

# Dr. Procario-Foley Promotes Dialogue and Understanding Between Religions

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Dr. Elena Procario-Foley, Ph.D., Brother John G. Driscoll Professor of Jewish-Catholic Studies, Iona University, New Rochelle and member, Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations ([www.ccjr.us](http://www.ccjr.us)), an association of approximately 30 institutions, dedicated to mutual understanding between Jews and Christians, disseminated information regarding CCJCR's "A National Reckoning of the Soul: A Call to Churches of the United States to Confront the Crisis of Antisemitism," written on December 14, 2022.

"In October 2001 a bunch of academic organizations got together to form the Council; our first annual meeting was in 2002," Dr. Procario-Foley said. "CCJR does a lot of work in community education; that is why it is a Council of Centers. We have several organizations of scholars that build bridges between Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

"The university or college has to be operating in terms of external programming, running conferences to enhance understanding between Jews and Christians."

"CCJR organizations are all across the United States, Canada and have overseas affiliates. We have Liaison Representatives, including organizations like the American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, National Council of Synagogues, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. as a member, because they are an educational institution and regular voting member."

CCJR's National Reckoning of the Soul states, "At this crucial time, there is a danger that preachers and teachers might inadvertently reinforce an image of Jesus as 'outside' Judaism or worse: as somehow opposed to the spiritual traditions of his own people. This could leave Christian congregations susceptible to the divisive an-

ti-Jewish propaganda echoing all around them.

"Therefore, we offer questions for self-reflection in Christian communities.

"We entreat the churches to look inward by examining their preaching, teaching and theologies to eliminate any traces of anti-Jewish sentiments and look outward to act and speak against all forms of antisemitism they encounter."

"As Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars of Jewish-Christian Relations," Procario-Foley explained, "we want the churches to speak out when politicians, entertainers, athletes and media personalities use their celebrity to spread antisemitic lies. Christians and their congregational leaders need to stand up and support their Jewish brothers and sisters when the Jewish community is under attack."

[www.ccjr.us](http://www.ccjr.us) is the website for the Council of Centers on Jewish Christian Relations.

Dr. Elena Procario-Foley, Ph.D.



# Westchester Day School Celebrates 75th Anniversary

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Westchester Day School, 856 Orienta Avenue, Mamaroneck, celebrated their 75th Anniversary, ([westchesterday.org](http://westchesterday.org)), with a dinner at Hyatt Regency, Greenwich on Saturday, December 17th, honoring Steven and Malka Helft, Ayala and David Lallouz, Jordana and Rabbi Jonathan Morgenstern and Mrs. Barbara Seader, Educator Award Recipient.

"One of the leading founders was Mortimer Propp," Head of School Rabbi Daniel Rockoff began. "It was 1948, shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel, in the years following the Holocaust, a time when the Orthodox Jewish community was starting to gain some traction.

"There was a need to have a Jewish Day School, combining the best of General Education as well as Judaic Education, to connect young American and Jewish American children to their heritage, while being active engaged citizens of

this country.

"The school is split between General and Judaic studies; half the day is General Studies; the other half, Judaic studies. We have an Early Childhood Program that starts at age 2, finishing with Grade 8. Primarily, there are academic subjects, including math, language arts, social studies, science as well as Judaic subjects such as the language, Chumash, Navi, Gemara/Talmud.

"There is a building occupied by Westchester Hebrew High School, which is a separate school. Most graduates go to other Jewish High Schools in the region. We are preparing our students to be contributing members of Jewish-American society.

"In recent years our school has focused on meeting the needs of diverse learners, meaning that every student learns differently, whether they

need extra support or enrichment to make them successful. We have a STEAM program (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics).



Westchester Day School Head Rabbi  
Daniel Rockoff



Westchester Day School Executive Director  
Rachel Goldman

Faculty, Administrators and Staff total 85; there are 325 students, Modern Orthodox studies with commitment to religious observance, Hebrew language and importance of Zionism.

"There are six teachers from Israel, Schlichim from Jewish Agency for Israel in conjunction with World Zionist Association, plus a boy and girl Shinshinim coordinated through Westchester Jewish Council, with two girls from Bnei Akiba, a religious Zionist youth group in Israel and around the world," Rockoff said.

Rachel Fischer, the school Development Coordinator noted, four hundred guests attended the successful dinner including parents, grandparents, alumni, community rabbis, lay leaders and faculty.

A tradition at Westchester Day School is to invite the 8th grade graduates to the event and enjoy a special evening.



# Campus Leaders See the “New Middle East” and Economic Cooperation Taking Place Post-Abraham Accords

Dozens of hand-picked Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as racially and politically diverse, undergraduate leaders visited Israel and the United Arab Emirates in early January to gain a firsthand understanding of the rapidly developing and mutually beneficial economic cooperation taking place between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

The students chosen went through a highly competitive and selective application process to join the inaugural cohort of Israel on Campus Coalition's (ICC) Geller International Fellowship, a half-year elite master class that culminates in this first-of-its-kind trip. The trip provided an immersive educational experience about coexistence and

cooperative partnerships in the political, cultural, security, economic and civil rights arenas. Students were afforded unique access to influential leaders, politicians, entrepreneurs, activists and professionals that shape Israeli and Arab society.

The student fellows include Abe Baker Butler of Rye Brook. A Yale University sophomore, he is majoring in Global Affairs and Cognitive Science. He serves as a student government Senator and an Officer of the Alexander Hamilton Society. Abe has worked for the Aspen Institute Germany and as a fellow to former American Jewish Committee {AJC} CEO David Harris.

In the fall of 2020, Abe founded FroshVote, an



Abe Baker Butler

initiative mobilizing thousands of university students to vote in the 2020 federal election which was featured on the Today show. He has served as Executive Director of Students Against Nicotine, and he has helped lead Telehealth Access for Seniors. Abe was awarded the American Academy of Neurology's Neuroscience Research Prize. He is an alumnus of the U.S. Senate Youth program {2019} and the Bronfman Fellowship {2019}. Currently, Abe serves as EVP of AJCs Campus Board.

Fellows had meetings with Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, the first Israeli Ambassador to the UAE Amir Hayek, one of the main negotiators in the historic Abraham Accords, Israel's Head of Economic and Trade Mission to the UAE, the Chief Rabbi of the UAE, numerous high-tech executives, academics, leaders of coexistence projects, and key members of the press and business world.

In Israel, fellows explored numerous mod-

els for coexistence and progress through meetings with FeelBeit Jerusalem organizers, Jaffa's diverse community members, and educators at Groovetech, a fully immersive center in the Eshkol region that trains students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Fellows also toured Bethlehem and the Aida Refugee Camp, visited the Gaza border and the Kerem Shalom border crossing, met with Palestinian and Jewish residents of the West Bank, and explored the Christian, Muslim and Armenian quarters of the Old City in Jerusalem. In Dubai, fellows met with local students and young professionals from around the world who are currently living, working, or studying in Dubai, including professors and students from the NYU Abu Dhabi Program, considered a model for coexistence. They also visited the Sheik Mohammed Center for Cultural Understanding and Global Village to discover how 80 different cultures cooperate in a shared economic space.

“Since the historic Abraham Accords were signed, the Middle East landscape has been changing on a weekly and daily basis with greater economic, security, technological, medical, and policy advances and cooperation than ever before. ICC is excited to provide the next generation of American leaders' access to experts on the front lines who can engage these future change-makers in robust conversations about Israel's new place in the Middle East, as well as the challenges that remain,” stated ICC CEO Jacob Baime. “This immersive experience will help build a diverse network of thoughtful, intelligent, and successful leaders who can help shape the future of the U.S.-Israel relationship. We know they will return to their campuses and communities with a better understanding of the changing Middle East and a desire to share their passion with others.”

Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC) unites and empowers pro-Israel campus organizations, providing strategic coordination and expertise to strengthen support for Israel.

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You can **register at [www.ajc.org/GlobalForum](http://www.ajc.org/GlobalForum)**

For more details and information: [westchester@ajc.org](mailto:westchester@ajc.org)

## Monarch Coopers Corner Appoints Ataide as Executive Director

Paul Ataide has been named executive director for Monarch Coopers Corner. In this position, he is responsible for day-to-day community operations. Monarchs Coopers Corner is nearing completion and is scheduled to open early 2023.

Ataide previously was executive director at a senior living community in Westchester County. He also served as associate executive director in senior living in MA. He brings over 15 years of health-care experience to this position.

Monarch Coopers Corner is the first senior living community in Westchester County to seek WELL certification from the International WELL Building Institute, or IWBI. WELL is grounded in research into the health effects of physical spaces on people.

The community, located at 11 Mill Road, New Rochelle, is developed and managed by Monarch Communities.



Paul Ataide

# New Unit Will Implement a Campaign Promoting Acceptance, Inclusion, Tolerance and Understanding of Diversity

Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced that the New York State Division of Human Rights is launching a statewide Hate and Bias Prevention Unit, which is charged with leading public education and outreach efforts, serving as an early warning detection system in local communities, and quickly mobilizing to support areas and communities in which a bias incident has occurred.

"New York State will use every tool at its disposal to eliminate hate and bias from our communities," Governor Hochul said. "We will not let the rise in hate incidents that we see happening online, across the country and across the world, take root here at home."

"We cannot allow ignorance, fear, and hatred to damage the enormous amount of work we've done to move our state forward," said Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado. "The partnerships that we're building within communities and across the state will ensure what we know to be true which is that love always prevails over hate."

Division of Human Rights Commissioner Maria L. Imperial said, "Everyone - no matter what color they are, or who they love, or what they believe - should feel safe when they go to work, or go dancing, or visit a house of worship, or send their kids off to school. This new unit will advance our mission of equal opportunity, access, and dignity

for all in our state."

As part of this new Unit's mandate, the Division is organizing 10 regional councils across the state made up of local stakeholders. These councils will provide a place for community members to share concerns, organize educational programming, host hate crime prevention and community healing events, conduct trainings in conflict resolution, and facilitate the filing of complaints with the Division and other relevant agencies. The Unit also will develop a rapid response team to assist communities affected by a bias or hate incident.

The Hate and Bias Prevention Unit also will be responsible for establishing and implementing a statewide campaign promoting acceptance, inclusion, tolerance, and understanding of diversity, as required by legislation signed in November by Governor Hochul. The campaign will coordinate and cooperate with public and private organizations, including, but not limited to, local governments, community groups, school districts, places



Governor Kathy Hochul

of worship, charitable organizations, and foundations and will develop educational materials to be published on the internet, social media, and other platforms to reach the public. The Division also works with the New York State Police to educate New Yorkers on the State's hate crimes laws.

The announcement builds upon Governor Hochul's long-standing commitment to combatting hate and violence across the state. The Governor announced \$96 million in state and federal funding to safeguard non-profit, community-based or-

ganizations at risk of hate crimes and attacks; \$10 million in state funding through the Securing Reproductive Health Centers Program to improve safety and security of patients and employees at reproductive health care centers and abortion services providers that may be at risk of crimes or attacks because of their mission, services, ideology or beliefs; and established within the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services a Domestic

Terrorism Prevention Unit and directed \$10 million in state grant funds to support county governments as they develop domestic terrorism prevention plans and threat assessment and management teams in the wake of the horrific white supremacist attack on the Tops Market in Buffalo.

The Division annually investigates more than 5,000 complaints of discrimination from individuals across the state. The agency also has the authority to initiate investigations and file complaints alleging violations of the state anti-discrimination law and last year, the Division secured more than \$6.2 million in monetary damages for individuals who have experienced discrimination. The Division also works with the New York State Police to educate New Yorkers on the State's hate crimes laws.

New York has the proud distinction of being the first state in the nation to enact a Human Rights Law, affording every citizen "an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life." The New York State Division of Human Rights is dedicated to eliminating discrimination, remedying injustice, and promoting equal opportunity, access, and dignity through enforcement of the Human Rights Law. Individuals interested in finding out more information or filing a complaint, visit the DHR website.

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# WJCI is Regional Co-Sponsor of HIAS Refugee Shabbat 2023

HIAS has announced that Refugee Shabbat will take place on February 3-4, 2023, and is a moment for congregations, organizations, and individuals in the United States and around the world to dedicate a Shabbat experience to refugees and asylum seekers. The fastest-growing European refugee crisis since World War II is still ongoing. People seeking asylum are being turned away at borders around the world. And this year, for the first time ever, the total number of displaced persons globally is over 100 million. This is a critical moment for all to reaffirm and redouble support for refugees and asylum seekers.

Locally, Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI) is a 2023 Regional Co-Sponsor of the Refugee Shabbat.

Whether you sign up to participate on behalf of your congregation or as an individual hosting an event in a home, there are many options for your Refugee Shabbat. It could be the culmination of a week of action on refugee issues, a moment to simply focus on learning more about the global refugee crisis in a Jewish context, or an opportunity to convene Jewish (or interfaith) congregations to

learn and chart a course of action together.

Congregations might consider including a liturgical reading on the theme of the refugee crisis in Shabbat services and/or dedicating a sermon or text study to the topic. If you have a relationship with a refugee or refugee professional in the local community, consider inviting that person to speak during services. You might also plan an educational program after Friday evening services or after Saturday morning services.

Upon registration, both individuals and congregations will receive access to HIAS' library of Refugee Shabbat programming resources, which will include liturgical readings, sermon/d'var Torah talking points, a text study, and a list of ways that people can take action on their own or as a group. Some of these elements are still being developed.

Congregations and organizations may also want to begin identifying possible community partners (e.g., other synagogues, local organizations, etc.) and finding the right space for the program.

Given the ongoing uncertainty around CO-

VID-19, HIAS is preparing resources that will work either online or in-person (in accordance with public health guidelines in place in February 2023).

2023 National and International Co-Sponsors include: Reconstructing Judaism; Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association; Jewish Council on Public Affairs; American Jewish World Service; T'ruah; Repair the World; Union for Reform Juda-

ism; Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; National Council of Jewish Women; Anti-Defamation League; OLAM; Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (JHSA); Hillel International; JIAS Toronto; Paideia; ECJC; JCORE; NATAN Worldwide Disaster Relief.

For more information call HIAS at 212-967-4100 or 800-HIAS-714 or visit HIAS.org.

## The Blue Card's Mission is to Help and Support Survivors

This is a pivotal time in human history; in the foreseeable future, it is very likely that historical texts will be the last reminders of the Holocaust. As members of the Jewish faith celebrated Hanukkah amongst their loved ones, a look back at history paints a passionate yet devastating portrait of Jewish resilience. Amidst the turmoil and horrors of the Nazi-run concentration camps, Jews banded together to celebrate Hanukkah in secret.

This past Hanukkah, The Blue Card continued to ensure that thousands of Holocaust survivors living in America are taken care of this holiday season. Most Holocaust survivors living in the US are over the age of 77, and the vast majority of them live alone. Affording proper food and health services is a struggle for this group, as the majority live below the federal poverty line. The Blue Card has made it their mission to help and support as many survivors as possible, providing financial assistance, education and outreach, and access to medical services.

There is a Hebrew saying, "L'dor v'dor" which describes the passing of values and culture from one generation to the next. Within the context of remembering the Holocaust, and honoring its survivors, this saying carries more weight than usual. During holiday season, as The Blue Card delivered Hanukkah gifts to the doorsteps of the survivors they serve, the organization's Executive Director, Masha Pearl, thinks about the importance of their



mission and its connection to l'dor v'dor.

"The Blue Card takes pride in being a safety net. I like to think that in our culture, we take care of the generation that came before us. These are the values that we intend to pass down to the generation that comes after us. If we don't fight for the dignity of these survivors, a group of people already let down by society once before, what kind of message are we sending to the next generation? What kind of message are we sending to the rest of the world?"

Part of Jewish tradition is the idea of giving to charity - or tzedakah. It is believed that those who give tzedakah benefit just as much as those on the receiving end. The Blue Card's mission is built on this concept of tzedakah and in the spirit of l'dor v'dor - by providing for Holocaust survivors in need, what supporters receive in return is an opportunity to help the past be remembered.

## Latimer Launches Tobacco Free Program

Science has made it perfectly clear over the last 60 years that smoking is a dangerous and potentially fatal habit. With that at the forefront, Westchester County Executive George Latimer has launched the Westchester Tobacco Free Program, a two-prong approach to lowering the smoking rate in the County.

"Addiction to nicotine products has cut short numerous lives to lung disease, heart disease and related illnesses; has robbed otherwise healthy individuals of their good health; has robbed families of fathers, mothers, siblings and other loved ones prematurely. That is why we are tackling the issue head on with Westchester Tobacco Free, a robust education and enforcement Program," Latimer said.

The County will fund and implement a robust \$3 million dollar public education campaign to all residents, highlighting the dangers of tobacco usage, offering efforts to help smokers quit smoking, and to support local community efforts to reduce smoking. This will include a new direct grant Program to community-based non-profits directly involved in tobacco-cessation as part of their anti-addiction efforts, and particularly those groups like local NAACP branches who have advocated for efforts to reduce smoking in communities of color.

The Program will be crafted with the assistance and oversight of members of the Board of Legislators to ensure the County is reaching all smokers, regardless of their geographic or demographic status. This effort will involve our Health Department, Community Mental Health Department, Youth Board and other related departments and offices of Westchester County Government to



County Executive George Latimer

ensure its success.

The County will develop a multi-level Program, working with state and local government resources to ensure improved enforcement of the existing Tobacco 21 age limit. Under the leadership of Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, the County will convene a conference with representatives from law enforcement agencies, prosecutorial and judicial offices, business leaders and youth organization leaders to develop a thorough plan to make sure no person under the age of 21 is able to obtain any type of tobacco product, which is clearly illegal by means of County, State and Federal law.

Jenkins said, "There is a path forward, and that path includes fighting addiction with all parties at the table. We need to identify what is necessary to ensure that Tobacco 21, the current law prohibiting sales of tobacco to those under 21, is being enforced."

History of anti-smoking initiatives in Westchester County: Ended smoking in public settings, including bars and restaurants (1996); Funded a tobacco-cessation education effort utilizing tobacco settlement funds (1999); Ended all sales of tobacco products to minors under the age of 21 (2018). Subsequently, both the State of New York, and the United States, has made tobacco sales illegal for all who have not yet reached their 21st birthday.

Latimer said, "In the report of the New York State Department of Health [August 2021], Westchester County had the lowest percent of adult current smokers among the 62 counties, 7.0%. However, we are not yet satisfied; we can do more."

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# “Chanukah on Fifth” Joyously Celebrated

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

“Chanukah on Fifth” was joyously celebrated in Pelham, beginning with a Laser Light Show by Laser Science Teacher Ben Regan; “Prismatic Magic,” in the Town House and Menorah Lighting in Gazebo Park by Chabad of Pelham Rabbi Levi Groner, along with a “Chanukah Gelt/Candy Drop,” from a Town Fire Truck by the firefighters. Also present were Town Supervisor Daniel McLaughlin and Village of Pelham Mayor Chance Mullen, who extended Chanukah greetings to the community.

Inside, latkes were served along with deli-

cious custard-filled chocolate donuts. Special glasses were distributed, that projected the image of a dreidel, when focused on Menorah flames.

“As we celebrated Chanukah in the privacy of our homes, tonight we light the Menorah outside in the cold and dark night. We are really cold, but the Menorah is going to warm us up,” Rabbi Groner smiled. “It is the power of light to illuminate. The greatest source of light is inside ourselves.

“The Maccabees could not find any new oil for their Menorah. All the oil had been defiled. A container of oil was found, enough to illuminate for one night. The light lasted for eight nights. Every one of us has a neshoma (soul) that shines so

brightly. Let us share our light with the world.”

“Chanukah is a great time of year to come together, and the lights signify the enduring spirit of the Jewish people,” Maurice Owen-Michaane, Broker/Owner, Capital Realty NY, sponsor of Chanukah on Fifth observed. “In the aftermath of Covid, we came together en masse to show that we stand together. Lots of members of the community, not just Jewish, came together for this great event.”

Chabad of Pelham is part of the largest network of Jewish social and educational organizations worldwide--widely known as Chabad Lubavitch.



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# Noa Tishby Pledges to Help Secure The Jewish Future

The Jewish Future Pledge (JFP) has announced that it has surpassed 11,000th pledges as author, producer, actress, thought leader and Israel advocate Noa Tishby, has signed the organization's moral commitment in December at the 50th Annual International Lion of Judah Conference. In reaching this milestone, Jewish Future Pledge demonstrates significant momentum in its work to ensure the future of the Jewish people through donations to other non-profit organizations and shared generational stories and values.

Born and raised in Tel Aviv, Noa Tishby was named Israel's first Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism and Delegitimization by Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on April 11, 2022. As a leading voice in issues involving the rise of anti-Zionist efforts to invalidate Israel as the Jewish homeland, Tishby is recognized as one of the 50 Most Influential Jews in the World by the Jerusalem Post.

"The importance of ensuring the future of the Jewish people cannot be understated," said Mike Leven, Founder of the Jewish Future Pledge. "These 11,000 pledges represent concrete, tangible action which we hope will ignite a surge of Jewish pride, secure much needed funds for the future, and spark critical intergenerational conversations about Jewish values."



Noa Tishby

"We need all Jews to come together, united in our mission to preserve our culture, our history, our values and our way of life – regardless of sect or observance level," said Tishby. "To take the Jewish Future Pledge is to take a public stance that the future of the Jewish people matters, and that a person takes pride in their Jewish identity and wants to leave a legacy of that identity behind to pave the way for future generations. For me this matter is of great importance, not just for the fu-

ture of the Jewish people, but for the world at large"

"It is estimated that \$68 trillion will transfer to the next generation in the next 25 years," added Leven. "We estimate that approximately 20% of these charitable dollars will be given by Jewish donors. The pledge aims to ensure that half of the amount allocated to charity by these Jewish donors, more than \$600 billion, is set aside for Jewish causes."

The Jewish Future Pledge is a commitment that from the funds a person leaves to charity at their passing, at least half will be earmarked to support the Jewish people and/or the State of Israel. None of the funds committed go to the Jewish Future Pledge. To where these funds will be directed is left entirely to the discretion of the Pledger. The organization simply encourages individuals to take part in the Jewish tradition of Tzedakah and ensure that values and life lessons live on in future generations.

Inspired by the Giving Pledge, which Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates introduced in 2010 for America's wealthiest philanthropists, the Jewish Future Pledge reaches out to people of any income whether individuals plan to leave \$10 or \$10 million to charity.

The Jewish Future Pledge (JFP) is a worldwide movement working to ensure the future of the Jewish people for generations to come. The organization calls on individuals to pledge that from the charity they leave at their passing, at least half will be earmarked to support the Jewish people and/or the State of Israel. While not legally binding, the pledge represents meaningful action during these challenging times and an opportunity to share views and have conversations with family and friends about shared values. In addition, the Jewish Future Pledge has created a Jewish Youth Pledge for 13- to 24-year-olds, asking them to commit to being active, committed members of the Jewish community throughout their lives, and providing resources so they can follow through. JFP has partnered with leading Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Federations of North America, JNF-USA, Israel Bonds, the Orthodox Union and numerous local federations in the United States. For more information visit: <https://jewishfuturepledge.org/>

## University Policies Fail to Protect Jewish Students

At a time when the mainstreaming and normalization of antisemitism is at an all-time high in the U.S., campus antisemitism watchdog group, AMCHA Initiative, released alarming new research which reveals school policies fail to address the predominant vehicle for antisemitism on campuses today, leaving Jewish students vulnerable and endangered.

"Whether antisemitism emanates from the right, in the form of classic antisemitism, or from the left, in the form of anti-Zionism, the rhetoric used to portray Jews is becoming increasingly similar: Jews possess undue power and privilege, which they use to control and oppress others. And while the antisemitism may be directed to different audiences, its intended effect is the same: to portray Jews as a threat to the common good, whose malevolent influence must be challenged and neutralized," stated AMCHA Director Tammi Rossman-Benjamin. "Yet, as the problem is rapidly becoming more acute, with a new massive assault on Jewish identity on campuses nationwide, a thorough examination of university policies reveals Jewish students are left neglected, vulnerable, exposed and without recourse against antisemitic harassment."

In the first-ever report of its kind, *Falling Through the Cracks: How School Policies Deny Jewish Students Equal Protection from Campus Antisemitism*, AMCHA's researchers compared the two main mechanisms in place on campuses to protect students from harassment and bigotry: Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policies and Student Codes of Conduct. Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policies are designed to address instances of harassing behavior directed at students because of their membership in particular protected identity groups. While most minorities are covered by these poli-

cies, Jewish students who fall victim to anti-Zionist motivated harassment, the predominant form of antisemitism on campuses today, are often deemed ineligible for coverage under this policy, since many university administrators do not consider support for Israel an expression of a Jewish student's religious beliefs or ethnicity. Jewish students who are not covered under the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy must therefore seek redress under the school's general Code of Conduct.

However, a comparison of the Non-Discrimination & Harassment Policies and Student Codes of Conduct on 100 campuses most popular with Jewish students revealed that, despite the severity of the harassment, not one school afforded victims as much protection under its Code of Conduct as they received under the school's Harassment Policy, likely leaving Jewish students unprotected from and vulnerable to the same harassment other students are protected from.

The study further noted that the problem of unfair and inadequate protection from harassment for Jewish students is greatly exacerbated by the unequal way administrators treat verbal harassment under the school's Harassment Policy versus its Code of Conduct. As most schools acknowledge, speech that meets the behavioral definition of harassment in their school's Harassment Policy and targets students who are members of the protected classes covered by the policy is not considered free speech and will be subject to discipline. However, harassing speech directed at "unprotected" students – no matter how severe, pervasive or persistent – is considered free speech and will not be subject to discipline. The study explains that this disparity doubly disadvantages many Jewish students: "[N]ot only are their harassers afforded free speech protection that



Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

is, in effect, license to continue verbally harassing them, but their own freedom of speech and academic freedom is diminished by the harassment."

"Despite the fact that anti-Zionist motivated attacks often meet the threshold for harassment articulated in school's harassment policies, the unfair discrepancy between these two policies means the exact same harmful behavior will be addressed promptly and vigorously for some students but ignored or downplayed when it comes to Jewish students," stated Rossman-Benjamin. "As the mainstreaming and normalization of antisemitism on social media and among entertainers, athletes, corporate executives and politicians continues at an alarming pace, it is essential that administrators address the institutional basis for the egregiously unfair treatment of Jewish students who fall victim to

harassment and bullying.

To fix this inequality, the report recommends requiring schools to use a single standard to judge objectionable behavior: language and action deemed unacceptable when directed at students from one group must be deemed unacceptable when directed at any student, irrespective of the motivation of the perpetrator or the identity of the victim. Under the First Amendment, all students - including Jewish students - have a constitutional right to be equally and adequately protected from behavior that takes away their own freedom of expression. And all students deserve an environment free from harassment that impedes their education and well-being. The researchers note that Harvard recently unveiled a draft policy that will do just that and can serve as a model for implementing this recommended approach. The Harvard draft policy guarantees unprotected students the administrative consideration of and response to harassing behavior equivalent to that granted protected students.

The report also recommends legislators consider new legislation, similar to the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, that establishes a clear legal process and robust government enforcement mechanisms for ensuring that all students in state and federally funded schools are equally and adequately protected from harassing behavior.

AMCHA Initiative is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to combating antisemitism at colleges and universities in the United States. The organization monitors more than 450 campuses for antisemitic activity, as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the U.S. government.

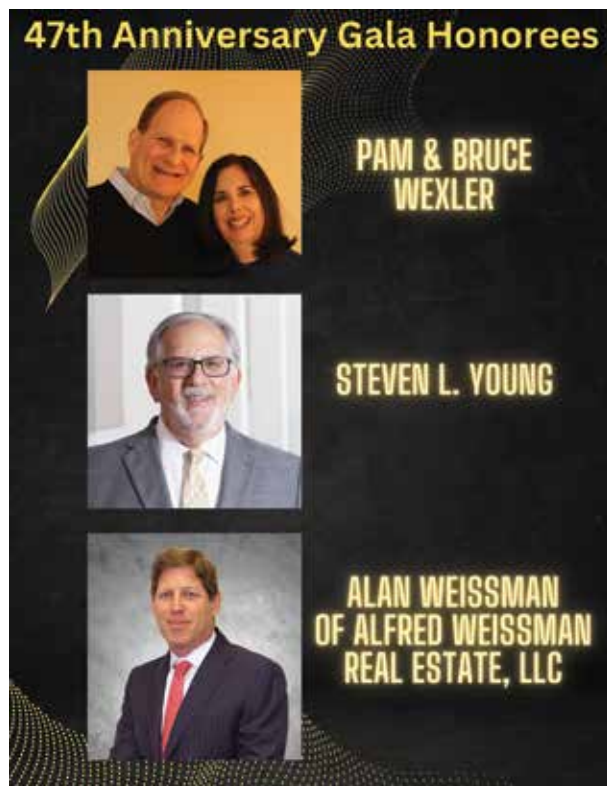
To learn more, go to <https://amchainitiative.org/harassment-policies-report/>

# Westchester Jewish Council Hosts A Time to Shine Gala

On February 4 at 7:15 PM, Westchester Jewish Council will host Time to Shine, the Council's 47th gala event, celebrating the leaders that illuminate the community at Congregation Kol Ami of Westchester, 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains.

This year, Pam and Bruce Wexler, Steven L. Young and Alan Weissman of Alfred Weissman Real Estate will be honored.

For questions call 914-328-7001. To register, go to [wjecouncil.org/gala](http://wjecouncil.org/gala).



## Universal Symbol Used to Designate Every Legally Sold Cannabis Product as Regulated

On December 15, Governor Kathy Hochul unveiled a "New York State Licensed Cannabis Dispensary" verification tool that will be posted in the windows of legally licensed retail dispensaries, which are set to begin opening by the end of 2022. The designation will ensure consumers know they are buying from a dispensary regulated by New York State. A universal symbol on each product sold will also show that it is up to standards set by the state. The combination provides consumers certainty that they have acquired a tested, regulated product.

"It's critical for New York's cannabis consumers to understand the risks of buying untested, illicit products and to have the tools to guide them to the safer, legal market that's poised to open," Governor Hochul said. "These tools will help to protect public health and strengthen our ability to deliver the equitable cannabis market our law envisions. We will continue to work with our partners in municipalities across the state to enforce the law and shutdown illicit operators who are selling products that put New Yorkers at risk."

As stores continue to open in the first quarter of 2023, the state will also be releasing a public education campaign called "Why Buy Legal New York," which will explain the benefits of purchasing legal adult-use cannabis for cannabis consumers in New York State. The campaign will discuss the risks of buying untested illicit products, and how those products undermine the goals of New York's cannabis law to build the most equitable and inclusive cannabis market in the nation.

Tremaine Wright, Chair of the Cannabis Control Board, said, "The dispensary verification tool unveiled by Governor Hochul today combined with requirements for



the universal symbol on regulated products sets us off on the right foot. It is critical that consumers know and trust that the new, legal cannabis market offers tested products and follows protocols designed to protect public health. These efforts combined with rigorous enforcement, will help build a stable, legal marketplace."

Chris Alexander, Executive Director of the Office of Cannabis Management, said, "We will use every tool available to strengthen the equitable, legal adult-use cannabis market we're building and the dispensary verification tool Governor Hochul unveiled today is one step in that process. Our enforcement team has been growing its partnerships and ramping up activity from Buffalo to New York City and will continue to do so until these illicit stores and trucks are shutdown."

The dispensary verification tool unveiled will be posted in the front windows of each legally licensed dispensary. It will include a QR code that can be scanned by consumers and local community members. Additionally, a similar version will be available for licensees who are looking to jump start sales through delivery.

Every product sold will also include a "universal symbol" designating it as a tested, regulated product. Consumers should check both the storefront for the dispensary verification tool and the product label to ensure they're purchasing a safer product.

## American Sephardi Federation Hosts 6th Annual New York Ladino Day

The American Sephardi Federation, the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, the Sephardic Foundation on Aging, and Shearith Israel League Foundation present: Kontar i Kantar: The 6th Annual New York Ladino Day, curated by Jane Mushabac and Bryan Kirschen. The festivities will be in person and on zoom, starting at 2pm, on Sunday, January 29, 2023, at the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street, New York. The program will feature Tony- and Grammy-nominated Broadway star Shoshana Bean; A conversation with Michael Frank, author of One Hundred Saturdays; Stella Levi and the Search for a Lost World; Judith Cohen, Sing Me a Story, on Sephardic Romances; and a Musical Finale with Susana Behar and guitarist Michel Gonzalez.

Ladino is a bridge to many cultures. A variety of Spanish, it has absorbed words from Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic, French, Greek, and Portuguese. The mother tongue of Jews in the Ottoman Empire for 500 years, Ladino became the home language of Sephardim worldwide. While the number of Ladino speakers has sharply declined, distinguished Ladino Day programs celebrate a vibrant language and heritage.

Since 2013, these programs have been held around the world to honor Ladino, also known as Judeo-Spanish. January 29th marks New York's 6th Annual Ladino Day hosted by the American Sephardi Federation.

To RSVP go to [asfny.org](https://asfny.org) {in person} or [tinyurl.com/ASFLadino](https://tinyurl.com/ASFLadino) {zoom}

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# WJCS Honors Michele Brettschneider and William Shirley at its 80th Anniversary Gala

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) will be honoring WJCS board members Michele Brettschneider and William Shirley at its 80th Anniversary Gala on March 28, 2023 at the Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase.

Founded in 1943, WJCS has grown to be the largest provider of licensed, community-based mental health services and one of the largest human service organizations in Westchester County. Proceeds from the Gala will support the 80+ programs and services that WJCS provides to over 20,000 Westchester residents of all ages and backgrounds each year.

"We are thrilled to be saluting two outstanding individuals who have given so much time and energy to support WJCS and the Westchester community," said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. "It is because of people like Michele Brettschneider and William Shirley that WJCS has grown from a small



Michele Brettschneider

agency to an organization that now helps 20,000 Westchester residents each year."

Michele Brettschneider has lived in and been an active member of the Westchester community for 16 years. She serves on the WJCS Executive Committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Children and Youth Services Committee, and the Gala Committee. Michele is on the Parent Advisory Board of J-Teen Leadership, a program of the UJA-Federation of NY.

Michele spent her professional career as a lawyer. She worked in the corporate department at Wolf, Block Schorr and Solis-Cohen in Philadelphia before moving to the law firm of Golenbock Eiseman Assor Bell & Peskoe in New York City. Michele spent the last few years of her legal career in house as Assistant General Counsel at Kenneth Cole.

Michele is a graduate of Lehigh University (B.A. Journalism, '90) and received a law degree

from the University of Pennsylvania (J.D. '93). She is a member of the Dean's Advisory Council for the College of Arts and Sciences at Lehigh University. From 2019-2021, she served as the College's representative to the Campaign Cabinet. Michele recently joined the Board of Advisors of the Penn Carey Law School. She was formerly on the board of the Women's Division of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Michele and her husband Fred are proud parents of their daughters Morgan and Haley.

William Shirley lived in Westchester County for 28 years, where he and his wife Kitty raised their three children. Their eldest, child, Alexander, has lived at WJCS's Harrison House since 2015. After Bill first learned about WJCS, as a grateful and amazed parent, he joined the WJCS board in 2019. He now serves as board secretary. In addition to focusing on WJCS's group homes, Bill has played a leading role as the board has pursued a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Bill spent his professional career as a lawyer. When he retired in 2022, Bill had served as Counsel at Sidley Austin LLP for eight years. For many



years before that, he worked at AIG Financial Products Corp., a subsidiary of American International Group, Inc., where his last position was Executive Vice President and the General Counsel, with responsibility for AIGFP's legal department, including lawyers in five offices worldwide. As a young lawyer, Bill worked at Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, where his practice areas ranged from corporate finance to capital markets to mergers and acquisitions. During his time there, Bill worked for three years in the firm's Paris office and two years in its London office.

Bill graduated with a degree in English from Stanford University in 1981. In 1986, he graduated from Columbia Law School, where he was Managing Editor of the *Columbia Law Review*. During the two years between Stanford and Columbia, Bill was a teacher at Rhodes School in New York City.

Bill is a proud parent of Alexander, Teddy, and Oliver. He owes more than words can say to his wife, Kitty.

For WJCS Gala ticket information and to participate in the WJCS Gala journal, go to [wjcs.com](http://wjcs.com)

## HHREC Announces GenerationsForward Speakers During Memory Keepers Story Hour

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains, has announced their Memory Keepers Story Hour schedule through 2023. These events are offered online, and feature HHREC Generations Forward speakers – a second, third and fourth generation group that includes children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

The event series features HHREC Board of Directors Chair Michael Gyory. Gyory told the true story about his father's first cousin Agi Keleti who survived the Nazis and outlasted the Communists to become the greatest female Jewish Olympian of all time – winning 10 medals in women's gymnastics for her native Hungary. Keleti is still alive at age 101 and is currently the oldest living Olympic medalist.

The HHREC Memory Keepers Story Hour speaker series will continue with Julie Sherman on January 19th; Tamar Ben Simon -on February 16th; Naomi Koller on March 16th; William Zimmerman on April 13th; and Yonat Assayag on May 18th.

"These stories provide a unique opportunity to hear from a very special group of next generation Holocaust family members and the consequences of human hate, and help people reflect, as they realize that choices matter, that one person can make a difference," said HHREC Executive Director Millie Jasper. She added, "We are eternally grateful for the contributions from these courageous men and women who



Michael Gyory and Agi Keleti

share their stories of survival and personal experiences from the Holocaust, and to their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren for their effort to help share them today, and for generations to come. Sadly, the number of our Survivors is dwindling, and we are taking great care to recognize what they mean to all of us and preserve their memories and the impact they have had – and will continue to

have – for future generations."

The HHREC launched the Memory Keepers Story Hour series in 2020 in support of their mission – to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, to promote the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect, and to encourage speaking up and acting against all forms of hate, bigotry, and prejudice. The HHREC has been inviting guests to attend these events to hear members of their Speakers Bureau share their family's uniquely powerful Holocaust experiences and present their testimonies to their origins. The HHREC Memory Keepers Speakers Bureau includes Holocaust Survivors, Honorary Holocaust Liberator Speakers and GenerationsForward Speakers who tell their stories from a "next generation" perspective, adding new meaning to the survivors' powerful stories.

All the HHREC Memory Keeper Story Hours begin at 7pm. To register for these events, visit [hhrecny.org/inspire\\_events/](http://hhrecny.org/inspire_events/) or email Millie Jasper [mjasper@hhrecny.org](mailto:mjasper@hhrecny.org) for Zoom log-in information.

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# An Elevator Speech Delivering a Message



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

According to Wikipedia, an elevator speech is a short description of an idea, product, or company that explains the concept in a way such that any listener can understand it in a short period of time. Experts say that you should keep your elevator speech short and sweet, with the goal being to deliver your message in under a minute. Basically, the concept is to be able to tell someone what you do in the time it takes to go on a brief elevator ride.

## WJL Calender January 2023

The JCC of Mid Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale will be featuring a Hebrew Café on Tuesdays, January 31, February 28, March 8 and May 30 from 7:30-8:30 pm as Shachar Liran-Hanan from Israel will lead the group in practicing Hebrew in a friendly environment. All levels are welcome. Learn more and register at [jccmw.org/Hebrew-café](http://jccmw.org/Hebrew-café)

The Chabad of Bronxville is offering a new course called Book Smart, a panoramic overview of 3000 years of Jewish learning at the Chabad Jewish Center, 453 White Plains Road, Eastchester, on 6 Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm, February 1-March 8. For more information contact [Rabbi@JewishBronxville.com](mailto:Rabbi@JewishBronxville.com) or call 914-458-2441.

The JCC of Mid Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale will host a Beginners Hebrew class on Mondays, January 30, February 6, 13, and 27, March 13, 20 and 27, April 10 and 17 from 7-8:30pm. Learn more and register at [jccmw.org/beginner-hebrew](http://jccmw.org/beginner-hebrew)

### January 24

At 7:45pm, Westchester Jewish Council in partnership with The Jewish Education Project, Westchester Association of Temple Educators and the Westchester Board of Rabbis, invite the public to a free community wide lecture at Congregation Kol Ami, 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, with Professor Eliyahu Stern about The Enlightenment. Suggested reading is *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 1770-1870* by Jacob Katz. For more information contact [Helene@wjccouncil.org](mailto:Helene@wjccouncil.org) or 914-328-7001 X 106



### January 25

The Harrison Public Library, 2 Bruce Avenue, Harrison, will present a Rugelach Baking Workshop with Baked with Love at 7pm. Registration is required. Call

914-835-0324 or visit [harrisonpl.org](http://harrisonpl.org) to sign up.

So, here is my elevator speech: our law practice is focused on legal problems faced by individuals as they age and individuals with special needs. However, in many instances our actual clients are family members (and loved ones) of seniors and individuals with special needs who seek our representation on behalf of their loved one.

Many of our clients come to us for help in preparing their estate plans, including a last will and testament, living trust, health care proxy, living will, and durable power of attorney. In any event, estate planning is not about forms and documents; it is about making sure that your wishes are carried out upon incapacity or death.

People who are trustee of a trust have ongoing responsibilities to the trust beneficiaries. Our firm can help you manage these duties and ensure that you are in compliance with all legal and tax requirements. A trust can serve many purposes and it is important that the administration of the trust is conducted in a manner consistent with the trust creator's intent.

Our special needs planning practice focuses on assisting individuals with special needs and their families achieve the highest quality of life possible. We advocate to ensure that our clients

### January 26

In honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day, The Harrison Public Library in partnership with The Tuckahoe Public Library, will present an online lecture by Dr. William Reszelbach who will discuss his book, *Through the Eyes of a Child of Holocaust Survivors* at 7pm. Register at [harrison-pl.org/events](http://harrison-pl.org/events)

### January 27

The International Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed annually and is a day of remembrance of the six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust. This date, designated by the UN in 2005, commemorates the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army in 1945. Many programs will be featured this day.

### January 29

The Shames JCC on the Hudson, 425 South Broadway, Tarrytown, will host an interactive Family Day workshop tasting a variety of botanically infused honeys and then making your own infused honey. Bring one small 4oz. mason jar for class. Registration is for one adult and one child 5+. Contact Jillian Greenberg for questions or to register at [programs@shamesjcc.org](mailto:programs@shamesjcc.org)

### January 30

A new talk on Zoom about Funny Jewish Women on Film will be held at 7pm by The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy and given by film historians Irv Slifkin and Laurence Lerman, founders of FilmShul. For tickets go to

[www.eventbrite.com/e/funny-girls-a-new-talk-on-zoom-about-the-funny-jewish-women-of-film-tickets-483973055437](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/funny-girls-a-new-talk-on-zoom-about-the-funny-jewish-women-of-film-tickets-483973055437)

### February 4

At 7:15pm, Westchester Jewish Council will host their 47th Gala called, Time to Shine at Congregation Kol Ami, 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, honoring Pam and Bruce Wexler, Steven L. Young and Alan Weissman of Alfred Weissman Real Estate. To attend, go to [wjccouncil.org/gala](http://wjccouncil.org/gala).

have access to all appropriate government benefits to which they are entitled. We also assist clients with special needs trusts to help protect their assets for their loved ones and with guardianship for people who cannot manage their own affairs due to illness or incapacity.

While New York's probate process is not particularly complex, it can still be overwhelming for many. Our firm helps executors of estates perform their legal duties to ensure that the decedent's final affairs are settled properly.

About 70% of all Americans will need long-term care at home, in an assisted living facility or in a nursing home. The cost of long-term care in the New York metropolitan area can be more than \$200,000 a year. Failure to plan in advance can result in the loss of significant personal assets. By planning in advance, you can take the necessary steps to ensure that your choices regarding who will manage your finances and health care are followed in the event you become incapacitated. Moreover, with proper planning, you can minimize your out-of-pocket costs for long-term care. Our firm can help explain the available options to you and help you make the right choices for you and your family.

## A New Year, A Renewed Call to Action: No Hate in Our States



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL

It has been three long years, and it's not only due to the Covid pandemic changing everything we once considered "normal".

The past few years, we have borne witness to an increasing normalization of hatred against Jews.

Therefore, as we launch our 2023 New Year's Resolutions, whether including more exercise or incorporating mindfulness into our lives, let's include a Call to Action for No Hate in Our States.

This is not just a Call to Action for the Jewish community. Importantly, it is one for our friends and allies, and community partners. Upstanders.

The string of anti-Jewish rants by Kanye West ("Ye") perhaps drew the most attention recently, but they are not isolated incidents.

*Words matter.*

So much hate is directed against the Jewish people who comprise barely 2% of the U.S. population and just 0.2% across the globe. Yet, Jews are among the world's leading recipients of hate.

Consider AJC's 2021 groundbreaking antisemitism survey, where one in four American

Every child with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate public education. We represent individuals and their families to ensure that school districts are held accountable and provide the type of education that the law requires, regardless of disability. Our firm takes a collaborative approach and works with school district representatives to make sure the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meets the child's individual needs; however, we are prepared to go to court, if necessary, to protect our client's interests.

There you have it. My elevator speech, and then some. I hope to see you in the elevator!

*Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the "Best Lawyers" in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914-684-2100) or by visiting the firm's website at [www.littmankrooks.com](http://www.littmankrooks.com).*

Jews said they had experienced antisemitism in the last year. And 4 in 10 said they had changed their behavior to avoid being publicly identified as Jewish, such as self-censoring on social media, or not wearing a yarmulke or Star of David (*Magen David*) necklace.

In 2022. In the United States of America.

Often, the Jewish community is not included in DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity) conversations or task forces, in schools, college campuses, or workplaces. As the number one target of all religiously based hate crimes according to the FBI, how is that possible?

AJC is working to reduce those shocking numbers and situations through our **Call to Action Against Antisemitism** ([AJC.org](http://AJC.org)).

This resource provides guidance and tools to help leaders understand, respond to, and prevent antisemitism. Let's be very clear: antisemitism is everyone's problem.

*Actions matter.*

Together, as we look forward into the possibilities that the calendar change provides, we recommit ourselves to celebrate the strength of our diverse communities.

Together we can work with our community partners, government officials, social media and media leaders and encourage them to join us in a unique New Year's Resolution: rededicate ourselves to standing up against hatred and antisemitism and strengthen our society overall.

Let this be our New Year's Resolution for 2023: working together to truly ensure that there is No Hate in Our States.

*Myra Clark-Siegel is regional director of AJC (American Jewish Committee). To learn more: [westchester@ajc.org](mailto:westchester@ajc.org).*

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### AUDITION CALL

The Manor Club Theatre, 1023 Esplanade in Pelham, is auditioning for "Lovers and Other Strangers." 5 Men, 5 Women, ages 20 to 70. Auditions at the theatre on January 22, 2023 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm and January 23 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Show dates: March 12-14. For full information go to [tmcofpelham.org](http://tmcofpelham.org)

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# Mazel Tov

## Measure to Award Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz

In December, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) announced that their bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Benjamin Ferencz was included in the FY2023 omnibus funding package. Ferencz, the last living Nuremberg prosecutor, will receive the award in recognition of his work prosecuting Nazi war criminals, most notably the Einsatzgruppen, and his service in World War II. The bill previously passed the House in May and was introduced by Representatives Lois Frankel (D-FL) and Joe Wilson (R-SC).



Benjamin Ferencz

"I am honored to have secured the awarding of 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 spent the many decades since then fighting for human rights, justice and peace. Mr. Ferencz's life exemplifies what it means to dedicate oneself to compassion, empathy and righteousness. Few people have been more deserving of this tremen-

dous honor."

"I am honored to recognize Benjamin Ferencz, the last living Nuremberg prosecutor, with the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the greatest honors an American can receive," 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. This award rightfully recognizes Mr. Ferencz for his fervor for justice and lifelong devotion to human rights and

peace."

"Ben Ferencz embodies the fight for justice and this honor is well deserved. 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 was proud to join my colleagues in making this award a reality. The Congress-

sional Gold Medal is a fitting tribute to a life of purpose and service to humanity."

"By awarding Ben Ferencz, the last living Nuremberg prosecutor, with the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress is sending an important message: that hate, bigotry, and antisemitism can never be tolerated. This message couldn't come at a more important time with antisemitism and Holocaust denial on the rise," said Rep. Frankel. "Mr. Ferencz is a hero of the Jewish community who has dedicated decades of his life to combatting antisemitism, prosecuting those who act on their hatred, and keeping the lessons of the Holocaust alive. It is a privilege to recognize his remarkable lifelong commitment to justice, peace, and human dignity with the Congressional Gold Medal—Congress's highest expression of honor."

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. He also lived in New Rochelle.

After graduating from Harvard Law School, Fe-

rencz 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.

## JCRC Hosts 2022 Annual Benefit

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York {JCRC-NY} honored four exemplary and esteemed New York leaders - Hal Fetner, Alex Fetner, Michael P. Lustig and Rev. Jacques Andre DeGraff - during its 2022 Annual Benefit at the Harmonie Club on Thursday, December 15.

Among the civic, political and community leaders in attendance were Ambassador Asaf Zamir, Consul General of Israel in New York, H.E. Israel Nitzan, Deputy Consul General of Israel in New York,

Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, NYC Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Chair of the Jewish Caucus, and Eric S. Goldstein, CEO, UJA-Federation of New York.

In his remarks, JCRC-NY President Bennett Golub welcomed the honorees, guests and JCRC-NY leadership. He noted, "In addition to our honorees, there are many to thank this evening: a special thank you goes to our Annual Benefit Co-Chairs and Sponsors, Development Co-Chairs Robyn Polansky Morrison and Gene Rachmansky and the Development Committee, Board Members, past honorees, and our stellar and devoted staff, led tonight by our Annual Benefit team," Golub concluded.

The awards program began with videotaped greetings from the Consul General of Israel in New York Ambassador Asaf Zamir, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and David L. Moore, Chair of the Board, UJA Federation of New York.

Hal Fetner, President & CEO and his son Alex Fetner, Associate of Fetner Properties, accepted The L'Dor V'Dor Community Builder Award, presented by Louise Carroll, Partner and Co-Chair, Affordable Housing and Community Development Practice, Katten. The award was presented "in recognition of your deep dedication to Jewish traditions, family, community, the State of Israel, and the City and State of New York."



Left to right: Honorees Hal and Alex Fetner, and Michael P. Lustig; JCRC-NY President Bennett Golub; JCRC-NY Chair Cheryl Fishbein; Honoree Rev. Jacques Andre DeGraff; JCRC-NY Executive Vice President and CEO Gideon Taylor, and JCRC-NY CEO Emeritus Rabbi Michael S. Miller (photo credit: Michael Priest Photography)

The Shofar Award was presented to Michael P. Lustig by Brian S. Cohen, Lavine Family Executive Director, Columbia/Barnard Hillel Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life. Michael is a JCRC-NY Officer who, after a 25-year career on Wall Street, now devotes the majority of his time and energies toward non-profit and impact-related enterprises. Prior to retiring, Lustig spent most of his career at the asset management firm BlackRock, where he was Managing Director overseeing Structured Mortgage & Derivative Products trading and Advisor/Portfolio Manager for the Federal Reserve's Global Financial Crisis-Related Managed Assets.

Rev. Jacques Andre DeGraff accepted The Bridge to Justice Award from Rabbi Michael S. Miller, CEO Emeritus of JCRC-NY. Rev. DeGraff is a renowned champion for equity and inclusion, who has served on the pastoral staff at historic Canaan Baptist Church, where he was ordained under the Reverend Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker (Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s former Chief of Staff). Upon graduating from Hunter College, he studied at the NYU School of Real Estate, New York Theological Seminary, and Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

JCRC-NY builds relationships within the Jewish community and with New Yorkers of all backgrounds and faiths to advance the values, interests, and security of the Jewish community and to create a more interconnected New York for all.

## Orthodox Union Leadership Elects Mitchel Aeder as 18th OU President

In January, Mitchel Aeder began his term as the 18th president of the Orthodox Union (OU), the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization. Aeder takes over from Mark (Moishe) Bane, who served as OU president for the past six years.

At the OU's biennial convention on January 1 in Woodmere, N.Y., convention delegates elected Aeder unanimously. At the same time, the delegates elected other lay leaders to fill various positions. Long-standing Orthodox Union board member Yehuda Neuberger was elected as the new Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Aeder has served on the OU's board since 2000. He has been the chairman of Yachad, the OU department that provides services to individuals with special needs, and the Youth Commission that governs NCSY, the OU's youth movement that provides 30,000 Jewish teenagers with programming to help them develop a positive Jewish identity. Most recently, Aeder served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the OU.



Mitchel Aeder

The role of OU president is a two-year term. Bane, elected to three terms as head of the international organization, achieved far-reaching and historic accomplishments that achieved transformational change. During the pandemic, he oversaw the OU's continued growth, facilitating the purchase of the OU's new headquarters in downtown New York City. Under his careful direction, the OU revamped its professional leadership structure; expanded its offerings; added board members; and created

three new departments: Torah Initiatives, Women's Initiative and Impact Accelerator.

Orthodox Union President Mitchel Aeder stated, "It is a great honor to work with the OU's extraordinary professionals and engaged lay leaders. I am humbled by the opportunity to partner with them in leading this great institution. I thank my mentor and friend, Moishe Bane, for his visionary leadership and look forward to his continued involvement in the OU."



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