

A Special Chanukah Message

BY RABBI LEVI WELTON

Baruch Hashem, in a little less than a month the Jewish community will be celebrating the festival of Chanukah. The most famous aspect of this holiday is the lighting of the Menorah, a tradition dating back 2,162 years and which remains a timeless symbol of hope and resilience.

In that pivotal moment in history, a small group of Jewish scholars, the Maccabees, rose against oppressive forces that condemned religious freedom, defiled the Holy Temple, and persecuted the Jewish people. Despite being few in number and having a low chance of success, the Maccabees were victorious in their battle for religious liberty, rededicating the Holy Temple and rekindling the Menorah. Chanukah, in Hebrew, translates to 'rededication,' and I believe this holiday has life lessons that can resonate with all Americans. As Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson would advise his students, "We must listen carefully to what the candles are saying."

Firstly, in remembrance of this miracle, we light a menorah with eight branches, unlike the original Temple Menorah with seven branches. This choice signifies the Maccabees' limited supply of uncontaminated olive oil, which miraculously endured for eight days. The Menorah's message is clear – no matter what generation we find ourselves in, and no matter how great the darkness is around us, we have the duty and ability to be a shining light of justice, liberty, and freedom.

This concept aligns with the Seven Laws of Noah, which the Jewish people consider guiding principles for all of humanity. Former President George H.W. Bush, in Public Law No. 102-14, emphasized that these 'Seven Noahide Laws,' transmitted through God to Moses on Mount Sinai, are ethical values applicable to everyone, irrespective of religious faith. These principles include belief in one God, reverence for human life, protection of animal life, respect for others' property, and establishing a just legal system.

Secondly, one might ask, why light only one candle? Why not all eight at one time? Ancient scholars debated such a thing, and today, the practice is to light one candle each night. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that adding a new



Chanukah candle every night teaches us that every day we must increase our endeavors to spread light throughout the world.

Lastly, the Menorah serves as a testament to the belief that the Almighty can bestow miracles upon the resolute few who stand for what is right, even when many might say it is wrong. In the words of the eminent American anthropologist Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Rabbi Welton is currently a United States Air Force Chaplain (Captain) and the Manhattanville College Jewish Chaplain at the Clark Center for Religion and Social Justice. He is also the author of the book, Be Like the Moon.

Lost and Found



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

For years, Jewish community scholars and leaders raised growing concerns about a divide between Israelis and Diaspora communities around the world. Many were concerned about the younger generation being distanced from, disinterested in, or disconnected from Israel. Divides between denominations and political affiliations were growing, and the very

real political strife within Israel over the judicial overhaul was stretching Israeli civil society as never before.

From a number of corners, there was genuine, growing concern about the future of Jewish peoplehood, until October 7, a date which will be scarred into our community's collective history. After the horrific, depraved terror attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7, everything changed.

No longer are we divided: Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, Israeli, Diaspora, Democrat, Republican, Sephardi, Mizrachi, Ashkenazi. We are Am Echad, ONE people. We are unified, fighting for the very existence of our people. And the Jewish community has found its voice. At every age, denomination, level of religious practice, and background, we are standing strong, and are vocal.

If Hamas thought that through these horrific terror attacks that they would bring us to

our knees, and weaken or destroy us, they were badly mistaken. We are a people of collective memory. We are the same people who every year for millennia recount and retell the stories of those who tried to destroy us – Passover, Purim, Tisha B'Av, the Shoah. But, as Jews, we come back stronger. Those who tried to destroy us are the ones who have gone from power. We are here to stay.

Our response: Jews around the world who never did so before have begun wearing a Magen David or Star of David necklace, are going to synagogue, having Shabbat dinner, and are publicly advocating for the Jewish people and Israel in a newfound, powerful, and unified voice.

Death wishes on Jews, calls for the destruction of Israel, and glorification of the horrors of Oct. 7 are not expressions of support for the Palestinians. The violent expressions

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“Sip For Solidarity” to Support Israeli Wineries and Raise Money for Israeli Relief Efforts

The world of wine in Israel, perhaps the oldest wine-producing region in the world, has always represented a sense of peace and goodwill but has become collateral damage of the horrible atrocities that occurred on October 7.

To raise awareness and in support of Israel and Israeli wineries, the Israeli Wine Producers Association (IWPA), a trade organization promoting Israeli wineries through wine education and events, is asking consumers to “Sip For Solidarity.”

The massacre has had an immediate, concrete impact, particularly on picking, sorting, and winemaking teams. Harvest had begun shortly

before the attacks, which meant that the sorting, crushing, and fermentation processes, were, in many cases, done under the constant threat of attack and bombardment. For many wineries, production teams have been hollowed out as the young men and women who normally would be shepherding the crucial winemaking process have been called up to help defend the nation.

“Winemaking has its own schedule, unlike other industries where you can pause production or run with limited staff. Grapes grow and ripen when they do; the winemaking process is very hands-on. Without staff, many wineries face an impending crisis,” said Joshua Greenstein, the

Vice President of the IWPA. “Additionally, wine is usually something enjoyed when you go out to eat or to a party, and people in Israel aren’t feeling particularly celebratory these days. It’s catastrophic not just for this year’s sales, but for the vintages harvesting now that won’t be ready for sale for years to come.”

Asked what people can do to help, Mr. Greenstein said, “Buy a bottle of Israeli wine. Not only will the purchase help the wineries, but we’re donating 10% of every case shipped from November 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023, to Israeli relief efforts. With the wine-consuming public’s support, these challenges are surmountable, and wineries will still craft wines that accurately and deliciously reflect the character of the vintage and of Israel, just as they always have.”

Israel has been able to blend their ancient history with the most modern technology to produce some of the finest wines available and become one of the fastest-growing winemaking regions in the world. The Israeli Wine Producers Association (IWPA) repre-



Joshua Greenstein, VP of IWPA, showcases the vast array of wines produced in Israel.

sents Israeli wines with a unified voice. To communicate, educate, market, and expose US customers and consumers to Israel as a world-class wine region. The IWPA represents 30+ Israeli wineries ranging from boutique to the largest producer. Follow @IsraeliWine for the latest from the IWPA.

Statement from UJA-Federation of New York on the Confirmation of Jack Lew as Ambassador to Israel

UJA-Federation of New York congratulates Jack Lew on his confirmation as ambassador to Israel. Jack’s extensive international and policy experience and unwavering commitment to promoting Israel’s stability in the region have never been more crucial to Jews in Israel and around the world. His legacy of distinguished leadership will no doubt strengthen the US/Israel relationship during this extremely challenging time,” said Eric S. Goldstein, CEO, UJA-Federation of New York.

Birthright Israel Relocates To Hotels Hundreds Of Israelis Affected By Missile Attacks In The South And North

In a heartwarming effort to assist people along the country’s southern coast suffering during Hamas’s war against Israel, Birthright Israel recently relocated more than 270 residents from the Ashkelon area bombarded by Hamas rockets to a Jerusalem hotel. The organization has also relocated 185 residents from northern Israel to a hotel in Tiberias due to Hezbollah’s launching of missiles from Lebanon.

Birthright Israel has also arranged for them educational and recreational activities, developed by their education department through its deep experience of working with civilians during the Second Lebanon War (2006) and Operation Protective Edge in Gaza (2014).

The relocations were made possible thanks to a limited emergency relief fund led by Judy and Michael Steinhardt and the generous support of Rita and Charles Bronfman, the Goldberg Nash Family Foundation, Len Abramson, and contributions for the Jewish Federations of North America’s emergency fund.



“Birthright Israel stands hand in hand with the families of southern Israel,” said Gidi Mark, Birthright Israel CEO. “As the clouds of the initial shock October 7 at Hamas’s barbaric massacres dissipate, Birthright Israel is doing our part to assist and relieve the unbearable anguish of our brothers and sisters whose homes have been destroyed – people whose families have been torn apart and whose lives have been changed forever.

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Governor Announces the Launch of a New Hotline and Online Form to Report Hate and Bias Incidents

On October 20, Governor Kathy Hochul, in conjunction with the Hate and Bias Prevention Unit of the New York State Division of Human Rights, announced the launch of a new telephone hotline and online form allowing New Yorkers to report hate and bias incidents directly to HBPU. Alongside this announcement, HBPU encourages all New Yorkers to contact the Unit if they or someone they know has experienced an incident involving hate or discrimination. The announcement and reminder comes as Jewish, Arab, Muslim, and other communities across New York State and around the country face prejudice and violence in the aftermath of the horrific violence in Israel and Gaza.

“Hate is a cowardly thing, and no New Yorker should have to endure the discrimination it fuels,” Governor Hochul said. “It is crucial to stop any form of hate as soon as it emerges so that it has no opportunity to grow into a force that leads to the loss of life. Keeping New Yorkers safe is my top priority, and I am proud to launch this hotline so that everyone can quickly get the help they need.”

“During these times of profound loss and tremendous tragedy, we cannot give in to the destructive impulse to hate, instead, let us look to the infinite power of love,” said Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado. “In New York, we will not let this moment divide us. We are committed to ensuring that every person in this state, regardless of religion or background, is protected from hate and supported with love. We will look out for each



Governor Kathy Hochul

other, and we will get through these tragedies together.”

The Division’s Hate and Bias Prevention Unit condemns all forms of hate and seeks to address acts of hate and bias that occur in New York State. While emergency situations and real-time incidents should be referred to 911 first, HBPU encourages all New Yorkers who have experienced an incident involving hate or discrimination, or who wish to participate in community anti-hate initiatives, to contact HBPU. HBPU stands ready to offer a wide range of assistance to community

members, including assistance in filing complaints, organizing educational programming, hosting community dialogues, providing conflict resolution, and more.

The announcement highlighted the Unit’s launch of a dedicated incident reporting hotline at 844-NO-2-HATE, and members of the public can also report incidents through HBPU’s online reporting form, which can be found at <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/DHR-Bias-Incident-Form>. Governor Hochul announced the plan for these new reporting mechanisms during an event at the Center for Jewish History.

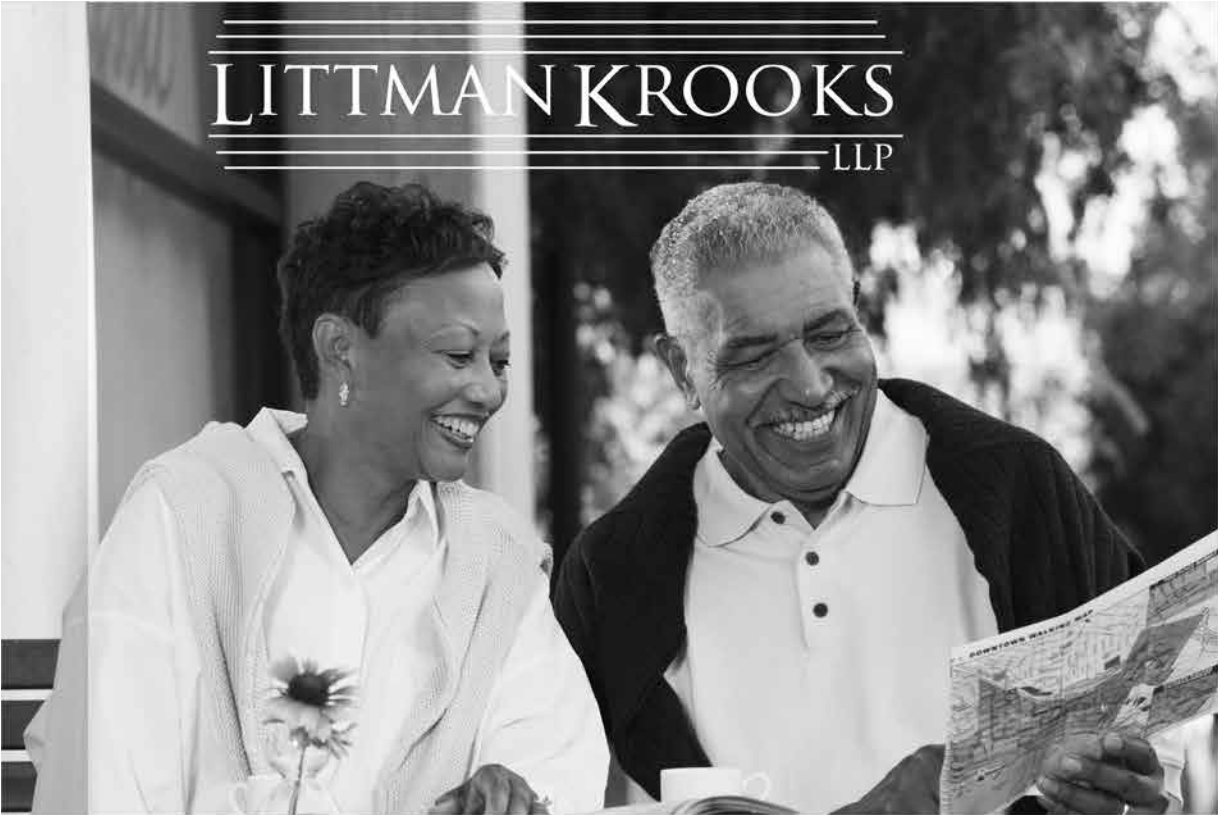
Division of Human Rights Commissioner Maria L. Imperial said, “The Division of Human Rights will continue to work to ensure New Yorkers can live with dignity, fulfill their potential, and participate fully in the life of the state. Antisemitism and anti-Muslim bias have no place in our communities. It’s vital that we address hate here at home, and work with our neighbors and communities to build a better world, filled with love for all.”

Hate and Bias Prevention Unit Senior Director Joan Pangilinan-Taylor said, “The Hate and Bias Prevention Unit is here to assist New Yorkers in this difficult time. All of us should feel safe, welcome, and respected in our daily lives, without the painful experience of Antisemitism or Anti-Muslim bias. We encourage every individual in our state to speak out if they have experienced or witnessed a hate or bias incident and contact us

for help.”

In addition, Governor Hochul led a bipartisan coalition of seventeen governors to stand in solidarity with Israel, issuing a joint letter to federal leaders to express broad support for Israel and condemnation of terror attacks from Hamas. Governor Hochul has led New York’s response to the crisis in Israel, offering support to Israeli President Isaac Herzog and meeting with Israel’s U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan. She has attended multiple vigils and rallies in support of the State of Israel, from Albany to New York City. The Governor has also lit state landmarks in blue and white, the colors of Israel’s flag, raised the Israeli flag above the Governor’s residence in Albany, and directed flags on State buildings to be flown at half-staff to commemorate the victims of the Hamas terror attacks.

Launched by Governor Hochul in December 2022 and chaired by Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado, HBPU has established 10 regional Hate and Bias Prevention Councils representing every region across the state. The councils are comprised of a diverse network of public and private stakeholders that include community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, government agencies, and other advocacy groups. HBPU also oversees a rapid response initiative, which offers support to communities impacted by hate or bias incidents. More information about the Hate and Bias Prevention Unit can be found at <https://dhr.ny.gov/nohate>.



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Calendar of Events

Westchester Jewish Council
Voices From Israel – Virtual Event Lunchtime Series
Through Tuesday, November 21
Learn daily with a teacher from Israel and hear the Torah anchoring them now.
To register, visit www.hartman.tfaforms.net/4719093. For more information, visit www.hartman.org.il/.

JCC of Harrison
130 Union Avenue, Harrison
November 15, 7:00 p.m.
Book Launch and Dessert Reception of Street Corner of Dreams by Westchester resident Florence Reiss Kraut. The event is sponsored by the Harrison Library and the JCC of Harrison. For more information, contact Elise Levin Cooper at eliselevinecooper@gmail.com or call 914-584-7952.

Hoff-Barthelson Music School
Third Faculty Concert in the HB Artist Series
Joan Behrens Bergman Auditorium
25 School Lane, Scarsdale
November 17, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$20 pp
Enjoy an eclectic evening of classical, jazz, and contemporary works, promising a delightful experience for all attendees. Featured faculty members are Andrew Gonzalez, guitar; Joan Forsyth, piano; and Rolf Sturm, jazz guitar. Joining the faculty on stage are guest artists Jessica Marino, piano; William Anderson, guitar; Jenna Mammina, vocals; and Rob Henke, trumpet. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.hbms.org/event/hb-artist-series-4/.

Museum on Eldridge Street
12 Eldridge Street, New York, NY
On view through November 19
A Collage of Customs, Iconic Jewish Woodcuts Revised for the Twenty-First Century
This exhibition featuring works by artist Mark Podwal offers inventive interpretations of woodcuts from the 16th-century Sefer Minhagim (Book of Customs) and combines lighthearted, imaginative whimsy with insightful commentary on Jewish customs and history. He not only injects a sense of playfulness into religious objects and practices but also invites deeper contemplation and appreciation of their significance. For more information, visit www.eldridgestreet.org/events or call 212-219-0302.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY
November 20
The Met to Reopen 45 Newly Installed European Paintings Galleries
The Met will reopen its full suite of 45 galleries dedicated to European Paintings from 1300 to 1800 following the completion of an extensive skylight renovation project that began in 2018. A chronological sequence of engaging displays will showcase more than 700 works from the Museum's world-famous holdings, offering fresh dialogues and thematic groupings. The newly re-configured galleries—which will include recently acquired paintings and prestigious loans, as well as select sculptures and works of decorative art—will illuminate the interconnectedness of cultures, materials, and moments in the collection. For more information, visit metmuseum.org

Response to Trauma in the Face of Hamas Attacks

BY MIRIAM AROND

Trauma has been described as an overwhelming physiological response in which an individual experiences a loss of control, vulnerability, and immobilization.
The barbaric massacre that occurred on October 7 in Israel was a trauma that shook the Jewish world. While any attack is shocking, the unimaginably horrific brutality and savagery that was carried out within the Jewish state, the murder of 1,400 people in one day, the maiming of thousands more, and the kidnapping of 240 people, including babies, the elderly, and the disabled, have been devastating. It has triggered deep-seated fears and suffering related to years of persecution of Jews and intergenerational trauma.
At Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), employees and board members came together online to share and process their sadness, grief, and anxiety about Hamas attacks against Israel. In gathering as a community, members of our WJCS staff focused on what experts say about responses to trauma and opened up about their own reactions to recent horrific news reports.
Hanna Cohen, Psy.D., Assistant Chief Psychologist at the WJCS Trager Lemp Center for Treating Trauma & Promoting Resilience, noted that one of

the challenges of trauma is that, as we are experiencing fear, anger, worry, helplessness, grief, and guilt, we also need to carry on with our daily responsibilities. We each have a “window of tolerance” in which we feel we can deal with whatever stresses or pressures are happening in our lives, she explained.
When the stress or trauma becomes overwhelming, however, we often respond, with either a Hyperarousal or Hypoarousal response. A Hyperarousal response is characterized by anxiety, anger, and feeling overwhelmed which can lead to agitation, blaming, insults, or running away from the situation. A Hypoarousal response, on the other hand, is a “frozen” response. People “zone out,” feel empty, and become numb. The body shuts down in avoidance of dealing with the trauma.
Stephan Spilkowitz, Director of Culture and Engagement at WJCS and the co-leader of our online discussion, encouraged participants to share what they have been experiencing, which many did. “Creating a safe space in which we come together as a community to talk about our feelings and challenges and offer support to each other is vitally important,” said Seth Diamond, CEO of WJCS. “It’s also essential for all of us to remember to care for ourselves so that we can be there for others.”
One of the best ways to manage trauma is to try to restore a sense of safety, predictability, and con-

Twenty-Eight Local Jewish Leaders Embarked on Emergency Trip to Israel with UJA-Federation of New York

The UJA-Federation of New York led a coalition of twenty-eight local rabbis and Jewish leaders to aid those impacted by the war with Hamas. The delegation landed in Israel on Monday, October 30, and traveled through November 1, visiting numerous communities to provide support and trauma assistance to evacuees and families of hostages and engaging in chaplaincy work at major medical centers.
The delegation comprised of rabbis and Jewish leaders from diverse backgrounds, including eleven Orthodox, six Conservative, five Reform, and one Reconstructionist leader. They represented synagogues and organizations from all five boroughs in New York City, as well as Long Island and Westchester.
Rabbi Menachem Creditor, the Pearl and Ira Meyer scholar-in-residence at UJA, and Alex Roth-Kahn, the managing director of UJA’s Carling Department, traveled with the delegation.
“As Israel mourns in the aftermath of the barbaric terror attack committed on innocent Israeli civilians, it is vital for Israelis to know that American Jewry is here to support them,” said Rabbi Creditor. “My heart is in pain as I made this trip to Israel, but we as clergy are ready to serve and stand in solidarity with our Israeli brothers and sisters during this painful time.”
Since the attack on Israel on Oct. 7, UJA has allocated more than \$37 million to meet emergency needs related to the war. Further information on UJA’s emergency work in Israel and grantmaking can be found at www.ujafedny.org/israel-at-war.

Participating Jewish leaders included:
Orit Lender: Joan & Alan Bernikow JCC of Staten Island
Erica Brown: Yeshiva University
Aaron Brusso: Bet Torah
Angela Buchdahl: Central Synagogue
Eliezer Buechler: Columbia/Barnard Hillel – The Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life
Carie Carter: Park Slope Jewish Center
Michelle Dardashti: Kane Street Synagogue
Joshua Davidson: Temple Emanu-El
Steven Exler: Hebrew Institute of Riverdale
Naphtali Harcsztark: SAR Academy and High School
Richard Hidary: Sephardic Synagogue
Jonathan Jaffe: Beth El of Northern Westchester
Jonathan Leener: Prospect Heights Shul
Yosie Levine: The Jewish Center
Serge Lippe: Brooklyn Heights Synagogue
Liana Meirom Asif: The Jewish Agency for Israel/UJA-Federation
Shlomo Nisanov: Kehilat Sephardim of Ahavat Achim
Harry Pell: The Leffell School
David Schuck: Beth El Synagogue Center
Daniel Sherman: West Side Institutional Synagogue
Jodie Siff: Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore
Noam Silverman: Abraham Joshua Heschel School
Benjamin Skydell: Congregation Orach Chaim
Joshua Stanton: East End Temple
Annie Tucker: Temple Israel Center
Elie Weinstock: Jewish Center Atlantic Beach

Birthright Israel Relocates to Hotels Hundreds of Israelis Affected by Missile Attacks in the South and North

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We will continue to support Israelis in any way we can.”
The fund Will provide relief services, welfare, equipment, food, and other necessities to the families affected by Hamas’s heinous terrorist attacks.
Birthright Israel shares in the deep, national mourning of this unfathomable catastrophe, which saw Hamas invade Israel and murder 1,400+ Israelis. The steps the organization announces today are meant to help as many Israelis as possible from the southern and northern border communities.
Birthright Israel, which provides ten-day experiences and internships to Israel for Diaspora young adults, has a special connection to the southern communities. Nearly every group spends meaningful time in Israel’s periphery.
Photo courtesy of Birthright Israel, of residents from the Ashkelon area spending the weekend at the Ramada Hotel in Jerusalem.

Stacked up for Chanuka!

Chanuka is around the corner and we are stacked up!

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Slow Cooker Hanukkah Beef Brisket

PREP TIME: 45 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 HOURS
TOTAL TIME: 24 HOURS
Flavorful slow cooker beef brisket, cooked low and slow until ridiculously tender and then smothered in a sweet and tangy sauce.

Ingredients:

- 4 to 5 pound piece beef brisket

For Sauce:

- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, for seasoning
- 1 1/2 cups beef stock
- 6 tablespoons packed light or dark brown sugar

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 4 teaspoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon red chili flakes

For Roux (optional):

- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted



- Directions:**
1. Season brisket generously on both sides with salt and pepper.
 2. Whisk all sauce ingredients together in a bowl.
 3. (Optional) if your brisket will fit, heat a large cast iron skillet or dutch oven over medium-high heat. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes per side until browned.
 4. Place brisket in slow cooker. Cover with sauce. Cook on low heat for 10 hours, flipping once half way through (flip it very carefully using two large, flat spatulas rather than tongs so it doesn't fall apart).
 5. Transfer the brisket and sauce to a baking dish, or you can also put the bowl of your slow cooker directly in the fridge if it will fit (let it cool slightly first). Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or ideally overnight.
 6. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.
 7. Remove brisket from fridge and spoon off any excess fat that has risen to the surface of the cooled brisket and surrounding liquid.
 8. Remove brisket from sauce and place on a large cutting board. Trim off any large fatty areas from the edges of the meat; slice into 3/8-inch thick slices and arrange in a baking pan.
 9. Transfer leftover liquid to a saucepan set over medium heat; bring to a simmer. Continue to cook until sauce has reduced by about a third, about 20 minutes.
 10. If you want a thicker sauce, prepare a roux by melting butter in a small skillet set over medium heat, then whisk in flour until smooth and lightly golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add roux to sauce, a spoonful at a time, returning to a simmer between each addition, until sauce is thickened and coats the back of the spoon.
 11. Pour sauce over top of sliced brisket in baking dish. Bake in preheated oven until heated through. Serve immediately.
- Adapted from The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook.
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uja.nyc



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SCAN TO DONATE



FIDF Raises a Record \$60 Million in Emergency Campaign for IDF Soldiers

Photo credit: Courtesy of FIDF.

On October 31, Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF), the sole organization designated by the IDF to collect donations in the United States to benefit Israel's soldiers, today announced that it has raised close to \$60 million in an emergency campaign launched on October 7 in response to the most horrific attack in Israel's 75-year history, when 1,400+ innocent Israelis were massacred by the Hamas terrorist organization.

FIDF is in daily communication with the IDF and responds to their direct requests immediately, transferring funds to fulfill these urgent requests within 24 to 48 hours. One hundred percent of the funds the organization raises for this emergency campaign are going straight to meet soldier needs as directed by the IDF. FIDF is funding the majority of support that IDF soldiers are receiving, distributed across the entire military, to reach more soldiers than any other organization.



More than \$34.5 million of the \$60 million has already been transferred to the IDF since October 7 for direct requests from the IDF for humanitarian supplies to benefit the hundreds of thousands of IDF soldiers, and 360,000 reservists called to the front lines.

Funds from FIDF's emergency fundraising campaign have covered the vast array of needs of IDF soldiers as they fight to protect their homeland

and bring hostages back to safety. Items funded by FIDF to date include plasma for 1,700 soldiers; emergency medical equipment; 70 operational ambulances; genetic DNA analyzers, go-pro cameras for search and rescue teams, hygiene kits for more than 21,500 soldiers; clothing and towels for more than 18,500 soldiers; snack packages for more than 21,500 soldiers; refurbishment of hospital waiting areas for wounded soldiers; visiting reserves gathering areas; gift packages for 800 wounded soldiers during hospital visits; gift packages for 400 fallen soldiers' families during shiva visits; food for 20 families in financial need for the duration of their shiva; gazebo/canopy tents; blood and fluid warmers; direct support for all FIDF adopted Brigades; tzitzit for soldiers; olive green-dryfit; refurbishment of hospital waiting areas for families of wounded soldiers; personal wellbeing kits for more than 60,000 combat soldiers; shaded rest tables; respite and refreshment break cycles for combat units.

In addition to the tangible support mentioned above, FIDF's team members in Israel, along with volunteers, are providing comfort to soldiers and bereaved families. Staff members have attended 320 funerals and shivas to date.

"We are immensely grateful for the outpouring of support we've received within days of the war's eruption, enabling us to swiftly address



the most critical needs of the IDF over the last 3+ weeks," said Steve Weil, CEO of FIDF. "Our unwavering commitment stands firm, and our dedication remains resolute: we will stand by the soldiers of the IDF who courageously put their lives on the line to reinstate security, safety, and peace in Israel, and we are dedicated to meeting every humanitarian need through the duration of the war."

FIDF's initial fundraising goal for the emergency campaign was \$50 million, but the IDF's requests to FIDF for its soldiers' needs have proven to be far greater than anticipated and the organization expects that \$100-\$150 million will be necessary to meet the evolving and fast-growing needs of

the IDF throughout the war.

FIDF was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors as a 501(C)(3) not-for-profit organization with the mission of transforming the lives of the young men and women of the IDF who protect Israel and Jews worldwide through empowering educational, financial, well-being and cultural initiatives. With 25 chapters throughout the United States, FIDF proudly supports soldiers before, during, and after their service, as well as families of fallen soldiers and wounded veterans, reinforcing the vital bond between the communities in the United States and the soldiers of the IDF. For more information, visit: www.fidf.org

Governor Hochul Visits Leket Israel

On October 18, the Governor of New York, Kathy Hochul, paid a visit to Leket Israel, the country's leading food rescue organization, in a demonstration of unwavering solidarity during these challenging times. The visit aimed to highlight the strong support and partnership that Leket Israel has provided to the people of Israel during the ongoing conflict.

During the visit, Governor Hochul toured Leket Israel's facilities with Leket Israel's Founder and Chairman, Joseph Gitler and Leket Israel's CEO, Gidi Kroch, where she witnessed firsthand Leket's dedicated efforts in rescuing surplus food and redistributing it to those in need. Leket Israel's commitment to alleviating food insecurity in the region, particularly during times of crisis, has made a significant impact on the local communities.

Leket has established a command center to address and assess all needs as they arise working with local nonprofits, municipalities, and initiatives that have been created to sup-

port those in need. Leket is currently focusing on three main projects, supporting the farming community with volunteers and monetary support, purchasing meals and dry goods to distribute to nonprofits in the south and families who have been displaced, and providing monetary support through rechargeable credit cards which will be given weekly for four months. Governor Hochul commended the organization for its exceptional contributions to the community. Their steadfast dedication to providing nourishment to the vulnerable during this period of heightened tension is a testament to their invaluable role in society.

The Governor's visit emphasized the enduring ties between New York and Israel and served as a reminder of the global support network that stands with Israel during challenging times.

Governor Hochul: "Now that there are so many extra people to help from the south, they've become refugees, and homeless, and

they don't have a kitchen, they don't have food, they don't have any way to prepare their next meal for their families and you're all making a profound difference here. Thank you for giving your time and your love. New York is here to share that experience with you. We stand in solidarity with Israel, you're doing your part to fight the battle here, by taking care of people who need food."

Joseph Gitler: "I thank Governor Hochul for her steadfast support for Israel and her commitment to ensuring food security for thousands of Israelis in need. Unfortunately, the need will only continue to grow as the situation evolves. It is our obligation to leverage our years of experience in the field, our logistical knowledge, and our resources to aid as many people as we can. Countless people across the nation have suffered the loss of their loved ones, homes, and their sense of safety, and Leket Israel is committed to guaranteeing that no one will experience hunger during this critical time."



Till Death Do Us Part?



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, ESQ.

I met with a client (Andy) last month whose wife (Mary) is very ill. She will likely spend the rest of her life in a nursing home at a cost of more than \$20,000 a month. Andy and Mary, unfortunately, had not done any advance planning and were totally devastated by her diagnosis of early-onset Alzheimer's Disease. Andy, a relatively young 68 years old was very concerned about how he and Mary would be able to pay for the catastrophic cost of her care and how Andy would be able to afford to continue to live in the family home in Westchester for the remainder of his life. After reviewing some estate planning decisions which needed to be made, Andy sheepishly asked whether divorce is a viable strategy for securing government assistance to help pay for some or all of Mary's nursing home costs.

Andy and Mary have been married for 43 years and Andy told me that he and Mary each take their wedding vows very seriously; however, Andy was a fairly successful businessman over the years, and he wanted to explore all options. Thus, the topic of divorce.

Before we talk about whether divorce would be of any benefit to Andy and Mary in their situation, let's review some basics. The United States does not have a health insurance system for long-term care. If you have a chronic illness such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) then Medicare does not cover the cost of your long-term care. Some folks are able to get Medicare coverage for short-term rehabilitative care in a hospital or nursing home setting, but that type of subsidized care is time and cost limited. It will not pay for the long-term nursing home costs of Mary or anyone else.

Medicaid is the only government program that will cover the costs of long-term care. However, in order to qualify, you must meet Medicaid's strict income and asset requirements. Moreover, if you are married, then you are legally responsible for the long-term care costs of your spouse. When one spouse needs nursing home care, the government counts not only the assets of the sick spouse, but also the assets of the well spouse

for purposes of determining whether you meet their asset and income requirements. Thus, moving all the assets into the name of the well spouse won't, on its own, solve the problem since the assets of both spouses are counted in the Medicaid determination. So that raises the question asked by Andy, if I'm about to put my spouse into a nursing home setting, is divorce a strategy to make her eligible for benefits, saving assets for my own future needs?

Putting aside the emotional issue of getting divorced so that you don't have to pay for a spouse's care, there are other problems with this approach. For example, the divorce court, if a divorce is granted, will require an equitable distribution of your marital assets. Thus, some (approximately half, depending on the circumstances) of your marital assets would go to the sick spouse and be spent on the cost of her care. The good news is that the other half would go to the well spouse and not have to be used to pay for the sick, (now former) spouse's care. If your spouse is incapacitated, like Mary, then the court will appoint someone to look after their interests in the divorce proceedings.

After discussing the foregoing, Andy asked whether he and Mary can enter into an agreement to divide assets as they wish. Some couples will enter into such agreements prior to getting married and others will do so while they are married. However, in Andy's case, Mary may not have the capacity to enter into such an agreement due to her condition. In any event, while these types of agreements, if properly done, are generally binding on the couple, they are not binding on the government or Medicaid since they were not a party to the agreement. Thus, a marital agreement with respect to the distribution of marital assets in the event of a divorce is unlikely to protect the marital assets from the costs of long-term care.

A better strategy would be to plan in advance. There are many legal strategies available, including the use of trusts that could have helped in Andy and Mary's situation. Unfortunately, many of these strategies are not effective if done while you or your spouse is on the nursing home doorstep. In addition, the rules are very complicated, and you would be well-served by seeking the advice and counsel of a Certified Elder Law Attorney prior to making any decisions.

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.

Gillibrand Holds Press Conference Discussing Steps to Protect Jewish Community

With antisemitism continuing to rise nationwide and within New York, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand recently held a video press conference to discuss the steps she is taking to protect the Jewish community. She is:

1. Calling on the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to prioritize the safety of Jewish organizations, including synagogues, schools, and Jewish community centers, and to work closely with community leaders and local law enforcement to respond quickly to threats of violence.

2. Pushing for additional federal funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides grants to institutions at risk of terrorist attacks to strengthen their security measures.

3. Leading legislation to fight hate crimes and terrorism, including the Hate Crimes Commission Act, which would establish a bipartisan, bicameral commission to study hate crimes and provide recommendations to help law enforcement collect better hate crime data. She is also cosponsoring the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, which would establish a new interagency task force to track and respond to domestic terror threats.

"Over the last few weeks, we've seen a disturbing rise in virulent antisemitism and hate crimes against the Jewish community around the world, across the country, and right here in New York," said Senator Gillibrand. "The incidents are sickening, and they are unacceptable. I am doing everything in my power to protect at-risk commu-



Kirsten Gillibrand

nities, including ensuring that the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security are on high alert and in close communication with local law enforcement. I'm also fighting for federal funding to help synagogues and other non-profits improve their security and working to pass legislation to combat terror threats. Every American has the right to live and worship freely and without fear. I am committed to making sure they can."

The full text of Senator Gillibrand's letter to the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI is available at www.gillibrand.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/10.25.23-Letter-to-DHS-and-FBI-on-Antisemitic-Threats-with-signatures.pdf.

More information about Senator Gillibrand's push to increase funding for the NSGP is available at www.gillibrand.senate.gov/news/press/release/following-disturbing-rise-in-antisemitism-and-hate-crimes-gillibrand-announces-push-to-protect-synagogues-other-religious-institutions/.

More information about Senator Gillibrand's Hate Crimes Commission Act is available at www.gillibrand.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Hate-Crimes-Commission-Act-One-Pager.pdf.

More information on the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act is available at www.gillibrand.senate.gov/news/press/release/gillibrand-lays-out-multipronged-plan-to-fight-domestic-terrorism-and-violent-extremism/.

Lost and Found

continued from page 1

we have witnessed on our campuses and in so many cities across the United States and around the world are expressions not of support for the Palestinian people but a violent manifestation of anti-Jewish hatred. Full stop. And they must be roundly and publicly condemned for their reality: antisemitism – hatred of Jews.

Antisemitism in America used to be relegated to the dark fringes of society, but as we have seen on social media, in mainstream media, on campus, and in the workplace, that mask has been torn off and exposed.

Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen it increasingly become part of mainstream discourse, becoming ever more violent, and it must not become normalized. According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2022 report, 43% of American Jews believe that antisemitism is a serious problem in the United States. However, antisemitism on our campuses and in the workplace has rarely been addressed. Many DEI trainers and officers do not know how to talk about Jew hatred, with many making comments that downplay or ignore Jewish hate.

College presidents should immediately and without equivocation, adopt the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) Work-

ing Definition of Antisemitism and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness) officers at K-12 schools, on college campuses, in the corporate world, and in government should work diligently to ensure that the Jewish community is invited to participate in DEI efforts.

Our campuses and workplaces should adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism as a clear framework for understanding the many manifestations of antisemitism, including debates about Israel's right to exist and Zionism. Only by identifying antisemitism in its most potent forms can our leaders in education, in the workplace, and in government effectively combat it.

We must continue to stand up against hatred against Jews and Israel and AJC has resources available for you to use for your schools, university administrators, workplaces, and with government officials: www.ajc.org/attackonisrael.

The Jewish community here in Westchester County, throughout the United States, in Israel, and around the world is Am Ehad. We are proud Jews; we are strong, and we will prevail. Am Yisrael Chai.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield Regional Director. Please join us at: westchester@ajc.org.

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Chabad of Westchester Hosts Challah Bake at Aleph Bet Preschool

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

A significant Challah Bake by Chabad of Westchester was held at Aleph Bet Preschool Harrison, 130 Union Avenue, Harrison, New York on November 8 with more than one hundred women from across southern Westchester communities participating (New Rochelle, Scarsdale, White Plains, and Harrison).

“The vision of this event was to attract Jewish women of all ages,” according to Alef Bet preschool parent Melanie Meer, “. . . an evening of unity fulfilling a time-honored mitzvah . . . power in numbers draw[ing] blessing and peace to the Jewish people.”

“All the women had the opportunity to make two Challahs that they could take home,” Meer continued. “We followed along a traditional family recipe together with different women from the community leading different parts of the recipe. There is a special mitzvah called hafrashat challah, separating the first of your dough. We recite this blessing as a community while we allow the dough to rest and rise. Then, we braided the challah, and the women chose from a variety of toppings to complete the challah.”

According to Meer, “Chabad hosts many Challah Bakes throughout the year, but this was the largest community Challah Bake event. Last year, the event was limited to Aleph Bet’s parents and served as a school community-building event in the form of a moms’ night out. This year, we wanted an opportunity for the entire community to unite and join together for this mitzvah. The event was circulated through word of mouth, on social media, and by email, but [it] was mostly a grassroots effort to spread the word.”

For programs at Aleph Bet Preschool, including Chabad Hebrew School and Friendship Circle at Chabad Lubavitch of Westchester, located in New Rochelle, visit www.chabadofwestchester.com, or phone 914-712-8332.



Julie Leffell Photography

To all of our Neighbors and Friends

Happy Chanukah

Even in these challenging times, the warmth of Chanukah’s glow and the joy of sharing moments with loved ones continue to light up our hearts.



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