

## WJCS Gala Raises Vital Funds for Critical Human Services in Westchester



WJCS-Westchester Jewish Community Services hosted its annual Gala on April 5th at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase. Attended by philanthropic, community, and political leaders from throughout Westchester County, the evening marked a triumphant return to in person events after two years of virtual galas. The event supports the programs of WJCS, one of the largest human service organizations in Westchester. The money raised will provide much-needed funds for the agency's 80+ programs that serve 20,000 Westchester residents every year.

"It was wonderful to have so many members of our community together to celebrate this year's honorees—New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and WJCS Board President Mariquita Blumberg, two individuals who work tirelessly to improve the lives of Westchester residents," said Seth Diamond, CEO of WJCS. "Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins is an outstanding State leader and someone who epitomizes the spirit of Tikkun Olam, "repairing the world," a mission that drives our work at WJCS every day. Just as WJCS helps people of all ages and backgrounds who are struggling with major life challenges, Andrea Stewart-Cousins has dedicated herself to improving the lives of families in Westchester and all of New York State."

Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins has been a game changer and trailblazer, taking the lead on issues relating to mental health services, Universal Pre-K, child care, and education. She has been a strong advocate for affordable housing, criminal justice reforms, women's rights, and the LGBTQ+ community. She shattered the glass ceiling, becoming the first woman and African American woman to lead a New York State legislative conference in 2012. "After a long day in Albany, Senator Stewart-Cousins has met with the young people of WJCS Center Lane LGBT+ Center, letting them know she is proud of them and will fight for legislation to help them. She has given inspirational talks at our Mary J. Blige Center, encouraging the young girls to reach for their dreams. It has been an honor to salute her work and commitment to the people of Westchester and the entire Empire State," said Diamond.

"I'm proud to receive this honor from WJCS,"

said New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "For as long as I have been in public life, WJCS has been a safety net for Westchester residents. Their initials are synonymous with helping those who struggle, face challenges, or hardship. Whether it is community mental health, senior care, or youth development, their programs support, care for, and inspire 20,000 Westchester residents each year. This was especially true during the COVID pandemic, and it underscores just how important WJCS is to our county. I thank WJCS CEO Seth Diamond, the Board, and all connected to this wonderful agency, and congratulate my co-honoree WJCS Board President Mariquita Blumberg."

WJCS's Gala honoree Mariquita Blumberg is an executive coach, organizational consultant, and Scarsdale resident who has served as President of the WJCS Board for the past three years. "Mariquita has provided strong, uplifting leadership at a time of tremendous challenge. Her skills as a technology leader, executive consultant, former Board Treasurer and previous member of numerous WJCS Board committees were just the right combination to help us navigate during the dark and difficult days of Covid," said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. "The people of our community will always be grateful for and remember her leadership."

"It has been my greatest pleasure to work with Seth, the WJCS team, and our incredible WJCS board so closely over the last three years," said honoree Mariquita Blumberg. "I'm humbled by this honor and share it with the hundreds of WJCS employees who have helped the thousands of WJCS clients in our county. Thank you."

Westchester County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky presented a proclamation from Westchester County to the honorees. Partners at UJA-Federation were among the Gala attendees and were recognized for their support of WJCS.

The Give for Good Auction included four videos in which WJCS clients shared their personal stories of how WJCS helped them overcome youth and adult mental health challenges, deal with the difficulties of being an aging Holocaust survivor, and train teens to identify serious emotional problems in themselves and their peers and get access to appropriate help.

## UJA-Federation of NY Honors Philanthropic Westchester Residents

UJA-Federation of New York held its annual Westchester Celebration at Old Oaks Country Club in Purchase, on April 28, 2022, honoring Arlene Kleinberg and the Kleinhandler family for their leadership and dedicated service to the community.

"Our honorees are people who help make our Westchester community the kind and caring place it is," said Tara Slone-Goldstein, regional chair of UJA Westchester. "When they see a need, they take action, and help to make a difference every day."

Arlene Kleinberg of New Rochelle is UJA Westchester's campaign chair, a member of the Westchester Executive Leadership Committee and the Westchester Women's Cabinet, and board member of Westchester Jewish Council.

"I am humbled by this honor because supporting UJA and the Jewish community is in my DNA," said Arlene in her acceptance remarks. "It is simply the right thing to do."

Laura and David Kleinhandler and their daughters Rachel, Sophie, and Lilly of Rye Brook have all held leadership roles at UJA. Laura is currently a member of the UJA Westchester Executive Leadership Committee, liaison to the advisory



From left: David and Laura Kleinhandler; Tara Slone-Goldstein; Amy A.B. Bressman, UJA-Federation of New York president; Arlene Kleinberg; Rachel Kleinhandler and Lilly Kleinhandler

board of J-Teen Leadership, and a board member for Westchester Jewish Community Services. Both David and Laura have served on the UJA Board of Directors. Rachel, Sophie, and Lilly are leaders of J-Teen Leadership.

As the event took place on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Laura acknowledged her parents, noting her father is a Holocaust survivor. "It has been their unconditional love and support that has enabled us to reach this moment."

The event featured a presentation by Emmy Award-winning mentalist Oz Pearlman.

## Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Awards

Westchester Jewish Council hosted the 27th Annual Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Awards Ceremony on Tuesday evening, May 10th at Temple Israel Center of White Plains. They honored the following people:

Anti-Defamation League (ADL).....	Adam Waldman
Bet Am Shalom Synagogue .....	Elizabeth Haas Edersheim
Chavurat Tikvah .....	Peter Schlactus
CSS – Community Security Service .....	Guy Shmuel
Congregation B'nai Yisrael .....	Lisa Mazure
Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel (KTI) .....	Margot Metzger
Hebrew Congregation of Somers.....	Irene Herz
Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.....	Bette Sparago
Jewish National Fund.....	Caren Hammerman
Lincoln Park Jewish Center.....	Jack Schweizer
Scarsdale Synagogue – Temples Tremont and Emanu-El.....	David Goldman
Shames JCC on the Hudson.....	Charles Friedman
Sinai Free Synagogue .....	Elizabeth G. Spiro
Temple Beth Abraham .....	Jennifer Povman
UJA Federation of NY / Westchester Region.....	Michele Gregson
United Hebrew of New Rochelle .....	Jim Staudt
Westchester Jewish Council .....	Darren Peister
Young Israel of Scarsdale .....	Marie Miller

The Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Award is named after Julian Y. Bernstein (z"l), a former Westchester Jewish Council board member, who was a visionary communal leader.

As Westchester's Jewish community relations organization, the Council unites Westchester Jewry with the State of Israel, fosters communication among Jewish organizations and cultivates and strengthens relations with other ethnic groups, elected officials and the community at large.

To learn more visit [www.wjccouncil.org](http://www.wjccouncil.org)