

Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration Draws Large Crowd, Features Holocaust Survivor Speaker

An estimated crowd of more than 300 people gathered at the Garden of Remembrance in White Plains for the Annual Countywide Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) Commemoration on April 24, 2025. The program, presented by the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) and Westchester Jewish Council (WJC) featured keynote speaker Arlette Baker, a procession of Westchester's rescued Holocaust Torahs, and remarks by U.S. Congressman George Latimer.

The event began with the Opening of the Gates by Hillels of Westchester and the Sounding of the Shofar by HHREC and WJC Board Member Mitchell Ostrove and was followed by the Procession of Rescued Torahs led by Rabbi Leora Frankel, President, Westchester Board of Rabbis and Rabbi Leora Frankel of Larchmont Temple.

Welcome remarks were delivered by Daniel P. Weinreb, Chairperson HHREC, and an Invocation was offered by Reverend Erwin Lee Trollinger, Calvary Baptist Church, White Plains. Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins welcomed all attendees, followed by the keynote speaker.

Baker, a Holocaust survivor, spoke about her experience growing up in Paris, France where she was raised in a French-Jewish family when, as a 4-year-old, she was arrested in their apartment by Nazis. She shared how her father was able to bribe the two men to let her go with her grandparents, and thus saved her life. Her parents were taken to a concentration camp, deported to Auschwitz, and put to death. She remarked how she became an orphan during the Holocaust, and said "To me, the memory of the Shoah is part of my being, it is with me every day of my life." She also said: "The Holocaust was a planned, scientific plan for the extermination of the Jews." and concluded her remarks with "My parents blood runs in the veins of my children and grandchildren. Don't forget them. Do not murder them again. Speak about the 6 million, it is your turn."

Following the appearance by Baker, a Holocaust Kaddish was delivered by Cantor Lauren Phillips Fogelman, Temple Beth Abraham and Kol Hazzanim, Westchester Community of Cantors, and a music selection was performed by Cantor Hayley Kobilinsky, Temple Israel of Northern Westchester. The program concluded with closing remarks by Michael Mittelman, President Westchester Jewish Council.



Youth from The Leffell School carry rescued Holocaust Torahs.

Jewish Community United In Grief and Strength After Anti-Semitic Shootings

American Jewish Committee (AJC) CEO Ted Deutch released the following statement after the tragic shooting of two people after AJC's annual Young Diplomats reception in Washington, D.C. on May 22:

"At this painful moment, we mourn with the victims' families, loved ones, and all of Israel. May their memories be for a blessing.

"At moments like these, the Jewish community stands strongly together. We are also immensely grateful for the outpouring of support from our friends and allies around the world."

The Westchester Jewish Council: "We mourn from our hearts and from our souls, the tragic killing of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim - two workers at the Israeli embassy.

Sarah and Yaron were murdered while attending a program sponsored by the AJC—a program that was dedicated to building community ties and peace. Baruch Dayan HaEmet - May their memories serve as a blessing and as an inspiration to pursue goodness and light and to stand together over hatred and darkness."

Our sacred teachings remind us that "Whoever destroys one life is considered to have destroyed an entire world." (Sanhedrin 4:5)

Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress: "The attack outside the Capital Jewish Museum, which claimed the lives of Yaron Lishinsky z"l and Sarah Milgram z"l, is a devastating reminder that the danger facing Jewish communities is not history—it is real and ever-present."

"These were two individuals who dedicated their lives to building bridges between people and communities, rather than walls."

"Though this brazen act of violence occurred on American soil, its message was meant to cause Jews everywhere to tremble with fear."

"But let there be no mistake—this act of terror will not drive us into the shadows. We will not hide our faces or our symbols. We will live openly and proudly, as a courageous people."



Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky

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Rye Brook Student Recognized by American Jewish Committee for Fighting Campus Antisemitism

A Rye Brook college student has been recognized by American Jewish Committee (AJC) for his work fighting antisemitism at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ben Messafi, a Penn sophomore, accepted the AJC Sharon Greene Award for Campus Advocacy at AJC Global Forum on behalf of Penn Hillel, where he is a vice president. He is also a co-founder of PA Leads the Fight, which works with university administrators and community leaders to ensure the security of Jewish students and help them thrive.

The award is presented annually to student activists and campus organizations that work to reduce antisemitism, fight the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and other organized efforts to delegitimize Israel, and to promote Jewish life and a positive image of Israel on campus.

“When it comes to creating a safe, inclusive environment for Jewish students, Penn remains a work in progress,” Messafi said. “At the same time, the current administration appears committed to ensuring our concerns are being taken seriously. But it took constant pressure from Jewish student groups on



campus to get to that point.”

Messafi is also a member of AJC’s Campus Global Board, an initiative to broaden AJC’s engagement with college students around the world and help them become effective advocates for the Jewish people. He is also a graduate of AJC’s Leaders for Tomorrow program, which teaches high school students leadership and advocacy skills.

“Outstanding students like Ben and groups like Penn Hillel have been unrelenting in their advocacy for Jewish students even when faced with hostility, protests, and intolerance on campus,” AJC CEO Ted Deutch said. “We need to send a clear, unequivocal

message across all campuses that Jewish students must feel safe and protected at all times.”

AJC has partnered with the family of the late Sharon Greene on the award to pay tribute to her many contributions to the Jewish community and in support of AJC’s mission. A fierce advocate for social justice, Greene was a strong believer in the power of younger generations to effect positive change.

AJC LFT
Leaders for Tomorrow
EMPOWERING TODAY’S GENERATION OF
GLOBAL JEWISH ADVOCATES

AJC Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) high school students at the 2025 LFT Summit participants after advocating on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

Calling all 10th, 11th, 12th graders!
Applications are Now Open!
Are you interested in learning to be a strong Jewish and pro-Israel advocate?

AJC’s Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) innovative education program for Jewish high school students, is designed to empower today’s generation of young Jewish leaders to advocate on behalf of the Jewish people and Israel. LFT instills in teens the knowledge, confidence, and passion to serve as positive changemakers among their peers and in their communities.

To learn more about LFT and Apply for the 2025-26 LFT High School Leaders Cohort, contact Jill Friedman at friedmanj@ajc.org or westchester@ajc.org or apply at [AJC.org/LFT](https://www.ajc.org/LFT)

World Jewish Congress Mourns Passing of Margot Friedländer



After the passing of Holocaust survivor Margot Friedländer, Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, released the following statement:

“The World Jewish Congress mourns the passing of Margot Friedländer – a woman of unshakable moral courage, a survivor of unimaginable loss, and a voice of remembrance for generations.

“Margot did not only survive the Holocaust – she chose to bear witness. She chose to return to Berlin and speak to young people across Germany and beyond with dignity, grace, and truth. Until her final days, she stood as a symbol of resilience and humanity. Her words reached hearts. Her presence changed lives.

“This is a profound loss for the Jewish people, for Germany, and for all those who believe in memory and moral responsibility. The World Jewish Congress was honored to count her as part of our family, and we extend our deepest condolences to her loved ones and all who were touched by her extraordinary life.”

Waterstone of Westchester Advisor to Speak about Father's Journey as Holocaust Survivor

When Helayne Scheier was growing up, her father Norman Frajman, never spoke about his experiences in the Warsaw ghetto or the concentration camps of Poland.

"I never even knew the back story, but when he moved to Florida, all of a sudden, he couldn't stop talking about it," she said.

That's when Norman joined and ultimately became president of the Child Survivors and Hidden Children of Palm Beach County, Florida.

When Helayne's father died at age 95 last April, she felt compelled to pick up the torch and tell his story. On April 30, she spoke to residents at Waterstone of Westchester about his experiences.

"The Holocaust survivors are nearly gone. There are so few left. My father wanted kids to be educated by people who had a personal experience of the Holocaust," said Helayne.

Norman's personal experience was grim. At age 12, he and his family, once prosperous members of the Jewish community in Poland, were stripped of their home and business and sent along with thousands of others to live in the infamous Warsaw Ghetto. The ghetto had 400,000 Jews, and after armed resistance by its population failed, everyone was either killed or shipped off to concentration camps. Norman told Helayne that 400 people were packed into railroad cars big enough to hold about 120 people with only a bucket and no food or water. Many died along the way. When they arrived, Norman was separated from his mother and sister. He later learned that they were marked for immediate extermination because his sister could not work, and his mother refused to leave her.

"My father survived because he was old enough to work. If you couldn't



work, they shot you," said Helayne.

Norman was sent to the Majdanek camp and later worked in the munitions factory before being sent off to Buchenwald.

"As a Jew you held no value. They shaved their heads and bodies and rubbed them with creosote. It burned horribly." She added, "My father said, you lose all humanity. You have no name, just a number."

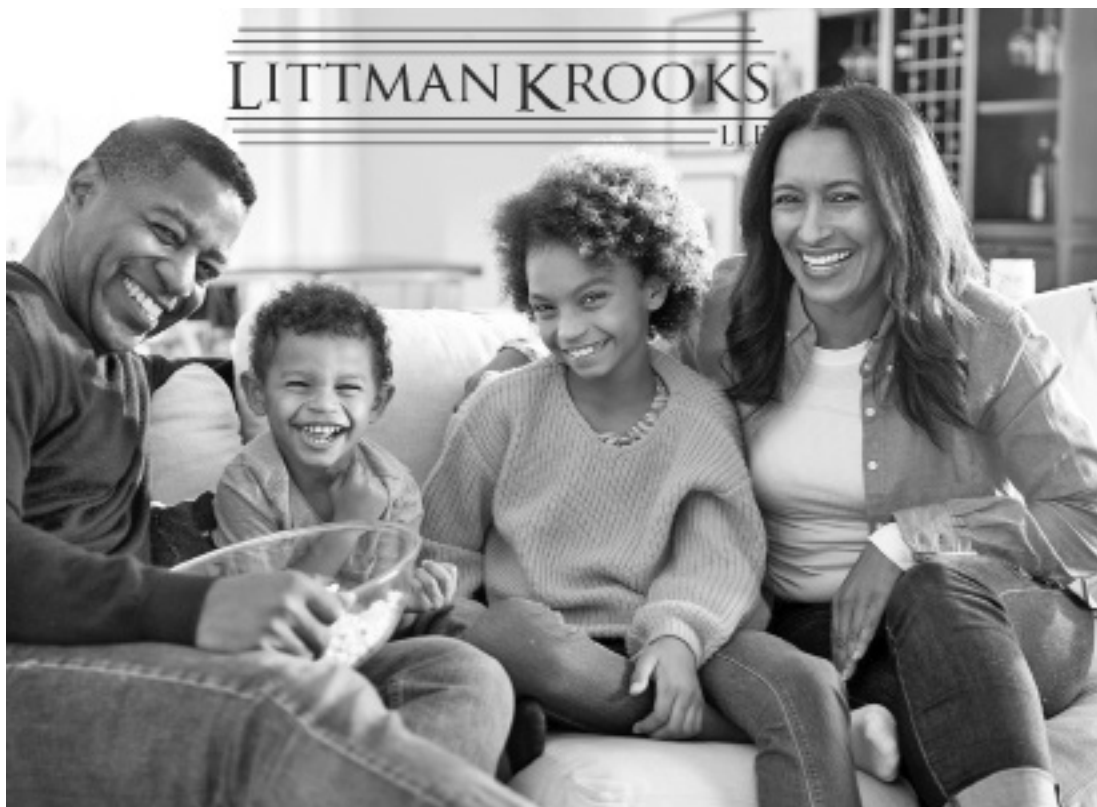
Norman was liberated from Buchenwald on May 8, 1945. On a happy note, Helayne's grandfather survived his time in a Russian prison camp and made his way to Israel. Norman did not learn of his father's survival until 1955. They reunited in 1960 when Norman's father visited the United States.

Helayne said that she felt compelled to start sharing his story. She donated his concentration camp uniform, which he kept as a reminder, to the Holocaust Documentation & Education Center and Museum in Dania Beach, Florida.

"The underlying reason for his presentation was to make people aware of the hate in the world. At the end of his talks, he always said, 'I want you to replace the four-letter word hate with the four-letter word love.'"

Waterstone of Westchester is the latest best-in-class independent senior living community created by leaders in the field. EPOCH Senior Living is the owner/operator and National Development is the owner/developer. EPOCH Senior Living operates 16 senior living communities in the Northeast. Waterstone of Westchester is the company's first independent senior living community in New York State.

For more information about Waterstone of Westchester, visit www.waterstoneofwestchester.com or call 914-821-6369.



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The Cost of Aging: Is Long Term Care Insurance Worth It?



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS,
CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:
JOEL KROOKS

It's widely understood that long-term care is expensive and getting even more so. Costs have risen faster than overall inflation, and the aging U.S. population has long been a source of concern for programs like Social Security and Medicare. Long-term care insurance (LTCI) has sometimes been proposed as a partial solution to this growing challenge.

However, the concept isn't without

complications. Life expectancy has generally been on the rise. When long-term care insurance first gained attention in the mid-1970s, the average life expectancy for a 65-year-old was about 16 years—14 for men and 18 for women. Now a 65-year-old man is expected to live 16.95 years and a woman is expected to live 19.75 years.

Assuming longevity continues to rise alongside increasing healthcare costs and a growing prevalence of dementia, LTCI has become a riskier business for insurers. As a result, premiums must rise and underwriting standards become more restrictive.

The situation is even more complicated than it first appears. Many seniors who purchased long-term care insurance (LTCI) eventually let their policies lapse—something the industry anticipated and factored into its pricing. However, in the early years, lapse rates were lower than expected, leading to more policyholders holding onto coverage and filing claims.

While the U.S. population is aging, today's seniors are, in many ways, healthier than previous generations. Rates of smoking, cancer, and several chronic diseases have declined. Yet at the same time, the prevalence of disabilities has risen—often triggering LTCI claims and increasing costs for insurers.

Parsing LTCI data can be challenging due to the many variables involved, but the American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance offers a valuable source of real-world insights. Their statistics cover everything from average claim amounts and premium trends by enrollment year to denial rates by age—unsurprisingly, nearly half of applicants in their 70s are declined coverage.

Only a small percentage of seniors purchase long-term care insurance, and these policies cover just about 5 percent of the total long-term care expenses nationwide.

So, should you consider buying LTCI? It depends. Some individuals

may qualify for Medicaid and receive help with long-term care costs. Others may have enough savings and income to self-fund their care for many years.

The key takeaway: if you're thinking about buying LTCI, timing is critical. Eligibility and premiums are far more favorable if you apply when you are younger than if you wait under you are older.

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.

AJC Welcomes Home Edan Alexander, Calls for the Release of All Remaining Hostages

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, is overjoyed to welcome Edan Alexander home after 584 days in Hamas captivity. AJC is dedicated to bringing home all the remaining hostages and will continue to support hostage families and those who have been rescued and released as they advocate for every single hostage until they are all reunited with their families or returned home for a proper burial. We are grateful to Steve Witkoff and the Trump Administration for their tireless efforts to bring Edan and every hostage home.

"We have been praying and working for Edan's return for 584 days, and today those prayers were finally answered," said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. "As Edan's mom said yesterday – this is the greatest Mother's Day gift imaginable – for her and Adi to finally be able to hold their son in their arms again. Yet, even as we are overjoyed to see Edan finally reunited with his parents, we cannot rest – the work is far from done. None of us are truly home until they are all home. The world must heed the testimony from other survivors—time is running out. The entire international community must demand the release of the remaining 58 hostages. We will not rest until they are all home."

Just two weeks ago, Yael and Adi Alexander addressed AJC Global Forum 2025 in New York, sharing their heartbreaking story and calling for urgent international action to secure the release of all the hostages still held by Hamas. This call is even more urgent today.

Since October 7, 2023, AJC has mobilized its entire global advocacy operation to work toward the release of the hostages. We have worked closely with the families of hostages to facilitate meetings with community and government leaders in the U.S. and worldwide, emphasizing the urgent need to bring home every person kidnapped on October 7. During visits to Washington, D.C., New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Paris, Brussels, Rome, and other cities around the world, AJC has assisted more than 50 families of hostages in sharing their stories with more than 200 Members of Congress, media outlets, the State Department, high-level administration officials, diplomats, UN officials, and Jewish communities.

WJCS WELCOMES NEW CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER



Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) recently welcomed Amanda Garfinkle as Chief Advancement Officer. She previously worked at UJA-Federation of New York's Westchester office, where she held key leadership roles in development and community engagement.

"Amanda Garfinkle brings a distinguished track record of leadership and innovation in the philanthropic sector, and we are excited to have her expertise driving our advancement effort," said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. "With her deep understanding of the non-profit landscape and her ability to build meaningful connections, Amanda is perfectly positioned to lead our advancement work. As Chief Advancement Officer, she will play a pivotal role in ensuring the resources needed to sustain and expand WJCS's vital programs and services."

While at UJA, Garfinkle directed the creation of the young family division to cultivate new young leaders. Prior to UJA, she

worked in consulting and finance, specializing in investor relations for several hedge funds in New York City and Connecticut, including Aurelius Capital and Structured Portfolio Management.

"As a strategic thinker and passionate advocate for the well-being of individuals who struggle with significant challenges, Amanda brings the perfect blend of qualities to enhance WJCS' mission of transforming lives and strengthening communities across Westchester," said Bruce M. Freyer, President of the WJS board.

"While I've only been at WJCS for a few months, I have already witnessed the significant and broad impact of its work," said Garfinkle. "I am so proud to be contributing to the growth and strength of this agency. I look forward to continuing this journey and achieving great things for the community we serve."

Garfinkle received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and English from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Classical Diploma from Phillips Exeter Academy. She and her family reside in Chappaqua, and are active members of Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, where she serves as Treasurer for the Board and as Co-Chair of the Annual Fund Committee. An avid volunteer, Amanda is also involved in the Grafflin Elementary PTA and sits on the Chappaqua School Foundation (CSF) Board.

AJC Honors Congressman Ritchie Torres with Nita M. Lowey Congressional Leadership Award

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, today honored Congressman Ritchie Torres (D-NY) with the AJC Nita M. Lowey Congressional Leadership Award, recognizing the Congressman’s fearless advocacy for the Jewish people and the State of Israel. The award was presented at AJC Global Forum 2025 in New York.

In recognition of her unparalleled legacy as a fierce champion of the Jewish community, Israel, international human rights, and religious freedom, the award was renamed this year to honor the legacy of AJC’s dear friend, Chairwoman Nita Lowey. First presented in 2001, the Nita M. Lowey Congressional Leadership Award recognizes Members of Congress who work to build bridges, strengthen alliances, and elevate leaders who carry forward Chairwoman Lowey’s legacy of moral clarity and unwavering resolve. Previous honorees include Sen. Joseph Lieberman, Sen. John McCain, Rep. John Lewis, then-Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. John Danforth, and Sen. Richard Lugar.

“The future of the Middle East does not belong to the Islamic Republic and its empire of terror. The future of the Middle East belongs to Israel and the Abraham Accords. The future of the Middle East does not belong to hate. The future belongs to hope: *hatikva*,” said Congressman Torres. “In the grand sweep of history, in the millennia long Maccabean marathon that is the story of the Jewish people, we are as close as we have ever been to realizing the Abrahamic dream of a world where all the children of Abraham Jews, Christians and Muslims, can coexist in peace and prosperity. A durable peace is possible, and we as Americans, in the greatest country on Earth, have the power – indeed the responsibility – to make it so and make peace.”

AJC CEO Ted Deutch, who served in the House of Representatives from 2012-2022, said, “I had the privilege of serving with Ritchie, and from first-hand experience, I can tell you his allyship, courage, and moral compass are unwavering. His actions align with the values that drive AJC’s mission every day. Ritchie has been a strong voice demanding the return of the hostages, affirming his unwavering support for Israel, in denouncing antisemitism, and standing up for and with the Jewish community. Thank you, Ritchie, for your extraordinary leadership – especially during this most trying time for the Jewish community. I’m excited to continue this important work together.”

Deutch continued, “I also had the honor of calling Chairwoman Lowey a mentor and a friend. It is only fitting that the first recipient of this newly named award is someone who so clearly embodies Nita’s values and legacy.”

In bestowing this honor, AJC Honorary President John Shapiro said, “From the very beginning of his public service, Congressman Torres has been a fearless advocate for justice and a passionate friend of the Jewish people. At a time when moral courage matters more than ever, he has never wavered in standing up for truth, for Israel, and for the values we share. Whether in his unwavering defense of the U.S.-Israel relationship, his vocal opposition to antisemitism in all its forms, or his belief in the dignity and rights of all people, Ritchie leads with heart, with conviction, and with an unshakable sense of purpose.”

Accepting the award, Congressman Torres reflected on his long-standing relationship with AJC, noting, “AJC has been an unfailingly unifying force in a time of division and polarization. It’s been an institutional voice of cool and calm reason in an age of red hot passions. AJC plays the long game, refusing to be distracted by the pettiness and partisanship of our present politics.”

Visit

www.westchesterjewishlife.com

World Jewish Congress Welcomes Landmark Commitment By German Industry To Confront Nazi-Era History, Uphold Democratic Values

On the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) today welcomed an unprecedented statement by leaders of Germany’s most prominent companies, who together publicly acknowledged their historical responsibility during the Nazi era and reaffirmed their commitment to fighting antisemitism, extremism and hate in all its forms.

The joint statement, signed by the CEOs of more than 50 major German corporations, including Bayer, BASF, Siemens, Allianz, Deutsche Bank, Evonik, Porsche and Mercedes-Benz, calls for vigilance in defense of democracy and remembrance of the crimes of the Holocaust. It reflects a growing recognition within the private sector that historical accountability must be matched by moral leadership today.

WJC President Ronald S. Lauder called the joint declaration “a remarkable and courageous act of conscience from the heart of German industry.”

“This coalition of German corporate leaders has taken a profound step by confronting the darkest chapter of their companies’ pasts and by affirming their responsibility to ensure that history does not repeat itself,” Lauder said. “At a time when extremism is rising once again in Europe and around the world, this kind of clarity, moral leadership and remembrance is essential. We will never allow another Holocaust to happen.

“The World Jewish Congress looks forward to building on this partnership, together transforming remembrance into action and using Germany’s example to inspire the world. Our shared goal must be to turn difficult legacies into durable foundations for democratic, pluralistic and peaceful societies.”

The World Jewish Congress has long engaged with Germany’s private sector to advance Holocaust remembrance, education and antisemitism prevention. Many of the signatories to today’s statement have worked with the WJC in past years through the global #WeRemember campaign and other initiatives that promote historical awareness and moral responsibility.

Most recently, in January 2025, Lauder led a delegation of CEOs and senior executives from Bayer, BASF, Siemens and Evonik to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camp, including the site of the former IG Farben factory at Monowitz (Auschwitz III), to mark the 80th anniversary of the camp’s liberation.

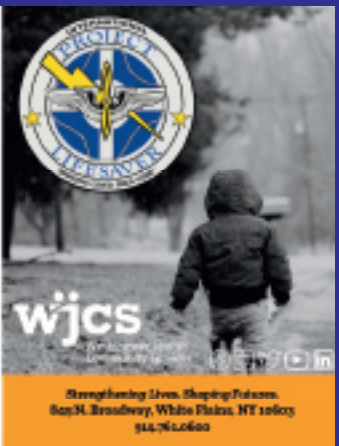
“That visit served as a powerful moment of reflection, and today’s statement is a testament to its lasting impact,” Lauder said. “As the WJC continues to confront contemporary antisemitism and defend democratic values globally, this renewed coalition with German industry marks a meaningful step forward. Together, we will work to implement projects that cultivate a living culture of remembrance across Germany, one that can serve as a model for confronting history and building stronger, more resilient futures around the world.”

On May 8, 1945, also known as Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day), the Allies of World War II accepted Nazi Germany’s unconditional surrender of its armed forces.

Do you know a child or young adult with autism/developmental delay who wanders, elopes, or has gotten lost?

WJCS Project Lifesaver uses radio frequency technology, employing devices worn on a wrist or ankle, to locate wandering and lost children/young adults to bring them home safely.

Questions? Please contact Isabel M. Petersen, Project Lifesaver Program Manager, at 914-761-0600 x2238; ipetersen@wjcs.com. For more information, visit www.wjcs.com.



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North American Jewish Choral Festival Is a One-of-a-Kind Musical Experience



The annual North American Jewish Choral Festival (NAJCF) brings hundreds of singers together to enjoy five magical days of a life-changing musical experience. One harmonious choral community is led by world-class conductors creating a melodic tapestry of contemporary, folk, classical, and traditional music. The 2025 event will be held from July 20-24 in Stamford, Connecticut.

“The Festival is for anyone who wants to celebrate the joy of Jewish music,” says Maestro Matthew Lazar, Festival Founder and Director. “The participants include amateur singers, professionals, cantors, conductors, and lovers of Jewish music of all ages.”

Festival attendees have the unique opportunity to interact with and learn from top experts in Jewish choral music in a supportive setting. There are a variety of uplifting Jewish musical activities, including daily community sings; workshops and seminars on a wide range of topics; and evening concerts featuring guest choirs and outstanding performers.

“Being able to connect to this type of music and this type of text is something you can’t get anywhere else,” says NAJCF participant Dor Kaminka, an Israeli-American composer and conductor now residing in Los Angeles, California.

NAJCF provides an environment of fun and excitement as well as a sense of healing, hope, unity and Jewish pride, as participants share a bonding experience and forge new friendships.

“The North American Jewish Choral Festival is my happy place,” says Cantor Mira Davis of New York City. “It’s a community of people who are like-minded, love each other, love Israel and love Jewish music -- a place where you can be yourself. The friends I’ve made at NAJCF will last a lifetime.”

“Whether you’re a novice or a pro, you’ll leave with new skills, new music and new friends to cherish from this transformative Choral Festival,” concludes Maestro Lazar.

The North American Jewish Choral Festival is a program of Zamir Choral Foundation.

For more information and to register for NAJCF 2025 visit <https://zamirchoral-foundation.org/north-american-jewish-choral-festival/>

Equipping the Next Generation to Lead with Jewish Pride and Purpose



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL,
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

As mortarboards fly and tassels turn this June, a new generation of Jewish students is preparing to step into a world that is both promising and perilous. Graduation season is a time of joy and transition—but for Jewish families, it also brings rising concern.

We have all witnessed antisemitism reaching disturbing new levels on college campuses. Since October 7, we’ve seen Jewish students harassed, excluded, and silenced. Some face vandalism and threats. Others are pressured to renounce their connection to Israel, or to stay quiet about their Jewish identity altogether.

This moment demands action and education —and preparation.

At AJC (American Jewish Committee), we believe every student deserves to feel proud, safe, and supported as they enter college – and while they are in high school. Our Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) program does exactly that: it equips high school students with the tools, confidence, and knowledge they need to advocate for Israel, to speak up against antisemitism, and to lead with strength

and Jewish pride.

LFT doesn’t just teach facts. It builds leaders—students who can navigate difficult conversations, engage with diverse peers, and represent the Jewish people with clarity, courage, and purpose. Many of our LFT alumni go on to become campus leaders, standing at the forefront of Jewish advocacy at a time when it’s needed most.

As Jewish parents, grandparents, and allies, we cannot assume our young people are ready to face what’s coming—we must prepare them. That means encouraging participation in programs like LFT, empowering Jewish teens to deepen their connection to Israel, and modeling what it means to live Jewish values out loud.

It also means holding our institutions accountable. Universities and schools in the K-12 arena (both public and independent) must protect the safety and dignity of all students, including Jews. And we must demand better—from administrators, from faculty, and from public officials.

Jewish history has taught us that silence is never the answer. This generation deserves our full support—not just in celebration, but in preparation.

As our students step forward into the world, let us equip them to carry their identity with pride, to speak with purpose, and to lead with unwavering resolve.

Because the future of Jewish life—and Jewish advocacy—depends on them.

AJC Westchester/Fairfield is now accepting applications for our 10th LFT cohort for Jewish incoming 10th-12 graders. For more information, go to westchester@ajc.org

Myra Clark-Siegel is regional director for AJC Westchester/Fairfield.

Love Israel Foundation USA Partners with Holy Spirit Tel Aviv to Support Visionary Prayer Garden Project in Israel

The Love Israel Foundation USA is proud to announce a renewed partnership with its longtime collaborator, Holy Spirit Tel Aviv (formerly Love Israel Tel Aviv), in support of a deeply meaningful initiative: the creation and expansion of the Prayer Garden at Yardenit in Israel.

Originally envisioned by Moshe Bar Zvi, a globally recognized leader in business and Judeo-Christian philanthropy, the Prayer Garden is a tribute to the sacred relationship between Christians and Jews. First conceived in 2019, the Garden is now poised for expansion, further fulfilling Moshe’s vision to create a place of peace, learning, and spiritual connection for visitors from around the world.

The Prayer Garden Yardenit serves a threefold mission aligned with the core priorities of the Love Israel Foundation USA:

Support for PTSD Recovery in Israel – A portion of all contributions will go toward ongoing efforts to address the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by Israeli citizens and soldiers following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack.

Church Partnership Opportunities – U.S. churches can join this global effort. A portion of the contributions raised by congregations will be returned to the church, fostering community engagement and shared mission.

Faith-Based Tourism and Education – Located in one of Israel’s most visited baptismal sites, the Prayer Garden will welcome tourists and pilgrims seeking to deepen their understanding of the Christian and Jewish faiths.

“We believe this project beautifully reflects our shared values,” said Stan Hanson, Founder and Chairman of Love Israel Foundation USA. “Not only does it advance our commitment to healing the wounds of trauma in Israel, but it also creates a unique opportunity for churches across the U.S. to participate in something much bigger than themselves—spiritually and philanthropically.”

Details about the Prayer Garden and how to contribute can be found at: <https://theprayergarden.org>

For more information about the Love Israel Foundation USA and its mission, visit: <https://loveisraelusa.com>

Bobby Lapin Named American Jewish Committee President



Bobby Lapin, a longtime activist in the Jewish community, has been named president of American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people.

Lapin, who was previously chair of the AJC Board of Governors, succeeds Michael Tichnor, who concluded his three-year term. Lapin was formally elected national president by the Board of Governors at AJC Global Forum in New York on April 27.

“I am excited to take on this role at a pivotal time for the Jewish people,” Lapin said. “AJC has an unparalleled role in the fight against antisemitism across the globe while being a staunch defender of Israel. AJC’s lay leadership stands ready to continue its support and guidance to further this vitally important work.”

Lapin, of Houston, is a founder of Lapin & Landa, L.L.P., a civil trial firm, where he specializes in commercial litigation, personal injury and wrongful death, securities arbitration, employment law, and product liability.

In addition to his service on the Board of Governors and AJC Executive Council, Lapin has also chaired AJC’s National Legal Committee as well as its Contemporary Jewish Life Committee, and was president of AJC Houston. He has also served as President of the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston, President of the Board of Trustees of the Emery/Weiner School, President of Congregation Beth Israel, and Board Chair of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston.

“Bobby’s unbridled enthusiasm for AJC and our work has been infectious,” AJC CEO Ted Deutch said. “He has set an example for others by turning words into actions. I can’t imagine having a better partner to work with in fulfilling AJC’s mission to advance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel.”

JCC MID-WESTCHESTER HOSTS THE ISRAEL FILM CENTER FESTIVAL 2025



The JCC Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) is excited to announce that they have partnered with Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan to host the Israel Film Center Festival from June 6 to June 12.

The Israel Center Film Festival runs

every June and is the largest festival of Israeli films in New York. In the midst of this time of conflict in the region, the JCCMW will screen a selection of award-winning films presenting visions of human stories from a thriving artistic industry on the Shasha Stage in their Bendheim Performing Arts Center.

The festival will kick off on Friday, June 6 with a matinee showing of Pink Lady. On Sunday June 8, Highway 65 will be screened with a talkback between the film’s director, Maya Dreifuss, and Hila Madar Itzkowitz, Senior Community Shlichah (emissary) for Westchester, Director of the Westchester Shinshinim.

The Shoshani Riddle will be featured on Tuesday, June 10 with a Q&A session with director Michael Grynszpan. Closing night of the festival will be on Thursday, June 12.

There will be a reception prior to the screening of The Property, and a Q&A session with Dana Modan, the film’s director.

Learn more about the films and purchase tickets at jccmw.org/Israel-film-center-festival.

The JCC Mid-Westchester Hosts Second Annual Jewish Women’s Health Summit: Our Bodies, Our Jewish Selves



Rabbi Dahlia Bernstein of the JCCMW with the panelists of the Jewish Women’s Health Summit

On Sunday, May 4, from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM, to kick off Women’s Health Month, the JCC Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) in Scarsdale welcomed women of all ages and backgrounds for a meaningful morning of learning, discussing, and connecting at their second annual Jewish Women’s Health Summit. The summit provided a safe, open space to pause, reflect, and explore how our values and voices can guide us through life’s challenges, complexities, and transitions as well as resources, tools, and tips for self-care and strengthening resilience.

The morning began with a restorative sound bath experience led by Katy Romita of One Small Stone, a light breakfast, and a health fair populated with local health and wellness organizations. Attendees then joined together for a panel discussion featuring Rebecca Soffer, best-selling author of The Modern Loss Handbook and cofounder of the Modern Loss Community, as the moderator. The panelists included Dr. Sara Glass (psychotherapist, queer advocate, and author of Kissing Girls on Shabbat), Lauren Tetenbaum (psychotherapist, women’s empowerment advocate, and author of the forthcoming book Millennial Menopause: Preparing for Perimenopause, Menopause, and Life’s Next Period), and Dr. Margo Lederhandler (double board-certified dermatologist, Mohs surgeon, and assistant professor of clinical dermatology at Weill Cornell Medicine).

After the panel discussion, Rabbi Viki Bedo (Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle), Rabbi Cornelia Dalton (Westchester Jewish Center in Mamaroneck), and Rabbi Dahlia Bernstein (JCCMW) led three breakout sessions discussing topics including cosmetic surgery, self-image, and societal pressures around appearance, weight, and aging.

Kensington Senior Living was the presenting sponsor of the event. If you would like to learn more about the JCCMW and its programs, visit jccmw.org.

Israeli Bomb Shelter Artist Headlines “A Night in the Negev” Event

More than 300 philanthropists recently attended Jewish National Fund-USA’s signature annual event in Westchester at Congregation Kol Ami in White Plains, where they learned how the organization’s Beautified Bomb Shelter initiative is supporting the post-October 7 rebuilding of communities in Israel.

Co-chaired by Alena Markley and Jenna Wise, the “A Night in the Negev” event featured Israeli bomb shelter mural artist Elyasaf Miara, who utilizes spray paint to create extraordinary, whimsical artwork on bleak concrete bomb shelters and makes public spaces like parks and playgrounds safe and welcoming for children. Miara spray painted several murals during the event, which were auctioned off to support the organization’s Israel Resilience Campaign, which is rehabilitating Israel’s battered North and South (jnf.org/support-israel).

“As a young parent, I am especially moved by the fact that, despite all the trauma the children of Israel have endured, the cartoons chosen by my children and painted by Miara on a beautified bomb shelter we sponsored, continue to bring smiles to Israeli children, offering them a small respite from their pain,” said Markley.

The event also featured guest speaker Yedidya Harush, Jewish National Fund-USA’s Halutza Community Liaison, who works with the organization to support regional development in southern Israeli communities. On October 7, Yedidya’s world was turned upside down when he and his friends jumped into action to protect neighboring communities under attack by terrorists.

“They managed to break our hearts on October 7, these monsters of Hamas,” said Harush. “They hurt us, they killed my best friends, they damaged my chil-



Israeli bomb shelter mural artist Elyasaf Miara

dren’s childhood, but one thing they will never do is break our spirit. We have hope. We believe in tomorrow. Despite the challenges and the dark times we’re going through, we will emerge stronger than ever.”

Local lay leaders also discussed Jewish National Fund-USA’s efforts to rebuild once-vibrant communities. From housing and infrastructure to mental health resources, the organization is working with Israelis in the region to help them recover and thrive.

“Israel has always held a special place in my heart, and like all of you, the events of October 7 and the ongoing war have deeply shaken me,” said Wise. “In the face of this devastation, I initially felt helpless, but I was driven to make a difference in whatever way I could.”

Wise added: “The impact of Jewish National Fund-USA has never been more evident. Our Build Together and Reimagine plans are leading the charge in rebuilding and healing. In the South, we’re helping families return home and providing them with the necessary resources to recover. In the North, we’re addressing trauma, displacement, and the ongoing threats they face. Together, we’re rebuilding lives and ensuring a sustainable future. Since October 7, Jewish National Fund-USA has been on the front lines—delivering critical aid, rebuilding communities, and supporting those in need. To date, we’ve raised over \$200 million, and this is just the beginning.”

The event also recognized local community members Caren & Hillel Hammerman and Ruth Raisfeld & Leonard Benowich for their longstanding dedication to the land and people of Israel.

For more information or to learn about future events in Westchester, contact Samara Rader, Director, Westchester & Southern CT at srader@jnf.org.

CEO of The Creative Coalition Robin Bronk Inducted into the Manhattan Jewish Historical Initiative Hall of Fame, Class of 2025

The Manhattan Jewish Historical Initiative (MJHI) is proud to announce that Robin Bronk, Chief Executive Officer of The Creative Coalition, was inducted into the MJHI Manhattan Jewish Hall of Fame, Class of 2025. The induction ceremony was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at the historic Bryant Park Plaza.

Robin Bronk has led The Creative Coalition for more than a decade, advancing the organization’s mission to harness the power and efficacy of the arts to elevate critical social welfare issues. Under her leadership, The Creative Coalition has launched impactful national campaigns advocating for increased public funding for the arts, mental health equity, anti-censorship protections, and greater support for family caregivers—demonstrating how artistic expression can be a catalyst for lasting public policy change. Her work and thought leadership have been featured in USA Today, The Washington Post, The New York Times, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, and Deadline. In addition to her advocacy work, Bronk is the author of *Art & Soul* (Hearst) and *The Art of Discovery* (Rizzoli), two celebrated books that spotlight the personal and transformative power of the arts through the voices of prominent artists and influencers. The Creative Coalition is the premier nonprofit advocacy organization of the entertainment industry. Founded by prominent members of the creative community, the organization harnesses the power of the arts to drive positive social change. Its programming spans public service campaigns, leadership forums, and policy initiatives addressing issues such as First Amendment rights, mental health, family caregiving, and arts education. Robin Bronk serves as CEO,



and Tim Daly serves as President.

“Being inducted into the Manhattan Jewish Historical Initiative Hall of Fame is deeply meaningful to me—not just as a professional honor, but as a personal one,” said Bronk. “My Jewish heritage instilled in me a responsibility to stand up, speak out, and use every platform to make a difference. That belief has shaped my work at The Creative Coalition—where we harness the influence of the arts to drive policy, elevate underrepresented voices, and champion causes that matter. To be recognized among those who have helped shape Jewish life and culture in Manhattan is a profound and humbling tribute.”

Actor Tim Daly, President of The Creative Coalition, added, “Robin is a rare leader who blends vision with action. She has brought the arts into the national conversation in a powerful way, and this recognition is a well-deserved celebration of her impact.

Bronk is a long-time member of Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle, New York. Beth El’s Rabbi David Schuck commented, “Whether organizing events or stepping up behind the scenes, she’s the kind of do-er every community dreams of—reliable, joyful, and deeply committed to Israel and Jewish life. You can always count on Robin to get the job done and make you laugh along the way. Our community is enriched by her presence and her volunteering.”

The Manhattan Jewish Historical Initiative (MJHI) celebrates and preserves the rich history and contributions of Manhattan’s Jewish community. Through events, exhibitions, and education, MJHI honors individuals whose work reflects the enduring legacy of Jewish life in New York City.

World Jewish Congress Debuts Student Art Exhibition On Holocaust Memory at Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) is collaborating with its constituents to streamline their human resources needs with its innovative HR program, JHR. JHR integrates Jewish values with organizational health and employee well-being to become congregations' trusted HR partner and serve as the administrator for compliance, benefits, professional development, and more. By moving HR administration away from the congregations, staff can redirect their efforts to other, more essential business needs, thereby amplifying their community's impact.

"Most Jewish organizations have few employees. However, two employees still need an HR structure," states Adam Grossman, director, North American audience engagement, URJ. "By transitioning the HR tasks to JHR, we can transform the way we treat staff, aligning our values with our words, and building stronger bonds with employees. This, in turn, can develop deeper relationships with the constituency and create a more dynamic Jewish community."

JHR was soft-launched in 2024 and made available to all URJ congregations in good standing. The program delegates administrative tasks to a team of professionals from High5, a subsidiary of Compass/eTeam, acting as the Employer of Record (EOR) for non-benefit eligible employees, and Insperity, a Professional Employer Organization (PEO) focusing on benefit eligible staff. Through these partnerships, congregations can access "Fortune 500-style" benefit structures, plan for cost avoidance, enhance employee well-being, and strengthen compliance while minimizing risk.

Following initial success in New York City, Chicago, Austin, and other locations over the past year, JHR will now be available to Jewish non-profit organizations outside of the URJ. The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), representing nearly 550 Conservative/Masorti Jewish congregations across North America, is the first to work with the program. They will begin offering JHR to their members this summer.

"We are thrilled to embark upon this collaboration with the URJ," said Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal, CEO, USCJ. "Together, we are setting a new standard for how Jewish organizations can support their staff and foster a thriving community. By providing innovative HR solutions through JHR, we not only enhance the well-being of synagogue employees but also deepen connections within our communities. This collaboration represents a significant step forward in our shared mission to create vibrant and resilient Jewish institutions."

To learn more about JHR, visit growjhr.urj.org.

World Jewish Congress Debuts Student Art Exhibition On Holocaust Memory at Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum

The World Jewish Congress debuted a powerful new exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, showcasing original artistic interpretations of Holocaust memory created by students from 13 schools across 10 European countries. The works reflect how the Holocaust resonates with young people today and how its lessons can shape their understanding of justice, tolerance and human dignity.

Titled #WeRemember Journeys, the exhibition is an educational offshoot of WJC's global #WeRemember campaign, an initiative launched to ensure that Holocaust remembrance remains a living, global commitment. Supported by the European Commission and developed in partnership with the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, and the International Center for Education About Auschwitz and the Holocaust, the project engages students through a multi-stage learning journey that blends historical education with personal creative reflection.

Participating students, from both Jewish and non-Jewish schools, studied Holocaust history through virtual or in-person visits to memorial sites—including Auschwitz itself—and were then invited to express their insights through original artworks such as paintings, sculptures, digital designs and written narratives. Each artwork is a personal response and interpretation of the legacy of the Holocaust, through the eyes of the next generation.

WJC President Ronald S. Lauder said the initiative is a vital bridge between history and moral conscience. "The Holocaust is not only a matter of remembrance—it is a call to moral responsibility," Lauder said. "By empowering young people to express what they learned through art, we are not only teaching them about the past, we are equipping them to confront the challenges of today. This is how remembrance becomes personal, and how memory becomes action."

Sara Friedman, CEO of WJC Israel, said at the exhibition's opening at Auschwitz, "This exhibition reminds us that Holocaust education must go beyond dates and facts. It must reach hearts and shape values. These students have turned memory into meaning. They are becoming the new storytellers, the new witnesses."

Book of Joshua: Walls of Jericho Takes Viewers on a Powerful, Epic Biblical Journey of Faith, Courage and Triumph

The beautifully animated feature film, Book of Joshua: Walls of Jericho, a powerful Biblical account that takes viewers on an epic journey demonstrating the power of faith and the might of the Lord, will premiere on major VOD streaming platforms, beginning June 3.

A story considered an article of faith for Jews, Christians and other religions alike, Book of Joshua: Walls of Jericho recounts the story told in the Old Testament Bible's "Book of Joshua," following the Israelites' conquest of Canaan and the delivery of The Promised Land—long avowed by God to those of faith as they endured 40 years of great oppression, suffering and famine following their liberation from slavery in Egypt. According to the Deuteronomist, the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the Israelite tribes was swift and decisive. Today, there is archaeological evidence of the destruction of Jericho and the site was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2023.

After wandering the desert for 40 years, Joshua leads the Israelites to the Promised Land. Confronted by the formidable walls of the fortress Jericho, they carry out God's improbable plan—seven days of marching, culminating in a miracle.

Book of Joshua: Walls of Jericho won "Best Animated Film" at the 2025 Hollywood Independent Film Festival. It was also an official selection of the 2025 International Christian Film & Music Festival, where it is nominated in five categories, and the 2025 Hollywood Florida Film Festival.

Produced by PartingSeas Productions and distributed by BMG-Global, Book of Joshua: Walls of Jericho stars Mac Rogers as Joshua; Merri Jamison as Rahab; Xander Bailey as Moses; Allen Marsh as Salmon; Alistair David Herz as Caleb; and Hannah Marie Lloyd as Sharon; and McKenzie Harms as Achsah. The film was written by Amir Kovacs and Tony Goss; directed by Tony Goss; and produced by Amir Kovacs. Original music by Daniella Kor. Animation produced by Abhijit Charkraborty and directed by Indrarayan Datta, who also served as the lead storyboard artist.

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Project Community in Pelham, is searching for a Pediatric nurse to manage Project CHILDD (projectcommunity.us) - a monthly program of art, music, and yoga for children and teens with developmental disabilities. Meetings take place on Sunday 2 - 4 pm, September through May and are staffed by community volunteers and teen mentors. Contact administrator@projectcommunity.us for complete job description.

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PJ Library New York Launches The Great Lower East Side Scavenger Hunt

This summer, families are invited to celebrate Jewish immigrant history and culture with The Great Lower East Side Scavenger Hunt, a free, interactive adventure presented by PJ Library New York.

Now through Labor Day, participants can take a self-led journey through the historic Lower East Side to explore iconic neighborhood spots, uncover stories of Jewish heritage and its lasting influence on NYC, and search for PJ Library books hidden in the windows or interiors of eight unique locations on the Lower East Side.

To start your quest, simply head to PJLibrary.org/NYCScavengerHunt. There, parents will find two maps to view, download, or print. One is meant for parents to use to navigate their families to the eight locations in the scavenger hunt. Parents are encouraged to design a route that takes into account the unique needs and interests of their family.

The second is a kid-friendly printable visual with information about each Lower East Side location and a PJ Library pointer (or fun fact). Plus, at each stop, families will discover a PJ Library book that connects to the site's immigrant past. As kids find the books, they can mark them on their map. Snap a photo of the completed map and DM a photo to @pjlibraryinnewyork on Instagram for a chance to be featured and win a PJ Library beach bag!

This scavenger hunt offers families an exciting way to explore NYC's historic Lower East Side, taste traditional Jewish foods, visit cultural institutions, and connect with stories of immigration and resilience—all while enjoying PJ Library's celebrated children's books.

Participating locations in the Lower East Side include:

Yonah Schimmel's Knish Bakery – 137 East Houston Street

Katz's Delicatessen – 205 East Houston Street

Economy Candy – 108 Rivington Street

Davidovich Bakery Shop – 79 Clinton Street

Tenement Museum – 103 Orchard Street

The Pickle Guys – 357 Grand Street

Museum at Eldridge Street – 12 Eldridge Street (Show scavenger hunt map for \$5 off admission)

Buddha Bodai Kosher Vegetarian Restaurant – 5 Mott Street

Bonus Stop: The Center for Jewish History – 15 West 16th Street

PJ Library inspires joyful Jewish experiences by sending free storybooks and activities to families with children ages 0-12 and offering ways to connect with community. The program was founded in 2005 by the Harold Grinspoon



Foundation (HGF) and, with the support of generous donors and partners, now distributes books in seven languages to more than 650,000 children in over 40 countries every month. The PJ Library family experience is built around the monthly storybooks and also includes family-focused holiday guides and other free gifts. Anyone who visits PJ Library's website can hear original storytelling podcasts and explore a vast collection of Jewish parenting resources. The program welcomes families across the diversity of Jewish life. Learn more or sign up for monthly children's books at pjlibrary.org.

Jewish Community United In Grief and Strength After Anti-Semitic Shootings

continued from page 1

Rep. George Latimer: "Two innocent young people, Israeli Embassy workers, were gunned down while leaving an event at the Capitol Jewish Museum. A murderer yelled 'Free Palestine' and shot and killed them. They were planning an engagement and a life together. There is no justification for this hatred and antisemitism. We grieve their loss today."

Rep. Mike Lawler: "I am shocked and saddened by this act of violence right in the heart of our nation's capital. My prayers are with the families of the victims, the Jewish people, and the Israeli embassy staff as they mourn."

"May the perpetrator of this heinous act of antisemitic violence be swiftly served justice."

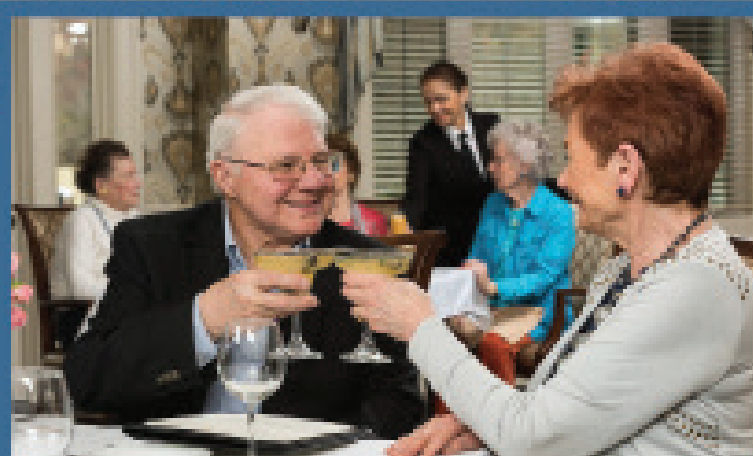
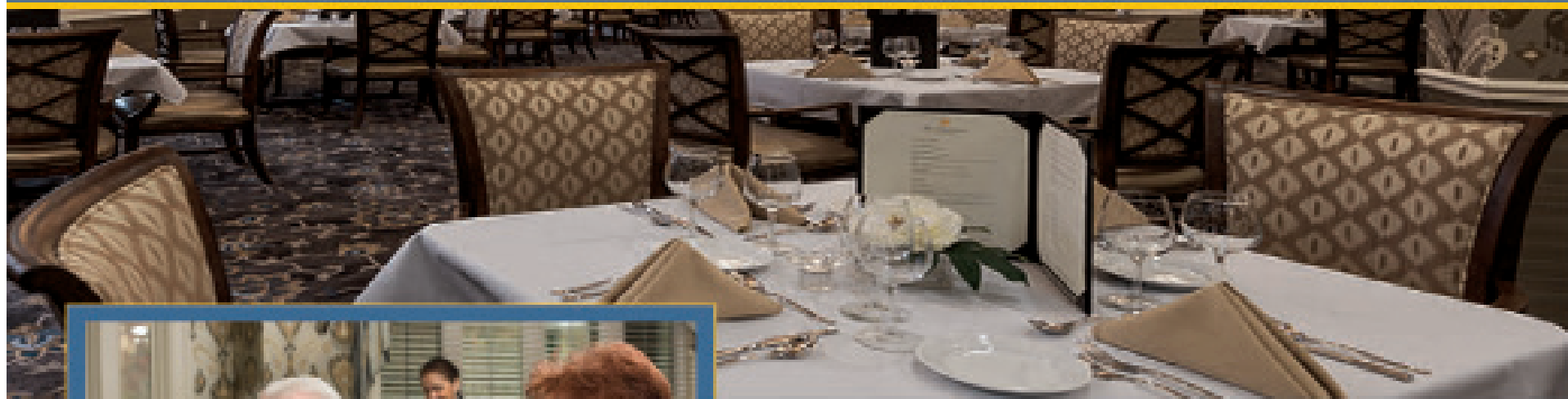
Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins: "In response to the tragic killing of two Israeli Embassy staff members, Sarah Lynn Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, outside the Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., we have implemented increased monitoring and enhanced security measures around our faith-based organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of our communities."

"There is—and must be—no place in our societies for this violence. We must continue to speak out against hatred in all its forms, and work together to build a world rooted in peace, understanding and respect."

Westchester County Board of Legislators: "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the tragic shooting that claimed the lives of two Israeli embassy staff members outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. This senseless act of violence represents an attack not only on these individuals and their families, but on the values of tolerance and respect that define our community."

"Just days after we proudly celebrated Jewish American Heritage Month, we are reminded that the fight against hate and intolerance requires constant vigilance. We extend our deepest condolences to the victims' families and stand in solidarity with our Jewish neighbors during this dark moment."

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