



KALEIDOSCOPE

Jewish Life in Upper Fairfield County

FALL/WINTER 2018



COMMON THREADS

Connecting ancestry to community

A year of programming & resources
to explore our diverse ancestry
& build integrated community

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A publication of the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County



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From the Lens of David Weisberg

When my daughters, Hannah and Alison, were very young, they would fall asleep every night to a CD by a wonderful Jewish musician named Carla Sciaky entitled *Spin the Weaver's Song*.

I should note that –

1. While I first met Carla Sciaky over 25 years ago, I only recently learned that she is Jewish.

2. While I think Carla is a wonderful songwriter, most importantly this album, which is comprised entirely of traditional songs about weaving, created a hypnotic comfort that meant instant sleep for my then-young girls.

I was reflecting recently on *Spin the Weaver's Song*, as Alison, who is expecting her own first child this fall, recently asked that I find her a

copy of the album for when she puts her own child to bed for the night.

It occurs to me that there was something about this album that made it different than a collection of lullabies. Indeed, it wasn't a collection of lullabies whatsoever.

Perhaps the comfort lay not only in the music, but in the subject matter weaving its way through every song, the subject matter itself being weaving. And while I've never woven myself, I can imagine the comfort brought not only by the repetition but by the creation of interconnected fabric, the creation of something to cover, to protect, to provide warmth, even to

provide holiness.

It is that sense of comfort, that sense of interconnectedness, that makes me excited about our community's Common Threads project, which will launch this fall and continue through the spring. Under the tagline, *connecting ancestry to community*, Common Threads is coordinated by the Federation and Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies, in partnership with so many of our congregations, and will explore our diverse Jewish heritage through events and programs hosted by organizations and

congregations throughout our Federation region. We'll even have an opportunity for those who are interested in DNA ancestry testing, and we'll build a virtual map of our community's ancestral roots.

But just as importantly, by looking together at our common threads, I believe we'll find comfort, not only by learning of our past, but by continuing to weave together an interconnected community fabric that today provides cover, protection, warmth, and, yes, even holiness.

I hope you'll find the opportunity to be part of this exciting program throughout the year, and perhaps make a new friend... or even find a long-lost relative.

Enjoy reading.



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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.

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A YEAR OF COMMON THREADS

A sampling of programs hosted throughout our community

COMMON THREADS KICKOFF

Iom Romì (A Day in Rome)
film screening, reception
& talkback

Thursday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m.

4200 Park Ave., Bridgeport

Experience a day in the life of the contemporary Jewish community of Rome, which for centuries has lived in limbo between persecution and integration. Join the director and producer for a talk-back, as they share their journey chronicling the most ancient diaspora community.

The evening will include wine and Italian Jewish antipasto and treats. Tickets: \$10/person



"Hazzan: A Jazz Creation of Jewish Liturgical Chants and Improvisational Rhythms"
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Quick Center for the Arts,
Fairfield University

Info: jhaynos@fairfield.edu /
203-254-4000, ext. 2066

"So, You Want to Speak Yiddish?"
Four-week Yiddish class beginning
Tuesday, Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Temple Shalom,
259 Richards Ave., Norwalk

Register: 203-866-0148 /
admin@templeshalomweb.org

"Mizrach to Maarav:
Jewish Art East to West"
Thursday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m.

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

Genealogy through Technology
Tuesday, Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.

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

Learn great tips for researching your
family tree.

"Looking for Bubbe:
The Remembered and
Forgotten Jewish World
in Heritage Tourism"

Monday, Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m.

Dolan School of Business, Fairfield
University

Info: jhaynos@fairfield.edu /
203-254-4000, ext. 2066

The Secret Jews of Calabria
Thursday, Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m.

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

Film screening and
Italian dessert reception

Jewish Genealogy
with Arthur Kurzweil
Sunday, Nov. 4, 3 p.m.

Congregation Shir Shalom,
46 Peaceable St., Ridgefield

Documentary: Back to Berlin
Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7 p.m.

Temple Israel,

14 Coleytown Road, Westport

Eleven motor-bikers carry the Maccabiah
torch from Israel to the site of the
infamous 1936 Berlin Olympics, for the
first Jewish Olympic Games on German
soil, retracing the heroic journeys of the
original 1930s Maccabiah riders.

"Is a Manuscript a Mirror?
Reading Jewish History
in Jewish Art"

Monday, Nov. 26, 7:30 p.m.

Dolan School of Business, Fairfield
University

Info: jhaynos@fairfield.edu /
203-254-4000, ext. 2066

COMMUNITY READ & MEET THE AUTHOR

The Weight of Ink

with author Rachel Kadish

Monday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.

"A mysterious collection of papers
hidden in a historic London home
sends two scholars of Jewish history
on an unforgettable quest... Kadish
leaves no stone unturned in this
moving historical epic. Chock-full of
rich detail and literary intrigue."

—Kirkus Reviews

Read more about *The Weight of Ink*
on p. 22 of this issue.

"Jewish Calcutta through Music
and Memory" with Rahel Musleah
Sunday, Mar. 31, 4 p.m.

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

Program followed by light Indian dinner.

THE GREAT
COMMUNITY REVEAL
Sunday, Apr. 7, 4 p.m.

4200 Park Ave., Bridgeport

Daniel Horowitz of MyHeritage
unveils the results of our
community's DNA ancestry testing.



"Shalom Y'all: The History of
Jewish Immigrants in the
American South"

with Rabbi Rachel Bearman
Sunday, Apr. 29, 6 p.m.

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

Visit shalomct.org/commonthreads
for updates, event registration,
program descriptions,
and sneak peeks.



While our Upper Fairfield County Federation is a community of communities, we are also a vast library of stories and a vibrant garden with interconnected roots.

This year, with the coordination and leadership of our Federation, many of those communities – congregations, organizations, and others – will be joining together to create Common Threads, a year-long project to explore how our diverse ancestry and heritage weave together into our strong and integrated Upper Fairfield County community.

“The Federation and its many partners hope that this exciting programming framework will create the opportunity for a year of discovery – about ourselves, about our rich history, about our diversity, and, importantly, about the common threads that weave the fabric of our vibrant community together,” says Federation CEO David Weisberg. “We are excited to learn about all the connections that exist within our vast community, and how these intersections enrich our understanding of who we are as a Jewish community.”

As of August 1, Federation's Common Threads partners include 20 congregations, educational institutions, and cultural organizations – and the list will continue

to grow. Follow updates at shalomct.org/commonthreads.

Like our varied histories, Common Threads will be varied in its offerings and modalities, offering community-members with diverse interests countless opportunities to tap in.

Throughout the year, from September through the spring, congregations and organizations will be offering Common Threads events relating to ancestry and heritage throughout our Upper Fairfield County region.

The kickoff on Thursday, Sept. 27, features a film and talkback program at the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus in Bridgeport, focusing on the Jews of Rome, followed by an ever-growing year-long schedule of lectures, workshops, musical events, cooking programs, and more. The dynamic schedule (for which the current list is shown on page 4 of this issue) will be kept current at shalomct.org/commonthreads, and all Common Threads programs will be open to the entire community.

For those wishing to learn more about their own ancestry – and perhaps even to discover new roots and branches in their own family tree – Common Threads also

features a special partnership with MyHeritage.com: an opportunity for individual DNA testing. Our community's aggregated results will be used to create a virtual map of our collective ancestry, which will also be featured on the Federation's website and will be the focus of an exciting community event this spring. Through a special arrangement with MyHeritage, DNA testing kits can be purchased through the Federation website at a discounted rate of \$80, with the added bonus of six months' free access (from Jan. 1 – June 30, 2019) to MyHeritage's Family Trees program, a total value of well over \$200. Testing kits will be available for purchase on the Federation's website from September through November, with the kits delivered to convenient locations for pick-up.

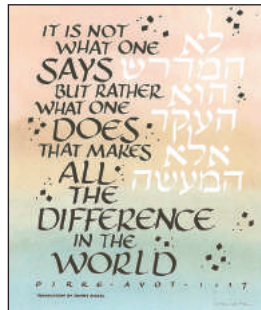
Common Threads will also provide an opportunity to collect and share stories via a special Common Threads blog on the Federation website. The community is invited and encouraged to submit family stories and photos to be posted on the blog. Selected stories will also be featured in Federation e-newsletters and other social-media channels. Submissions for the blog can be sent to the Federation at commonthreads@jewishphilanthropyct.org.

2ND MITZVAH HERO AWARDS TO BE PRESENTED AT DECEMBER TZEDAKAH-FEST

In January 2018, a sold-out crowd gathered in Bennett Hall on the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus in Bridgeport, where the Federation presented its inaugural Mitzvah Hero Awards honoring 14 individuals nominated by their congregations in recognition of the positive impact they make in our community and in our world.

Just 11 months later, the Federation is planning an even bigger Mitzvah Hero Awards ceremony, incorporating the presentation into its new Tzedakah-Fest event on Sunday, Dec. 9 at Congregation B'nai Israel in Bridgeport. Two inaugural award recipients have stepped forward as co-chairs for this second annual Mitzvah Hero celebration. Founding event co-chairs Wendy Cohen and Sheri Warshaw will pass the baton to 2018 co-chairs Amy Gershberg, honored last year by

Congregation Beth El Fairfield, and Temple Israel's 2017 honoree, Allyson Gottlieb. And the expectation is that, this December, the awards program will grow



even larger, with more congregations selecting Mitzvah Hero honorees.

"I was honored to be chosen by Beth El Fairfield as their first-ever

Mitzvah Hero," Amy said. "I was very inspired by the efforts and accomplishments of the inaugural group of Mitzvah Heroes and look forward to being an integral part of making Year 2's program as meaningful and special."

Added Allyson, "I was truly humbled to be part of the ceremony last year and look forward to recognizing those individuals who have made a difference in their communities and continue to uphold the values of *tikkun olam*."

As Upper Fairfield County Jewish congregations begin to select their respective honorees this fall, the Federation will announce the 2018 slate of Mitzvah Heroes through social media. The event is open to the community free of charge as part of the Tzedakah-Fest celebration.

Federation's Tzedakah-Fest & Mitzvah Hero Awards: Sunday, Dec. 9, 2-6 p.m., Congregation B'nai Israel, 2710 Park Ave., Bridgeport | Info/registration: 203-226-8197 / shalomct.org



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WHAT IS TZEDAKAH-FEST?

Imagine...

■ **Imagine** a fair where the community could meet all of the beneficiaries of our collective *tzedakah* – local and international partners, social-service providers, dayschools, summer camps, and more, all in one place.

■ **Imagine** that all of our community congregations were also present at the fair, providing opportunities for interaction and a chance for those unaffiliated to connect with a potential congregational family.

■ **Imagine** that the fair also featured one big hands-on mitzvah project, enabling all those who attended the opportunity to have collective impact together.

■ **Imagine** that the day's schedule included breakout sessions on important topics of great interest, from spotting the signs of teen drug abuse to addressing the needs of aging parents.

■ **Imagine** if it included some amazing PJ Library children's programming, perhaps a concert with an exciting children's performer.

■ **Imagine** if the day featured multiple giving circles, where community-members had the opportunity to interface with potential beneficiary organizations and personally allocate communal funds to support projects in our partnership region of Afula-Gilboa in Israel and to organizations that promote inclusivity and sustainability.

■ And, finally, **imagine** if the centerpiece of it all was our Community Mitzvah Hero Awards event, where we honored individuals selected by congregations throughout our community in recognition of the good deeds that they do.



Put ALL of those incredible things together and the result is **Tzedakah-Fest: A Celebration of Collective Impact**, an amazing event being presented by our Federation in partnership with countless congregations and organizations on **Sunday, December 9, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Congregation B'nai Israel in Bridgeport.**

Scheduled on the seventh day of Chanukah, Tzedakah-Fest will be an opportunity to celebrate the gifts that our community gives to so many others, both here at home and throughout the world.

And the Federation will be offering a special opportunity to those who make contributions to the annual campaign at Tzedakah-Fest: anyone who makes a 2018 Federation campaign contribution at Tzedakah-Fest that is an increase of their prior year's contribution will be given the opportunity to direct 50% of the increase to any beneficiary organization present at the festival, including their own congregation.


Federation beneficiary partners, excited about the opportunity to meet our community, are planning to pull out all the stops to make for an exciting and interactive day. The American Jewish Joint Distribution

Committee, Federation's partner in supporting Jews in need throughout the world, will offer a virtual-reality visit with Jews in Siberia. The Emunah Sarah Herzog Children's Center, an outstanding Federation partner in Afula-Gilboa that provides a safe home for at-risk children, will bring its famous Emunotes Children's Choir for a mini-performance.

Tzedakah-Fest promises something compelling for all ages, from informative breakout sessions on topics of great relevance to an incredible children's program to the opportunity for community-members to participate directly in new mini-allocation processes aimed at making an impact in advancing inclusivity and sustainability.

And, being Chanukah, it will all conclude with an eighth-night community menorah-lighting, reminding us of the powerful light and collective impact that our community emits when we all join together.



A photograph of four professionals (three men and one woman) standing outdoors in front of a blurred background of trees. They are all smiling and dressed in business attire. The man on the far left is wearing a blue suit and tie. The man next to him is wearing a dark suit, glasses, and a blue striped tie. The woman in the center is wearing a black blazer over a red and white patterned blouse. The man on the far right is wearing a dark pinstripe suit and a red tie.

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A Tasty Celebration of Israel's 70th!

Some 750 community-members gathered on Sunday, June 10 for A TASTE OF ISRAEL, the Federation's 2nd annual Southern Connecticut Jewish Food Festival. Held at Temple Israel in Westport, this year's festival served as a special celebration of Israeli food, in honor of Israel's 70th birthday. The festival featured an exhibit hall focused on vendors with Israel-related foods, and breakout sessions and cooking demonstrations highlighted Israeli cuisine and agricultural technology, along with a wonderful, first-ever Hebrew Book Fest, coordinated by Israelis-in-CT. But the centerpiece was a keynote conversation and cooking class with Nir Mesika, chef and partner of New York's highly regarded Timna restaurant. As with the inaugural festival in 2017, the Federation aspired to create a zero-waste event, and once again this year, with the help of an amazing group of volunteers from the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, the full-day festival resulted in just a half-bag of garbage. Special thanks to Food Festival chair, Elise Meyer, and to an inspiring group of committee-members, including Naomi Berman, Bryan Bierman, Carol Boas, Relly Coleman, Michelle Fanwick, Ronnie Fein, Lisa Friedland, Chef Leticia Moreinos Schwartz, Guy Philosoph, Jay Rand, Orna Rawls, Liz Rueven, Linda Russ, Tikva Shapiro, and Steve Ulman, and to lead Federation staffperson, Stacy Kamisar.



Our tireless Food Festival committee

Chef Leticia
Moreinos
Schwartz &
cook-author
Ronnie Fein



Elise Meyer & Liz Rueven



Visiting author
Leslie Kimmelman reads her
Everybody Says Shalom at
the Festival's PJ Library event.

Chef Nir Mesika's food demo.



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SHALOM TO OUR NEW SHINSHINIM*!

INTRODUCING OUR 2018-19 FEDERATION ISRAELI EMISSARIES

Welcome to Shay Eshel, Eyal Marom, Yuval Shahar, and Rotem Sharon, who join our community this fall as part of the Federation Israeli Emissary program. Now in its 20th year, the program was first piloted in Westport as a way to build a living bridge between Israel and diaspora Jewish communities. This wonderful opportunity is made possible through our Federation's relationship with the Jewish Agency for Israel.

These four recent high-school graduates chose to postpone their Israeli military service to spend the year sharing their love of Israel with our preschools and religious schools, adult-education programs, local high schools and dayschools, and Jewish Senior Services. While all four will work together on community-wide events, they each will have primary responsibilities at individual synagogues.

This is a wonderful opportunity to add some cross-cultural enrichment to your family's life! Please reach out to these special young "ambassadors." Invite them to your Shabbat-dinner table or adult dinner party, or to spend a day with your family enjoying apple-picking or the Big Apple. Show them a bit about life in the U.S. and listen as they share their thoughts on life in Israel. Consider being a host family for three months. For more information, please contact Stacy Kamisar:

skamisar@jewishphilanthropyct.org or
Judy Blumenthal:
jblumenthal@jewishphilanthropyct.org.

Shay Eshel

I live in Moshav Ram-On in the Yizre'el Valley. My father, Amir, is a lawyer; my mother, Yael, is a CPA; and my little brother, Reyi, is 16. We are very close.

I have been dancing professional classical ballet, modern dance, jazz, and tap for 11 years. I follow the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus and practice four or five times a week at least. I also enjoy scuba-diving, swimming, watching TV, meeting with friends, and going to the beach. I



L to R: Federation Israeli Emissaries 2018-19 have arrived!
Welcome, Shay Eshel, Rotem Sharon, Eyal Marom, and Yuval Shahar.

consider myself an adventurous person, and I really like to try new things and get to know new people and places.

I chose to be an emissary because I love Jewish life and community and I believe that the connection between the Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora is inseparable. I want to serve the State of Israel by giving my time and skills to represent my country in the Jewish community abroad. I'm so excited for the upcoming year, and I'm thrilled to share my love for Israel with all of you.

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excited for the upcoming year, and I'm thrilled to share my love for Israel with all of you.

Eyal Marom

My mother, Yifat, is an accountant in Afula. I have two younger sisters in elementary school, Aya and Shir.

In high school, I double-majored in software engineering and music. I have been studying jazz and playing the piano since age 7. In high school, I participated in the IDF's national Magshimim program, which trains students to become cyber-intelligence military officers. I also was a part of the B'nai Hamoshavim youth movement, where I was a counselor for two years.

I chose to be an emissary because I believe that the connection between our communities is both important and meaningful. I feel strongly that this connection is necessary in order to keep the Jewish people together, so my goals for this year are to become a part of the "living bridge" by taking a larger role in connecting Jewish life across the world.

Yuval Shahar

I live in Gan Ner, a small communal village in the beautiful Gilboa area. My father, Hanan, is a police officer and my mom, Esther, is an artist and English and art teacher. My brother, Roi, is 23 and serves as an IDF officer.

In high school, I double-majored in Arabic and theater, where I learned acting skills, writing, and more.

I enjoyed every minute on stage. I have four years of counselor and volunteer experience in an organization for disabled children and as an instructor and mentor in the B'nai Hamoshavim youth movement. I like playing soccer with my friends and participating in athletic competitions.

I want to be an emissary because I believe that the best way to learn and understand Israel is to meet an Israeli like me, who grew up in Israel and can tell about it from his point of view.

I love Israel and I hope to represent Israel in the best way I can. I want to be a meaningful instructor and emissary in your community.

Rotem Sharon

I live in the Alonei Abba moshav. My sister, Adi, is 24 and is a physical-therapy student at University of Haifa. My brother, Tomer, is 22 and just finished his IDF service. My father, Dror, is the CEO of Magal Security Systems. My mother, Yael, is the COO of DGA.

In high school, I double-majored in physics and media, which included production of documentary films. I really like music and playing the piano and guitar. I also love handcrafts such as knitting, crocheting, embroidery, etc. I was part of B'nei Hamoshavim youth movement, where I was a counselor for two years.

I chose to be an emissary because it gives me the opportunity to maintain and strengthen this important connection with the Jewish communities in the diaspora, while having new experiences that will develop my character. It's an opportunity to spread Israeli culture as I experience it every day. I'm sure it will be a beautiful adventure that I will not forget and I can't wait to start!

** Shinshin (plural shinshinim) is the Hebrew acronym for an Israeli who performs a shnat sherut, a year of volunteer service in Israel or abroad.*

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Celebrating the First Chapter...



In May, Book Buddies closed the book on its first chapter, celebrating the successful inaugural year of its pilot program at Blackham School in Bridgeport.

Every week during the year, volunteer readers met one-on-one with students to practice reading skills. This Federation-run program, led by Anita Chargar and Lauren Zirn, not only helped to improve literacy, but also fostered a love of reading among the children in the pilot program, who looked forward to their weekly sessions with their buddies.

"We can't help but marvel at the wonderful relationships that have formed between our Book Buddies," Lauren commented. "Each week, our volunteers arrived to the hugs and smiles of the children, who were eager to read with their new friends."

To mark this milestone, each child received a cupcake, a set of crayons, a certificate of completion, and books to own, courtesy of Federation's Books2Connect, a program established to encourage children to build their own home libraries.

"Kudos to our wonderful volunteers, who set the stage not only for a life-long love of books, but for a life-long love of learning," said Anita, a former literacy specialist with New Canaan Public Schools.

Book Buddies kicks off its second year this fall, with the hope of adding new volunteers to pair with a growing list of students. For more information on the program or to become a Book Buddy, visit books2connect.org.



FREE JEWISH BOOKS AND MUSIC FOR KIDS? YES, PLEASE! PJ LIBRARY IS GREAT FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Have you met PJ Library? Monique Lions-Greenspan wants to introduce you!

The new Federation PJ Library coordinator has lots of exciting ideas to engage your family with this great program that delivers free books and CDs to your mailbox, and fun activities to the community.



Thanks to PJ Library, families with children ages 6 months to 8 years receive a free book in the mail each month from January through November, and a free

music CD in December. PJ Library shares the best of Jewish tradition – ethics, values, culture, heritage, and rituals – in a way that is accessible, adaptable, and above all, fun. You can sign up to receive these free books at pjlibrary.org.

Monique comes to the role after a stint in the corporate world, time as an educator, and, most recently, as an active volunteer. She and her family – children Jordana, Jonathan, and Eliza, and husband, Phil – have been enjoying PJ Library books for years.

Beyond the books and CDs, Monique helps to connect families through local events. PJ programming is meant for any family raising Jewish children – affiliated, unaffiliated, interfaith, or non-traditional. These fun and educational events pop up regularly in public spaces like local parks and libraries, and at synagogues throughout our community.

There's more! PJ Our Way is the "next chapter" for kids who age out of the PJ Library program at age 8.

To get in on the fun, visit and "Like" our Facebook page facebook.com/PJLibraryCT – where we post PJ Library updates and information about events for the broader community. And, once you sign up for books at pjlibrary.org, you will receive our monthly e-newsletter with great ideas for storytimes, family activities, and craft projects.

If you have any questions, ideas, or feedback, please contact Monique at 203-226-8197 or monique@jewishphilanthropyct.org.



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The **KALEIDOSCOPE** Interview:

Rabbi-Cantor Dan Sklar & Rabbi-Cantor Shirah Sklar

It's unusual enough when two rabbis or cantors decide to share their lives as a married couple. But how about two rabbi-cantors? Dan and Shirah Sklar received both their rabbinic and cantorial ordinations at Hebrew Union College in New York. The couple met at HUC while studying for the cantorate and now serve as cantors in the area Reform congregational community, Dan at Temple Israel in Westport and Shirah at Temple Shalom in Norwalk. The couple lives in Westport with their three young children.

"When we were in school, we would never have believed that we would be fulltime cantors in neighboring towns at friendly Reform congregations," Dan says. "It's really a dream situation for us."

Rabbi Evan Schultz of Congregation B'nai Israel in Bridgeport, host of the *Really*

Interesting Jews podcast (reallyinterestingjews.com), sat down with his colleagues to learn how they decided on this unique career path.

Evan: *Share a little bit about your story and how you came to find yourselves in this work.*

Shirah: My father, Mark Lipson, has served Temple Shalom in Norwalk since 1973, first as student cantor, then as cantor, and now as rabbi. He was ordained as a cantor at Hebrew Union College in 1978, a week before I was born. I grew up at Temple Shalom with cantors around me, with cantorial music around me, with the joy of what it meant to be Jewish, and music and Judaism were the two really important parts of my identity. So I knew from a very young age that this is what I wanted to do. I began cantorial school right after college, in June 2000, and when I came back after that first year in Israel, in

2001, I began as student cantor at Temple Shalom, working with my dad and other student- rabbis and cantors. When I was ordained as a cantor in 2005, I was offered the position of fulltime cantor at Temple Shalom and I've been there ever since.

In mid-July, I was ordained as a rabbi after completing a two-year course of study. It was a very natural thing because in my role as a cantor, I've been involved in every facet of Jewish life at Temple Shalom, which has been a huge blessing for me. That led me to the place where I felt, "I can do this and I can pursue rabbinic ordination and I can be both," with the tremendous support of my family.

Dan: I grew up very Classical Reform in the northern suburbs of Chicago. It was a wonderful place to grow up, it was a wonderful Jewish education, and my rabbi was

very inspiring. I did junior choir and Confirmation and I went to Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute for a couple of years, but it just didn't light that fire; I found fulfillment in other areas of my life and the Jewish piece was a part but it was not my whole.

I studied voice and electronic music at Oberlin. I was very interested in musical theater and was hell-bent on getting to New York City and making my living doing musicals.

I was also interested in the history of religion and I got my toe in the water through a famous New Testament lecture seminar that involved critical literary analysis of the sacred texts. It opened my eyes to doing crit-lit with the Hebrew bible as well. My first trip to Israel was with this professor, and we did a dig in Caesaria and I was very fascinated by the history of it all.



When I graduated, I took a break from all that and worked for almost 10 years in New York City. I was a secretary for Hal Prince and I got to tour with Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* for almost three years and 1,000 shows. The acting experience was wonderful and I was fortunate.

When I came back to New York, I was getting hired to do Jewish music. For one of the first times in my life, I was singing sophisticated, unbelievable music that really inspired me, under the direction of Matti Lazar. I sang in Park East Synagogue and at Carnegie Hall with the ultra-Orthodox guys, so I had exposure to a whole different musical language and that gave me an appreciation for a traditional Judaism that I didn't know growing up. But I always knew I was a Reform Jew. Matti would say, "Hey, there's a career for a nice Jewish boy like you." It took

me a while but then I realized that he had a point and that HUC would be the place for me.

I was always drawn to the rabbinic literature; I just didn't know if I had the wherewithal to do a double degree. As Shirah and I got serious, my future father-in-law, Rabbi-Cantor Mark Lipson, said, "If you're thinking about it, do it now while you're in school." I was ordained as a cantor in 2006, the same year we got married, and as a rabbi in 2008.

After school, I went to work at Westchester Reform Temple as rabbi-cantor [succeeding Rabbi-Cantor Angela Buchdahl]. When you do the full rabbi-cantor thing, it's really not half and half; it's full and full. That was hard and I was looking to come home and that's what Temple Israel afforded me.

Evan: When you're leading people in music or prayer, what are you hoping to create, where do you want to take them?

Dan: I think the reason that Shirah and I click so well is that we generally have a similar outlook on the modern cantorate: What is old becomes new, what is new becomes old. Even though we have a seven-year age difference, we both came up in the '70s, just as the golden-age singers were kind of entering their sunset years – and I mean that with love and respect – and as Debbie Friedman and the guitar were coming to the fore of Jewish congregational life.

I think we've arrived at a moment where many cantors want to preserve some of a cantorial art that's largely going away. We have an interesting task of trying to bring a little bit of the golden age of cantorial into a pop

medium and also to recapture some of the grand Classical Reform German composers.

Shirah: Rather than just thinking of what a particular prayer or song is trying to create in an environment, I think of the entire experience as an arc, as programming. I think that the best use of music in Jewish worship is an eclectic mix that takes you on an emotional journey. I hope that what I can offer with my talent, my skill, and my voice brings people to a place where their spirits are elevated, where they're having an emotional moment of connection to Judaism through the music.

Read or hear the entire interview (including music!) at shalomct.org/sklar.



JEWISH COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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Congregation Bikur Cholim
2365 Park Ave.
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Orthodox

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

Congregation Rodeph Shalom
2385 Park Ave.
203-334-0159
mblock@rodephshalom.com
rodephshalom.com
Conservative

Fairfield

Congregation Ahavath Achim
84 Senior Place
203-372-6529
office@ahavathachim.org
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office@bethelfairfield.org
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tbc@templebnaichaim.org
templebnaichaim.org
Reform

Norwalk

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bethisraelct.org
Orthodox

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

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Reform

Ridgefield

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chabadridgefield@gmail.com
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Modern Orthodox/Traditional

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

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

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ctjfs.org | 203-454-4992

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(Pre-K – 8th)
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1937 West Main St., Stamford (9th-12th)
jhsct.org | 203-357-0850
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carmelacademy.com | 203-863-9663

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ezraacademyct.org | 203-389-5500

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

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Youth Activities

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circleoffriendsct.org | 203-293-8837

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

Keshet Jewish Enrichment for Children
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cbibpt.org/keshet.html#keshet
203-336-1858

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for Judaic Studies
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merkazct.org | 203-450-5303

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

Summer Camps

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Weston & Wilton
ganisrael.com | 203-226-8584

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jccnh.org/jcc-summer-day-camp
203-387-2424, ext. 253
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County: 203-226-8197

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cbibpt.org | 203-336-1858

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schneersoncenter.org | 203-635-4118

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jewishledger.com | 860-231-2424
Jewish Arts & Film Festival
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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)
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Jewish Twenties & Thirties
ctjfs.org | 203-921-4161

Young Jewish Professionals, CT
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Organization of America, Inc.
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203-307-1319

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The Bennett Center for Judaic Studies

fairfield.edu/BennettPrograms

LECTURES AND PROGRAMS: FALL 2018



Daniel Pearl World Music Days Concert

"Hazzan: A Jazz Creation of Jewish Liturgical Chants and Improvisational Rhythms"

Jacques Schwarz-Bart

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Tuesday, October 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Quick Center for the Arts,
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LIMITED SEATING. Reservations required.



Jacoby-Lunin Humanitarian Lecture

"Defending Human Dignities"

Khizr Khan

Lawyer and activist.

Wednesday, November 14 at 8 p.m.

Quick Center for the Arts,
Kelley Theatre - ticket required

Co-sponsored by the Bennett Center for
Judaic Studies and Open VISIONS Forum



*Joan and Henry Katz Lecture
in Judaic Studies*

**"Looking for Bubbe: The
Remembered and Forgotten
Jewish World in Heritage
Tourism"**

Dr. Daniel J. Walkowitz

Emeritus Professor of History
and of Social & Cultural Analysis,
New York University.

Monday, October 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Dolan School of Business Dining Room



*Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher
Lecture in Judaic Studies*

**"Is a Manuscript a Mirror?
Reading Jewish History in
Jewish Art"**

Dr. Marc Michael Epstein

Professor of Religion and Visual
Culture, Director of Jewish Studies,
Vassar College.

Monday, November 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Dolan School of Business Dining Room

Reservations required: Bennettcenter@fairfield.edu or 203-254-4000, ext. 2066.
Purchase 11/14 tickets from Quick Center Box Office, 203-254-4010.



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PIONEERING FEDERATION ISRAELI EMISSARY LEADS LGBTQ PROTEST IN AFULA

Shani Cabra Gerbak was a trailblazing young leader when she served as one of Federation's first two Israeli Emissaries 20 years ago. Two decades after the program launched in our community, Shani remains an innovative leader, working to create Home in the Valley, the first-ever LGBTQ advocacy organization in the Afula-Gilboa region of northern Israel. In 2017, the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County was pleased to become the organization's inaugural funder.

This past July, Shani and Home in the Valley organized over 300 protesters to advocate for the LGBTQ community as part of one of the largest protests ever held in Israeli history. The protesters, from the city of Afula and the Yizre'el Valley, held up signs proclaiming "Love thy neighbor as thyself," "Equal rights now!" and "The Valley demands equality and tolerance." The Yizre'el Valley – and in particular, Afula – had never seen a protest of this magnitude and content, crying out for LGBTQ equal rights and social justice for all people and genders.



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The rally was part of a national surge of protest, prompted by Israeli legislation passed in July denying surrogacy rights to gay couples. On July 22, tens of thousands of LGBTQ Israelis and their allies joined a nationwide strike by staying home from work and closing their businesses. More than 20 companies – including Microsoft, Apple, and IBM – expressed support for the strike, adding their voices to the public outcry for justice and equality.

The main protest events took place in Tel Aviv, with over 100,000 participants, and with concurring events in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Be'er Sheva. Yet when word of the protest reached Afula, Home in the Valley immediately took action. The young LGBTQ initiative decided to join the public protest through organizing a local event. Days earlier, some 40 participants from the Afula-Gilboa region had discussed how best to respond to the anti-gay legislation, and decided that Afula needed to add its unique perspective to the protest. The organizers, Afula natives proud to invite their friends and family to the protest, summed up the experience: "We could never have imagined seeing such a warm reaction from the Afula public. The fact that our family is here with us says it all. We know that Afula is a more conservative community, but seeing such strong public support proves to us that the call for equality is shared not by the few, but by the many, not just in Tel Aviv, but across the country. That is truly an inspiring and optimistic message!"



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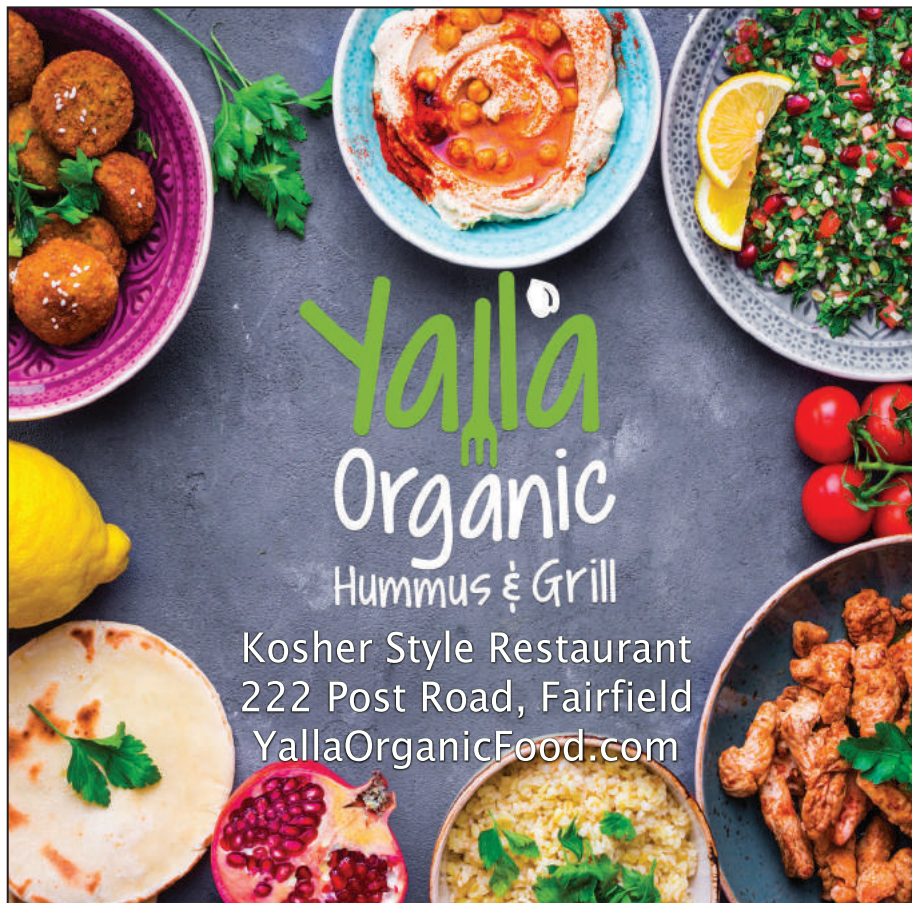
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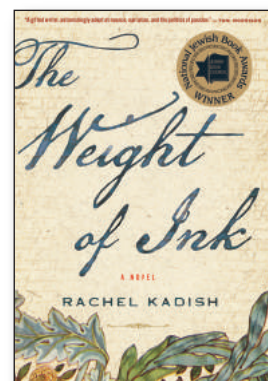


JOIN THE COMMON THREADS COMMUNITY READ

An eye-opening journey
to 17th-century Jewish
London: Award-winning
author brings *The Weight
of Ink* to Upper Fairfield
County

Rachel Kadish's acclaimed *The Weight of Ink* (Mariner, May 1, 2018) is a dazzling, intellectual, and emotional jigsaw puzzle of a novel. Critics are gushing. "I gasped out loud," says Rose McGowan on the *New York Times Book Review Podcast*, hailing Kadish's "mastery of language" that has created a novel so powerful and visceral, "I haven't been able to read a book since."

Set mostly in London of the 1660s and the early 21st century, the book follows the interwoven tale of two women of remarkable intellect: Ester Valasquez, an emigrant from Amsterdam who is permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi; and Helen Watt, an ailing historian with a love of Jewish history. As the novel opens, Helen has been summoned to view a trove of newly discovered 17th-century Jewish documents and embarks on one last project: to determine the identity of the scribe "Aleph."



**Meet Rachel Kadish in Westport
on Monday evening, Feb. 25,
and hear firsthand how she
created this spellbinding tale.**

The Weight of Ink is a novel about what it takes for a woman not to be defeated when everything around her is telling her to sit down and shut up. It's a novel about a woman of heart and mind trying to speak about the world as she sees it... at a time when speaking that way – let alone

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speaking as a woman – could have deadly consequences.

The story took Kadish 10 years to write, and began from a simple seed of an idea. "Virginia Woolf said that if Shakespeare had had an equally talented sister, she'd have died without writing a word," she says. "My question was: what would take for a woman like that to avoid that fate? So I wrote something like a literary mystery: how would my character, Ester Velasquez – a child of Inquisition refugees from the same community as Spinoza – have done it? Through what disguises, what subterfuge, and at what great personal cost, might a 17th-century woman have refused to die without writing a word?"



Electrifying and ambitious, sweeping in scope and intimate in tone, this multi-layered book is a history lesson, a geography lesson, and a philosophy lesson. And yet, it is utterly digestible, Helen's contemporary story is moving, and it's amazing how relevant Ester's centuries-old struggle feels today.

The Weight of Ink is winner of the Association of Jewish Libraries Jewish Fiction Award, an Amazon Best Book of the Year, a *Ms. Magazine* "Bookmark" selection, and a *Jewish Exponent* 2017 "Top Read." Rachel Kadish is also the award-winning author of the novels, *From a Sealed Room* and *Tolstoy Lied: A Love Story*, and the novella, *I Was Here*. Her work has appeared on NPR and in the *New York Times* online, and in *Ploughshares* and *Tin House*.

The Weight of Ink with author Rachel Kadish: Monday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m. | Location TBA | Info: skamisar@jewishphilanthropyct.org / 203-659-3602 | Co-sponsored by The Westport Library



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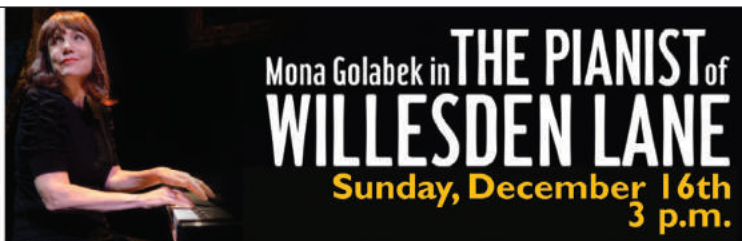
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Federation for Jewish Philanthropy
OF UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY

INFO monique@jewishphilanthropyct.org / 203-226-8197

A HEALER WHO CROSSES CULTURAL BOUNDARIES MERKAZ HONORABLE ALUMNI AWARD: DR. ELISHA WALDMAN

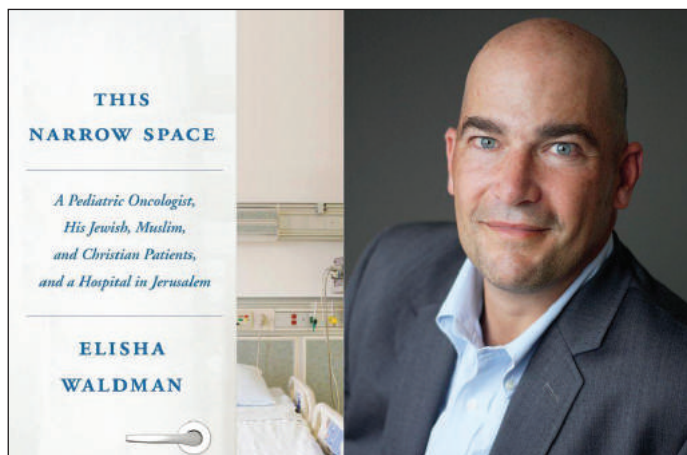
This year marks the 40th anniversary of Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies. As part of the celebration, the school will present Dr. Elisha Waldman with its Honorable Alumni award on Thursday evening, Oct. 25.

Dr. Waldman is associate chief of the Division of Pediatric Palliative Care at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. He spent seven years at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, treating children diagnosed with cancer – Israeli Jews, Muslims, and Christians, as well as Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. *This Narrow Space* is his poignant and critically acclaimed memoir of the experience, a time filled with a deep sense of accomplishment but also with frustration when regional politics got in the way of his patients' care, and with tension over the fine line he had to walk when the religious traditions of some of

his patients' families made it difficult for him to give those children the care he felt they deserved. Navigating the baffling Israeli bureaucracy, the ever-present threat of full-scale war, and the cultural clashes that sometimes spilled into his clinic, Waldman learned to be content with small victories: a young patient whose disease went into remission, brokenhearted parents whose final hours with their child were made meaningful and comforting.

A native of Fairfield, and son of Rabbi Label and Andi Waldman, Dr. Waldman is the third recipient of the annual Merkaz Honorable Alumni Award.

Merkaz Honorable Alumni Award
honoring Dr. Elisha Waldman: Thursday,
Oct. 25, 7 p.m., The Harry and Jeanette
Weinberg Campus, 4200 Park Ave.,
Bridgeport | Info/tickets:
info@merkazct.org / (203) 450-5303



BEIT CHAVERIM SYNAGOGUE OF WESTPORT/NORWALK

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

At Beit Chaverim Synagogue in Westport, we take tradition seriously.

The tradition of creating a vibrant
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The tradition of lifelong learning.

The tradition of sharing life's greatest
joys and sorrows with each other.

The tradition that a good question
beats a good answer.

The tradition that there are many ways
to be Jewish.

The tradition of good food, good music,
and good friends.

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Judaism together!

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All are welcome.



BETH ISRAEL OF WESTPORT/NORWALK - CHABAD

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

Marking 120 Years of Service to the Community

As we gear up for the Jewish New Year
5779, the SHUL – incorporated in 1899
as The Hebrew Bet Israel Society, Inc. –
extends best wishes to all for a good
and sweet year.

Of the many outstanding services
provided by Beth Israel Chabad to our
Upper Fairfield County community is the
availability for all to have their son or
daughter prepare for their Bar/Bat
Mitzvah with memories to last a lifetime.
Membership is not required.

The approach of Beth Israel Chabad
is simple. Every effort is made to
celebrate lifecycle events as being
inclusive and experienced with
confidence. It's the genuine good feeling

when one feels united in their
appreciation of Jewish peoplehood and
sacred traditions of the Torah.

Our spiritual guide, Rabbi Yehoshua
S. Hecht, directs the study of each
Bar/Bat Mitzvah trainee. The
Synagogue's warm sanctuary setting and
its beautiful edifice provide the
ambiance for a memorable event.

Adults attending services will enjoy
the vibrant and joyous spirit at Beth
Israel Chabad and young people trained
at Beth Israel Chabad benefit from their

increased faith and involvement with
Judaism.

The Synagogue also hosts the well-
regarded Weston/Westport Hebrew
School that meets Tuesday afternoons at
the Grange in Weston under the
dynamic leadership of Freida Hecht. For
more information, call (203) 493-6505 or
visit westonhebrewschool.org.

To contact Beth Israel Chabad for
services and adult-education
opportunities, call 203- 866-0534 or visit
bethisraelct.org.



CONGREGATION AHAVATH ACHIM

84 Senior Place, Fairfield
ahavathachim.org | 203-372-6529

The Eruv - Symbolic Boundary or Legal Fiction?

Congregation Ahavath Achim is currently upgrading the community's Eruv, under the leadership of Rabbi Yirmiyah Moldovan. We are undertaking this endeavor with the hope that the Eruv will be strengthened with stability and reliability for many years into the future, to be used and enjoyed by all members of the local Jewish community.

What is an Eruv, you ask? Briefly, it is a created boundary that allows a person to carry needed items outside of the home on Shabbat. The prohibition against carrying includes basic items like house keys, clothing, books, canes, and even children who cannot walk on their own. Recognizing the difficulties this rule imposes, the Talmud Sages devised the

Eruv, a way to symbolically extend the private domain of Jewish households into public areas, allowing for carrying in public without breaking Jewish law. The community can turn a large public area into a large private domain, where items may be carried and strollers and wheelchairs may be used, allowing for enhanced Shabbat community enjoyment.

Sharonne Cohen writes on MyJewishLearning.com: "The Talmudic Rabbis were concerned with maintaining the integrity of the halakhic system while ensuring that the law is livable. Though the Eruv makes use of a legal technicality, the fact that it is used — rather than allowing people to just carry anything, anywhere — is itself considered a form of respect for and submission to a legal system that is central and indispensable to traditionalist Jewish life."

The Eruv can be comprised of a series of pre-existing structures (walls, fences, electrical poles and wires) or

structures created expressly for the purpose. Our local Eruv is comprised of wires mounted on telephone poles in designated areas of Fairfield and Bridgeport. As community conditions change, it often becomes necessary to repair, replace, and/or update the local Eruv. Weather conditions affect the poles and wires, as do unexpected changes by the utility companies.

So, who is responsible for all this Eruv maintenance? Naturally, the community that creates and uses the Eruv must accept responsibility and we do so gladly. Every member of Ahavath Achim is assessed annually to support the Eruv Fund, used solely for maintenance, including inspections, repairs, and upgrades.

Rabbi Moldovan inspects the Eruv every Friday afternoon, often making immediate on-site repairs to ensure that the Eruv is working for Shabbat. A map of the local Eruv is available at ahavathachim.org.

CONGREGATION BETH EL FAIRFIELD

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

In Elul, finding a way through the forest

Winner of the 1966 Nobel Prize in Literature, Shmuel Yosef Agnon explores various aspects of the High Holidays in his book, Days of Awe. In one story, from the 19th century, Rabbi Chaim of Zans tells about a man who had been wandering in the forest for several days, unable to find his way out. Finally, he saw a man approaching in the distance. His heart was filled with joy. He asked the man, "Brother, will you please tell me the way out of the forest? I have been wandering here for several days." Replied the other man, "Brother, I do not know the way either, for I too have been wandering here for many days. But this much I can tell you: Do not go the

way that I have gone, for I know that it is not the way. Now come, together let us find the way out."

During the month of Elul, we turn our eyes to heaven in search of meaning and inspiration. We try to repair our broken world, building bridges of love, peace, and understanding. On a personal level, we reconnect to ourselves and to our neighbors, trying to find the way in the midst of our own personal forests. Every morning during the month of Elul, we hear the powerful sound of the shofar, calling us to repent, to rethink our existence, and to live better lives. We pray to God to help us find the right path that will lead us through the forest, searching for the strength within to make this process relevant and meaningful for ourselves, our families, and our congregations.

According to our sages, Elul can be read as an acronym for the words in Song of Songs 6:3, Ani L'dodi V'dodi Li: "I am for my beloved and my beloved is

for me." Any spiritual search must begin with the Ani – the I. For the next few weeks, we are invited to think about ourselves and to reflect on who we are, who we have and haven't yet been, and who we might become.

May God bless us, our families, and our community with a meaningful month of Elul and a significant journey through the forests of our lives.

L'shanah tovah,
Rabbi Marcelo Kormis



CONGREGATION BETH EL-NORWALK

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

Danielle Mittleman has joined Congregation Beth El-Norwalk as the new director of Education for the Navasky Explorers religious school. Danielle has a long history in Jewish education, having taught almost every grade from pre-K through 7th grade.

Danielle explains: "My interest in Jewish education started when I was 13 and after my bat-mitzvah. I became a madricha [teen leader] at the Hebrew School that I attended. The teachers at the time saw something in me and by the end of the year, I was helping run the class of 3- and 4-year-olds. This experience changed my life and made me pursue a career in education and specifically in Jewish education."

The Navasky program at

Congregation Beth El is a Solomon Schechter Award-winning program with an abundance of resources and great teachers to help our students feel knowledgeable in their Jewish learning and prepared for lifelong Jewish engagement. Hanukkah Bashes, Purim Carnivals, and Synagogue Sleep-Overs – does the fun ever end? Not at Navasky Jewish Explorers, offering a modern approach to Jewish learning for children ages 3-13. Danielle said she is thrilled to

be taking the helm of such a splendid Jewish-education program.

Rabbi Ita Paskind said, "We are so lucky to have found Morah Danielle to lead our school after the retirement of longtime director, Al Treidel. She is warm, motivated, creative, and eager to foster relationships with all the children in our congregation and their families."

Want to learn more about Navasky? Visit congbethel.org or call us at 203-838-2710.



Danielle Mittleman and family

CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

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

The Future Flows through S.T.R.E.A.M. at B'nai Israel

Bonim Preschool always goes the extra step for its students.

At Congregation B'nai Israel, lifelong learning begins in our preschool classrooms. We are instituting a new science and technology program that other early-childhood programs already use, but while the others generate S.T.E.A.M. – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics – Bonim flows with S.T.R.E.A.M.

"At Bonim, we added the 'R' for Reading into the S.T.E.A.M. curriculum," says B'nai Israel Early Childhood Director Alexa Cohen. "There are many ways for children to experience literacy instruction."

The R revs up a program that gives children a head start by inspiring them to think creatively and solve problems. Certified teacher Adele Josovitz helps Bonim students explore a state-of-the-art lab that includes a wind tunnel, magnet wall, Beebots for coding, and robotics.

"It's a great way to introduce them to such an important area and to better prepare them for school," Cohen says. "They learn so much across so many different areas. These subjects impact so much of their lives."

Bonim provides services for infants through pre-K-aged children – open to the whole community – but S.T.R.E.A.M. is not just for those entering kindergarten. Children as young as 2 will be able to experience the S.T.R.E.A.M. program through activities such as the water-table and wind-tunnel.

It's an experience designed to last them a lifetime. "We are so thrilled about this new addition to the Bonim preschool program," B'nai Israel Associate Rabbi Evan Schultz says. "We are fostering the next generation of creative, dynamic Jewish thinkers!"

Bonim Preschool "scientists"
concoct a better future
at Congregation B'nai Israel
as part of the school's new
S.T.R.E.A.M. curriculum.
Photo credit: Marci Pearlberg



CONGREGATION B'NAI TORAH

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

The Nursery School at Congregation B'nai Torah... Equality and Inclusion

By Joan Watnick, Director

At B'nai Torah Nursery School, our goal is to create a caring, cohesive community, characterized by kindness and respect, where all children can thrive while their parents feel supported during these most important years. Our curriculum focuses on teaching Jewish values, culture, and holidays through age-appropriate, hands-on, enriching experiences.

Ideally, a Judaic nursery school is the first step in a long-term Jewish education that continues with Talmud Torah, B'nei-Mitzvah, Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies, and lifelong learning for our current and potential congregant families.

But I've also grown to relish the opportunity to introduce our non-Jewish Nursery School families to Jewish customs and way of life. Functioning as a Jewish public relations "ambassador," I occasionally meet individuals who have never entered a synagogue, spoken to a rabbi, understood *kashrut*, or heard of many/most Jewish holidays. In this role, I believe I can contribute to a more tolerant and inclusive society. To quote educators Kirsten Cole and Diandra Verwayne, "In the field of early childhood education, we spend much of our time and energy nurturing children's capacity for kindness and respect. Helping children see the role they have to play in fostering equality and inclusion through racial justice is a critical piece of this project."

Yes, I feel gratified when my students speak kindly to each other, help their friends, welcome a newcomer, share and take turns, give to those less fortunate, care for our environment, answer every Pesach seder question, and share their knowledge of Israel with the Federation

Israeli Emissaries.

It also warms my heart to hear about one of our students belting out "Shabbat shalom!" during Mass, and another requesting hallah at Communion. Often, our non-Jewish families purchase Hanukkah candles to light their child's handmade hanukiah at home. Recently, a family on vacation celebrated Shabbat in a hotel so that their daughter could use everything she had created in her Shabbat Box that week. One of our children ran a Pesach seder at his family's Easter dinner, retelling the complete story.

I'm sure my colleagues in other area schools can regale you with similar anecdotes – just ask them.

Speaking of colleagues, I would like to personally acknowledge someone who has always been a friend and support to all of us in the early-childhood education community, and who is now retiring. Yasher koach to Sheila May. Thank you for making a difference in so many lives.

CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

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

An Emphasis on Jewish Values

The Congregation for Humanistic Judaism (CHJ) celebrates Jewish identity by embracing a humanistic philosophy. Members gather to celebrate major holidays and lifecycle events. Dedicated volunteers help families create unique Bar- and Bat-Mitzvah ceremonies. High Holiday services are free and open to the public. In everything we do, we emphasize and reflect the values of Tzedakah (giving to those in need), Gemilut Chassadim (loving-kindness) and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).

CHJ, through its vibrant Social Action Committee, organizes Congregation-wide events, such as marching to support breast-cancer research, cleaning up local parks, and

maintaining and refurbishing facilities for after-school and weekend programs benefiting less advantaged youth. In June, CHJ members led the zero-waste effort at the Federation's own "Taste of Israel" Southern Connecticut Jewish Food Festival.

The Social Action Committee promotes and coordinates participation in community-support efforts throughout the year. Members write to prisoners in solitary confinement, read with children in Bridgeport, and bring excess food from grocery stores and restaurants to shelters and food pantries. We recently joined with volunteers from other congregations in weekly voter-registration drives.

Opportunities for social action at CHJ are limited only by members' imaginations and commitment. Our members practice Tikkun Olam on their own and are encouraged to seek help from the Congregation when needed. One member organizes an

annual bike-ride to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for AIDS research; another regularly collects household items, toiletries, and clothing for neighbors in need; and yet another volunteers to teach professional skills at a local community college – only a few of many examples.

To learn more about CHJ's celebration of Jewish identity with a human-centered philosophy, visit humanisticjews.org.



CHJ volunteers of all ages pitch in to prepare the Trumbull Nature and Arts Center for a summer of community activities.

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHOLOM

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

Historic synagogue, modern congregation

Congregation Rodeph Sholom is a community of diverse Jews who adhere to the principles of the Conservative Movement while being relevant to our contemporary way of life and making Judaism more relevant for us. Our community draws members from many communities throughout upper Fairfield County. We have an energetic membership and engaging clergy in Rabbi David S. Barnett and Hazzan Niema Hirsch, both of whom bring a dynamic approach to Judaism to a historic synagogue. Our staff and volunteers create a warm atmosphere for spiritual nurturing and connection.

At Rodeph Sholom, we work hard to balance tradition and practice in the context of our world. Our members are the core of our synagogue. Some families have had an affiliation for several generations; others are first-generation congregants. Our synagogue is a community of people with the desire to engage in Jewish knowledge, spirit,

culture, and community.

We invite you to get to know us better, and look forward to welcoming you to our community. If you have any questions or would like a building tour, please contact our executive director, Mark Block, at mblock@rodephsholom.com.



TEMPLE ISRAEL

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

Each of us is born with a spark of the Divine inside of us. The spark ignites a Jewish flame that fuels our love, arouses our compassion, inspires us to create beauty, urges us toward truth, and obligates us to justice. The flame enables us to be a fully-realized human being.

At times, our Jewish flame burns bright and vigorous. We feel purposeful and motivated. This is when we are most vital and alive.

Other times, our flame is dim. We struggle just to get through the day. We feel indifferent, lacking motivation or resolve.

Events of the past year have worn many of us down. The world seems increasingly chaotic and

incomprehensibly unjust. Where we once sensed that we had influence and control, the future now seems to be irretrievably beyond our grasp.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi taught that in every Jewish soul, there is a "small spark of Jewish faith" that can never be extinguished. It can always be rekindled, no matter how deep it may be buried or how dead it may appear.

The High Holy Days are our time to re-kindle our Jewish fire. This is our time to stoke and nourish the Divine spark within us, to strengthen the flame so that it

can sustain us through the year ahead.

As we gather over these High Holy Days, may each of us resolve to stoke the embers of our Jewish flame. May the flame warm us from within. May we rediscover wonder and possibility. And may we cultivate hope and purpose in the year ahead.

KINDLE YOUR FIRE

HIGH HOLY DAYS 2018/5779



TEMPLE SHALOM

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

Celebrate the Joy of Jewish Life at Temple Shalom

Temple Shalom draws its membership from communities across Fairfield County, people looking for a unique and personal synagogue experience. We are a warm, inclusive and interfaith family-friendly Reform congregation, welcoming congregants from all different backgrounds. We celebrate the richness of Jewish life through beautiful and inspiring music and services, education for all stages of life from our wonderful full daycare program and preschool to Hebrew school, teen, and adult learning. We offer engaging Jewish educational, cultural, musical, spiritual, social, and social-action opportunities for all.

Our clergy and staff go above and beyond to ensure all of our congregants are treated as individuals and valued members of our community. Our Shabbat, Holiday and Lifecycle services are uplifting and joyful, with beautiful music and inspiring leadership of our clergy. We are dedicated to our mission of providing enriching Jewish experiences and helping our congregation to foster a meaningful

connection to Jewish values and community and make a positive impact in our greater world.

Come to enjoy our beautiful services, learn more about Temple Shalom, and meet our dedicated and welcoming rabbis, cantor, and staff. Be a part of strengthening Jewish life with us in this wonderful community! We welcome you to make Temple Shalom your new Jewish home.



THE CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE

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

At TCS, we like to say that we have a “wide tent” in which we love to welcome people from diverse backgrounds and traditions. Whether you grew up Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, or otherwise, we have a place for you. If you are married to a Jewish person or someone who is not Jewish, we have a place for you. If you are single, married, divorced, or widowed, if you are straight or a member of the LGBTQ community, we have a place for you.

We open our doors on the second day of Rosh Hashanah to the entire community (advanced tickets, free of charge, are required). Our young family services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are also open to the entire community (once again, advanced

tickets, free of charge are required for security purposes).

Throughout the year, we offer community lectures from some of the best authors and scholars available, often partnering with The Westport Library, the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy, and other organizations.

We are proud of our thriving preschool, innovative religious school, active mitzvah community, engaging

clergy, and a synagogue family that is present for each other during times of celebration and tragedy. At TCS, we aim to be The Community Shul. We look forward to welcoming you!





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of Westport
Serving Upper Fairfield County

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