

# WESTCHESTER JewishLife

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## ADL Hosts Special Envoy Deborah Lipstadt and Discusses "Fighting Hate from Home"

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) CEO and National Director Jonathan Greenblatt and Deborah Leipzig, ADL Vice President of Leadership hosted U.S. Department of State Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism Deborah Lipstadt in a webinar, "Fighting Hate from Home" on Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

Lipstadt recently traveled to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (UAE) and participated in the Presidential Delegation to Israel.

"Antisemitism is on the rise, here at home and around the world," Greenblatt began.

"We are bearing witness to the proliferation of antisemitic acts in public places and have seen a normalization of antisemitism, the shift of



Deborah Lipstadt

movement of fringe ideas from margins into the mainstream, including manifestations in Europe against circumcision and Kosher slaughter.

"ADL has been tracking antisemitic incidents for over forty years, longer than the FBI. In 2021, ADL tracked 2,717 anti-Jewish incidents across the U.S., the highest number we have ever seen. We launched a COMBAT Plan last year, a one-of-a-kind comprehensive framework for policymakers and elected officials to fight antisemitism."

Greenblatt asked Lipstadt what her specific goals were. "The way I see this job is like a pitchfork with two prongs; "one, is to put out fires to make sure the embers do not explode into a conflagration. Given the Abraham Accords which have been fully embraced by this Administration,

there is a chance to do something positive, to work in countries where there were purveyors of hatred," Lipstadt replied.

Expressing deep alarm about the rise of White Nationalism with linkages between Europe, America, Christchurch, New Zealand, Norway and Democratic Florida gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum's association with left-wing Dream Defenders, tied to Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine, Greenblatt asked Lipstadt, "How does that factor in terms of your priorities? How do you reconcile this White Nationalism with the work you are doing?"

"There is the impossibility in this day and age to make a strict separation between foreign and domestic," Lipstadt, author of Antisemitism: Here and Now answered.

## Second Annual Holocaust Survivor Day Held at Young Israel of White Plains

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

The Second Annual Holocaust Survivor Day was held at the Young Israel of White Plains on Wednesday, July 13th with guest speakers NYS Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair Senate Committee on Education; Allison Danzig, Program Coordinator of Holocaust Survivors, Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS); WJCS CEO Seth Diamond, plus members of UJA Federation of New York. The program was made possible by a grant from the Claims Conference, Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

"I want to acknowledge and honor the Holocaust survivors who are here," Senator Mayer began.

"For many years when I represented only Yonkers, whose Jewish community dissipated over time, the Holocaust Survivors Speakers

Bureau was a game changer for many students. They did not know about the Holocaust.

"When they heard the real stories of the people and their experiences, for these young people, mostly Black and Hispanic, it changed their views. I

am so grateful that you keep their stories alive and share them with us.

"This year the State Legislature passed a law to make sure that the Holocaust is taught in New York schools. We directed a survey denoting who was teaching, what they were teaching and what students were learning."

Musical entertainment was provided by violinist Ted Kesler, Education Professor, Queens



Holocaust Survivors Judith Goldstein (left) and Ellen Kaidanow



Violinist Ted Kesler

College, CUNY and Kol Ami Cantor Daniel Mendelson. WJCS Rabbi Michael Goldman sang Ma Tovu (Balaam's Blessing); recited Motzei (prayer for bread); Shecheyanu prayer (gratitude for reaching this day) and led Kaddish for the Holocaust vic-

tims.

"We are very happy to share Holocaust Survivor Day with the survivors, with our friends at WJCS, UJA Federation and the Claims Conference. It is a beautiful day and a beautiful way to commemorate their lives," Millie Jasper, Executive Director, Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) commented.



Allison Danzig, Coordinator, Holocaust Survivor Services, WJCS and NYS State Senator Shelley B. Mayer



Holocaust survivors Eliezar (center) and Gesya Raninobich (right) enjoy summer celebration at Young Israel of White Plains.

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## UJA Volunteers Fill Backpacks for Westchester Children in Need

Nearly 400 volunteers of all ages filled more than 1,000 new backpacks with school supplies and made cards for Westchester children in need, including Ukrainian refugees resettling in the county, on July 31, 2022, at Bet Torah in Mount Kisco, Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester in Rye, Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, and Young Israel of Scarsdale.

The packing events were organized by UJA-Federation of New York and Supplies for Success to ensure that every child, no matter their background or level of family income, has the tools to succeed in the classroom. The backpacks will be distributed by Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), Hope Pantry, Westchester Coalition for Immigration, Edenwald Center, and local Jewish day schools.



Event chairs Tina Steinberg, Danielle Cohen, Megan Kadosh, Leora Rosenberg, Natasha Hanan, Lauren Neustat, and Lucy Kweskin at Bet Torah



Tara Slone-Goldstein, UJA Westchester Regional Chair, at Westchester Reform Temple



Packing school supplies at Westchester Reform Temple

## Leah Eisenberg Joins HHREC Board of Directors

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains, has announced that Leah Eisenberg has joined their Board of Directors. Eisenberg is a partner in Mayer Brown's New York office and a member of the firm's Restructuring practice. Leah's practice focuses on counseling clients in default, restructuring, bankruptcy and corporate trust matters, with an emphasis on indenture trustee and creditor representations.

"In furtherance of the Jewish concept of Tikkun Olam, 'repair the world', and as a third-generation survivor, personal and community healing and prevention starts with teaching and learning the lessons of the Holocaust, genocide and human rights. I am honored to be part of the HHREC family and board, where their dedication to teaching and learning these lessons through unique educational programs contributes to the great need for Holocaust and related human rights education and awareness."

Eisenberg has been recognized by *The Best Lawyers of America* and was the recipient of the NYIC Women's Division Executive of the Year

Award, among other honors. She earned her Doctorate in Law from the Brooklyn Law School, and earned a BA in Politics, Philosophy and Law from Binghamton University. Eisenberg is a graduate student at Kean University where she is enrolled in the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Master's Degree program.



Leah Eisenberg

"It is with great pleasure that we welcome Leah Eisenberg to our Board," said Michael Gyory, HHREC Board Chairperson. "She brings a tremendous level of energy and experience to our organization. We are very excited to have her join us in our efforts to promote human rights community here in the greater New York area."

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center is a not-for-profit organization based in White Plains that serves Westchester, Fairfield and neighboring counties. Their mission is to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. They encourage students and all people to speak up and act against all forms of bigotry and prejudice. For more information call 914.696.0738 email info@hhrecny.org

## Cantor Robin Joseph Premieres Her Play with Westchester Collaborative Theater

From Friday, July 22 through Sunday, July 31, Westchester Collaborative Theater (WCT) returned with an outdoor production of *Parking Lot Plays*, with five short new works featuring a mix of comedies and dramas from its play development program. Each site-specific play integrates Ossining's parking lot into its story as the characters navigate the terrain of this location while they tell their stories. The production was co-directed by WCT's Melissa Nocera of Yorktown Heights and Susan Ward of Ossining and featured an ensemble cast of WCT member actors.

The 2022 edition of *Parking Lot Plays* was performed outdoors in the satellite parking lot adjacent to the WCT Theater at 23 Water Street.

"WCT playwrights have done a masterful job of seamlessly blending the location into a sometimes farcical, often zany, always engaging mix of plays that manage to provoke thoughtfulness and hilarity simultaneously. Covering a wide range of timely topics from climate change to cognitive behavioral therapy to unconscious bias, all are sure to enthrall audiences," says WCT Executive Director Alan Lutwin.

One of the plays was written by Cantor Robin Joseph of Temple Beth Shalom in Hastings on Hudson. Called *Something to Lose By*, was a question from a stranger that causes a young woman to rediscover a part of herself that she had lost—or was hoping to lose.

Westchester Collaborative Theater is a multicultural, cooperative theater company located in Ossining, dedicated to developing new work



Robin Joseph photo by AlisonSheehy

for the stage and bringing live theater to the community. It is comprised of local playwrights, actors, and directors who employ a Lab approach in which new stage works are nurtured through an iterative process of readings, critiques, and rewrites. When work is ready for production, it is presented to the public at its new theater space.

WCT is committed to furthering theater arts in the community. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and a recipient of production grants from ArtsWestchester and New York State Council on the Arts.

## Bill to Award Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) recently introduced a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz, the last living Nuremberg prosecutor, in recognition of his work prosecuting Nazi war criminals, most notably the Einsatzgruppen, and his service in World War II. The bill passed the House in May and was introduced by Representatives Lois Frankel (D-FL), Joe Wilson (R-SC), Ted Deutch (D-FL), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Jim McGovern (D-MA), and Chris Smith (R-NJ).

"I am honored to introduce this bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz, a champion for human rights and the last living Nuremberg prosecutor," said Senator Gillibrand. "As chief U.S. prosecutor during the Nuremberg trials, Mr. Ferencz held Nazi war criminals accountable for their crimes against humanity, and subsequently spent his life fighting for human rights,

justice and peace. Mr. Ferencz's life demonstrates what it means to dedicate oneself to compassion, empathy and righteousness. Few people have been

more deserving of this honor, and I am hopeful that the Senate can swiftly pass this important bill."

"I am proud to support and introduce this legislation to award Benjamin Ferencz, the last living Nuremberg prosecutor, with one of the greatest honors an American can receive, the Congressional Gold Medal," said Senator Schumer. "Mr. Ferencz, a Jewish immigrant who went on to serve our country in the Army, and honorably serve as a chief prosecutor for the U.S. in the Nuremberg trials, bravely held notorious Nazi war criminals to account. I urge my Senate colleagues to pass this bill expeditiously to recognize Mr. Ferencz for his fervor for justice and lifelong devotion to human rights and peace."

"Ben Ferencz embodies the fight for justice.

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Benjamin Ferencz. Photo credit- Adam Jones, Ph.D/ Global Photo Archive/ Wikimedia Commons



# WJCS Awarded \$2 Million SAMHSA Grant

WJCS (Westchester Jewish Community Services), the largest provider of outpatient licensed community-based mental health services in Westchester County, was awarded a \$2 million federal grant to provide trauma services. The five-year grant was awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and will allow the agency to expand services at the WJCS Trager Lemp Center for Treating Trauma & Promoting Resilience. The grant will allow the agency to deepen its focus on providing trauma services to young people, ages 8 to 21, and their families with a particular focus on Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ young people who have been impacted by COVID 19. The grant also allows for more support to be offered to those with intensive mental health needs resulting from multiple traumas.



Seth Diamond

“The loss of consistent schooling, the lack of social connection and economic and health uncertainty over the past two years of the pandemic has been devastating for our young people,” commented WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. “As a result, the rate of trauma among young people is higher than it has ever been. This grant will greatly assist efforts to help those struggling now and will contribute to our efforts to help our community heal. We thank SAMHSA for providing support for these critically needed services.”

“Trauma, if untreated, will negatively influence every aspect of the lives of our young people and those effects will ripple throughout our entire community,” said Liane Nelson, Ph.D., Director of the WJCS Trager Lemp Center and founding Co-chair of the Westchester County Task Force on Trauma. “By allowing us to dedicate more resources to communities of color most impacted by COVID, we can help young people recover and

move forward.”

The award-winning Trager Lemp Center, founded in 1982, is Westchester's only comprehensive, outpatient trauma treatment center. The project's goals more specifically are to increase the capacity of WJCS to identify children experiencing trauma and to allow the agency to serve those identified in a trauma-informed way. Under the grant, the agency will use evidence-based practices for its trauma treatment and will closely monitor the outcomes of its services.

Founded in 1943, Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) serves 20,000 people of all ages and backgrounds in Westchester County annually. The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on Westchester County. Throughout the county, 220 children lost a parent or caregiver due to COVID-19, between March and July 2020

alone. Black and Hispanic children lost a parent/caregiver at more than twice the rate of Caucasian children in New York State. Unemployment, food, and housing insecurity, loss of health insurance and childcare, and social isolation all skyrocketed, increasing the psychosocial distress, which has potentially long-lasting consequences for youth.

WJCS is one of the largest non-profit, non-sectarian human services agencies in Westchester, serving 20,000 people of all ages and backgrounds. WJCS is a trauma-informed agency. Its integrated network of services includes: mental health treatment and counseling, child and youth development programs, residential and non-residential programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, senior services, and educational, cultural, and spiritual programming for the Westchester Jewish community. For more information about WJCS, go to [www.wjcs.com](http://www.wjcs.com).

## Bill to Award Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz

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His remarkable contributions to the Nuremberg tribunal's prosecution of some of the 20th century's most notorious war criminals have rightly been recognized by numerous organizations, including the U.S. Holocaust Museum and Memorial, which continues its important work to give real meaning to the words ‘never again,’” said Senator Cardin. “Throughout his long life of accomplishments, Mr. Ferencz continued to be an outspoken advocate for the rights of the oppressed. I'm proud to join my colleagues in sponsoring the Congressional Gold Medal for Ben Ferencz. It is a fitting tribute to a life of purpose and service to humanity.”

Ben Ferencz immigrated to the United States from Hungary when he was ten months old and his family settled in New York City. Ferencz grew up in New York City and attended The City College of New York and Harvard Law School.

After graduating from Harvard Law School, Ferencz joined an anti-aircraft artillery battalion preparing for the invasion of France. Ferencz was

honorably discharged from the U.S. Army in 1945 with the rank of Sergeant of Infantry. Soon after being discharged, he was recruited to work on the Nuremberg trials.

Ferencz, along with roughly 50 other researchers, examined Nazi offices and archives in Berlin, finding staggering evidence of genocide by the Nazis. Ferencz, in his first-ever case and aged 27, served as Chief Prosecutor for the United States in the Einsatzgruppen Case, in which commanders of SS mobile death squads faced charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Twenty-two defendants were charged, prosecuted, and convicted of murdering over a million people. Fourteen were sentenced to death.

The Congressional Gold Medal is Congress' highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. The first Congressional Gold Medal was given to George Washington in 1776 and has been awarded just 184 times to our nation's heroes, activists, scientists, and other important figures in our society.

## AJR Announces New Partnerships

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ternationalization which provides programmes for teaching and learning about National Socialism and the Holocaust.

Refugee Voices is AJR's ground-breaking Holocaust testimony collection of filmed interviews with Jewish survivors and refugees from Nazi Europe who fled to Great Britain prior to the Second World War or who came to the country at war's end. Alongside the filmed interviews, the archive comprises photographs and documents that describe, in their own words, the lives of a remarkable community of people.

AJR Refugee Voices can already be accessed at many of the world's leading institutions for Holocaust studies and research, including Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris and the Wiener Holocaust Library in London. The collection is also available for students at several UK and European Universities, such as Southampton, Essex and Leeds as well as the Freie University Berlin where it complements two other Holocaust survivor testimony archives. Recent publications using material from the Refugee Voices collection include Rebecca Clifford's book 'Survivors: Children Lives after the Holocaust' and Deborah Cadbury book on Bunce Court entitled 'The School that escaped the Nazis.'

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, director of the AJR Refugee Archive, said, “As we approach the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Refugee Voices, we are delighted to expand our international partnership

and to share the many Holocaust testimonies we have collected with new audiences. It is our fervent hope that the precious stories we have captured will be used for research and study, to combat Holocaust denial and distortion, and to preserve for posterity a unique history and cultural heritage.”

The AJR is the leading national charitable organisation exclusively delivering social, welfare and volunteer services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression living in Great Britain.

The AJR is also the largest supporter of Holocaust educational programmes, projects and initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust in the UK.

The AJR has produced the ground-breaking audio-visual testimony archive, Refugee Voices. This collection of 250 filmed interviews creates a legacy of the experiences of the refugees and will advance and enhance Holocaust research for future generations. Refugee Voices enables Holocaust researchers and scholars to watch up to 500 hours of film and read fully edited and transcribed accounts. Researchers are assisted by timecodes that, together with a summary sheet and key words section, direct users to specific sections of the films.

The AJR's 'My Story' project tells the life stories of Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors through the production of individual life story books to be kept as treasured memories and tools for reminiscence and to raise awareness about the Holocaust and Nazi oppression.

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