

46th Annual Westchester Jewish Music & Arts Festival Returns!

The 46th Annual Westchester Jewish Music and Arts Festival will be held on Sunday, August 21, 2022, from noon to 6 p.m. at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla. The festival is presented by The Westchester Jewish Council and in cooperation with Westchester County Parks.

Westchester Jewish Council CEO, Elliot Forchheimer shared, “This year’s Festival is back and in person. We have an amazing headliner, Neshama Carlebach, along with folk duo The Levins and Cantor Ines Kapustiansky, plus festival favorites including Ned Gelfars and Israeli Dancing with Leng. There’s music, dance, arts and so much to celebrate and enjoy for the entire family!”

Neshama Carlebach is an award-winning singer, songwriter and educator who has performed and taught in cities around the world. A winner and four-time nominee in the Independent Music Awards for her most current release, Believe, and winner of the Global Music Awards Silver Award for Outstanding Performance by a female vocalist for the album, Neshama has sold over one million records, making her one of today’s best-selling Jewish artists in the world. Neshama has been a cornerstone of major Jewish music festivals across the U.S. and globally, performing in front of thousands at countless concerts and gatherings for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

The music will continue with Cantor Ines Kapustiansky of Temple Shaaray Tefila and with The Levins, a husband and wife duo, who uplift and unite with unflinchingly feel-good folk-pop, infectious musicality, sharp songwriting skills, and a unique approach to vocal harmonies that is both soulful and unexpected.

In addition, Israeli dance with Leng, (sponsored by Camp Zeke) for all ages will take place throughout the day. Free face painting by Maria, WonderSpark Puppets Show sponsored by PJ Library in New York, and juggler Ned Gelfars, whose show is full of juggling, magic, and an incredible amount of hilarious, good-natured audience participation, and games, crafts and more, will also be on hand to provide plenty of family activities and



Neshama Carlebach

fun throughout the day.

The event is free (including parking), open to the public, and will be held rain or shine. Attendees are welcome to bring chairs, blankets, and picnics. A tented area is available from which to enjoy all the musical performances and Israeli dancing. Food will be available for purchase.

Pre-registration is requested at www.wjcouncil.org. This event is sponsored in part by the Morris & Sylvia Trachten Family Foundation. For more information about the event, including information on becoming a vendor, visit www.wjcouncil.org or contact Westchester Jewish Council Assistant Executive Director Pam Goldstein at pam@wjcouncil.org (914) 328-7001.

The Westchester Jewish Council connects Westchester’s Jewish communities and strengthens relationships among Jewish organizations and other ethnic and faith based groups, elected officials, Israel and the community at large. The Westchester Jewish Council is a proud Core partner of UJA-Federation of New York. For more information about the Westchester Jewish Council, visit online at www.wjcouncil.org.

Walk Against Hate in Van Cortlandt Park



On Sunday, June 12, ADL New York/New Jersey held a gathering at the Parade Ground in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx and heard from guest speakers suggesting how to work toward a future without antisemitism, racism and hate.

Hannah Kliger, TV Reporter for CBS New York, served as host. Featured speakers included: Council Member Eric Dinowitz, New York City Council District 11 ; Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinow-

itz, New York State 81st Assembly District; Tanya Gersh, Public Speaker, Solutions to the Rise of Hate & Antisemitism; Consul General Jorge Islas López, Consulate General of Mexico in New York; Pastor Gilford Monroe, Executive Director of Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships (OFCP) ; Representative Ritchie Torres, 15th District of New York ; and Ambassador Asaf Zamir, Consul General of Israel in New York.

Harrison Resident Felt Connected During Birthright Trip in Israel

Eighteen-year-old Lillian Appelbaum has returned from a May Birthright trip and wanted to share her story. “I’ve heard about Birthright in the past from other friends and family members. I knew that at some point in my adult life I wanted to go on the trip because of the great things I heard. Since I’m planning a medical career, I understood that my future summers will be filled with more jobs surrounding the medical field,” noted the Northeastern University student.

“I remember getting off the plane in Israel. We were all so excited, exhausted and hungry. Our first food after arriving was falafel. It was my first time having Israeli falafel. The falafel in Israel is incomparable to any of the Israeli food that is in America. All my friends and I just sat in complete silence enjoying our pita falafel until we were ready to begin talking about how good it was.

“One main highlight of the trip was a night out in Jerusalem. None of us knew what to expect. It was the night the entire group bonded and became close. It was the night before the flag-day parade in one of the most popular Israeli cities, so we knew it was going to be fun. The shuk was filled with life and culture, unlike anything any of us have seen before. At the end of the night we talked about how much fun we had,” said the Harrison resident.

“I would say the highlight of the trip was when the entire group was together. One night in Jerusalem, we all sat in a room at the entry of the hotel and just shared some funny school memo-



Lily Appelbaum

ries. Doing all the activities together brought us closer.

Another highlight was learning more about Jewish culture and Judaism in general. I only knew a little about the Jewish culture and I was fascinated walking around the various markets and the different holy cities.”

“One of the most striking emotions I felt, was at the Western Wall. I’ve been to Israel before but never felt emotion while being at the Kotel. Dima, our tour guide, told us to people-watch. As my friends and I watched the different reactions people had at the wall, it was overwhelming. I felt connected.

“Being in Israel comforted me in the sense that I knew I was part of a majority. I noticed that Israelis are typically more friendly than Americans. Throughout my adulthood, I have noticed that America is very competitive. Although I do not have a full understanding of Israel yet, I noticed that the people in Israel came together to lift each other up.

“I gained a lot from going on Birthright. In terms of knowledge, I learned much more than I came in with about Israel’s geopolitical standpoint. As I continue with my college-life after Birthright, I want to learn more about Israel’s political standpoint as well as help educate others on it. I also gained knowledge about Israeli culture, including foods, music, norms and even picked up some language. I hope the friendships I made on the Birthright trip will last throughout college and my life.”

Bruce M. Freyer Named President of the WJCS Board of Directors

Bruce M. Freyer has been elected President of the Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) Board of Directors, effective July 1, 2022. Freyer became involved with WJCS in 1997 and has held a variety of Board positions, including Chair of the Development Committee, Chair of the Jewish Programs committee, and Member of the Audit, Budget and Finance, Children and Youth Services, Government Relations, Investment, Managed Care, and Nominating Committees.

“Bruce has been invaluable in furthering the mission of WJCS in countless ways,” said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. “He has been integral in developing strategic initiatives, a passionate and effective advocate for vulnerable children at Westchester County budget hearings, and been an active partner, supporting all aspects of the agency’s work. We are thrilled to have him as our new Board President and look forward to continuing to grow WJCS’s impact throughout Westchester with



Bruce M. Freyer

his guidance.”

“It is both an honor and a privilege to be recognized by my fellow board members to serve as their president,” said Freyer. “I look forward to working with all of my dedicated colleagues in continuing the work of this great organization and, along with them, in meeting the challenges confronting our community and bringing the dedicated expertise of the staff of WJCS to the needs of the entire Westchester community.”

Freyer’s dedication to social service and making the world a better place for all people extends to work overseas. He and his wife Dana found-

ed the Global Partnership for Afghanistan, a non-profit organization devoted to working with rural Afghans to create viable and sustainable farm businesses that alleviate poverty, build sustainable livelihoods, and promote economic development. Ordained as a Rabbi from the Hebrew Union

continued on page 11

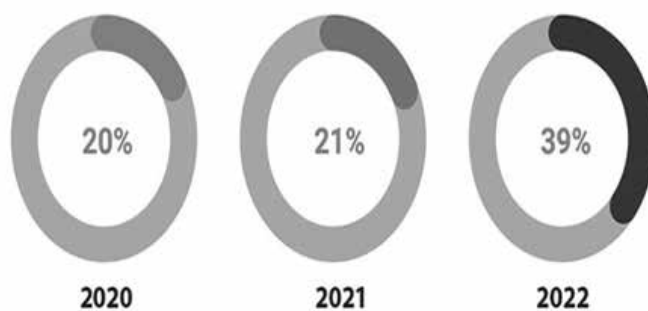
ADLSurvey of Online Hate and Harrassment

The annual survey of hate and harassment online by the ADL Center for Technology and Society Social acknowledges that media platforms are vital online spaces where much public discourse takes place.

The results in 2022 show that hate and harassment remain at alarming levels. Forty percent of all those surveyed, and nearly half (47%) of American teens, report that they have experienced some form of online harassment. The rates are even higher for those in marginalized groups including Jews, women and people of color. A staggering 72 percent of marginalized youth report being harassed because of an aspect of their identity. The sharpest rise in online harassment was reported by Asian Americans; nearly twice as many reported experiencing it than in last year's survey.

ADL also surveyed exposure to controversial content, especially content rooted in hate such as COVID conspiracy theories, tropes

Online Harassment 2020-2022: Asian Americans



about Jewish economic and political power and Holocaust denial.

It's clear that social media companies are nowhere near where they need to be when it comes to reducing the hate and harassment that plague their platforms, ADL states.

This kind of hate-based harassment can

drive people out of online spaces where they no longer feel safe or welcome. Among adults who either experienced harassment or were worried about being harassed, 20% reported feeling anxious or having trouble sleeping and concentrating, and 13% struggled with more severe mental health outcomes such as depressive or suicidal thoughts.

Children are not immune to the impact of online hate and harassment. For many, being harassed causes serious, lasting harm affecting their mental or emotional health and their everyday behaviors. Online harassment can also spill over offline — 22% reported being harassed in person based on information about them online.

For things to get better, ADL suggests that tech companies prioritize people over profit and government action is needed to promote this and to hold the platforms accountable. Concerned people need to make a difference by speaking out.

Armonk Family Will Compete in Three Different Sports at World Maccabiah Games

continued from page 1

has been my life's passion is an incredible honor and thrill but doing so with my kids at my side takes this thrill to a whole other level," Jeffrey Binder said. "For years, I've been cheering them on from the sidelines, now, we get to march into the opening ceremonies arm in arm and pull for each other as we compete in our respective sports — all in the name of building Jewish pride and support for Israel. It is truly a dream come true."

"Volleyball and staying connected to my Jewish roots are two very important aspects of my life right now and I am incredibly excited to combine the two and represent the USA at the games this summer. I can't wait to get on the court with my teammates and keep up the winning tradition for team USA," Abigail Binder said.

Zachary Binder added, "I am thrilled to be competing and excited to be able to experience Israel and connect with my Jewish heritage and culture. I am looking forward to competing against the best Jewish fencers from around the world. Also, competing alongside my family makes it even more special."

The Only Constant in Life is Change



BY: BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

We all know that things can, and do, change; even (or perhaps, especially) when it comes to estate planning. That's why it makes sense to review your estate plan every couple of years or, more often, if there is a life-changing event such as the birth of a child or grandchild, change in a relationship with someone mentioned in your will, or a change in financial circumstances for you, among many other reasons.

Surprisingly, many clients are not even aware that their estate plan could be changed. While there may be some things that you have done in your estate planning that are irrevocable, that's probably not the case for most items in your estate plan.

For most documents in your estate plan, changes can be made so long as you have the capacity to do so. Keep in mind that the legal capacity to execute or change a Will is different than, for example, that needed to change a trust or a power of attorney.

In your Will, you nominate an executor to marshal your assets, pay your debts and expenses of your estate administration, and distribute your assets after your death to whomever you have mentioned in your Will. An amendment to a Will is called a Codicil. These days, we don't often do Codicils since it is so easy to change documents using digital files and it is usually much easier to draft a new Will instead of doing a Codicil. Moreover, Codicils have the same exaction requirements as a Will and having one document, instead of two, makes it easier to keep track of it and store. To make or change a Will you need to have "testamentary capacity," which has been described as the lowest form of capacity to execute any legal docu-

ment in New York. Basically, that means you must have the ability to know:

- 1) what you own - the nature/extent of your assets and what they are,
- 2) the natural objects of your bounty - your loved ones and who they are, and
- 3) how you plan to dispose of your assets - that your estate planning documents determine who gets (or doesn't get) your assets.

In addition to a Will, many clients also have a trust which could be revocable or irrevocable. Use of revocable trusts are becoming more common in New York since it provides for a successor trustee who could manage your financial affairs if you become sick or incapacitated and the assets contained in the trust will not be subject to the probate process upon your death. You can always make changes to your revocable trust provided you have the legal capacity to do so. However, the capacity required to execute or make changes to a trust are similar to the capacity needed to enter into a binding contract. This level of capacity is higher than that required to execute or change a Will.

Conversely, if your trust is an irrevocable trust, which might be appropriate if your purpose in creating the trust was to save taxes or protect assets from a nursing home or the costs of long-term care, then, the trust cannot be changed unless there are specific provisions in the trust authorizing certain actions by you or someone else. Some irrevocable trusts may give you the right to change trustees or the power to change the ultimate disposition of the trust property, among other things. It really depends upon the terms of the trust document itself.

Also, keep in mind that if you become incapacitated, your agent under a power of attorney may be able to make certain changes to your estate plan, depending on the powers granted to the agent in the power of attorney. However, the agent will not be able to change your Will.

One final note; making changes to legal docu-

continued on page 5

The Secret to Healing after Grief

BY MIRIAM AROND

Sherry Birnbaum, Assistant Executive Director of Jewish Programs at Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), will be retiring on July 1st after 39 years of working at the agency. Gillian Rittmaster, LCSW, Director of WJCS Health and Healing Services, has been appointed to the position.

Birnbaum's legacy at WJCS is monumental. Under her leadership, Jewish Programs expanded to include Partners in Caring and Partners in Schools, which provide on-site counseling and support programs to 40+ synagogues, day schools, Jewish community centers, nursery schools, and geriatric centers in Westchester. She launched the WJCS Addressing Alzheimer's program, which offers support for caregivers and individuals with early-stage dementia, and community educational programs about Alzheimer's and related dementias. Under her supervision, WJCS conducts support groups for Holocaust Survivors and their children, social, cultural, and spiritual programming for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and numerous other programs, which serve people of all ages in the wider Jewish community.

Birnbaum, who started her career at WJCS as a volunteer and then a mental health clinician, has special expertise in helping people cope with bereavement. She led WJCS's efforts to help those suffering traumatic loss after September 11th, Hurricane Sandy, the pandemic, the shocking death of a Westchester rabbi and his wife in a house fire, and the loss of an entire young family in a plane accident. Seemingly countless clients and former clients have shared how helpful and instrumental Birnbaum's support was in getting through the most difficult challenges of their lives.

Given Birnbaum's stellar reputation as a bereavement specialist, I asked her what the secret is to helping people deal with grief. Here's her re-

sponse:

"It's focusing on the source of pain--asking people to describe the person who died, what kind of relationship they had, what that person meant to them, and how that person made them feel. You try to get to the underlying feelings that the person is struggling with now," she explained. "It may be that the person is scared of being alone or feels like a 'nobody' without having their partner around."

"Often, there are a lot of unresolved issues," she continued. "People often say, 'I never did enough,' and can't give up that feeling of guilt. People who never expressed their love to their loved one worry that the person who died never knew how much they were cared for. There are some family caregivers who, no longer able to tolerate watching their parent or spouse suffer, had hoped for that relative's death but then feel guilty for having had that thought. The luckiest people," Birnbaum noted, "are those who felt they did everything they could. They miss the person who died but can rest knowing they helped that person in every way they could."

While exploring the source of pain is key to dealing with grief, this can't be expected to happen immediately after a loss. An unexpected trauma, like the death of a loved one due to an accident, evokes raw feelings of mourning that are tough to process. "Survivors are often in a state of shock. Their sense of safety in the world may be shattered," Birnbaum explained. "But, with time, understanding what is at the core of prolonged grief, and being able to talk about it allows you to focus on steps to move forward and heal."

If you or someone you know has experienced a loss, go to <https://www.wjcs.com/services/jewish-programs/bereavement-services/> to learn about bereavement programs at WJCS or contact Gillian Rittmaster, LCSW at grittmaster@wjcs.com; (914) 761-0600 x2142.