

AJC Releases Report on Antisemitism in America

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, has released the annual State of Antisemitism in America Report, the first analysis of the impact of antisemitism on American Jews and the US general public for the full-year following Hamas' October 7, 2023, massacre of Israelis. The data, from surveys conducted in Fall of 2024, assesses and compares Jewish and general population perceptions of, and experiences with, antisemitism in the United States.

The report is the largest annual poll of its kind and the first report to analyze a half decade's worth of this type of data from both American Jews and U.S. adults.

As AJC CEO Ted Deutch said, "Antisemitism has reached a tipping point in America... That one-third of American Jews have been the target of antisemitism in the past year should raise red flags for every American and our leaders."

Key Findings

- 77% of American Jews say they feel less safe as a Jewish person in the US because of the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attacks.
- Nearly six in 10 (56%) American Jews say they altered their behavior out of fear of antisemitism in 2024 – a sharp increase from previous years. In 2023, this number was 46%, and 38% in 2022.
- 90% of American Jews say antisemitism has increased in the US since the Hamas terrorist attacks.
- One-third (33%) of American Jews say they have been the personal target of antisemitism – in person or virtually – at least once over the last year.



AJC CEO Ted Deutch

Young American Jews' Experience with Antisemitism

- Four in 10 (41%) young American Jews, ages 18-29, said they have been the target of antisemitism at least once in the past 12 months.
- 35% of American Jewish college students report experiencing antisemitism at least once during their time on campus.
- Over one in four (32%) American Jewish college students say they have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at a campus event because of their Jewish identity.
- American Jewish Connection to Israel
 - 81% of American Jews say caring about Israel is important to what being Jewish means to them.
 - The majority of Americans agree: denying Israel's right to exist is antisemitism. 85% of American Jews and the general public believe the statement "Israel has no right to exist" — the foundational core of anti-Zionism — is antisemitic.

Where the American General Public Stands

- A majority of U.S. adults (72%) say antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. today.
- Almost 6 in 10 (59%) U.S. adults say antisemitism has increased in the U.S. in the past five years, and the vast majority (88%) of this group say they are concerned by the increase.
- Nine in 10 (90%) U.S. adults say antisemitism affects society as a whole and everyone is responsible for combating it.

Happy Rosh Hashanah!

Visit www.westchesterjewishlife.com

JCCMW Hosts Third Annual Kumzitz



The Jewish Community Center Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) welcomed more than 100 local community members under its tent for the JCCMW's third annual Kumzitz: Night of Israeli Music on August 6. The evening brought together people of all ages for a heartfelt celebration of music, unity, and community spirit. Award-winning composer, producer, and artist, Beth Styles, led attendees in an uplifting and spirited sing-along of beloved Israeli songs. The evening was filled with joy, connection, and the shared love of Jewish culture and tradition.

Rabbi Dahlia Bernstein, Senior Director of Jewish Engagement and Care Services at the JCCMW, expressed gratitude to Sheila and Bob Friedland, who helped to make this special event

possible and shared, "At a time when so much divides us, the Kumzitz brought us together under one tent, offering belonging and hope rather than isolation and despair."

Supporting Early Childhood Development Across Westchester: A New School Year for Project SEED

BY SARAH ROSENWASSER, LMSW,
EARLY EDUCATION COORDINATOR
AT WESTCHESTER JEWISH
COMMUNITY SERVICES

As the new school year begins, Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) is proud to continue supporting schools, educators, and families in creating nurturing and responsive early learning environments. At the heart of this work is Project SEED (Supporting Early Emotional Development), a unique initiative designed to help early childhood educators foster emotional and social development in young children. Project SEED provides hands-on support to both staff and families in Jewish early childhood programs across Westchester.

Our SEED consultants, all licensed social workers, bring deep expertise and a passion for working with children and families. They offer professional development for educators, model effective classroom strategies, and create spaces for honest conversations around classroom management, behavior challenges, and family engagement. They also lead parenting workshops and provide individual consultations to help families navigate the complexities of early childhood. In the coming school year, Project SEED is proud to be working with 10 schools across the county. Each school has a unique set of strengths and challenges, and all schools benefit from the added support, a listening ear, and the thoughtful partnership that SEED offers.

One director said, "Project SEED has been one of the most beneficial growth opportunities as a new Early Childhood Director in a temple nursery school. Being able to meet with other directors who are going through the same situations, who understand the big and little things that make a school run and are just a general resource has been incredibly support-

ive during a time that can often feel isolating. Having a dedicated Project SEED Social Worker has also been a wonderful resource for our families, teachers, and children. Our families feel supported in knowing there is a specialist within the community to help as they navigate the fun—and often messy—ups and downs of parentings. We love collaborating with our SEED Social Worker!" Recognizing the need for a holistic approach to child development, Project SEED has also brought in experts such as a pediatric nutritionist to guide parents on healthy eating habits and a speech-language pathologist to help foster communication and connection at home. For educators, our team offered training sessions on using strength-based approaches in the classroom—helping them recognize and build on the unique gifts of each child.

At a time when many families may be feeling anxious, Project SEED provides a calming, consistent, and caring presence. Parents come to us seeking guidance on everything from sibling dynamics to emotional regulation, from setting boundaries to navigating decisions around early intervention services.

In response to feedback from Directors, one of Project SEED's key areas of focus for the new year will be promoting healthy technology habits in early childhood. As concerns about screen time grow, our team is committed to helping parents and educators create screen-free opportunities for imaginative play, social connection, and joyful learning.

At WJCS, we are honored to walk alongside families and educators during these formative years. We are excited to continue growing Project SEED and expanding its impact across Westchester's Jewish early childhood landscape.

To learn more about programs and services at WJCS, visit <https://www.wjcs.com/>.



L'shanah Tovah U'metukah!

Wishing you and your family
a sweet New Year filled with love,
peace, happiness, and good health.

On behalf of your friends at AJC Westchester/Fairfield

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AJC Westchester/Fairfield

American Jewish Committee (AJC) is the global
advocacy organization for the Jewish people.

AJC.org

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Antisemitism Has Become Part of American Jews' Daily Life

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, is deeply concerned by the findings recently published in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Reported Crimes in the Nation 2024 – Hate Crime Statistics report. The data show that religiously motivated hate crime incidents have increased year-over-year, with incidents targeting Jews rising at a faster pace than the national average. Anti-Jewish hate crime incidents continue to reach record highs, with this year's data reflecting the highest number of such incidents since the FBI began reporting this information.

"Leaders of every kind — teachers, law enforcement officers, government officials, business owners, university presidents — must confront antisemitism head-on," said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. "Jews are being targeted not just out of hate, but because some wrongly believe that violence or intimidation is justified by global events. With the added climate of rising polarization and fading trust in democracy, American Jews are facing a perfect storm of hate. Whether walking to synagogue, dropping their kids off at school, sitting in restaurants, or on college campuses, Jews are facing a climate where fear of antisemitism is part of daily life. This is unacceptable — the targeting of Jews is not a Jewish problem, it is a society-wide issue

that demands a society-wide response." The FBI report shows that religiously motivated incidents increased by 3.1 percent from 2023 to 2024, with anti-Jewish incidents having increased by 5.8 percent from 1,832 in 2023 to 1,938 in 2024. Jews account for only 2 percent of the U.S. population, yet were the target of roughly 70 percent of religiously motivated hate crimes and more than 16 percent of all hate crimes reported in 2024. Even with total incidents of hate crimes decreasing — from 11,862 in 2023 to 11,679 in 2024 (2.6 percent) — religiously motivated incidents continue to increase, driven by the continued rise in anti-Jewish hate crimes.

According to AJC's State of Antisemitism in America 2024 Report, one-third (33 percent) of American Jews say they have been the personal target of antisemitism — in person or virtually — at least once over the last year with young people bearing the brunt. Four in 10 (41 percent) young American Jews, ages 18-29, say they have been the target of antisemitism at least once over the last year.

As concerning as the FBI data is, it is likely that the number of religiously motivated and anti-Jewish incidents is actually greater — as hate crimes are widely underreported across the country. Since many major cities continue to not report hate crimes, the true state of antisemitism in the U.S. is likely much worse.

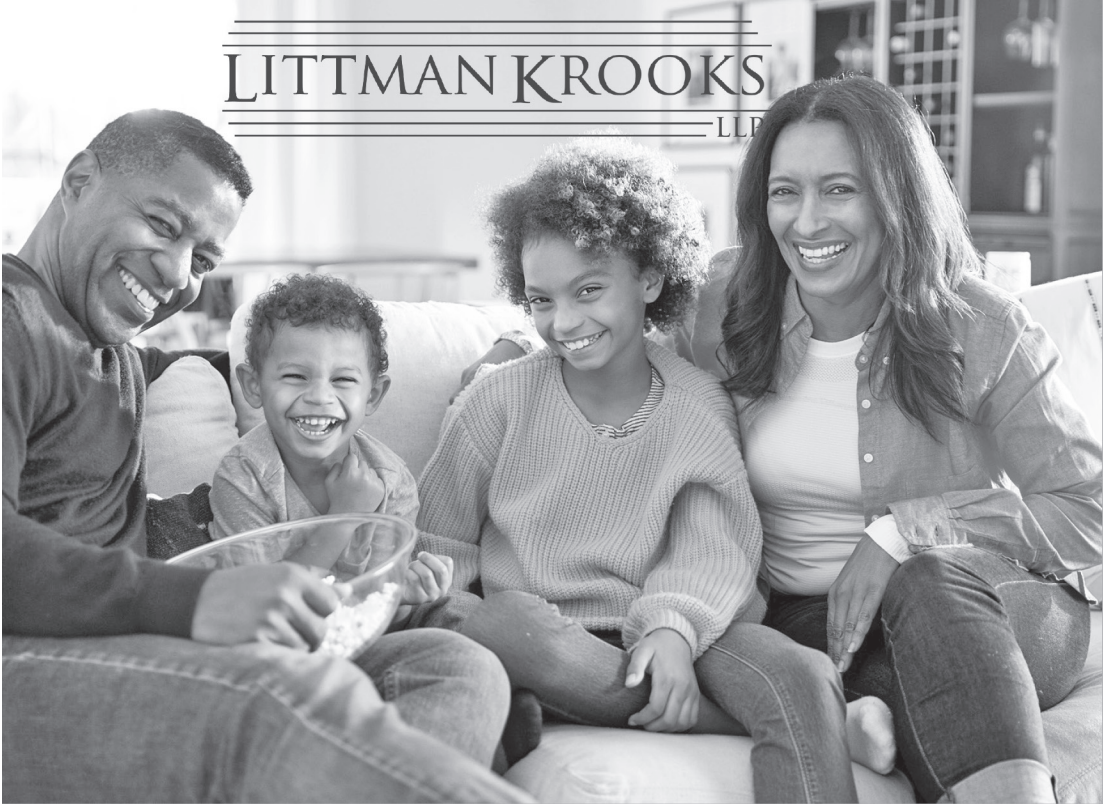
AJC welcomes the news that an additional 410 law enforcement agencies participated in reporting for the 2024 Hate Crime Statistics Report, compared to 2023, and continues to urge all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to accurately document and report this information. The difficulties faced by agencies nationwide in reporting this information deprive communities and elected officials not only of the opportunity to truly understand the degree to which hate-based violence permeates American society, but also of the information necessary to address this hate and to create new policy to combat antisemitism and all hate.

Accurate data and reporting are key tools in effectively combating hate. AJC has released Reporting Antisemitism to Federal Agencies, Law Enforcement, and Social Media: Guidance by American Jewish Committee, which contains information for law enforcement, the Jewish community, and witnesses of antisemitism to help close the gaps in reporting. AJC has also published A Law Enforcement Guide to Countering Antisemitism, which offers suggestions to law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

To improve hate crimes reporting across the country, AJC is urging Congress to pass the bipartisan Improving Reporting to Prevent Hate Act (H.R. 2588). This legislation, led by

Representatives Don Beyer (D-VA) and Don Bacon (R-NE), would require law enforcement agencies representing populations of 100,000 or more to report hate crimes or be subject to auditing and potentially denied federal grant opportunities. There are currently more than 50 localities with populations of 100,000 or more that have reported zero hate crimes, including Albuquerque, NM; Baton Rouge, LA; Little Rock, AR; Montgomery, AL; Newark, NJ; Savannah, GA; and Tulsa, OK.

AJC is also calling on Congress to provide at least \$500 million for the Department of Homeland Security-administered Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which provides funding for high-risk nonprofits — including synagogues, Jewish day schools, and Jewish community centers — to increase preparedness and security. NSGP grants fill a much-needed funding gap and allow grantees to acquire the resources they need to ensure their, and their communities', safety. Additionally, AJC supports funding and promoting awareness of federal grants and programs such as the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program, and the Community Relations Service (CRS). These grants and programs empower both communities and law enforcement agencies to strengthen hate crime reporting and anti-hate efforts.



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JBI Library Announces Expanded Free High Holy Days Offerings for People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

This High Holy Day season, JBI Library is deepening its commitment to accessibility and connection with an expanded mix of inclusive programming and free materials for people who are blind, have low vision, or have a physical disability or reading disability that makes reading a standard book difficult. In addition to providing free large print, braille, and audio prayer books, calendars, and adult and children’s reads, JBI is hosting virtual workshops, accessible book clubs, and other interactive programs—including a new three-part series exploring the High Holy Days through sound, taste, and touch.

Orders for free High Holy Day prayerbooks and materials must be placed by September 8 for individuals. “Our goal is simple,” said JBI Executive Director Michelle Shapiro Abraham, who took the helm earlier this

year. “No one should ever feel like Jewish life is out of reach because of a vision or print disability. Whether it’s reading from a large print or braille prayer book, listening to an inspiring audio book, or joining a thought-provoking discussion from home, we’re making it possible for everyone to take part in Jewish life in a way that is personally meaningful.” One of the highlights of this year’s offerings is a new program called “Sensing the High Holy Days,” a virtual series led by Professor Eve Keller that invites participants to connect to the season through memory, sensory experience, and shared ritual. The series joins JBI’s other High Holy Day and ongoing programs, including accessible book clubs in English and Russian.

2025 High Holy Day Program Highlights

High Holidays 5786

High Holidays 5786 begin at sundown on Monday, September 22, with Rosh Hashanah, which ends at nightfall on September 24. The 10 days of Yamim Noraim the Days of Awe, conclude with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, beginning at sundown on October 1 and ending at nightfall on October 2. Westchester synagogues offer these services to observe the holiest days in the Jewish calendar.

Westchester Jewish Center
 Palmer and Rockland Avenues, Mamaroneck
 Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 6:30 PM: Ma’ariv Service
 Rosh Hashanah Day 1
 Tuesday, September 23
 8:30 AM: Combined P’sukei D’zimra and Shacharit
 9:30 AM: Sanctuary Service
 10 AM-11:15 AM: Family Service*
 Rosh Hashanah Day 2
 Wednesday, September 24
 8:30 AM: Combined P’sukei D’zimra and Shacharit
 9:30 AM: Sanctuary Service
 10 AM-11:15 AM: Family Service *
 Erev Yom Kippur
 Wednesday, October 1
 5:45 PM Sanctuary Kol Nidre Service Begins*
 Yom Kippur
 Thursday, October 2
 8:30 AM: Combined P’sukei D’zimra and Shacharit
 10 AM: Adult Service*
 10 AM-11:15 AM Family Service*
 7:18 PM: Fast Ends/Ma’ariv
 7:18 PM-8:45 PM-Community Break-Fast*
 *Registration Required
 For more information, email info@wjcenter.org.

Congregation Emanu-el of Westchester
 2125 Westchester Avenue East, Rye
 Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 7:30 PM: Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Tuesday, September 23

10 AM: Morning Service, reception to follow
 3 PM: Young Families Service & Celebration for children through grade 2
 Wednesday, September 24
 10:15 AM: Rosh Hashanah Nature Walk at the Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, 1 Playland Parkway, Rye
 11 AM: Tashlich at the Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary Beach
 Shabbat Shuvah
 Friday, September 26, 7:30 PM
 Yom Kippur
 Wednesday, October 1
 7:30 PM: Kol Nidre
 Thursday, October 2
 10 AM: Morning Service
 3 PM: Afternoon Service
 3:30 PM: A Healing Service of Music and Meditations
 4 PM: Yizkor/Memorial Service
 4:45 PM: N’ilah/Concluding Service
 5:45 PM: Break Fast
 For more information, call 914-967-4382.

Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester
 220 South Bedford Road, Chappaqua
 Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 5 PM: Outdoor Musical Erev Rosh Hashanah Service
 Rosh Hashanah, First Day
 Tuesday, September 23
 9:30 AM: Rosh Hashanah Morning Early Service
 12:30 PM: Rosh Hashanah Morning Late Service
 3 PM: Service for Families with Children in Elementary School
 Rosh Hashanah, Second Day
 Wednesday, September 24
 10 AM: Rosh Hashanah Second Day Service
 Kol Nidre
 Wednesday, October 1
 7:45 PM: Yom Kippur Evening Service
 Yom Kippur
 Thursday, October 2

New! Sensing the High Holy Days
 Led by Professor Eve Keller | Virtual (Zoom) | 5:30 PM EDT on September 2, 16, and 30
Session 1 – Elul: Sound: Shofar – Awakening
Session 2 – Rosh Hashanah: Taste: Apples, Honey, New Fruit – Gratitude
Session 3 – Sukkot: Touch: Sukkah, Lulav, Etrog – Precarity & Responsibility
 Professor Eve Keller of Fordham University will lead in exploring connection with the Jewish holidays through the senses. Each session delves into rich themes, progressing from renewal and forgiveness to freedom and, finally, joy. The focus will be on objects central to celebration, and how senses enrich experience. Participants will be invited to bring a treasured object, memory, or melody to enhance discussions and to help

9:30 AM: Yom Kippur Morning Early Service
 12:30 PM: Yom Kippur Morning Late Service
 2:30 PM: Service for Families with Children in Elementary School
 5 PM: Yizkor Service
 5:50 PM: Neilah Concluding Service with Havdalah
 Break-fast snack following
 For more information, email temple@bethelnw.org.

Congregation Kol Ami
 252 Soundview Avenue, White Plains
 Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 7:30 PM-9 PM
 Potluck Dessert, Oneg to follow
 Rosh Hashanah, First Day
 Tuesday, September 23
 9 AM-11:30 AM: Early Service
 12:30 PM-3 PM: Late Service
 3:30 PM-4:15 PM: Family Service
 Rosh Hashanah, Second Day
 Wednesday, September 24
 10 AM-Noon
 Luncheon to follow
 Yom Kippur Kol Nidra
 Wednesday, October 1
 5:30 PM-7:30 PM: Early Service
 8:30 PM-10:30 PM: Late Service
 Yom Kippur
 Thursday, October 2
 9 AM-11:30 AM: Early Service
 12:30 PM-3 PM: Late Service
 3:30 PM-4:15 PM: Family Service
 5 PM-7 PM: Yizkor and Neilah Service
 For more information, call (914) 949-4717.

Temple Israel of Northern Westchester
 31 Glengary Road, Croton-on-Hudson
 Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 8 PM: Rosh Hashanah Evening Service
 Tuesday, September 23

create shared meaning and connection to the High Holy Days. To register or learn more about JBI Library’s programming for the High Holy Days and beyond, email <https://jbilibrary.org/programs-events> or call the direct library line at 212-545-8025. For patrons who are blind, have low vision, or are print-disabled, JBI continues to offer High Holy Day audio, large print, and braille materials at no cost, including children’s and adult holiday-themed Books, Machzorim (prayer-books), as well as Selichot and Yahrzeit prayers and JBI’s Jewish reference calendars. To ensure arrival by Rosh Hashanah, materials should be ordered by September 8 for individuals. Browse more at <https://jbilibrary.org/our-library/high-holy-day-materials> or request by emailing library@jbilibrary.org.

10 AM: Rosh Hashanah Morning Service
 1 PM: Rosh Hashanah Multi-Generational Service
 Yom Kippur
 Wednesday, October 1
 6 PM: Kol Nidre Multi-Generational Service
 8:15 PM: Kol Nidre
 Thursday, October 2
 10 AM: Yom Kippur Morning Service
 1 PM: Yom Kippur Experience for Young Families
 5:30 PM: Neilah (closing service) followed by Break-the-Fast
 For more information, email connect@tinw.org.
 Westchester Reform Temple, 255 Mamaroneck Road, Scarsdale
 Erev Rosh Hashanah
 Monday, September 22
 5:45 PM: Adult Service with concurrent K-5 program
 Rosh Hashanah, First Day
 Tuesday, September 23
 9 AM: Adult Early Service
 10:45 AM: Family Service (Beit Midrash)
 11:45 AM: Adult Late Service
 1 PM: Intergenerational Service (Beit Midrash)
 Rosh Hashanah, Second Day
 Wednesday, September 24
 10 AM: Morning Service
 10:30 AM: Family Apple Picking at Wilkens Fruit & Fir Farm, 1335 White Hill Road, Yorktown Heights
 Erev Yom Kippur – Kol Nidre
 Wednesday, October 1
 5 PM: Family Service (Beit Midrash)
 5 PM: Adult Early Service
 7:45 PM: Adult Late Service
 Yom Kippur Day
 Thursday, October 2
 9 AM: Adult Early Service
 10:45 AM: Family Service (Beit Midrash)
 11:45 AM: Adult Late Service
 1 PM: Intergenerational Service (Beit Midrash)
 3:45 PM: Yom Kippur Afternoon Service includes Yizkor and Ne’ilah
 For more information, contact the temple office at 914-723-7727.



HEAR THE CALL

As we welcome the new year, 5786, we're called to look within — to find the strength to repair not just ourselves, but our world. We're called to act.

At UJA, with your support, we're working every day to rebuild Israel's devastated communities and restore a people in trauma.

Here at home, we're confronting the rise of antisemitism — on campus, online, and in our streets — while strengthening the safety and security of our institutions.

And across our community, we're responding to the extraordinary outpouring of Jewish pride and engagement, making Jewish life more accessible for all who seek it.

Shanah Tovah. May the year ahead bless each of us with the strength and the courage to act.

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Young Singers Welcome as New Season Begins in Westchester for HaZamir International Jewish Teen Choir



Westchester County To Host Interfaith Prayer Vigil and 9/11 Memorial Service

Westchester County will host two commemorative events to honor the memory of those who perished in the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and those who later died from 9/11-related illnesses. The events will feature an Interfaith Prayer Vigil on September 10, and a September 11th Memorial Service on September 11.



Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said: “Nearly a quarter-century later, the pain of September 11 remains deeply felt in Westchester. We gather each year to ensure the names, stories and sacrifices of our residents are never forgotten. This vigil and memorial service are moments for reflection and support for the families whose lives were forever changed.”

Deputy County Executive Richard Wishnie said: “Westchester’s strength lies in its people, and on these days we stand side-by-side in remembrance and solidarity. The vigil and memorial are opportunities for collective reflection and healing.”

Interfaith Prayer Vigil

September 10, 2025, 5 PM

Kensico Dam Plaza, The Rising & 9/11 First Responders Memorial

Faith leaders from Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim communities will lead prayers, followed by candle lighting and a wreath-laying ceremony at the steel beam from the Twin Towers. The vigil will honor all Westchester residents who lost their lives on 9/11 or from related illnesses.

September 11th Memorial Service

September 11, 2025, 3 PM

Kensico Dam Plaza, 1 Bronx River Parkway, Valhalla

The memorial service will honor all Westchester County residents who died on 9/11 and from 9/11-related illnesses. The ceremony will include remarks, music, and the reading of the names of all who are memorialized.

If you are a family member of someone who died on 9/11 or of a 9/11 related illness and would like to be involved in these two memorial events, email Communications@westchestercountyNY.gov.

These events are open to the public, and all are encouraged to attend and participate in honoring the lives lost and those affected by 9/11.

Teens entering grades 8-12 are encouraged to join the Westchester chapter of HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir for a rewarding combination of music, culture, leadership and friendship. Rehearsals for the 2025-2026 season begin in September, culminating in a gala performance at the new David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City next spring with hundreds of HaZamir singers from across the United States and Israel. An open house for interested singers is scheduled for September 7. For more information, email HaZaWestchester@gmail.com.

HaZamir was created by Maestro Matthew Lazar, Founder and Director of the Zamir Choral Foundation, to provide an opportunity for accomplished young singers to perform great Jewish music at the utmost standard of excellence and sing on the world’s biggest stages.

“HaZamir gives young people an outlet to celebrate their Jewish heritage, connect with one another and feel a sense of belonging and pride through the creative outlet of music,” says Matthew Lazar. “Now, more than ever, this supportive community is crucial to teens.”

HaZamir members rehearse weekly in their local chapters with expert conductors, as well as at regional, national and international gatherings throughout the year. The three-day annual HaZamir Festival leading up to the annual gala performance brings Israeli and American teens together to rehearse, socialize and participate in facilitated encounter groups that allow for cultural exchange and understanding. HaZamir singers in 11th and 12th grade also have the chance to apply for the selective HaZamir Teen Leadership Program and serve as role models for a new generation of leaders.

“It’s really gratifying to see the young singers creating such strong bonds with one another as they discover the music and texts of the Jewish people and perform them at the highest level,” says Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman, conductor of HaZamir Westchester. “There is no better place for a musical Jewish teen than HaZamir.”

“HaZamir teens are given the unique opportunity to express their Jewish identities through their love of music while learning responsibility and interacting with peers from a range of backgrounds,” adds Vivian Lazar, Director of HaZamir. “The healing power of choral singing also boosts mood and self-esteem, which fosters future success in all areas of their lives.”

The HaZamir choir is comprised of teenagers in 26 American chapter locations including Baltimore, Bergen County, NJ, Boca Raton, Boston, Brooklyn, Central New Jersey, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, LA Valley, Los Angeles, Long Island, NY, Manhattan, MetroWest NJ, Miami, Minneapolis, New Haven, Orlando, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, Silicon Valley, CA, South New Jersey, Washington, DC and Westchester County, NY and in 9 cities in Israel.

HaZamir teen singer Jaynie R. sums up the joys of joining her peers from across the U.S. and Israel: “We have a lot in common: we’re Jewish, we love to sing, and we’re all committed to music. When we perform, it’s so special because we’ve worked on this all year, and then we come together and get to know each other. At the same time, the songs have such great meaning, and it becomes very emotional. All in all, it’s an amazing experience.”

For additional information about HaZamir, email hazamir@zamirchoralfoundation.org or visit www.hazamir.org.



**HERE
FOR
GOOD**

FRIENDS OF THE IDF
WESTCHESTER & CONNECTICUT
ANNUAL DINNER

**A NIGHT TO
SALUTE OUR HEROES**

Sunday, October 26, 2025 | 5:30 PM
Greenwich, Connecticut

*For more information, contact
Anat Chavkin, Executive Director,
at anat.chavkin@fidf.org*

Shana Tova

from the
Friends of the IDF (FIDF)

Wishing you a sweet, healthy New Year
and heartfelt thanks for your steadfast
support of Israel's soldiers.

You've stood with them long before 10/7,
through the heartbreak of war, and beyond
Operation Rising Lion.

Am Yisrael Chai. Forever.

Anat Chavkin
Iris Bartov and Lisa Zach,
Rebecca Grossman and Tomer Hoory



Hineni: This High Holiday Season, Stand and Speak



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

As we prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—the Days of Awe—our tradition calls us both to introspection and renewal and to redouble our commitment to justice, truth, and speaking out.

This year, our resolve to stand up for the Jewish community is not optional; it is urgent.

The latest FBI data confirms it: anti-Jewish hate crimes in the U.S. rose nearly 6 percent between 2023 and 2024—reaching the highest recorded numbers since reporting began. In 2024, Jewish Americans—comprising just 2 percent of the population—were victims of 18 percent of all hate crimes, and 69 percent of religion-based hate crimes targeted Jews.

These are not remote statistics. And we all know it. These are the lived experiences of the Jewish community. And they are the stark realities haunting our neighborhoods, schools, campuses, workplaces, and houses of worship.

In the Torah, when God calls to Abraham, to Moses, to Samuel, the response is the same: *Hineni*, “Here I am.” It is more than an announcement of presence. It is a declaration of readiness. Readiness to step into the moment, to shoulder responsibility, to act when called: Count on Me.

This High Holiday season, each of us is being called upon to stand up for the Jewish community and Israel. The question is—will we answer *Hineni*?

Each of us must step forward—as supporters, and as educated, empowered advocates. This is how we turn pain into purpose.

The American Jewish Committee (AJC) stands at the center of this work—defending Jewish life, advancing Israel’s story, and equipping those of us who refuse silence to stand up for our community and Israel.

What does *Hineni* look like in practice?

- **Know your facts:** Understand the complexity of Israel’s situation and the nuances of antisemitism—not just globally, but right here in our region.

- **Tell the story:** Speak about Israel’s contributions, its vulnerabilities, and its challenges from a place of conviction, clarity, and compassion.

- **Engage with action:** Lend your voice to AJC’s Unity Breakfasts, community briefings, interfaith forums, and school dialogues.

- **Work across differences:** Build partnerships with leaders of other faiths, educators, and local officials to protect not just Jewish safety but shared civic ideals.

- **Ensure our next generation is educated and empowered:** AJC’s Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) program is now accepting applications, with limited spaces remaining.

- This is your chance to be trained and raise your voice with other strong, proud, pro-Israel Jewish voices—intentional, strategic, and unwavering.

This year, when history calls, let’s answer as our ancestors did: *Hineni*. Here I am. Ready to learn. Ready to speak. Ready to act.

May this be the year we stand taller, speak louder, and act bolder—for ourselves, for Israel, and for the generations to come.

Shanah Tovah.

Myra Clark-Siegel is regional director of AJC Westchester/Fairfield. AJC is the global advocacy organization of the Jewish people. To learn more about how to be a strong Jewish advocate, email westchester@ajc.org.

Hundreds of Voices Created a Harmonious Community at the 2025 North American Jewish Choral Festival



More than 400 singers joined together this summer in celebration of Jewish choral music and to feel a sense of pride and belonging at Zamir Choral Foundation’s annual North American Jewish Choral Festival (NAJCF). Participants enjoyed five days of a life-changing musical experience.

“NAJCF is a special place where Jewish spirit and musical excellence come together to create something truly transformative,” says Matthew Lazar, Festival Founder and Director. “It was a gift to be among so many voices united in harmony, tradition, and hope.”

The Festival is a unique and joyful opportunity to connect to the power of Jewish choral music and form lasting friendships with fellow music lovers. Attendees of all ages came from across the United States as both members of choirs and individual singers and represented a variety of musical experiences from amateur singers to professionals, cantors and conductors. Many are also members or alumni of Zamir Choral Foundation’s musical programs including HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir; Zamir Noded for young adults 18-30; and the acclaimed Zamir Chorale.

A variety of uplifting Jewish musical activities took place during the five-day festival, including daily “community sings” as well as “instant ensembles” conducted by Matthew Lazar, Richard Cohn, Joyce Rosenzweig, and Scott Stein.

Festival attendees are also treated to evening concerts by outstanding performers and choirs. Special guest performers for 2025 included the award-winning a cappella vocal ensemble Six13 and acclaimed musical artist Noah Aronson.

NAJCF provides an environment of fun and excitement as well as a sense of

healing, and unity as participants share a bonding experience with one another.

“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.”

Each year, the Festival presents the Hallel V’Zimrah Award to individuals who have made important contributions to the world of Jewish music. The 2025 award was given to Cantor Robert Lieberman and Rabbi Vicki Lieberman in honor of the establishment of the Jewish Choral Conducting Institute, in a special presentation featuring performances by Zamir Chorale & Zamir Noded, conducted by Matthew Lazar.

NAJCF reinforces Zamir Choral Foundation’s commitment to musical education and excellence. There are seminars throughout the five days on topics ranging from vocal technique to spirituality through music. Workshops in 2025 included: Precision Singing; Pitch, Tone and Timing; Jewish Music and Themes of Water; Techniques for Singing; Friday Night Choral Repertoire; Shalom Gorgeous: Barbra Streisand and Jewish Identity; and many more.

“This Festival is more than an event—it’s a celebration of Jewish identity and Jewish choral music, past, present and future,” concludes Matthew Lazar.

The 2026 North American Jewish Choral Festival is set for August 2-6, 2026, in Stamford, Connecticut. For more information about NAJCF and other Zamir Choral Foundation programs, visit zamirchoralfoundation.org.

What Happens in New York if You Die Without a Will?

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR: AMY C. O'HARA, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

Thinking about death is never pleasant, but understanding what happens to your money, home, and belongings if you pass away without a Last Will and Testament is important for protecting your loved ones. In New York, dying without a valid will is called dying "intestate." When that happens, state law—not you—decides who inherits your property. The rules are set out in the New York Estates, Powers and Trusts Law (EPTL), and they may not match your wishes.

When a person dies intestate in New York, the process is handled through the Surrogate's Court in the county where they lived. The court appoints someone to manage the estate—called the "administrator." This person collects the deceased's assets, pays outstanding debts and taxes, and then distributes what remains to the heirs determined by law. The law creates a family tree of priority, starting with the closest living relatives.

Here is how the basic inheritance order works in New York:

- If you leave a spouse and no children: Your spouse inherits everything.
- If you leave children but no spouse: Your children inherit every-

thing, divided equally. If a child has died before you but left their own children (your grandchildren), that share passes down to them.

- If you leave both a spouse and children: Your spouse inherits the first \$50,000 plus half of the remaining estate. Your children inherit the other half, divided equally.

- If you have no spouse and no children: Your estate passes to your parents.

- If your parents have died: Your estate passes to your siblings (or their descendants if they have died).

- If there are no surviving immediate relatives, the inheritance can go further out to nieces, nephews, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. If no family members can be found, your estate eventually goes to the State of New York.

These rules apply only to assets that are considered part of your "probate estate." Certain property passes automatically outside of the intestacy process—such as jointly owned property with rights of survivorship, life insurance proceeds with a named beneficiary, and retirement accounts with designated beneficiaries.

Dying without a will can create challenges. First, you lose control over who receives your property. You cannot leave specific gifts to friends, charities, or unmarried partners, because New York's intestacy law recognizes only spouses, blood relatives

and legally adopted children as heirs. Stepchildren do not inherit unless legally adopted, no matter how close your relationship was.

You also cannot choose who will handle your estate—New York law sets the order of priority for who may serve as administrator, and it might not be the person you would have picked.

The intestacy process can also be slower and more costly. Family members may disagree about who should be in charge or how property should be handled. If no close relatives are available, the Public Administrator's office may have to take over, adding another layer of bureaucracy.

Creating a will is not only about distributing your assets—it's about reducing stress for your loved ones. A properly drafted and executed will in New York allows you to:

- Choose exactly who inherits your property and in what amounts.
- Name an executor you trust to manage your estate.
- Appoint guardians for minor children.
- Provide for non-relatives or charities.

Without a will, your legacy is left

to a set of rigid legal rules. While these rules aim to be fair, they cannot reflect your personal values, relationships, or intentions. By taking the time to prepare a will, you ensure that your wishes—not the default laws—guide the distribution of your life's work.

In short, if you live in New York, dying without a will means the state will write one for you—and you might not like what it says. The best way to protect your loved ones, your property, and your peace of mind is to plan ahead. Consulting with an experienced estate planning attorney can help you create a clear, valid, and enforceable plan that speaks for you when you no longer can.

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.

U.S. Community College Presidents Experience Israel with AJC

After a week of connecting with their counterparts and experiential learning in Israel, four community college presidents returned stateside after participating in an American Jewish Committee (AJC) Project Interchange and AJC Center for Education Advocacy delegation.

South Texas College President Ricardo Solis, Rockland Community College President William Mullaney, Suffolk County Community College President Edward Bonahue, and Tidewater Community College President Marcia Conston traveled across Israel in late July, meeting with higher education professionals and experts on Israeli history, culture, and current events.

The first AJC Project Interchange delegation specifically tailored for community college professionals, the group met with representatives from and visited institutes including Tel Aviv University, Sapir College, ORT Academic College Tel Aviv, and the Council for Higher Educa-

tion in Israel (MALAG).

Suffolk County Community College President Edward Bonahue said, "Our American two-year colleges expand access to educational and economic opportunity, and we foster democratic values and civic engagement for students from all backgrounds. AJC Project Interchange's program showed us we have colleagues and partners in Israel working toward the same goals amidst even more complex circumstances. We learned about national higher education policy and programs, but hearing the personal stories of so many Israeli students and leaders made the experience especially meaningful."

In addition to their higher education focused meetings, the delegation also heard from Rabbi Ishay Kibeda, founder of the first pre-military prep school for the Ethiopian Community and Samer Sinijlawi, Palestinian political activist and Chair of the Jerusalem Development Fund.

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Edward Shapiro, President and Publisher
es@shorelinepub.com

Nancy Coveney, Editor
nancy.coveney@shorelinepub.com

Cynthia Pena, Art Director
shorelineproduction@gmail.com

Mary DeYoung, Advertising Account Executive
mdeyoung.61@gmail.com

Lauren Levine, Advertising Account Executive
levinelaur@gmail.com

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Fantastical Realities: Sandra Caplan, Maya Ciarrocchi, and Ray Ciarrocchi

Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale, 5901 Palisade Avenue, will host the upcoming exhibition, *Fantastical Realities: Sandra Caplan, Maya Ciarrocchi, and Ray Ciarrocchi*, which will be on view from September 7, 2025 through January 11, 2026. A reception and talk with the artists will take place on Sunday, September 14, at 1:30 PM. As part of Open House New York, a special exhibition tour will take place on Sunday, October 19, at 1:30 PM. RSVP at (718) 581-1596 or art@riverspring.org. Admission to the Museum is always free.

This exhibition will be the first time two generations of the Ciarrocchi-Caplan family will exhibit together. Sandra Caplan focuses on still life, Ray Ciarrocchi on landscape, and Maya Ciarrocchi works across disciplines. The worlds they create and the realities they express are intimately connected to the times and places in which they work.

Sandra Caplan works almost exclusively in still life, using vivid colors and staged tableaux that she carefully assembles and paints directly from observation. What results, however, is fantastical. Flowers, fruits, fabric, mirrors, and personal objects are painted in bold, saturated colors and at large scale. Among the objects Caplan includes are “photos associated with people and places from the past,” including “reproductions of paintings that hold an emotional connection,” Caplan has explained. In *Downtown View*, September (1989), for example, she juxtaposes the subjective, internal world, symbolized by the still life, with the objective reality represented by the New York City skyline beyond the studio window.

Two tapestries, three needlepoints, and a sixteen-panel cyanotype installation by Ciarrocchi’s and Caplan’s daughter, Maya Ciarrocchi, will be on view. They are related to *LoopCurrent*, a research-based performance installation that envisions humanity’s impact on the planet and the irrevocably altered future. “*LoopCurrent* examines our relationship with the future by imagining the relics of that time. In a world rocked by a climate crisis, war, and political upheaval, what new, fantastical spaces can we build from the residue of destruction and loss?” Ciarrocchi stated.

A response to the present-day climate catastrophe, the works shown imagine remnants discovered by future archaeologists with collap-



Sandra Caplan (b. Winnipeg, Canada, 1936), *Downtown View, September*, 1989. Oil on linen, 50 x 42 in. Courtesy the artist.

ing cities, maps of water, migration pathways, and artifacts from industries such as mining and oil drilling. For example, *City of Sighs*—both the small needlepoint from 2023 and a large Jacquard tapestry of the same title from 2025—feature angular, geometric shapes that collapse into each other or intersect, referencing architectural forms and pathways. The works include imagery resembling topographical maps that reflect Ciarrocchi’s interest in migration, shifting realities, and displacement.

Ray Ciarrocchi has a strong formalist practice related to the physical aspects of landscape. His vibrant compositions begin with observation and become fantastical places all their own with the dramatic color and shadow that appear within his works. Describing his process, Ciarrocchi states, “the canvas . . . becomes more ‘real’ than the subject which initially inspired it.”

Ciarrocchi uses light as a way to explore the potential of color, transforming observed reality into something dreamlike. For example, the rhythmic stylization of natural forms and saturated pinks, greens, blues, and purples of *Field by a River* (1989) present a view of the Susquehanna River—the longest river on the East Coast and a subject that Ciarrocchi has returned to many times over the years—as a transcendent, surrealistic landscape, at once recognizable and strange.

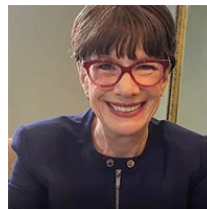
The works on view reflect the distinctive social and artistic concerns of two generations of artists, yet each one engages with their own fantastical realities. While Maya Ciarrocchi uses abstraction in her textiles and cyanotypes to imagine a sprawling, ruinous future caused by the contemporary climate crisis, Sandra Caplan and Ray Ciarrocchi experiment with

formalist elements to transform traditional still life and landscape painting from what they observe into what they envision.

Museum hours: Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Photo ID is

required for all visitors to the Hebrew Home campus. Call (718) 581-1596 or email art@riverspring.org to schedule in-person or virtual group tours or for holiday hours. For further information, visit www.derfner.org.

Calendar September 2025



Nostra Aetate at 60: Progress, Problems and Promise

Tuesday, September 16, 7:30 PM

Ryan Library, Iona University, 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle

Sixty years ago, on October 28, 1965, the Roman Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council issued *Nostra Aetate*: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions. The document did more than embrace dialogue with other religions. The centerpiece of the document both rejects antisemitism and inaugurates a new Catholic understanding of Judaism. Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, internationally acclaimed scholar of Jewish-Christian relations, will guide us through key achievements in Jewish-Catholic relations, offer a frank assessment of the work that remains, and reflect on the ethical imperatives of *Nostra Aetate*. Program is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, contact AJC Westchester/Fairfield at westchester@ajc.org.



Izmir: Jews in the Ottoman World—A Talk with Professor Dina Danon

Thursday, September 18, 7 PM

Durst Theatre, Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road

Professor Dina Danon explores the long-overlooked history of the Ottoman Jewish community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Drawing extensively on a rich body of previously untapped Ladino archival material, she tells a story through the voices of beggars on the street and mercantile elites, shoe-shiners and newspaper editors, rabbis and housewives. Free admission. A light reception catered by Seasons begins at 6 PM. To register, go to <https://www.purchase.edu/calendar/event/73186-izmir-jews-in-the-ottoman-world-a-talk-with-prof>

Lunch & Learn: William McKinley’s Relevance Today

Thursday, September 4, 1 PM

Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale

Was William McKinley merely a forgotten president tragically assassinated in 1901, or a visionary leader who reshaped America’s place in the world? Join Evan Weiner for a discussion of McKinley’s presidency and the lasting impact of his decisions on today’s political and global

landscape. Lunch will be served. Admission is \$25, \$15 for members. For more information, email adultprograms@jccmw.org.

New York Times Puzzle Love: Behind the Scenes Sunday, September 7, 7:30 PM

Shames Jewish Community Center on the Hudson, 371 South Broadway, Tarrytown

New York Times puzzles have become a cultural phenomenon, with millions of people playing them daily, sharing their scores, and having competitions with friends and family. Will Shortz of the famous daily crossword and Wyna Liu of the newer challenge, Connections, will discuss how they found their way to becoming puzzle creators and give a peek behind the curtain at the process required to get the puzzles we love out the door daily. Admission is \$36 for non-members, \$30 for members, \$20 for students under 18. To register, go to <https://www.shamesjcc.org/event/puzzle-love-behind-the-scenes-with-new-york-times-game-editors/>

“Back To School” September Social

Tuesday, September 9, 2 PM

DOROT Westchester, 925 Westchester Avenue, White Plains

Dust off your high school yearbook and any other memorabilia to bring to the Back-To-School social. Laugh and recall all that has changed since those days, and all that remains the same. This program is for adults age 60 and older. To register, go to <https://dorotusa.jotform.com/252095945930161>

Malcolm Gladwell in Conversation with Angus Fletcher: Primal Intelligence

Thursday, September 11, 1 PM

Shames Jewish Community Center on the Hudson, 371 South Broadway, Tarrytown

Join Malcolm Gladwell, bestselling author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*, for a visionary conversation with Angus Fletcher about the hidden roots and untapped potential of human intelligence as described in his new book, *Primal Intelligence: You Are Smarter Than You Think You Know*. Where do visionaries like Abraham Lincoln, Maya Angelou, Nikola Tesla, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Warren Buffett, and William Shakespeare get their extraordinary intelligence? In 2021, Angus Fletcher and a research team set out to find out the answer—and what they learned has enormous implications for human intelligence in the age of AI. Free admission. Learn more at shamesjcc.org.

Selichot with Chana Raskin

Saturday, September 13, 8:15 PM

Beth El Synagogue Center, 1324 North Avenue, New Rochelle

Join the Beth El Clergy team with musical and prayer leader Chana Raskin, founder of RAZA. Chana hails from the Chabad-Lubavitch community and recently released a groundbreaking album of Chabad nigunim, the first LP of women singing these songs of the spirit.

To register, go to bethelnr.org/selichot

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