel
14 Coleytown Road
203-227-1293 | info@tiwestport.org
tiwestport.org
Reform

The Conservative Synagogue
30 Hillspoint Road
203-454-4673 | execdir@tcs-westport.org
tcs-westport.org
Conservative

COMMUNITY AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Anti-Defamation League
Connecticut Regional Office
connecticut.adl.org | 203-288-6500

Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of
Upper Fairfield County
shalomct.org | 203-226-8197

Israelis-in-CT
israelisinct@hotmail.com
facebook.com/israelisinct

Jewish Family Service of
Connecticut, Fairfield
jfsc.org | 203-366-5438

Jewish Federation Association of
Connecticut (JFACT)
jfact.org | 860-727-5701

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March of the Stuffed Animals

Congregation Beth EL, Fairfield, 1200 Fairfield Woods Rd, Fairfield

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 | 5:30 PM

Celebrate Hanukkah!

Temple Israel, 14 Coleytown Road, Westport

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25 | 5:30 PM

Community Havdalah

Congregation Beth EL, 109 East Avenue, Norwalk

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7 | 6:00 PM

It's Tu B'Shevat!

Congregation Beth EL, 109 East Avenue, Norwalk

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 | 5:00 PM

Join the Purim Fun

TCS, 30 Hillspoint Road, Westport



Federation for Jewish Philanthropy
OF UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Synagogue affiliation not required.
All are welcome.

Jewish Community Resource Directory

Holocaust Child Survivors of
Connecticut, Inc.
hcs-ct.org | 203-226-3092

LifeBridge Community Services, Bridgeport
lifebridgedct.org | 203-368-4291

Schoke Jewish Family Service of
Fairfield County
ctjfs.org | 203-659-3601

The Jewish Community Foundation, Serving
Upper Fairfield County
dweisberg@jewishphilanthropyct.org |
203-226-8197

Voices of Hope – Holocaust and genocide
education
ctvoicesofhope.org | 860-470-5591

LIFECYCLE

Mohel

Rabbi Yitzchok Adler
860-798-9555

Mikvah

Mikvah Israel
1326 Stratfield Road, Fairfield
203-274-2191

End of Life

Abraham L. Green and Son Funeral
Home, Fairfield
greensfuneralhome.com | 203-255-8993

Jewish Cemetery Association of
Fairfield County
203-452-1221

Loyalty Cemetery Association, Fairfield
203-452-1221

Martin H. Green Memorials & Lettering
203-452-1221

YOUTH & EDUCATION

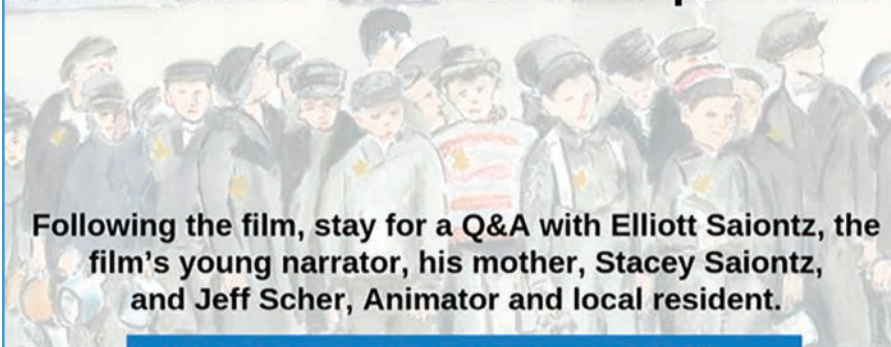
Early Childhood

PJ Library: Free Jewish-themed books and
music for kids 8 and younger
Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper
Fairfield County
monique@jewishphilanthropyct.org
jewishphilanthropyct.org | 203-659-3602

continued on the next page

Please join us for a family-friendly film screening of the
HBO documentary

The Number on Great-Grandpa's Arm



Following the film, stay for a Q&A with Elliott Saiontz, the
film's young narrator, his mother, Stacey Saiontz,
and Jeff Scher, Animator and local resident.

Sunday, November 10, 1:30 PM
The Westport Library
20 Jesup Road, Westport



Federation for Jewish Philanthropy
OF UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY

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Aleph Bet Early Childhood and Daycare
Center, Westport
myalephbet.org | 203-635-4118

B'nai Torah Nursery School, Trumbull
bnaitorahct.org/nursery | 203-268-0227

Bonim Preschool
Congregation B'nai Israel, Bridgeport
cbibpt.org | 203-335-5058

Carol Schoke Early Childhood Center
Temple Israel, Westport
tiwestport.org | 203-227-1656, ext. 312

Gan Yeladim Preschool
Temple Shalom, Norwalk
templeshalomweb.org | 203-866-0148

K'tanim Preschool
Congregation Beth El, Fairfield
bethelfairfield.org | 203-374-5544

Nitzan Nursery School
Congregation Beth El-Norwalk
congbethel.org | 203-838-6019

The Conservative Synagogue
Preschool, Westport
tcs-westport.org | 203-454-4673

Dayschools

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
(Pre-K – 12 Grade)
2186 High Ridge Road, Stamford
(Pre-K – 8th)
bcds.org | 203-329-2186
1937 West Main St., Stamford (9th-12th)
jhsct.org | 203-357-0850
*A merger of Bi-Cultural Day School and Jewish
High School of Connecticut*

Carmel Academy
270 Lake Ave., Greenwich
carmelacademy.com | 203-863-9663

Ezra Academy
75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge
ezraacademyct.org | 203-389-5500

Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy
261 Derby Ave., Orange
schacademy.org | 203-795-5261

Hebrew

Alef-Tav Hebrew for Children &
Ulpan Habait
An Israeli program for learning Hebrew
israelisinct@hotmail.com | 203-434-7705

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The Westport Inn | 1595 Post Road East | Westport, CT 06880
203.557.8124 | info@westportinn.com

continued on the next page



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Saturday, November 9, 2019

6:30 p.m. Pre-Show Sponsor Reception

8:00 p.m. Show

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Anti-Defamation League of Connecticut www.adl.org



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Recognizing our responsibility and transparency as a steward of our community's charitable dollars, we are proud that, for the 3rd consecutive year, our Federation is a Charity Navigator Four-Star Charity, with our score reaching 96.06, our highest rating ever.



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Jewish Community Resource Directory

Youth Activities

BBYO Connecticut Valley Region
Fairfield, Ridgefield, Westport Chapters
bbyo.org | 203-389-2127

Circle of Friends Connecticut
circleoffriendscct.org | 203-293-8837

Friendship Circle Fairfield County
friendshipct.com | 203-329-0015, ext. 131

Keshet Jewish Enrichment for Children with
Special Needs and Their Parents
Congregation B'nai Israel, Bridgeport
cbibpt.org/keshet.html#keshet | 203-336-1858

Merkaz Community High School for
Judaic Studies
4200 Park Ave., Bridgeport
merkazct.org | 203-450-5303

Westport USY
The Conservative Synagogue, Westport
tcs-westport.org/communities/youth-groups
203-454-4673

Day Camps

Camp Gan Israel of Westport,
Weston & Wilton
ganisrael.com | 203-226-8584

JCC of Greater New Haven Day Camps
jccnh.org/jcc-summer-day-camp
203-387-2424, ext. 253
*Contact Federation for Jewish Philanthropy to learn
about subsidized bus transportation from Upper
Fairfield County: 203-226-8197*

Mishkan Israel Day Camp
mishkanisrael.com | 203-268-0740

Lifelong Learning

Fairfield University Carl & Dorothy
Bennett Center for Judaic Studies
fairfield.edu/judaic | 203-254-4000,
ext. 2065

Israelis-in-CT Hebrew Conversation Group
Meets every other Monday at The
Westport Library
israelisinct@hotmail.com

Keshet Project for Developmentally
Challenged Adults
Congregation B'nai Israel, Bridgeport
cbibpt.org | 203-336-1858

Schneerson Center for Jewish Life, CT
schneersoncenter.org | 203-635-4118

continued on the next page

Jewish Community Resource Directory

CULTURAL

Connecticut Jewish Ledger
jewishledger.com | 860-231-2424

Jewish Arts & Film Festival of
Fairfield County
jewishartsandfilm.org | 203-487-0941

Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County
jhsfc-ct.org | 203-321-1373, ext. 150

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Greater Bridgeport Jews (20s & 30s)
eschultz@cbibpt.org | 203-336-1858

Jewish Twenties & Thirties
ctjfs.org | 203-921-4161

Young Jewish Professionals, CT
yjpc.org | 203-354-3090

WOMEN

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist
Organization of America, Inc.
Connecticut Region
hadassah.org/regions/connecticut
203-307-1319

SENIORS

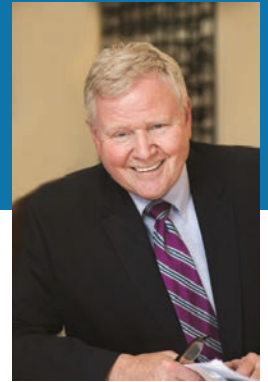
Jewish Senior Services
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg
Campus, Bridgeport
jseniors.org | 203-365-6400

Seymour I. Hollander Apartments
Greater Bridgeport Jewish Housing Corp.
hollanderhouse.org | 203-374-7868

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Barry Shrage

Professor, Horenstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program and
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University

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85 Post Road West, Westport | 203-227-3333 | BeitChaverim.com



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Congregation Beth El Fairfield

1200 Fairfield Woods Road, Fairfield | 203-374-5544 | bethelfairfield.org

Meet Dr. Samantha Stinson – Education, Music, and Ritual Director

"Dr. Sam" first performed Jewish music at age 11 as a youth soloist at Congregation Beth Elohim in Acton, Mass. Since then, she has consistently found ways to merge her performance and academic careers with her deeply-held Jewish faith.

Samantha earned a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Voice Performance from the University of Cincinnati College - Conservatory of Music, where she compiled an anthology of Yiddish Art Songs for her dissertation.

She served as a cantorial soloist at Temple Shalom of Chicago and Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, and as cantorial soloist, lay rabbinic leader, and b'nai-mitzvah tutor at Congregation Beth El in Potsdam, N.Y. – where she also taught at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music and served as faculty advisor to the Four College Hillel and as the Jewish

representative on the university's Spiritual/Cultural Diversity panel.

As a music educator, she has taught and developed programs in schools, summer arts camps, and synagogues in several U.S. communities, and at universities in the U.S. and the UK. A performer in opera, musicals, and concerts in the U.S. and abroad, she frequently collaborates in recitals to bring lesser-known Yiddish songs to the public.

Samantha's cantorial style integrates traditional Ashkenazic melodies, contemporary songs, and world-music arrangements of beloved prayers. "I especially enjoy introducing and teaching new melodies to congregations, and I seek to lift each congregant in *ruach* and *kavanah* through musical interpretations," she says. "I aspire to embody my Hebrew name, Simcha, and create joy in others through singing and teaching."



Dr. Samantha Stinson with her husband, Dr. Jonathan Stinson, a singer and composer, and 5-year-old twins Amalia and Abigail.

Beth Israel of Westport/Norwalk – Chabad

40 King St., Norwalk | 203-866-0534 | bethisraelct.org

Marking 120 Years of Service to the Community

As we prepare for the Jewish New Year 5780, the SHUL – incorporated in 1899 as The Hebrew Bet Israel Society, Inc. – extends best wishes to all for a good and sweet New Year. Everyone is welcome to attend our High Holiday Services; no ticket is required.

Beth Israel Chabad provides the availability for all community-members to have their son or daughter prepare for Bar- / Bat-Mitzvah, creating memories to last a lifetime. Membership is not required.

At Beth Israel Chabad, every effort is made to celebrate lifecycle events in an inclusive atmosphere. Each event is an opportunity to grow in appreciation of our Jewish peoplehood and experience firsthand the sacred traditions of the Torah.

The spiritual guide of the SHUL is Rabbi Yehoshua S. Hecht, who personally directs the study of each Bar- / Bat-Mitzvah trainee. The Synagogue's warm sanctuary setting and its beautiful edifice -- designed by the famed American architect, Percival Goodman -- provide

the ambiance for a memorable event.

Adults and youth attending services and classes enjoy the vibrant and joyous spirit that is the hallmark of Beth Israel Chabad.

The SHUL also hosts the well-regarded after-school Weston/ Westport Hebrew School that meets Tuesdays in Weston under the dynamic leadership of Morah Freida Hecht. Learn more at westonhebrewschool.org or (203) 493-6505.

To contact Beth Israel Chabad for High Holiday Services and Adult Education opportunities, call (203) 866-0534 or visit bethisraelchabad.org.



Congregation Ahavath Achim

203-372-6529 | ahavathachim.org

By Rabbi Peretz Robinson

For centuries, the Jewish people has looked to the wisdom of the Rabbis as encapsulated in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Fathers*) for guidance in lifelong ethical and moral quests. It is the wisdom of the sages as contained in those short chapters that serves as the embodiment of generations of Jewish religious and humanistic thought.

A passage at the beginning of *Pirkei Avot* quotes Simon the Just: "The world depends on three things: on Torah study, on the service of God, and on kind deeds."

As the spiritual leader of Congregation Ahavath Achim, I have set as our congregation's goal to excel in these three areas.

The primacy of Torah study and the continued pursuit of Jewish knowledge are evidenced by the numerous study sessions and classes that our congregation conducts weekly. Whether the topic be Talmud, Bible, Jewish history, or Hebrew language, you will find groups of congregants studying in our shul.

"The service of God," as expressed in *Pirkei Avot*, is exemplified in Congregation Ahavath Achim by our steadfast dedication to daily prayer services. Every morning, Sunday through Shabbat, we meet together for our daily minyan. It is our belief that starting

the day off with an intimate encounter with our Creator infuses our lives with meaning and direction.

Finally, Simon the Just informs us that one of the three things on which the world stands is kind deeds, *gemilut chassadim* in the original Hebrew. Our congregation strives to be a congregation of kindness, of *chesed*, where the typical congregant is always concerned with the needs of a neighbor or fellow congregant. While building a faith community together, we aspire to be cognizant of the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical needs of all of our fellow congregants.

Since the sale of our historic building on Stratfield Road in Fairfield last year, we have been holding services, together with Congregation Agudas Achim of Bridgeport, at the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus on Park Avenue in Bridgeport, home to Jewish Senior Services. We are proud of our relationship with JSS, and are working together with all parties to coalesce into a warm and inviting congregation, firmly rooted in its storied past, but with its eyes towards the bright future.

Please join Congregation Ahavath Achim for any of our regular prayer services, and experience for yourself what we believe to be a meaningful davening experience.

Congregation B'nai Israel

2710 Park Ave., Bridgeport | 203-336-1858 | cbibpt.org



Meet Our New Rabbinic Team at B'nai Israel!

Welcome to Congregation B'nai Israel! It has been a poignant and exciting time of rabbinic transition in our community, as we marked Rabbi Jim Prosnit's 29 years as Senior Rabbi of our congregation, and welcomed Rabbi Evan Schultz as our new Senior Rabbi and Rabbi Sarah Marion as our new Assistant Rabbi this past July.

Rabbi Schultz served for seven years as Assistant/

Associate Rabbi of B'nai Israel, and we could not be more thrilled to have Evan take the rabbinic leadership helm of our synagogue community. Evan carries a passion for engaging Jewish learning, powerful justice work, and creative prayer and spirituality. In partnership with the community, he hopes to build on the 160-year legacy of B'nai Israel, cultivating a synagogue community that seeks to speak both to the current and next generation of Jews in Greater Bridgeport.

Rabbi Sarah Marion joins us from Baltimore and has been an amazing addition to the B'nai Israel rabbinic team! Sarah is engaging, soulful, and immediately draws you in to the beauty of Jewish tradition. She has a passion for working with people of all ages and backgrounds, especially young children and women's groups.

Curious about Congregation B'nai Israel? We would love to meet you! We are an inclusive, welcoming Jewish community that celebrates individuals and families of all backgrounds and ages. You can reach Rabbi Schultz at eschultz@cbibpt.org and Rabbi Marion at smarion@cbibpt.org, or give us a call at 203-336-1858. We hope to welcome you soon to Congregation B'nai Israel!

Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County (CHJ)

P.O. Box 82, Westport, CT 06881 | 203-293-8867 | humanisticjews.org

Yiddish music, Noah's Ark: Celebrating a life

The late Saul Haffner proves that legacy and impact can endure even after one leaves this life. A longtime member and one-time president of the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County (CHJ), Saul worked as an aerospace engineer and a university professor, served on the Westport RTM and studied photography, and became a Justice of the Peace in 2001 to help interfaith couples seeking a wedding officiant. His memoir, *Just a Boy from Brighton Beach*, was published posthumously.

When Saul died two years ago, his family and friends established the Saul Haffner Jewish Enrichment Fund as a way to keep his spirit alive in the Upper Fairfield County community.

The endowment makes possible high-quality events that reflect Saul's many interests and bring Jewish culture and topics to a broader audience.

The Fund's programming kicked off in May, when nearly 200 community-members packed Bennett Hall at the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus in Bridgeport for a Yiddish Cabaret with singer Zhenya Lopatnik, who brought to life the spirited and beloved Jewish music of Eastern Europe. The rousing concert was CHJ's contribution to the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy's year-long, community-wide Common Threads program.

Coming up on Nov. 3, as part of Federation's year-long Judaism: A 2020 Vision programming framework, the Haffner Fund will co-sponsor an interfaith symposium on the story

of Noah – its significance in the three Abrahamic religions and its connection to modern-day concerns around climate change and proper stewardship of the earth.

For details, visit humanisticjews.org.



The late Saul Haffner

Congregation Rodeph Sholom

2385 Park Ave., Bridgeport | 203-334-0159 | rodephsholom.com

Congregation Rodeph Sholom is a close-knit community for those who seek to balance modernity and tradition while practicing our Jewish faith in the context of a changing world:

Our devoted members are the core of our congregation. Rodeph Sholom is a kehilla with the desire to enhance our own Jewish experience within the Conservative Movement while ensuring our relevance for generations to come.

Our engaging and energetic Hazzan Niema Hirsch, along with Rabbi Richard Eisenberg, our Rabbi-in-Residence, and our professional staff and volunteers, create a warm atmosphere for spiritual connection and growth through our daily and Shabbat services and programs.

We are offering a convenient religious-education experience spearheaded by Hazzan Hirsch at no cost for young unaffiliated families, which provides an opportunity for in-home learning and family programs.

We invite you to get to know us better and welcome you to contact Executive Director Mark Block at mblock@rodephsholom.com and visit www.rodephsholom.com



Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties

46 Peaceable St., Ridgefield | 203-438-6589 | ourshirshalom.org

Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties
46 Peaceable St., Ridgefield
ourshirshalom.org | 203-438-6589

Congregation Shir Shalom of Westchester and Fairfield Counties is a vibrant, inclusive, and caring Reform community that thrives on Jewish culture, Jewish history, and Jewish thought.

- We honor the diversity of our backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations.
- We celebrate our shared values... study of Torah, participatory worship lifted by music, advocacy of lifelong learning, ongoing participation in *Tikkun Olam* (Healing the World), dedication to social justice.
- We embrace the privilege of serving as "a light unto the nations," building a brighter future for our community and the world.
- We are eager to welcome you and to connect your Jewish life journey to our community through meaningful and inspiring worship, engaging educational

programs, and social and cultural activities.

- Shir Shalom's clergy leadership includes Rabbi David Reiner, Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray, and Rabbi Emeritus Jon Haddon.
- Shir Shalom's Religious School classes range from K-12 to meet the needs of all families. To learn about our new, parent-friendly morning sibling program, our personalized Bar/Bat Mitzvah experiences, our Social Action as Jewish Education (SAJE) program for grades 8-12, and our other innovative learning opportunities, contact Religious School Director Leslie Gottlieb.
- Shir Shalom's year-round Early Childhood Center, for children through age 5, integrates art, nature, music, and movement, with a separate, fun focus on science and reading readiness. New this year is "Practically Religious School," a light, one-hour Sunday-morning program that introduces



Congregation Shir Shalom's Rabbi David L. Reiner and Cantor Deborah Katchko-Gray, along with The Rev. Whitney Altopp (center) of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, comprise the Ridgefield Clergy Association.

children to the Jewish holidays and includes storytime and playtime. For more information, contact Director of Early Childhood Programs Jane Emmer.

TCS

30 Hillspoint Road, Westport | 203-454-4673 | tcs-westport.org

Meet Lauran Pancoast, Director of Early Childhood Education at the TCS Preschool

Originally from New York City, Lauran Pancoast grew up immersed in a melting pot of culture, religion, and tradition, which led her to earn an undergraduate degree in Cultural Studies. Following graduation, she ran the Bellevue Hospital Emergency Medical Department, where her responsibilities included reading to children in the pediatric urgent care clinic. She realized her love of children and education, earning a master's degree in Early Childhood Education. After years working at schools throughout New York City, Lauran was drawn to the Jewish Community Project Preschool in downtown Manhattan. "Its abundant community and warmth vibrated through the building," she says. "Each year there, I became more spiritually and academically connected to Judaism and extended my learning beyond the classroom, making personal connections with parents, teachers, staff, and clergy."

After moving to Connecticut in 2017, Lauran sought a similar working environment. "The minute I walked into the TCS Preschool, I was surrounded by that same sense of warmth and community that I had come to know and love," she says. "I immediately felt at home, hearing the voices of the cantor and the rabbi leading Preschool Shabbat, children singing and laughing, and an overall happy-to-be-here staff atmosphere"

TCS Preschool is committed to providing a program of excellence for the families in our care. We believe that quality education is a full-time endeavor involving parents, teachers, and a child's environment. We work in partnership to build trusting relationships that support each child's individuality, creativity, and potential. Jewish traditions and values inspire everyday learning opportunities and lifelong connections to Judaism. Learn more: tcs-westport.org.



Temple B'nai Chaim

82 Portland Ave., Georgetown | 203-544-8695 | templebnaichaim.org



At Temple B'nai Chaim, our passion for Jewish life permeates every aspect of our community! Every day, Rabbi Rachel Bearman, Director of Lifelong Learning Karin Beitel, and Student Cantor Suzanne Hamstra work in partnership with lay leaders as they strive to help modern Jewish families connect to our ancient tradition.

In any given week at TBC, you will see one or more of the following:

- Meaningful and creative worship experiences (Superhero Shabbat!) for our congregation and the larger community!

- Educational opportunities for everyone from 3 to 103!
- Social Action activities that bring our congregation into the wider community where we can live our values!
- Diverse families celebrated and honored!
- Caring Committee representatives supporting congregants who are going through difficult times and celebrating with those who are experiencing *simchas* (joyous moments)!
- Lifecycle events that honor the individual journeys of their participants!
- Family programming that brings parents into their children's educational journey!
- Students laughing, learning, and praying together!
- Interfaith partnerships with local congregations that bring strength and joy to our community!
- At TBC, Judaism is something that we live and love. We hope that you'll join us! To learn more about TBC, please call 203-544-8695.



Temple Israel

14 Coleytown Road, Westport | 203-227-1293 | tiwestport.org

Temple Israel of Westport is thrilled to welcome Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler, our new Rabbi Educator. In this role, Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler will be an integral member of our clergy team and senior staff. Her primary responsibility will entail oversight and leadership of our Religious School.

Rabbi Elana Nemitoff-Bresler, MAJE received her rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, where she also received her Master of Jewish Education from the Rhea Hirsch School of Jewish Education. Prior to attending rabbinical school, Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a B.A. in psychology, as well as minors in technical theater and Jewish studies. While in rabbinical school, Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler served congregations all over the country, including Billings, Mont., Kansas City, Mo., and Salinas, Calif. In addition, she spent time at various congregations and camps in the greater Los Angeles area as an intern. Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler also spent a year working at Beit Issie Shapira, a school for kids with special needs in Ra'anana, Israel after her first year of rabbinical school.



She is passionate about making learning and Judaism accessible to all, no matter their background or learning needs. This passion was imbued within her at a young age, as she attended URJ Goldman Union Camp Institute in Zionsville, Ind. for many years and saw how inclusion made all aspects of camp that much stronger.

Rabbi Nemitoff-Bresler and her husband Noah cannot wait to explore all that Westport and the surrounding area have to offer them.

Temple Shalom

259 Richards Ave., Norwalk | 203-866-0148 | templeshalomweb.org



Are you looking for connection within the Jewish community? Interfaith family? No synagogue experience or Hebrew school? Looking for an inspirational place to celebrate the upcoming holidays?

Celebrate the joy and inspiration of Jewish life with us and discover what makes Temple Shalom so special! We strive to enrich the lives of all who walk through our doors!

A vibrant, warm, and inclusive Reform Jewish community drawing from across Fairfield County. Musical, spiritual, cultural, educational, social and service opportunities for all ages. Now enrolling for full daycare, preschool, and religious school for the 2019-2020 school year.

We welcome you to make Temple Shalom your new Jewish home!

Call us or email to talk or schedule a visit: admin@templeshalomweb.org / (203) 866-0148 / www.templeshalomweb.org

Congregation Beth El-Norwalk

109 East Ave., Norwalk | 203-838-2710 | congbethel.org

Summer may be a relaxing time, but Beth El doesn't slow down! In late June, Beth El hosted an LGBTQ Pride Shabbat. The weekend began with a Rainbow Challah-Baking workshop. Shabbat services featured two guest speakers: Dubbs Weinblatt of Keshet, the national Jewish LGBTQ organization; and our own teen congregant, Harry Heftler.

Dubbs, who uses the pronouns they/them/theirs, spoke about their journey of discovering that they were transgender – how that first drove them from the Jewish community and eventually enabled them to find a way back in. Harry shared his experience as a gay, Jewish young man (still in progress at age 16). We decorated the sanctuary with colorful Jewish LGBTQ posters and the social hall with a Star-of-David Pride flag. Our Pride Shabbat also provided an opportunity to introduce two



permanent features to our building that signal openness and safety to members of the LGBTQ community: 1) a sign identifying a single bathroom as gender-neutral, and 2) stickers on each office marking it as an LGBTQ Safe Zone.

It was also been a summer of outdoor Friday-night services. There's nothing more spiritually awakening than welcoming Shabbat in the heart of nature, and

the weather cooperated! Over the summer, we held five services on the beach at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport and at the Cranbury Park Bunkhouse in Norwalk. Congregants brought their lawn chairs, dinner, and singing voices, joining with Rabbi Paskind and her guitar. We enjoyed this first summer of outdoor Friday nights and look forward to making this a Beth El tradition! Join us!

Congregation B'nai Torah

5700 Main St., Trumbull | 203-268-6940 | bnaitorahct.org

What do 8th-graders think about Judaism?

By Rabbi Colin Brodie

As Jewish educators, how can we create a post-B'nei Mitzvah learning environment that is both compelling and educational? Based on my research about teenagers/adolescents, I answered the challenge by developing a curriculum based upon films. If there is one thing that all teenagers like to do when they are not on social media, it is to watch movies. Using carefully chosen films, the semester progresses from cultural to theological to ethical topics, as we add a Jewish twist to each movie's talking points. Of course, the question for any educational program is how to measure efficacy. At our 8th Grade Commencement, students are invited to share their experience with the congregation. Here is what we learned from two 8th-graders.

"After my Bat Mitzvah, I was so sure that I knew what it meant to be Jewish. I mean, I am now considered a Jewish adult – right? Well, with 8th grade came a new perspective. We've all heard the classic line, "Television and movies will rot your brain." Well, apparently, they also help you understand Judaism. I'm not going to lie: I was a little skeptical at first. But after discussing these movies with my classmates, I

came to realize that, while being Jewish means being unique, communicating in Hebrew, and being Bar or Bat Mitzvah, it means so much more. Being Jewish means having faith and trust in G-d. Being Jewish means respecting others and being a mensch. Being Jewish means truly loving and embracing your culture. Being Jewish means finding any chance you can to help your community. Being Jewish means that B'nai Torah will always be a place where people can be Jewish together – and that's what truly matters."

"The 8th-Grade Class had a huge impact on my life. It provided me with new perspectives on life and the many problems we face. I believe that every single one of us affects the world in our own ways. With simple acts of kindness, we change the world. We should all go out of our way to make this world a better place. All of this, I learned from the class. I can't stress enough how important this class is for 8th-graders; it was truly one of the best years and I know I will never forget it."

I am looking forward to my next class of skeptical, inquisitive 8th-graders who think that Hebrew School means watching movies with the Rabbi!



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The Bennett Center for Judaic Studies

fairfield.edu/BennettFall19

LECTURES AND EVENTS: FALL 2019



Judaic Studies Scholar in Residence

"Eleven Months After Pittsburgh: What Did We Learn?"

Rabbi Danny Schiff, PhD

Author, Foundation Scholar Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh

Wednesday, September 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Kelley Center Presentation Room



Daniel Pearl World Music Days Concert

"An Evening with Elana Arian: A Celebration in Story and Song"

Elana Arian

Jewish composer, multi-instrumentalist, and recording artist

Tuesday, October 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Kelley Center Presentation Room



"New Jerusalem Down Under: The Search for a Jewish Homeland in Australia"

Adam Rovner, PhD

Author and Associate Professor of English and Jewish Literature,
University of Denver

Monday, October 28 at 7:30 p.m.

The Conference Center at Fairfield University

Co-sponsored with the Judaic Studies Program



22nd Annual Jacoby-Lunin Humanitarian Lecture

"Demanding Justice for Victims: From Cyber Crimes to Federal Court"

Carrie Goldberg, JD

Victims' rights attorney, against sexual assault, stalking, and blackmail online and off

Wednesday, November 13 at 8 p.m.

Quick Center for the Arts, Kelley Theatre

Co-sponsored with the Open VISIONS Forum



Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Lecture in Judaic Studies

"Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era"

Michael R. Cohen, PhD

Author and Chair of Department of Jewish Studies, Tulane University

Monday, December 2 at 7:30 p.m.

The Conference Center at Fairfield University



Fairfield University

For Reservations: Bennettcenter@fairfield.edu or 203-254-4000, ext. 2066.

Buy 11/13 tickets from Quick Center Box Office, 203-254-4010.

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