



Jewish Community News

The Publication of the Jewish Federation of the Desert

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Cheshvan-Kislev 5786 - November 2025

WELCOME HOME!



October 13th, 2025

Federation as a Remedy for Our Collective Healing



Danny Labin
*Chief Executive Officer,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert*

The horrors of October 7, 2023, reignited a sense of solidarity that the Jewish People has not experienced in a long time. Jews in Israel dropped the political infighting that had brought as many as one million Israelis out to the street on a weekly basis in protest of proposed judicial reform. Jews in capital cities across all seven continents came together in profound expressions of unity, seemingly forgetting the many differences that had previously divided us. And the North American Jewish community, in particular, rallied in a cohesive voice maximizing the tool of Federation to raise more than \$1 billion to support the needs of innocent Israelis

whose lives were ripped asunder on that day when the most unfathomable atrocities were committed, now just a little more than two years ago.

Throughout Jewish history, moments of crisis have brought us together time and again. Shared enemies and seemingly insurmountable challenges have often revealed what is best about our People’s unique DNA. Yet too often, our collective power to rise in a unified voice seems barely audible; our voice often seems to be resting just beneath the surface, sitting dormant when instead it could be used to our collective advantage – not only in times of strife but in times of plenty. Joseph had the prescience to know that years of plenty would be followed by bumper crops. How do we prepare for the inevitable tough times during times when it just feels easier to plug along, keep our heads down, and simply let the good times roll?

Over the course of the past couple weeks, we have all been able to let out a tremendous sigh of relief knowing that the last twenty living hostages have all returned to Israel. While Jews around the world have been removing our yellow pins and dog-tag necklaces, have stopped praying for the hostages’ release, and have begun to smile

again with a palpable sense of equanimity, there is a tantalizing temptation to just want to “move on”. But for many families, there will be no celebration of homecoming for relatives and loved ones who will never come home. And the devastation across Israel and Gaza, both emotional and physical, remains impossible to grasp. What’s more, the ceasefire is anything but guaranteed to last. A true end to the pain and suffering of war remains elusive. And while we have all been able to step back from the ledge of total despair, the dust’s settling reveals how much the need for solidarity remains.

It is at this precise moment, when we can take that deep breath and finally attempt to recollect our strength and focus, that solidarity is more important than ever. It is in these moments, when our People’s migraine is experiencing this current and ephemeral respite, that we must continue building a foundation that will serve as our tools for future survival. While the \$1 billion dollars donated to Federation during the past two years of relentless war was able to serve as a critical dose of pain relief, helping to dull the throbbing of our collective migraine, prevention is always the healthiest path.

The foundation of the Jewish people is represented by the many billions of dollars donated over the past 130 years of Federations’ history in America. That stalwart foundation has allowed us to do truly incredible things: from helping to bring Jews from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union home to Israel; to effecting political change that ensures the Jewish communities of North America’s ability to thrive; to empowering vulnerable members of our own community to cope with intense hardship, both financial and spiritual.

The work of Federation, day in and day out, in good times and bad, has ensured that American Jewry, Israel, and Jews around the world have survived and thrived over more than a century of Federation support. Whatever the future may hold for us, there is one thing I believe is certain: Federation can continue to serve as a prophylactic remedy for all that the Jewish people will face. And while we all deserve this moment to feel a sense of long-awaited relief and to stop and bask in our collective convalescence, the solidarity of our People and of our Desert community’s future will continue to depend on one thing only: each and every one of us.

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Join Us for Our First Annual Hanukkah Party!



Arnie Gillman
*Board President,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert*

The Jewish Federation of the Desert invites our community to an exciting new community tradition: our **First Annual Community Hanukkah Party**, being held at the Jewish Federation building in Rancho Mirage on Sunday, December 14th at 3:00 pm. Together we will light the first candle as we usher in Erev Hanukkah. We look forward to your joining us to celebrate tradition and togetherness.

Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, commemorates many miracles, including the miracle of resilience — when a small flame, expected to last only one day, burned for eight. It’s a story of hope,

perseverance, and rededication as the small but mighty Maccabees were able to regain control of the Temple after it had been desecrated by the powerful Greek army. It’s the values and our history that inspire us today.

As we light the menorah together, we will reflect on the power of community to shine through even the darkest times. In that spirit, our celebration is more than just a party — it’s a way to come together,

celebrate heritage, and strengthen our community. We celebrate our ongoing commitment to support those in need, rededicating ourselves to community, kindness, and connection.

Please plan to join us on December 14th. Everyone is welcome. There will be holiday refreshments, entertainment and activities for children (and grandchildren). We can’t wait to celebrate with you!

Chag Sameach!



Introducing Halle Kohn-Levine

The staff and board of the Jewish Federation of the Desert and the community are excited to welcome Halle Kohn-Levine to the Federation.

Halle will work closely with the Federation team, managing the office's administration while also supporting the Federation's Chief Executive Officer, Danny Labin, and the Federation's community engagement initiatives. Halle holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from California State University, Long Beach, and a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Social Science from Cal Poly Humboldt. She has held positions in the fields of conservation, marketing and administration.

Born and raised in Long Beach, CA, Halle was happy to move back to Southern California after completing her graduate program amidst the cloudy



redwood forests. Living in Joshua Tree, Halle found meaning through working to preserve the landscapes she cares about as Acquisitions Coordinator at Mojave

Desert Land Trust, facilitating full-cycle land acquisition and conveyance processes.

Most recently, Halle worked as Advertising Supervisor at the fast-paced and Forbes-rated Agua Caliente Casino Rancho Mirage. As Advertising Supervisor, she led cross-departmental meetings and facilitated collaboration processes; screened and delegated internal marketing requests; and set deadlines for multi-channel deliverables based on communications with management, team members and vendors.

Halle moved from Joshua Tree to Palm Springs in early 2020 after meeting her now-husband, though she has long been connected to Coachella Valley, where both sets of her grandparents lived and where she often visited for holidays.

She is thrilled to bring her nonprofit experience in outreach, communications, project management, and community-based advocacy to the Jewish Federation of the Desert. In joining the team, Halle hopes to help strengthen our local community through the Federation's important work of tzedakah and the many other enduring Jewish values that sustain our resilient peoplehood.

In her free time, Halle enjoys playing with her standard poodle, Kugel (a couch potato kugel, for those curious as to the type) and the occasional hike through our beautiful, expansive desert ecosystem. Halle began her new role after Rosh HaShannah this year, and we wish Halle a sweet new year as she embarks on this exciting beginning with the Jewish Federation of the Desert.

More than 50,000 Jews Made Aliyah Since October 7th, 2023

Jewish News Syndicate

More than 50,000 new immigrants have arrived in Israel since the Hamas-led terrorist attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, according to figures released by the Jewish Agency for Israel ahead of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

In addition, through Masa Israel Journey, a Jewish Agency program in partnership with the Israeli government, roughly 20,000 young people from Jewish communities abroad have come to Israel to volunteer and support the country.

Tens of thousands of Jews have participated in aliyah fairs held worldwide since Oct. 7, and more than 60,000 people have opened immigration files.

Since Oct. 7, the agency has provided tens of millions of dollars in aid, with more than 22,000 victims of terrorism and war receiving support through immediate grants, rehabilitation programs and resilience-building initiatives for children.

In addition, the agency's Communities2Gether initiative has created roughly 30 new partnerships between southern and northern Israeli towns and Jewish communities abroad. More than 1,700 youths from war-affected areas also attended summer camps in North America through the Campers2Gether program.

Since the war began, the agency's Youth Futures program has supported over 18,000 children and parents in roughly 50 communities across Israel's social and geographic periphery, strengthening resilience through its mentorship model, which provides intensive support over

three years.

The Jewish Agency has also expanded its network of gap-year preparatory programs (mechinot), including in the Gaza Envelope region, as well as a program serving the Druze community.

About 15,000 business owners from across Israel—including those owned by reservists of the Israel Defense Forces—have received support from the agency and its partners through grants and emergency loans.

"On this Rosh Hashanah eve, as we gather at the holiday table, we do not forget our deep commitment to all who have been harmed. The hostage families, victims of terror and war, and all who need our help," said Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog, chairman of the Jewish Agency.

"Thanks to our deep partnership with global Jewry, we were able to help many people who were affected during the difficult two years we have gone through, support business owners and strengthen Aliyah even in the shadow of the war," he said.

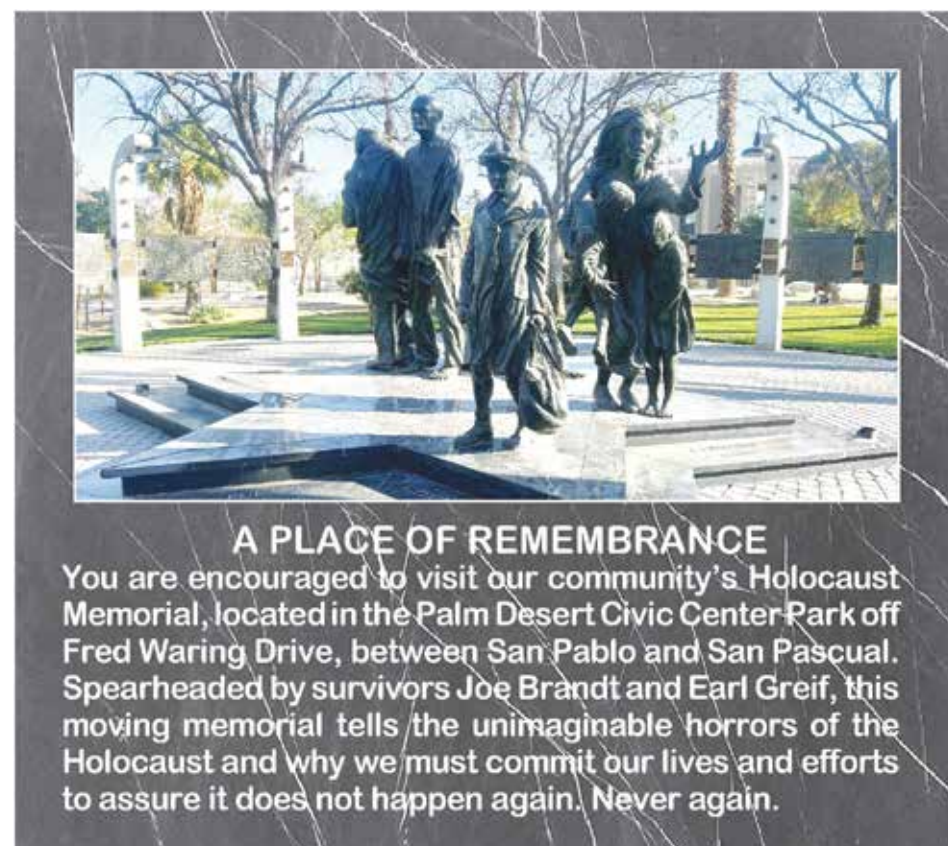
As part of efforts to strengthen the Gaza Envelope region, the agency, in collaboration with the Accountant General's office in the Israeli Ministry of Finance and backed by a state guarantee of approximately 1 billion shekels (\$300 million), will build around 1,000 new housing units in the Tekuma region. The project, supported by world Jewry, aims to attract new families and encourage

demographic growth.

Amid a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents worldwide, the agency is also working to strengthen the resilience of Jewish communities through several initiatives. Its Fund for Community Security has helped protect hundreds of Jewish institutions globally, while the JReady program has trained professionals to respond to

emergencies.

The agency also deployed a record number of Israeli Shlichim (emissaries) worldwide to strengthen ties with global Jewry. The shlichim corps has grown to nearly 3,000 across 65 countries, including more than 120 Israel Fellows stationed on college campuses to support Jewish students facing antisemitism.



Community Comes Together to Remember October 7th, on Second Anniversary

The Jewish community of the desert came together on Sunday, October 5th, the second anniversary of the October 7th 2023 massacre, to remember and to pray for the surviving hostages to be released. Yahrzeit candles and the yellow ribbon pins that had been created to remember the hostages and plead for their release, were given out. The somber gathering filled the sanctuary at Temple Sinai, hopeful that current negotiations between Israel and Hamas would be successful, but mindful that there was no certainty that it would happen. And then eight days later, our prayers were answered.

Danny Labin, CEO of the Jewish Federation, welcomed participants, as did Nancy Singer, president of Temple Sinai. The afternoon's program, coordinated by Leslie Pepper, Director of Community Engagement, with our community's clergy over the past two months, presented a program of hope through prayers and music.

Thank you to the clergy who participated: Rabbi Ken Emert (Ahavat Achim/Sun City), Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (Beit Haverim), Rabbi JB Sacks (Beth Shalom), Madrikh Ruhani Ken Hailpern (Beth Shalom), Rabbi Jules King (Desert Outreach Synagogue), Rabbi Rachel Axelrad (Desert Outreach Synagogue), Rabbi Andrew Bentley (Desert Outreach Synagogue), Rabbi Richard Zions (Har-El), Rabbi David Novak (Temple Sinai), Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron (Ahavat Achim/Sun City), Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela (Beit Haverim), Cantorial Soloist Wayne Abravanel (Temple Sinai), and Cantor Joseph Gole (Har-El).



Rabbi David Novak
of Temple Sinai



Event coordinator
Leslie Pepper, Jewish
Federation Director of
Community Engagement



Temple Sinai Sanctuary filled with participants. Front row fourth from right: Federation President Arnie Gillman, to his left, Federation CEO Danny Labin and his husband, Yehuda Gidron.



(From top:) Rabbi Jules King, Rabbi Ken Emert, Rabbi Andrew Bentley, Cantorial Soloist Wayne Abravanel, Rabbi Yankel Kreiman, Rabbi Steven Rosenberg, Rabbi JB Sacks,, Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron (Ahavat Achim/Sun City), Cantor Joseph Gole (Har-El) Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela, Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Madrikh Ruhani Ken Hailpern, and Rabbi Richard Zions.

Pictured right:
Danny Labin
with community
leaders from
across the
desert including;
David Sikman,
Jeff Gonzalez
(California
Assembly
Member), Jan
Pye and Dirk
Voss (Desert Hot
Springs Council
Members)



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EDITORIAL

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Layout & Design
Chief Executive Officer
Danny Labin

JCN STATEMENT

The Jewish Community News seeks to provide news and feature material of special interest to its readership, and to create a heightened sense of Jewish identity through the dissemination of information about people, events and issues at home and abroad. The JCN seeks to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions in the Jewish community.

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"Life, Land and Law: From Israel to Coachella Valley"

**Congregation Beth Shalom's 15th Annual Scholar-in-Residence Weekend
November 14 – 16, 2025**

Rabbi Amy Levin, Immediate Past President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel, will serve as Scholar-in-Residence at Congregation Beth Shalom Friday, November 14 through Sunday, November 16, 2025, made possible by a grant from the Jewish Federation of the Desert. The Shabbaton's theme, "Life, Land, and Law: From Israel to Coachella Valley," will be explored through presentations, divrei Torah, dialogues, and interactive conversations throughout the weekend, at Beth Shalom, Coachella Valley's Conservative Synagogue, 42600 Cook St., Second Floor, in Palm Desert. The entire community is welcome to attend.

Only the second woman ordained by the Masorti/Conservative Schechter Rabbinical Seminary (SRS) in Jerusalem, Rabbi Levin is a pioneer for women's religious leadership in Israel. The SRS is part of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, the only academic institution in Israel devoted entirely to Jewish studies and to fostering a pluralistic approach to Jewish-Israeli identity through education, the arts and community leadership.

A highly regarded Jewish Educator, Rabbi Levin has taught at the Schechter Institute, Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and The Conservative Yeshiva, a co-educational institute for study of traditional Jewish texts, part of the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center. She is also the founder of Pirka: Mobile Jewish Learning, which offers live, online interactive learning opportunities for adults.

In addition, Rabbi Levin serves on two prestigious committees of the international Rabbinical Assembly: the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which sets halakhic policy for Rabbinical Assembly rabbis and for the Conservative movement; and the Vaad Hakavod, which ensures compliance with the Rabbinical Assembly's Code established ethical standards.

Rabbi Levin is a Kashrut Supervisor, having completed the Rav Hamachshir program of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In addition she is certified as a consultant for faith communities through the prestigious Alban Institute's Consulting for Vital Congregations program.

She lives on Kibbutz Hanaton in Israel's beautiful Jezreel Valley, located near Tel Hanaton, site of the ancient city mentioned in the book of Joshua.

On Friday, Rabbi Levin will share "Life in Israel Post October 7: A Personal Account" during a special Erev Shabbat service. This will be followed by an Oneg Shabbat Dessert Reception, an opportunity for delicious refreshments and continuing conversation. Services begin at 7:15 p.m.

During Shabbat morning services, she will deliver the d'var Torah on "Masorti (Conservative Movement) Life in the Land of Israel: My Experience." Services begin at 9:15 a.m. and are followed by a sumptuous Kiddush Luncheon.

Friday evening and Saturday morning services and sessions are free of charge, and the entire community is welcome with valid identification. RSVP for these sessions is appreciated by Friday, November 7.

The Shabbaton will conclude by teaching "A Case Study in Applying Jewish Law: How Today's Conservative Rabbis Approach Halakhah (Jewish law)" at a Sunday champagne brunch beginning at 10:30 a.m.

The cost for the Sunday morning champagne brunch program for Beth Shalom members is \$36 per member and for non-members is \$46 per person. Advanced paid reservations are required no later than Friday, November 7.

Information is available on the website: www.CongregationBethShalom.net or by emailing info@CongregationBethShalom.net or calling (760) 200-3636.

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**FRIDAY - SUNDAY,
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RABBI AMY LEVIN**

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**Life, Land, and Law:
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www.CongregationBethShalom.net**

"With a Giving Heart"

When the Formula is Correct, Chemistry Creates a Well-Attended Community Event

By Lynda Zionts, Congregation Har-El

It takes a lot of support to create a community event for over 60 people on a Shabbat afternoon, especially on the Shabbat of Succot.

It all started when a desert resident and JCN reader Nancy Mynard called and emailed me a proposal. She suggested that her lifelong friend and film director, Scott Marshall, come to the desert to discuss his work. That movie was "Keeping Up with the Steins," directed by Scott Marshall, a movie that was listed as one of the top ten Jewish movies by Reform Judaism magazine.

That phone call was the beginning of a beautiful experience for our community. The successful formula was the selection a film that reminds us all of Jewish values through laughter.

Congregation Har-El hosted Scott Marshall on October 11, 2025, funded by a grant from the Jewish Federation of the Desert. Scott is the son of Producer, Director, Writer and Actor Garry Marshall. His extended close family and friends joined him. Scott's mother, Barbara, shared her own stories of her husband Garry during the discussion of



Jewish Federation of the Desert CEO Danny Labin, Jewish Federation Women's Philanthropy Chair and Past President of Congregation Har-El Fran Kaufman, Rabbi Richard Zionts of Congregation Har-El, Film Director Scott Marshall, Cantor Joseph Gole of Congregation Har-El, and Temple Isaiah's Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival Director Michael Frydrych



Nancy Mynard and Scott Marshall

the film. Scott shared how the influence of his family and many Jewish friends impacted on his film.

Among the attendees reviewing the



Post-film Q & A

movie was the moderator of the Q & A, our own talented and experienced film producer, Danny Labin, CEO of the Jewish Federation.



Scott Marshall and Danny Labin

In the audience was Michael Frydrych, the Director of the Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival, a project of Temple Isaiah. This annual Spring event has become one of the top 25 Jewish film festivals in the United States.

Succot, as a joyous fall harvest festival, was reflected in the genuine feeling of family, warmth and laughter that pervaded the entire event.

Those attending donated over \$1,000 to the Jewish Federation Tzedakah Fund to help those less fortunate in our own desert community.

The afternoon emphasized the highest Jewish values through the "eyes of the camera" and "the hearts" of those attending. What is not easy becomes possible when we all work together to create community!

Slain Hostage Ronen Engel, Returned October 19

By World Israel News Staff

The body of a hostage returned by the Hamas terror group was confirmed October 19th to be that of Ronen Engel, his family told Hebrew-language media.

Engel, 54, was originally from Tel Aviv but had lived in the Gaza-adjacent Kibbutz Nir Oz for more than a decade when he was murdered during the October 7 massacre.

He was a member of the kibbutz's emergency response squad and had attempted to stave off the invasion of his community on that morning.

During the onslaught, Engel left his wife and children in their home's safe room and went out to confront the terrorists. He was killed in a gunfight, and his body was abducted to the Gaza Strip.

Engel's wife, Karina, and daughters Mika, 18, and Yuval, 11, were kidnapped during the attack and held captive in Gaza for about 50 days before being



Ronen Engel with his wife and daughters

freed in a November 2023 hostage-prisoner exchange. Another son, Tom, was not on the kibbutz at the time of the assault.

For months, Engel's fate was uncertain. In December 2023, Israeli authorities informed the family that he had been murdered and his body was kidnapped to the Strip.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, Hamas transferred two hostage



bodies to the Red Cross, which later handed them over to Israel. Forensic testing confirmed Engel's identity. Later in the day, the second body was identified as that of Thai citizen Sontaya Ukkharsri, who was murdered in the fields of Kibbutz Be'eri on Oct. 7.

"After 744 days, my father finally

returned home," Mika wrote on Instagram. "It's not what we hoped, it's not what we wished for him, but it's finally here," she added. "Our hearts are with the families of the hostages, and we won't stop until the final slain hostage is returned home."

UCLA's Jewish Community Unites Against Trump's \$1-Billion Demand: 'Misguided and Punitive'

By Daniel Miller, Staff writer, LA Times

72% of American Jews believe that Trump is using antisemitism as an "excuse" to "penalize and tax college campuses," a poll shows.

The survey included 1,166 adults who self-identified as Jewish; participants spanned the spectrum of Jewish religious denominations.

A strong majority of Jewish Americans said they are concerned about antisemitism on college campuses but disagree with President Trump's approach to combating it, a national poll showed.

By nearly 3 to 1, American Jews believe that Trump is using antisemitism as an "excuse" to "penalize and tax college campuses," according to the poll released by Ipsos in collaboration with social and political scientists at UC Berkeley and the University of Rochester.

Bruce Fuller, a sociologist at UC Berkeley who co-authored the survey, said he was somewhat surprised that 72% of Jewish Americans considered Trump's use of antisemitism as an "excuse" to punish universities. He said a survey in April that asked a similar question showed a lower percentage of American Jews with this view.

"It appears that the Jewish community is growing even more skeptical and critical of deploying antisemitism as the rationale" for federal funding cuts to universities, Fuller said.

Since taking office, Trump has been intent on forcing elite universities to adhere to his agenda.

Accusing universities of failing to address alleged antisemitism on campus, the president has targeted several vaunted institutions — Harvard University and Columbia University among them — with massive penalties largely centered on cuts to federal research grants. In all, billions of dollars in funding has been threatened or withheld. At UCLA he is seeking to overhaul campus practices on hiring, admissions, sports, scholarships, discrimination and gender identity.

The Department of Justice issued a finding in July that UCLA violated the civil rights of Jewish and Israeli students



The quad in front of UCLA's Royce Hall was the site of an encampment set up by pro-Palestinian activists in Spring 2024

during spring 2024 pro-Palestinian campus protests that coalesced around an encampment. Top UC leaders are negotiating with the Trump administration, which has proposed a settlement that includes a nearly \$1.2-billion fine.

The new survey, whose lead author was James Druckman, a University of Rochester political science professor, polled 1,166 adults who self-identified as Jewish. Participants spanned the spectrum of Jewish religious denominations, including members of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements; they also included "nonaffiliated" Jews.

The poll broke down responses to some questions by each of the different categories of participants. On the "excuse" question, the survey showed that 50% in the Conservative/Orthodox category felt the Trump administration was using antisemitism as an excuse to penalize universities, whereas 79% in the Reform category felt this way and 78% in the nonaffiliated one.

It also said that a majority of Jews, 58%, do not support Israel's war in Gaza. Thirty-eight percent of Conservative

and Orthodox Jews disapproved or strongly disapproved of the war in the territory; 58% in the Reform category felt this way and 57% in the nonaffiliated one.

The survey, which was conducted August 28 to September 8 and cost \$31,000, was partly funded by private donors, Fuller said.

Since April, the Trump administration has ratcheted up pressure on institutions including UCLA. In the spring, several Jewish students and professors at UCLA told The Times that they believed Trump was using antisemitism as a cudgel to achieve his political objectives and exert his influence over higher education, and some doubted his sincerity.

Last month, a large swath of UCLA's Jewish faculty signed a letter denouncing the Trump administration's "misguided and punitive" demand for the \$1-billion-plus fine.

Times staff writer Jaweed Kaleem contributed to this report.

AN EVENING OF MID-CENTURY POP, RAT PACK-ERA MUSIC,
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German Chancellor Friedrich Merz Battles Tears as He Recalls Nazi Crimes, Declares 'War' on Antisemitism

By JNS Staff

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz appeared to be fighting back tears on days before Rosh Hashanah, as his voice broke during an address in which he recalled the atrocities committed against the Jewish people by Nazi Germany.

Speaking at the reopening ceremony of a Munich synagogue destroyed by the Nazis almost 87 years ago, Merz said he was appalled that Jew-hatred had flared up again in Germany, the DPA agency reported.

"I would like to tell you how ashamed I am of this: as chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, but also as a German, as a child of the post-war generation, as a child who grew up with 'never again' as a mission, as a duty, as a promise," Merz explained in his speech.

He appeared to become emotional as he turned to Rachel Salamander, who led the synagogue's restoration and whose parents survived the Holocaust, on

the question of why nobody saved the Jewish people.

"In one of your books, you wrote that as a child, you kept asking this one question of whether no one came to help the Jews," the chancellor said.

"Without holding on to the hope for a positive answer, as you went on to write, without clinging to the child's naive expectation of help, we would be lost as human beings," continued Merz, as he seemed to battle tears.

"Even today, we must allow ourselves to feel horror at the fact that most of us did not, in fact, help," according to the German leader. He praised those who survived and chose to return to



Friedrich Merz,
Chancellor of
Germany

Germany and "build a new home there again, in the country from which the Shoah originated."

Merz also said Berlin had "turned a blind eye for too long" to the fact that many refugees who arrived in Germany in recent decades "were socialized in countries of origin where antisemitism is virtually state doctrine, where hatred of Israel is taught even to children."

The Christian Democratic Union leader said that he hopes "that Jewish life in Germany will one day get by without police protection again."

"I therefore declare war on all forms of old and new antisemitism in Germany on behalf of the entire federal government of the Federal Republic of Germany," the chancellor told attendees at the event.

Architect Gustav Meyerstein built the Reichenbach Schul in 1931 in the New Objectivity style. Severely damaged during the 1938 Kristallnacht

Nazi pogroms, the synagogue was provisionally repaired in 1947 and used until Munich's Ohel Jakob Synagogue opened in 2006.

The Reichenbach Schul subsequently stood unused for years.

At the initiative of Salamander, the house of worship was restored in the same minimalist style. The renovation features simple wooden benches, colored walls and stained-glass windows portraying ritual objects and Psalms, aiming to remain faithful to the building's historic character.

Benny Gantz, the leader of Israel's Blue and White opposition party, thanked Merz for his "just and historic commitment to fighting the spreading cancer of antisemitism," particularly in the wake of the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, massacre in the Jewish state south.





Temple Isaiah, Mensch International & The Jewish Federation of the Desert
invite you to a weekend honoring the
memory of
HANNAH SENESH
The Hungarian poet who was captured by the Nazis while trying to rescue Jews in WWII, on the 81st anniversary of her death.

Join us for Shabbat Services at Temple Isaiah
332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262
Friday, November 7, 2025 at 6:30 pm



Services will include a presentation by Steven Geiger, Founder / Mensch International, the singing of Hannah's moving poem 'Eli Eli' & brief clip of the movie of her life, "Blessed is the Match."

Sunday, November 9th ~ 4 pm ~ Temple Isaiah
Screening of film "Blessed is the Match"
followed by a reception. \$12 donation.
RSVP to geigersa@gmail.com or 760-333-1189



A Time To Celebrate



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Tolerance Education Center
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www.toleranceeducationcenter.org



We apologize that the holiday greetings ad from the Tolerance Education Center was left out of last month's paper.

Anti-Israel US Lawmakers Largely Silent Amid Release of Final Living Hostages from Gaza

By Corey Walker, The Algemeiner

Several of the US Congress's most outspoken critics of Israel have remained notably silent following the release of the remaining living Israeli hostages from Gaza on October 13.

Progressive lawmakers such as Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), and Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) have not issued statements acknowledging or reacting to the agreement as of this writing, nor have conservative critics of Israel such as Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) and Thomas Massie (R-KY).

Two lawmakers who often castigate Israel, Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), did end up issuing statements that seemed to focus more on the damage caused by the Israeli military campaign in Gaza than the hostages.

"Seven weeks ago I met with families in Hostages Square and I am relieved their long nightmare has finally come to an end with the return of the remaining living hostages," Van Hollen posted on social media. "I also witnessed the utter devastation in Gaza and am relieved by the ceasefire & surge of humanitarian aid to civilians there."

Meanwhile, Sanders in a statement lambasted what he described as Israel's "barbaric campaign" in Gaza and described US support for the Israeli campaign to target Hamas as an "extremely dark chapter." He briefly mentioned the hostages in one sentence.

"Today, we welcome the long overdue release of the 20 remaining Israelis held by Hamas and the freeing of almost 2,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails," Sanders said. The senator appeared to be comparing Israelis kidnapped by invading Hamas fighters to Palestinian security prisoners, including hundreds of convicted terrorists serving life sentences.

The silence of many US lawmakers is striking given their frequent, vocal demands for an immediate ceasefire while condemning Israel's conduct in Gaza and calling attention to alleged human rights abuses. Many of these lawmakers, including Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib, Pressley, Sanders, and Greene, have accused Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza. Massie has accused Israel of indiscriminately targeting civilian infrastructure, and Van Hollen has accused Israel of deliberately starving civilians.

Israel says it has gone to unprecedented lengths to try and avoid civilian casualties

in Gaza, noting its efforts to evacuate areas before it targets them and to warn residents of impending military operations with leaflets, text messages, and other forms of communication.

Another challenge for Israel has been Hamas's widely recognized military strategy of embedding its terrorists within Gaza's civilian population and commandeering civilian facilities like hospitals, schools, and mosques to run operations and direct attacks.

None of the lawmakers responded to The Algemeiner's requests for comment on the hostage release, which came as part of the US-brokered ceasefire to halt fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

However, some pro-Israel lawmakers were quick to release statements marking the release of the hostages. Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), one of the most vocal allies of Israel in Congress, praised the "great American leadership" of US President Donald Trump in securing the release of the hostages. He urged the Hamas terrorist group to "lay down their weapons and step away from all governing responsibilities" in the Gaza enclave.

Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), another strident supporter of the Jewish state, praised the resilience of the surviving hostages.

"Those who were taken on October 7th will outlast the terrorist organization that tore them from their families and homes and unleashed a war of untold suffering," Torres wrote, referring to Hamas's Oct. 7, invasion of southern Israel during which the hostages were kidnapped.

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AK), chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, wrote on X that "we will never again allow Hamas to threaten the United States and our friends."

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) added, "Today is a victory for Israel, President Trump, and peace." However, Cruz cautioned that "Hamas remains incredibly dangerous" and will likely attempt to attack Israel again in the future.



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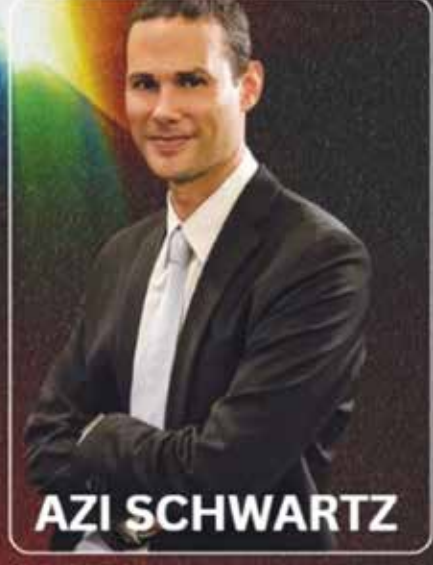
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Jewish Family Service of the Desert (JFS) and the JFS Auxiliary Announce the Exciting Events Scheduled this Season

By Kraig Johnson, Executive Director

JFS hosts its 23rd Annual Patron Party on December 7, 2025: "An Evening at the Museum," featuring Chris Ruggiero, and honoring Joanne and Myron Mintz with the 2026 JFS Humanitarian Award.

Auxiliary Luncheon November 16

Jewish Family Service of the Desert (JFS), a leading Coachella Valley nonprofit that has supported social service needs of the Jewish and general community for over 42 years, has announced plans for the Auxiliary's Luncheon on Sunday, November 16, 2025, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Aqua Caliente Casino, located in Rancho Mirage.

The Auxiliary will feature Sonja Lyubomirsky, PhD, an Internationally Recognized expert in the Science of Happiness Fresh from her TED talk and best-selling author of "The Science of Happiness," her talk is titled "A New

Approach to Getting the Life You Want." Dr. Lyubomirsky is an internationally recognized expert on the science of happiness. Based on 36 years of research, she will share cutting-edge strategies to increase your sense of well-being and actualize your potential for joy. Learn how to experience more happiness in your own life, even during these challenging times. Sonja Lyubomirsky's books have been published in 39 countries; her new book is scheduled for release around Valentine's Day 2026!

Lois Gold, JFS Auxiliary President, shared, "This is an opportunity to learn about the latest research and practical tools as well as learn about JFS programs and services."

VIP tickets to "The Science of Happiness" are \$135 per person and include early entrance to the event to mingle with Sonja, table-side Champagne,

and a copy of Sonja's book. General admission tickets are \$85 per person and include lunch and the presentation. Sponsorships are available starting at \$1,300. For tickets and sponsorship information, go to JFSDesert.org, or please call Cheryl Scarlett at 760-325-4088 ext. 107 or email her at cscarlett@jfsdesert.org. Become a JFS Patron and attend all events as a VIP!

Patron Party

On December 7, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, JFS will be thanking our generous Patrons with our not-to-be-missed 23rd annual Patron Party. Join us on the historical Clancy Lane for a private cocktail party at a fabulous home. Mix, mingle, and enjoy music. This JFS signature event brings all our Patrons together to enjoy a cocktail supper catered by Eight4Nine, beautiful views,

and the opportunity to meet other Patrons.

About Jewish Family Service of the Desert:

JFS is a nonsectarian agency founded on the Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam ("Healing The World"), supporting the social service needs of Coachella Valley residents for more than 42 years by providing more than 8,000 in-person and telecare services annually in mental health, case management, emergency assistance, programs reducing senior isolation, food support, special programming for the our cherished Holocaust survivors, and scholarships for local youth to attend camps through the Debra Dann Kay Campership Program. JFS is committed to promoting the well-being of people of all ages, incomes, and lifestyles. Today, JFS has evolved into an organization of professionals and volunteers that provides a broad range of support and services to Coachella Valley residents each year.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF THE DESERT SUPPORTS

Reservations for our 2025-26 event season available now!

JFS Auxiliary Presents
SONJA LYUBOMIRSKY PhD
"The Science of Happiness:
New Approaches to Getting the
Life You Want"

Sunday, November 16, 2025
11:30 am to 1:30 pm
VIP 10:45 am

Join us at the
Aqua Caliente
Rancho Mirage
Casino

23RD ANNUAL
Patron Party

Sunday, December 7, 2025
6-8 pm

Join us at a fabulous home on the
historic Clancy Lane.
Mix, mingle, and enjoy music.
Catered by Eight4Nine.

Wednesday, March 11, 2026
5-8:30 pm

Join us at the Palm Springs Art
Museum. Featuring Chris Ruggiero.

Honoring Joanne and
Myron Mintz with the JFS
Humanitarian Award

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All 20 Living Hostages Freed

Back Home in Israel Over 2 Years After Hamas's Oct. 7 Attack

By Debbie Weiss. *The Algemeiner*

Jubilation filled Israeli streets on Monday October 13th as all 20 living hostages abducted by Hamas-led Palestinian terrorists on Oct. 7, 2023, still being held captive in Gaza were returned to Israel.

Air Force One, carrying US President Donald Trump for a lightning visit, landed in Israel at 9:20 am local time, just after the first group of hostages — Alon Ohel, Matan Angrest, twin brothers Gali and Ziv Berman, Guy Gilboa-Dalal, Eitan Mor, and Omri Miran — arrived on Israeli soil.

The second wave included Elkana Bohbot, Rom Braslavski, Nimrod Cohen, brothers David and Ariel Cuneo, Evyatar David, Maxim Herkin, Eitan Horn, Segev Kalfon, Bar Kuperstein, Yosef-Haim Ohana, Avinatan Or, and Matan Zangauker.

"It's official: There are no more living Israeli hostages in Hamas captivity," the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) wrote in a social media post.

Hamas handed over the hostages — dressed in the same pseudo-military uniforms the Islamist group had forced previous captives to wear — to the International Committee of the Red Cross. While they were being transported, masked operatives patched video calls between the hostages and their families in Israel, in what appeared to be a cynical ploy to control the narrative. The ceasefire agreement barred public parades and ceremonies, unlike the

earlier hostage-release deals in January and February.

Julie Kuperstein, the mother of hostage Bar Kuperstein, told Israel's Channel 12 News she received a missed call from "Al-Aqsa Brigades," referring to Hamas's military wing. "I called them back, and they answered me! All of a sudden, I see Bar!" she said. "He said, 'Mom, everything is OK! Mom, everything is OK!'" She spoke through tears, shouting in jubilation.

The Red Cross subsequently transferred the hostages to the IDF inside Gaza, where military medical teams conducted initial examinations before they traveled to the Re'im military base to reunite with their families.

Footage of the reunions showed parents clutching their children in tears. Zvika Mor, who had opposed releasing terrorists even for his son's freedom, could not speak and only sobbed as he held Eitan.

Einav Zangauker — who had led an unrelenting campaign urging the Israeli government to strike a hostage-release deal at any cost — embraced her son, crying, "My life, my life, I love you, you are a hero, you are a champion!"

Hostages Square in Tel Aviv, where tens of thousands have gathered for protests and vigils over the past two years, erupted in cheers as footage of the releases appeared on giant screens. People waved American flags and posters thanking Trump. When news

broke that Air Force One had landed, the crowd shrieked with delight.

The Trump administration led the effort to push the US-brokered ceasefire and hostage-release deal, which halted fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, over the finish line. Of the 251 hostages initially abducted during Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, invasion of and massacre across southern Israel, 48 remained in captivity entering Monday, and only 20 of them were still alive.

The freed hostages appeared to be in relatively stable condition, including Rom Braslavski and Evyatar David, who had been shown emaciated in Hamas propaganda videos.

Each hostage received a welcome kit from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with a handwritten note reading: "On behalf of the entire Israeli people, welcome back! We waited for you and embrace you."

President Isaac Herzog quoted from the Book of Jeremiah on X: "And the children shall return to their own borders." He added, "With thanks to God we welcome our loved ones home. We are waiting for everyone — every last one."

Rachel Goldberg-Polin and her husband, Jon, whose son Hersh was murdered in captivity, also invoked scripture, calling on social media for people to give thanks by reciting Psalm 126, which speaks of captives returning to Zion.

In his address at Israel's parliament later on Monday, Trump said, "People are dancing in the streets — not just in Israel — about what is happening today."

"What a victory it's been," he said, thanking "the almighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"Today the skies are calm, the guns are silent, the sirens are still, and the sun rises on a Holy Land that is finally at peace," he added.

Under the deal, Israel agreed to release 1,950 Palestinian security prisoners, including 250 serving life sentences for deadly terrorist attacks, as well as 1,700 Palestinians arrested since Oct. 7, 2023. The prisoners were to be freed before the return of the 28 remaining dead hostages.

However, the Hostage and Missing Families Forum said only four of the 28 bodies would be returned to Israel on Monday, calling it a "blatant" violation of the ceasefire agreement.

"This represents a blatant breach of the agreement by Hamas. We expect Israel's government and the mediators to take immediate action to rectify this grave injustice," the forum said. "The families of the deceased hostages are enduring especially difficult days filled with deep sorrow. We will not abandon any hostage. The mediators must enforce the agreement's terms and ensure Hamas pays a price for this violation."

The Hostage Square Photographer, Yonatan Berman

Shalom, my name is Yonatan Berman. I am 16.5 and live in Kfar Saba, Israel. Before I turned 3 years old, I was diagnosed with autism, but I have never let that prevent me from doing things I love and from finding new interests in life.

I play music, and photography is a big part of my life. Every photo I take is meant to tell a meaningful story. Photography has given me new perspectives on life that not many people have. I think differently, and I make people happy when I shoot portraits on the streets. In addition, photography opens my eyes to all directions on the street, which allows me to be happier and to appreciate every moment in life.

Last week, when the Hostage Deal was first announced, I felt the need to go to Hostage Square in Tel Aviv and be part of the great joy of the State of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of people came to the square to rejoice. I captured these moments of joy in the



square, including the moment when Einav Zangauker (mother of Matan Zangauker, who was released a few days later from captivity in Gaza) felt more relaxed. Einav even smiled a rare smile in the photo I took.

I was at Hostage Square on October 9th, the day they announced there would be a deal to release the hostages. I was also there on October 13th, the day that the 20 live hostages were released. The atmosphere was

amazing. People were happy and full of hope for the first time in two years. Presented here is a combination of photos I took on October 9th and on October 13th in Hostage Square, Tel Aviv.

**See Yonatan's
Photos
Next Page**

They Are Finally Coming Home





Shabbat Schedule - November 2025

AHAVAT ACHIM/Sun City Jewish Services, Palm Desert

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert and Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron. In person services in Speaker's Hall in the Sunset View Clubhouse (second clubhouse) in Sun City Palm Desert the first and third Fridays at 7:15 pm. Information: Nadine Brinhendler, 707-332-3947.

BEIT HAVERIM, Palm Springs

Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (rabbi@robertrosenberg.com). Where friends old and new gather Friday evenings at 6:30 pm for Shabbat services and festive Oneg at Mizell Center or services and potluck dinners in members' homes. Shabbat mornings at 10:30 am: Nosh and drash/torah study online or in person. For schedule of services, potluck Shabbat dinners, Shabbat morning programs and activities, email beithaverim@gmail.com or call 760-766-3212.

BETH SHALOM, Palm Desert (Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)

Rabbi Dr. JB Sacks (rabbi@congregationbethshalom.net); Ken Hailpern, Madrikh Ruhani (ken@congregationbethshalom.net) 42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, Palm Desert, CA 92211. 760-200-3636. Shabbat Morning Services: 9:45 am, followed by light Kiddush lunch. Visitors welcome with valid identification. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636. www.CongregationBethShalom.net.

Scholar-in-Residence Weekend

November 14-16, with **Rabbi Amy Levin**.

Friday, November 14: Shabbat Evening Service, 7:15 pm "Life in Israel Post October 7: A Personal Account" – Oneg Shabbat Dessert Reception.

Saturday, November 15: Shabbat Morning Service, 9:15 am "Masorti (Conservative Movement) Life in the Land of Israel: My Experience" – Festive Kiddush Lunch. Community welcome with valid identification. RSVP appreciated by Friday, November 7. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636.

www.CongregationBethShalom.net (See Sunday November 16 program on November Community Calendar, following Shabbat Schedule)

CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim 250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalmsprings.com 760-325-0774. Shacharit services Monday-Friday at 7:30 am; Sundays at 8:00 am and Shabbat at 10:00 am. Evening services 10 minutes before sunset. Check website or call to confirm times.

NEW! First Fridays: Services at 7 pm, followed by Shabbat dinners at 7:30 pm. Check website for details.

CHABAD OF PALM DESERT

Rabbi Mendy Friedman. Located in south Palm Desert. Call for information and location: 760-969-2158; www.chabadpd.com. Shabbat morning services 10:00 am. Monthly Shabbat dinners.

CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE: Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew.

www.chabadrm.com. Weekly Shabbat Services start at 10 am, followed by a sit-down lunch/kiddush. Check online for weekday and Friday schedule of services Text 760-770-7785 or e-mail: info@chabadrm.com to be added to our mailing list. All programs and events are updated on our website.

Kids Hebrew School 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM on designated Sundays throughout the school year. Check our schedule online Info: chabadrm.com/kids or Chaya Posner: chaya@chabadrm.com or 760-272-1923.

CHABAD OF SUN CITY PALM DESERT

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim. Call 760-848-8250 or e-mail: info@chabadsuncity.com for information. Monthly Social Happy Hour. Holiday dinners and celebrations. Zoom Torah classes. Contact Rebbetzin Sussie Denebeim to receive weekly "Chabad in Sun City Newsletter" with listing of all services and activities: sussiedenebeim@gmail.com.

CHABAD OF LA QUINTA

Rabbi Moshe Katz 50620 Eisenhower Drive, Ste. G103, La Quinta, CA 92253. 760-709-2431. Email: Info@ChabadLQ.com; website: www.ChabadLQ.com. Chabad LQ offers weekly Torah studies, home visitations, Kosher meals, Shabbat

Services, Women's Circle, Youth activities, Holiday programs and more.

CONGREGATION HAR-EL, a

Contemporary Reform Congregation (Member, Union for Reform Judaism), offering year-round services, Torah study, youth and adult classes and events. Membership open for residents and non-residents. Rabbi Richard Zions, Ph.D.; Cantor Joseph Gole, D.Mus. harelurjpd@gmail.com

760-779-1691. Website: harelurjpd.org. Weekly in person Shabbat Eve services. Email for location and schedule. Rabbi Zions holds Torah Study on Zoom every Saturday morning at 11 AM. For a Zoom link, contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Rancho Mirage

Rabbi Dr. Jules King; Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Chazzan Maseng and Sarah Lonsert, Cantorial Soloist. 760-449-0111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 982, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270.

Shabbat services held at 7:00 pm on the second Fridays at Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert in Rancho Mirage. On second Saturdays: 10:30-11:30 am Torah study on Zoom with Rabbi Axelrad. Check the calendar for updates.

Adult Education: Adult B'nai Mitzvah, Hebrew—Beginning and advanced, Introduction to Judaism, Adult Confirmation, Adult Learning. Contacts: rabbi@my-dos.org; www.my-dos.org

OR HAMIDBAR

Rabbi David Lazar rabbi@orhamidbar.org In-person services each first Friday of the month and 3rd Shabbat morning. Online services all other Friday evenings and Shabbat mornings of the month. Kabbalat Shabbat Service - Fridays 6:30 pm; Shabbat prayer and study - Saturdays 10:30 am. Friday, November 7th, Pride; Welcome the Sabbath, 6:30 pm at the United Methodist Church, 1555 Alejo, Palm Springs. For more information of in-person services, upcoming classes and Zoom links, visit orhamidbar.org.

TEMPLE HAR SHALOM, Idyllwild

www.templeharshalomidyllwild.org **Email:** templeharshalomofidyllwild@gmail.com. Shabbat Candle Lighting on Fridays at 6:00 pm on Zoom. First Friday with Rabbi

Malka Drucker; 2nd Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat; 3rd Friday with Kerry Abram; 4th Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat. Shabbat Book Study with Rabbi Malka Drucker on Zoom Saturdays 4:00-5:00 pm. Check our website for current info including Torah Study with Rabbi Ilana one Saturday morning per month. For more information and for Zoom link call 951-468-0004.

TEMPLE ISAIAH, Palm Springs

332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262, 760-325-2281 (Office open Tuesday-Thursday). Email: temple@templeisaiahps.com; Website: templeisaiahps.com. Shabbat services Friday evenings in the Liberman Chapel at 6:30 pm, followed by Oneg. Torah services are on Shabbat mornings at 10:30 during season; Check website to confirm services and programming. Services also streamed online. To access any activity, go to Temple Isaiah's website and click on link to desired service or program. Interim Associate Rabbis: Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert, Rabbi Suzanne Singer. Cantorial Soloists: Ezra Yaron, Elliot Levine. Check website for schedule. Friday Kabbalat Shabbat service is broadcast on Facebook: www.facebook.com/templeisaiahpalmsprings.

TEMPLE SINAI, Palm Desert (Member, Union for Reform Judaism)

Rabbi David Novak rabbi@templesinai.org 73-251 Hovley Lane West, Palm Desert, CA 92260. www.templesinaipd.org 760-568-9699. Go to templesinaipd.org for access information. Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinaipd.org. Friday evening services 5:30 pm, preceded by pre-service Oneg at 5:00 pm. Saturday morning Torah study 8:45 am; Shabbat morning services 10 am. **Temple Sinai's Avi Levine Religious School open to children irrespective of parents' membership at Temple Sinai.** Contact Talia Lizemer-Hawley, Educator, for more information: educator@templesinaipd.org.

BIKUR CHOLIM

A project of Chabad of Palm Springs & Desert Communities (Community Outreach) www.BikurCholimPS.com Rabbi Yankel Kreiman - 760-325-8076, and Rabbi Mendy Kreiman - 760-567-6726.



Community Calendar of Programs - November 2025

Tuesdays

7:00 pm "Living With the Times":
Exploring the weekly torah portion on Zoom. Instructor: Sussie Denebeim, Chabad of Palm Springs. Chabadps.com.

Wednesdays

7:00 pm Tanya Class with Rabbi Shimon Posner, Chabad of Rancho Mirage. In person and available online. Email: info@chabadrm.com, Phone: 760-770-7785; www.ChabadRM.com.

Wednesday, November 5
6:30 pm (program begins at 7:00 pm)
Sabra Hadassah meeting at Sun City Shadow Hills Montecito Clubhouse. Special program for men and women.

Dr. Phil Kibort: "A Survivor's Story and Why Antisemitism." Members \$20; nonmembers \$25. Mail check payable to "Hadassah" to: Hadassah, 38180 Del Webb Blvd, PMB #315, Palm Desert, CA 92211. Information: call 760-289-7987.

Sunday, November 7

4:00 pm Mensch International, Temple Isaiah and The Jewish Federation: Screening of **"Blessed is the Match"** – the story of Hungarian Poet Hannah Senesh who was captured by the Nazis while trying to rescue Jews during WWII. At Temple Isaiah, 332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262. See ad page 8.

Saturday, November 15

Temple Sinai: 6:30 pm dessert reception; **7:00 pm** program: **Wayne Abravanel and The Mod Squad** present an Evening of Mid-Century Pop, Rat Pack-Era Music, Classic Oldies and a whole lot more! \$40 general admission; \$118 Sponsorship includes 2 admissions and reserved seating. Call Temple Sinai: 760-568-9699. See ad page 7.

Sunday, November 16

Beth Shalom Sunday Event for Scholar-in-Residence Weekend
10:30 am Champagne Brunch with **Rabbi Amy Levin**, Scholar-in-Residence. "A Case Study in Applying

Jewish Law: How Today's Conservative Rabbis Approach Halakhah"

Advance paid reservations required by Friday, November 7. Members: \$36 / Non-Members: \$46. Information: 760-200-3636 info@congregationbethshalom.net. See ad page 5.

Sunday, November 16

11:30 am-1:30 pm Jewish Family Service Auxiliary presents **Sonja Lyubomirsky** "The Science of Happiness; New Approaches to Getting the Life You Want." At the Agua Caliente Rancho Mirage Casino. See ad page 10.



Tribute Card Donations

Sending tributes and memorials is a meaningful way to honor loved ones.

Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Phyllis Eisenberg**, In honor of your 85th birthday, from Dolly Levy and Nina and Milton Zale.
- **Loreen Jacobson**, In honor of your 95th birthday, from Robert and Nany Fraiman, Cora Ginsberg, Margot and Jerry Halperin, Wendy Hahn, Barbara Platt, Sherry Schor, Albert & Cecille Silverman.
- **Stephen and Margie Kulp**, Wishing you good health and much happiness as you enjoy your new home, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Bertel Lewis**, Thank you for a wonderful New Year's dinner, from Cora Ginsberg.
- **Marilyn and Art Noll**, In honor of your 65th anniversary, from Barbara and Robert Paget.

- **Eskie Sheperd**, In honor of your 100th birthday. You are amazing! From Cora Ginsberg, Barbara Platt, Sherry Schor and Albert & Cecille Silverman.
- **Carole Sukman**, Happy special birthday and many more, from Margot and Jerry Halperin.
- **Sherwyn Turbow**, In honor of your 90th birthday, from Barbara Platt.
- **Lili Ann Zisook**, Have the happiest special birthday, from Margot and Jerry Halperin.

Refuah Shleimah Get Well:

- **Myra Gordon**, Welcome Home. So glad you're on the mend. Fondly, Barbara Platt.
- **Sandy Powell**, Hoping for a speedy recovery to your beloved husband, John, from Eunice Meister.

Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Audrey Bernstein and Family**, Our deepest sympathies on the loss of your beloved brother, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Jim Borax**, Sincerest condolences on the loss of your beloved Sheri, from Fran Kaufman.
- **Sorrell Lapins**, In memory of your beautiful wife, Lona, and our dearest friend. With love, Eunice Meister.
- **Lisa Novack**, Our sincere condolences on the loss of your dear father, Ronald Lorch. Warmly, Ellen & Stuart Markus.
- **Frankie Shack**, In loving memory of your son, Scott, from Barbara and Murray Beck.
- **Helen Silverman**, In memory of your beloved husband, Bill, "Billie." Our love and condolences. Barbara & Robert Paget, and Gail and Bob Scadron.



ברוך דיין האמת

The Jewish Federation of the Desert extends our community's condolences to Rabbi David and Sasha Lazar on the passing of Rabbi's mother, Serene Lazar, on October 6, 2025.

Donations in her memory may be sent to orhamidbar.org/donate/

Northwestern University Imposes Registration Hold on Students Who Protested Antisemitism Training

By Dion J. Pierre, *The Algemeiner*

Northwestern University has paused course enrollment for an unspecified number of students who refused to participate in anti-discrimination seminars which emphasized antisemitism prevention.

According to a statement the university shared with *The Algemeiner*, the students had advanced notice that their declining to complete the course, as well as other "mandatory student trainings," in a manner consistent with "the policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct," would precipitate "action, including a registration hold."

It added, "Students are not required to agree with the training modules but must attest that they will abide by the Student Code of Conduct ... Students have received regular reminders of this requirement over the last several months." Northwestern also said that it is "committed to maintaining education, work, and living environments in which people are treated with dignity and respect."

Protesting the seminar appears to have followed a premeditated plan involving older adults, including alumni and professors. Following the acts of defiance, the administration received a letter signed by over 200 anti-Israel activists which fired a volley of political attacks against the antisemitism training — lamenting that it does not delegitimize Zionism and the struggle for Jewish self-determination in Israel.

"As a group of students and graduate workers who stand united against racist,

antisemitic, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian discrimination, we cannot abide by these trainings which reinforce, rather than reduce, the proliferation of discriminatory bias in our communities," the letter said. "Furthermore, the severe consequences imposed for disagreement with this morally and intellectually objectionable content presents an extremely dangerous and unethical threat to the academic freedom of our scholarly community that may itself give rise to illegal discrimination."

Registration holds pose grave risks to the students on which they are imposed, including academic backsliding, restricted access to important documents, and the potential squandering of tens of thousands of dollars in tuition fees. It is not clear how long the students Northwestern punished plan to continue their demonstration. As of Monday, the anti-Israel letter to the administration is being circulated as a petition, although it seems unlikely to change the university's policy regarding the seminar.

As previously reported by *The Algemeiner*, Northwestern University's handling of antisemitism after Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, massacre across southern Israel is being investigated by the federal government, which recently impounded \$790 million worth of taxpayer funds previously appropriated to it, for potential civil rights violations. The issue is also being closely watched by concerned Jewish parents and advocacy groups. Withdrawing the university's support for the seminar could prompt catastrophic legal and

political consequences.

Earlier this year, after months of opprobrium, Northwestern University issued a report on its enactment of a checklist of policies it said has meaningfully addressed campus antisemitism.

"The university administration took this criticism to heart and spent much of last summer revising our rules and policies to make our university safe for all of our students, regardless of their religion, race, national origin, sexual orientation, or political viewpoint," the university said. "Among the updated policies is our Demonstration Policy, which includes new requirements and guidance on how, when, and where members of the community may protest or otherwise engage in expressive activity."

Northwestern added that it adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, a reference tool which aids officials in determining what constitutes antisemitism, and begun holding "mandatory antisemitism training" sessions which "all students, faculty, and staff" must attend.

Parents of students attending Northwestern University rejected the report as an attempt to manufacture positive headlines and mislead the public, most of all the Jewish community.

"The problems at Northwestern are deep. Deep and institutional," Lisa Fields, founder of Coalition Against Antisemitism at Northwestern (CAAN), told *The Algemeiner* during an interview in May.

Earlier this month, Michael Schill resigned as president of Northwestern, just days before the start of fall semester.

The embattled former executive testified last May before the US House Committee on Education and Workforce, where he faced a firing line of conservative lawmakers, such as Reps. Elise Stefanik (R-NY) and Burgess Owens (R-UT), who placed him in their crosshairs after identifying him as one of the dozens of college presidents who allegedly did far too little to combat the nationwide surge in campus antisemitism following Hamas's Oct. 7 atrocities.

Schill's gravest transgression, lawmakers charged, was the Deering Meadow Agreement, reached after a pro-Hamas group commandeered a section of campus and established what they called the "Northwestern Liberated Zone" on April 25, 2024. For five days, over 1,000 students, professors, and non-Northwestern-affiliated persons fulminated against the world's lone Jewish state, trafficked antisemitic tropes, and intimidated Jewish students.

By the morning of April 29, Schill and the group finalized the infamous deal — a first of its kind accord which became a model for 42 other schools who emulated it. It committed Northwestern University to establishing a scholarship for Palestinian undergraduates, contacting potential employers of students who caused recent campus disruptions to insist on their being hired, hiring two Palestinian professors, and creating a segregated dormitory hall to be occupied exclusively by Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) and Muslim students. The university — after days of hearing the activists shout phrases such as "Kill the Jews!" — also agreed to form a new investment committee in which anti-Zionist students and faculty wield an outsized voice.

Fields told *The Algemeiner* that Schill's resignation should be the first of a series of major changes at the university.

"As both a parent and CAAN's national chair, I know the fear and frustration Jewish families have felt watching Northwestern fail to protect its students," Fields said. "President Schill's resignation is a necessary first step, but it cannot be the last. The board's catastrophic governance shows how far Northwestern has drifted. Chair Barris should step aside, and the board must be restructured. Only sustained federal oversight, dedicated civil rights enforcement, structural reform, and a president with integrity and vision will restore accountability and integrity at Northwestern."



He's Gay. He's an Observant Jew. His Comedy Career Is Booming.

Mordechi Rosenfeld, known as Modi, already has the synagogue crowd. Now he wants the "Goyim, gays and theys," too.

By Lisa Lerer, *New York Times*

Mordechi Rosenfeld knew the joke about Grindr would crush if it included a Holocaust survivor.

Sitting at a center table at Reserve Cut, an upscale kosher steakhouse in Manhattan, Mr. Rosenfeld was unpacking his performance earlier that evening at an outpost of the Comedy Cellar, the club where he has been performing stand-up for more than three decades.

He had been trying some new material, including an extended riff about a personal experience on that gay dating app. Years earlier, he had unwittingly corresponded with someone who had an unexpected interest in the bedroom: World War II. Specifically, the German military.

The man who he had been messaging showed up at his apartment door in Nazi uniform. At that exact moment, Mr. Rosenfeld's neighbor, a Holocaust survivor with dementia, exited his own apartment for a nighttime jaunt. The situation was understandably awkward: Mr. Rosenfeld acted as his neighbor's caregiver and was frequently called on to collect him from the lobby or a hallway.

"Excuse me," the man said, "I must have walked into the wrong room."

Then came the punchline, energetically delivered in Mr. Rosenfeld's Long Island accent with ever-so-slight Israeli inflection: The neighbor never again wandered away after dark.

The room, dotted with men wearing black velvet yarmulkes and observant Jewish women in wigs, exploded in laughter. The joke was a little edgy for some, Mr. Rosenfeld acknowledged, but worked because it was deeply Jewish.

"What we were talking about was not, 'They're hooking up and having sex' — it's how a Jew sees it," Mr. Rosenfeld said. "Many comedians are comedians that happen to be Jewish. I'm a Jewish comedian."

For 30 years, being a Jewish comedian meant working comedy clubs and the synagogue circuit, making a living performing for Jewish organizations from Borough Park to South Florida. He developed a loyal following, fans who knew him by his nickname, Modi. But the markers of mainstream comic success eluded him.



Now, in the two years since the attacks of Oct. 7, which brought the war in Gaza and rising antisemitism around the world, Mr. Rosenfeld, 55, is packing theaters by the thousands from Las Vegas to Atlanta, and Paris to Tel Aviv.

It's an anxious and divisive time for American Jews. It's arguably a great moment to be Modi. Alex Edelman, the award-winning comic who's been a fan since childhood, described what he called Mr. Rosenfeld's "renaissance" in reverential terms.

"I've seen him do comedy in Yiddish. I've seen him do comedy for Hasidic crowds and for crowds where there's not a single Jew," said Mr. Edelman, who owned a DVD of Mr. Rosenfeld's stand-up routine as a modern Orthodox teenager. "There's no one like him."

Mr. Rosenfeld's ability to blend the contours of his identity — or "bubble hop," as he calls it — has been integral to his recent success. He mines his Judaism for material, cracking jokes about family trips to Israel and the cultural differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews — often with punchlines delivered in Hebrew and Yiddish. He ends many of his performances with a collective



"Moshiach energy," or "Messiah energy," is a personal philosophy for Mr. Rosenfeld and also a catchphrase for his merchandise, which include yarmulkes embroidered with the words.

singing of "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem.

Mr. Rosenfeld knows that is his current audience. But he is trying to expand — to figure out how to reach a more natural Grindr-joke crowd, while keeping the deeply resonant Holocaust-survivor punchlines. He wants, as he puts it, the "Goyim, gays and theys."

"I swear to you — and this is from my heart — I don't see the world as Jewish and non-Jewish, gay or straight, thin or fat, Black or white," he said. "I see people who buy tickets to my show, and people who don't buy tickets for my show. That's the only way I see the world."

The question now is whether the bigger, more secular world — one where antisemitism and Israel are fraught topics — will embrace him back.

Mr. Rosenfeld sees comedy as a holy mission, he explained on a sunny Sunday afternoon sitting in his second home, in western Connecticut, which he bought last year.

He recounted the story of two anshay b'dicha, or people of jokes, who are praised by the prophet Elijah for bringing joy. There was an element of the tale Mr. Rosenfeld never quite understood: Why, he wondered, did the ancient Jewish rabbis feature two comics rather than just a solo performer?

The answer came to him one night, when he was dancing shirtless at a techno rave on ketamine with his husband. The comic can't be alone. The comic must work with others to heal rifts through laughter.

A second epiphany about his work came when Mr. Rosenfeld was reading a Torah portion in which God describes Jews as the "chosen people."

"They weren't chosen to be the

strongest and the most powerful and the richest," he said. "Jews were put on this earth to create healing energy."

Those revelations became a personal mantra that guides his comedy: "Moshiach energy" — Messiah energy.

For Mr. Rosenfeld, the slogan reflects a Messianic idea inspired by the last leader of the Chabad-Lubavitch Orthodox movement, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Mr. Rosenfeld interprets it as a mandate to pour positive energy into the world to help bring the Messiah.

The son of Israelis who immigrated to the United States when he was a child, Mr. Rosenfeld discovered his faith as a teenager on Long Island.

His observance deepened during college at Boston University, where he spent much of his time studying at a Lubavitch center near campus. He improved his Yiddish, which he heard from his grandparents, and absorbed the rhythms of old comics like Shimon Dzigan and Israel Schumacher, a famous Yiddish comedy duo.

After school and a stint at a yeshiva in New Jersey, Mr. Rosenfeld accepted a job as an investment banker. Dyslexic and diagnosed with A.D.D., Mr. Rosenfeld struggled with the details of finance.

He was, however, great at imitating the secretaries in the office.

A friend persuaded him to try stand-up and Mr. Rosenfeld was hooked. He caught the tail end of the Catskills scene, began performing at the Comedy Cellar and worked clubs across the country. He called his rabbi for a blessing before every show.

"You hear comics that say they're comics because of some sort of child trauma or adult trauma," said Donny Moss, a friend who booked Mr. Rosenfeld's first standup spot in 1993. "He just was a very funny person who knew it and had this gift and did the work."

"You have no idea what a rough crowd is until you are in front of 1,200 Jews that have just been fed," he said. "If you don't get them in the first five to eight words, they just get up and go. 'Yeah, that's it. I heard enough. I'll be in the lobby.' My competition was the lobby. Jews love a lobby."

2 Years After Oct. 7 Shattered Them, Israel's Border Kibbutzim are Drawing New Dreamers

But some of the communities battered by the massacre remain largely empty.

By Deborah Danan, JTA

Two years after the Oct. 7 massacre, Israelis are moving into kibbutzim in numbers not seen for years, part of a deliberate effort to repopulate and rehabilitate communities devastated in the Hamas-led attack. The push is most visible along the Gaza border, but it extends to the north as well, where Hezbollah fire kept communities thinly populated for more than a year and a half.

Leaders of the movement speak of kibbutzim as the country's living perimeter. Neri Shotan, who runs the Kibbutz Movement's rehabilitation fund, invoked an old adage: If the country went dark and only kibbutzim stayed lit, their lights would trace the map of Israel. Roughly 100 of about 260 Israeli kibbutzim sit on the borders, a design Shotan said was meant to anchor the edges through civilian life rather than fortifications.

The scale of the damage remains stark. The movement counts 56 kibbutzim evacuated after Oct. 7 and says kibbutz communities lost 318 people in the attacks, close to a quarter of the roughly 1,200 killed that day. Some 40,000 kibbutz members were displaced.

A new wall listing more than 450 kibbutz members who died on Oct. 7 and in the subsequent Gaza war has been added to a longstanding memorial for kibbutzniks killed in acts of terror since Israel's earliest days.

The state's five-year plan for the Gaza periphery totals 19 billion shekels (\$5.75 billion) and a report released in September by the government's Tekuma directorate, the agency tasked with rehabilitating the Gaza envelope, said 7.9 billion shekels had been allocated so far, including 525 million shekels this year for programs to encourage evacuated residents to return.

Around 90% of evacuated Gaza-border residents are back, according to the report, and more than 2,500 newcomers have moved into the region. Minister Zeev Elkin, who is overseeing the recovery, said the plan was to double the population to 120,000 in the coming years.

Yet some of the hardest-hit places are lagging. Only about a third of Nahal Oz's residents have returned. Nir Oz and Be'eri are only now entering the rebuilding phase.

The reopening of the bakery and print



Neri Shotan runs the Kibbutz Movement's rehabilitation fund.



A kibbutz member receives her homecoming kit from the Kibbutz Movement Rehabilitation Fund shop at Be'eri,

where more than 100 residents were killed and dozens were taken hostage, were hailed as major steps toward rebuilding. But many of the workers commute from a kibbutz 40 kilometers to the east, near Beersheba, where Beer's displaced residents relocated.

And a ceremony to mark rebuilding at Nir Oz that featured Gadi Mozes, the octogenarian released from Hamas captivity in January who for many embodies the classic kibbutznik spirit, took place only in August, with workers placing the foundation then for new structures.

The Kibbutz Movement Rehabilitation Fund — set up within hours of the attack — positioned itself to fill gaps Shotan says the state has failed to address. It has raised roughly 160 million shekels to date, mostly from overseas donors.

Starting at 6 p.m. on Oct. 7, 2023, volunteers were handing out shoes to children who had fled barefoot, pressing the Interior Ministry to reissue identity cards lost in the wreckage and coordinating permissions and logistics for burials. In the months that followed, the fund placed evacuated children in schools, arranged ad hoc farm labor when reservist call-ups



Released Israeli hostage Gadi Mozes at a ceremony marking rebuilding in Kibbutz Nir Oz, August 7, 2025.



A new wall has been added to the Memorial to Fallen Kibbutz Members in Mishmar HaEmek, listing more than 450 people who died on Oct. 7 and in the subsequent war in Gaza

emptied crews and secured temporary housing. During June's war with Iran, it set up an emergency volunteer hub that, among other tasks, delivered truckloads of mattresses to kibbutz shelters in the north.

The fund's newest push is aimed at recruiting newcomers, in a project known as Chalutz — a derivative of the Hebrew word for pioneer. Chalutz serves as a clearinghouse and matchmaker between kibbutzim seeking members and newcomers looking for a place to live and volunteer. The project's target is to relocate 1,000 families, with thousands of inquiries logged, alongside placements for young singles who want to live and work in border communities.

Among them is 29-year-old Ilan Gritsevsky, who in August left Tel Aviv for Kibbutz Nir Oz, where roughly a quarter of residents were murdered or taken hostage on Oct. 7 and where only six houses emerged unscathed. He is part of a cohort of about 50 young adults connected to the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement who are moving in as construction starts. For now they live in temporary housing

financed by partners that include the rehabilitation fund, with new homes being built.

City life, Gritsevsky said, while fun, felt anonymous: "The only thing you share with your neighbors is a postal code." The kibbutz offered shared purpose and a sense that neighbors were partners in rebuilding. But the deeper impulse, he said, was defense by presence. Called up on Oct. 7 to reserve duty in Nahal Oz, he described his relocation to Nir Oz as the natural next stage of service.

"At the beginning of the war I had to protect our borders with weapons, and today I feel that settling on our borders is a meaningful form of protection, for the country's physical border and for the kind of country we want to be," he said.

The new crop of young adults will establish an educational community, taking on informal education roles alongside the school day. The need is acute. Since Oct. 7, problems that were once uncommon among kibbutz teenagers, including substance and alcohol use, have become more visible, alongside broader trauma. Tekuma has earmarked 115 million shekels for personal, family and social services programs and 61 million shekels for trauma and bereavement, funding family-support services, parent-child centers, targeted assistance for at-risk families, prevention of domestic violence, treatment units for sexual assault, and programs for children, older adults and people with disabilities.

In April, Nir Oz reached a state agreement for 350 million shekels to rehabilitate the community — becoming the last of the Oct. 7-affected sites to do so — but according to Shotan, it falls short of the 500 million shekels residents say is needed. KKL-JNF, which is financing rehabilitation projects nationwide, approved 75 million shekels for Nir Oz as part of a 750 million shekel national package, helping to narrow the gap.

Shotan said selling the idea of kibbutz life to families and young people is not difficult, because education, community and social support are big draws, and the cost of living in the periphery is far less than in Israel's population centers.

But ideology, he said, was doing most of

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the work in driving people to move. "You have to be a real Zionist to do it. People who don't have Zionism as a basic value won't come."

He traced the idea back to the first kibbutzniks of the 1910s and to families like his, whose grandparents in the 1920s helped found Shefayim — the central Israeli kibbutz that housed evacuees from Kfar Aza after Oct. 7.

The same logic, he said, held on Oct. 7. In his telling, front-line communities have again become a part of Israel's defense.

"The kibbutzes were relevant then and they'll become even more relevant in the future. Our defense rests with them, not through the army. If it wasn't for Nirim, or Nir Oz, Hamas terrorists would have reached Tel Aviv."

But not all newcomers framed their move as classic Zionism. Maya, a founder of Torenu ("Our Turn"), a grassroots movement under the Dror-Israel youth

movement, helped dozens of young people move to Gaza-border kibbutzim to staff classrooms, youth clubs and fields.

"We didn't come to save anyone, and I don't like the word 'rehabilitate.' We work alongside the people who were here long before us and who will probably be here after us," the Kfar Saba native told the Hebrew-language Israel Hayom daily. "Some may call it Zionism, but that is not what guided me. I just felt more people were needed here to help get the wheels turning again."

Maya gave up a job at a Tel Aviv startup to relocate to Kibbutz Re'im, along with eight other young adults. The community is back to over 180 families (out of 200 pre-war), and a further 10 new families that have since joined.

The kibbutz's secretary, Zohar Livneh-Mizrahi, said the new arrivals had changed the mood.

"It isn't something to take for granted, but I see how strongly people want to be

involved and lend a hand," she said. "It moved me from the get-go, and still does. We are writing a new chapter in the history of the kibbutz and of Zionism."

Repopulation of the northern kibbutzim is the Chalutzi project's next frontier, Shotan said. Damage there is extensive, and the return has been patchier, with 30% of the kibbutz members still living elsewhere.

Israeli authorities put northern property losses at about 9 billion shekels, but only about 2.2 billion shekels had been disbursed by mid-year, leaving a large gap that locals say is slowing work on housing, public buildings and farms. Tenufa, the northern framework intended as a counterpart to Tekumah, lacked sufficient funds and authority to push projects, and kibbutz leaders say they have to work across more than a dozen ministries to secure approvals.

Agriculture could take four to five years to regrow, yet without permits in place, little has started. Some of the kibbutzes have

grown tired of waiting. At Yiftach, where rockets destroyed about 90% of fields, kibbutz members chose to bypass the state and funded clearing and replanting on their own.

External shocks have compounded the strain, Shotan said. Houthi attacks in the Red Sea have disrupted shipping and forced longer routes, raising costs and in some cases, spoiling the exports. Economic boycotts levied at Israel have cut demand in certain European markets and new tariffs by the Trump administration have further scrambled trade flows and pricing.

Back south in Nir Oz, Gritsevsky joined 200 others for a communal Rosh Hashanah meal. He described the mood among the new arrivals and veterans as a mix of resolve and strain.

"We're all still living with this tension that on the one hand, it isn't over — the grief is still with us and will keep being with us, but at the same time, we want to stand up and take responsibility to rebuild," he said.

JEWISH FEDERATION 2025-2026 SEASON ~ COMMUNITY EVENTS

December 14, 2025

Sunday

Hanukkah Program at Federation Office

January 12, 2026

Monday

Lion of Judah Brunch

January 25, 2026

Sunday

An Evening of Jewish Theater:
"Simon Wiesenthal Presents"

February 11, 2026

Wednesday

Federation Day at Tamarisk Country Club

February 18, 2026

Wednesday

"Comedy for a Cause"
Starring Modi Rosenfeld

March 22, 2026

Sunday

Feast of Jewish Learning

April 14, 2026

Tuesday

Holocaust Remembrance/Yom HaShoah
Observance



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Newsweek Names Hadassah's Medical Center One of the World's Best for Oncology and Cardiology – Again

Newsweek also names the Israeli medical center a global leader in digital innovation

By Helen Chernikoff, Hadassah.org

Newsweek has named Israel's Hadassah Medical Organization a global leader in cardiology and oncology in the media company's "World's Best Specialized Hospitals 2026." This is sixth straight year the medical center has earned a top spot for cardiology and the fifth consecutive year it has earned one for oncology.

Newsweek has also recognized the medical center in the "World's Best Smart Hospitals 2026," citing the center's use of smart technologies like AI, automation, robotics and digital health tools.

The Newsweek rankings place the Hadassah Medical Organization in the company of world-leading medical centers such as Baltimore's Johns Hopkins Hospital, London's Royal Marsden Hospital and the Seoul National



University Hospital.
Said Dr. Yoram Weiss, Director

General, "Once again, the Hadassah Medical Organization's oncology and

cardiology care has been recognized as being among the best the world has to offer."

"We are proud to see our physicians honored in this way and humbled by their skill and dedication," said Carol Ann Schwartz, National President, Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, which founded and owns the Israeli medical center.

The 2026 rankings, produced in partnership with the global data firm Statista, are the result of Newsweek's annual review of more than 350 hospitals worldwide, which reflects the recommendations of tens of thousands of medical professionals vetted by an international committee of specialists.

MEET THE TEAM

Gina Anderson
Branch Manager

Grace Baggett
Marketing Coordinator

Maria Herrera
Branch Assistant Manager

Jaclyn Curdes
Office Administrator

Monique Herrera
Escrow Officer

NY State Young Republicans Chapter Dissolved Amid Racist, Antisemitic Scandal

By Asaf Elia-Shalev, The Times of Israel

New York's state Young Republicans organization has been disbanded in the wake of leaked group chats in which officials joked about gas chambers, praised Adolf Hitler and used racist, antisemitic and homophobic slurs.

"The Young Republicans was already grossly mismanaged, and vile language of the sort made in the group chat has no place in our party or its subsidiary organizations," New York GOP chair Ed Cox said in a statement, adding that he sent formal notice of the shutdown to the National Federation of Young Republicans.

Earlier this week, the Kansas Young Republicans club was also dissolved. The moves are meant to allow for a fresh start for the Republican Party's youth wing in those states following a Politico exposé

that published thousands of messages involving participants in multiple states.

Several participants had ties to New York Republican politics. Since the reporting, some involved lost jobs or had political opportunities withdrawn.

The scandal has also fueled partisan squabbling. Amid the fallout, the Republican Jewish Coalition posted on X in response to Democratic New York Sen. Chuck Schumer's criticism of GOP "silence," writing: "We strongly condemn the comments and those involved should step aside. See how easy that is?"

The post then turned into a political attack: "Your turn... condemn Jay Jones, Zohran Mamdani, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, and more, in your deranged, radicalized party. You won't. Enjoy the political wilderness in the meantime!"

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Israel to Spend up to \$4.1M in Bid to Bolster Support Among Christians in Western US

Federal filings show Foreign Ministry hired US firm to run campaign targeting churchgoers with digital ads, mobile 'Oct. 7th Experience'

By Asaf Elia-Shalev, JTA

With its popularity in the United States crashing, Israel is bankrolling what organizers say will be the largest campaign of its kind to bolster support among evangelical churches, until recently seen as an unshakable base of support for the Jewish state.

The Foreign Ministry has hired an American firm to run the campaign, with plans to spend as much as \$4.1 million on marketing aimed at Christians across the Western part of the country, according to newly filed federal disclosures.

The documents, filed in late September under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, reveal that Show Faith by Works, LLC will execute what it bills as the "largest Christian Church Geofencing Campaign in US history."

A newly formed company with a San Diego address, Show Faith by Works is run by Chad Schnitger, a prominent Christian conservative activist in California.

The initiative is designed to reach churchgoers with digital ads that are explicitly "pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian," while dispatching a mobile "October 7th Experience" exhibit to church parking lots and Christian colleges.

The campaign adds a new prong to Israel's US communications blitz, complementing a \$1.5 million-per-month contract for AI-driven social media activity with former Trump campaign strategist Brad Parscale and a contract with a firm called Bridge Partners to create an influencer network called the Esther Project.

The PR blitz was anticipated after the Foreign Ministry was allocated \$150 million in this year's budget for public relations efforts.

Public attention to Israel's efforts surged last week following reporting by an online outlet called Responsible Statecraft, which is published by the Quincy Institute, a dovish foreign policy think tank in Washington DC.

Together, the deals underscore how Israel's government is deploying unprecedented resources to shape American opinion amid what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described as the country's "eighth front": the battle of narratives and public opinion around the world.

The campaign comes at a time when Israel's once-reliable support among US evangelicals is showing cracks with recent



Trucks in New York City's Times Square display the message "Remember October 7" as part of an Israeli public diplomacy campaign

surveys showing that younger evangelicals are less likely to support Israel than previous generations. Americans. Though initiated months earlier, the campaign also comes shortly after the assassination of Charlie Kirk, who was perhaps the most prominent evangelical pro-Israel voice speaking to young Americans.

According to invoices attached to the filing, Show Faith, which was formed on August 5, expects to receive more than \$3.25 million over five months, paid in equal installments routed through the global ad giant Havas Media, while also floating an "ideal additional budget" of \$835,000 for equipment and expansion.

The firm reported receiving an initial payment of about \$326,000 on Sept. 18, days before it formally registered with the Department of Justice Department as a foreign agent. The arrangement mirrors the structure of the Parscale and Bridges contracts, which also list Havas as an intermediary, pointing to the company's role in coordinating Israel's foreign-agent activities in the United States.

Show Faith's scope of work blends high-tech targeting with old-fashioned religious outreach.

Campaign documents detail plans for geofencing, a technique to target ads to worshippers' phones within specific geographical boundaries around churches and Christian campuses in California, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado.

The firm has pledged to recruit pastors to write op-eds and distribute "Pastoral Resource Packages" by mail, to hire social

media influencers and produce television-style commercials, and to tour a branded trailer exhibit featuring tents, virtual reality headsets and kiosks designed to immerse audiences in narratives of Israel's conflict with Hamas for a program that will be called the "October 7th Experience."

The filings project 47 million ad impressions across display, audio and connected TV channels over the course of a year.

The filings name five people involved with Show Faith, led by its founder, Schnitger, who is listed on LinkedIn as a managing partner of Graystone Public Affairs, a political consulting and grassroots organizing firm based in Riverside, California. Schnitger also leads the state chapter of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, a conservative Christian political advocacy group.

Among the others are Melissa Lundie, who reported recent volunteer work with the Los Angeles County Republican Party and contributions to the California GOP, and Richard Tuong Do, who disclosed paying \$350 in dues to attend a California GOP convention this month.

In its pitch materials, Show Faith by Works also floated the idea of recruiting celebrity spokespeople to amplify the campaign. A presentation slide attached to the filing lists figures such as actors Chris Pratt, Mel Gibson and Mark Wahlberg, televangelist Joel Osteen, and former NFL quarterback Tim Tebow as potential endorsers who could bring star power to pro-Israel messaging in Christian communities. It is

unclear whether any outreach to these celebrities has taken place, and the names appear in the documents as aspirational targets rather than confirmed partners.

Presentation slides outlines a series of talking points divided into two sections: pro-Israel and "anti-Palestinian state."

The campaign's pro-Israel messaging is designed to speak directly to pastors and Christian audiences about Israel's biblical and historical significance. The materials emphasize the Jewish presence in the land before 1948, the state's legitimacy and record of protecting non-Jewish populations, and Israel's efforts to uphold civilian safety and "moral superiority" in wartime. Other talking points highlight Israel's democratic freedoms, its partnership with the United States, and its place in the Christian New Testament, suggesting a Christmas message about the birthplace of Jesus. One bullet point says to "question the longstanding policy of a 2-state solution."

The "anti-Palestinian" section of the plan characterizes Palestinians chiefly through the prism of Hamas. It asserts that Palestinians are complicit in Hamas's leadership, financing and military operations, and accuses them of sheltering terrorists, hiding weapons in schools and hospitals, and celebrating the October 7 attack. The materials stress that there has never been a Palestinian state, that Hamas's and Iran's goals are "genocidal" rather than "land-focused," and that Palestinians have squandered opportunities for modernization in favor of violence. The filings also note attacks on American Christian aid workers in Gaza.

The new campaign is the latest in a string of foreign-agent registrations linked to Israel's Foreign Ministry this month. On Sept. 18, Parscale's firm, Clock Tower X LLC, registered as a foreign agent, committing to produce 100 ads per month, with 5,000 variations, to combat antisemitism in the United States. Documents revealed plans to deploy AI-driven search engine optimization tools and shape outputs of GPT-based chatbots.

Days later, a newly registered firm called Bridges Partners disclosed that it had been retained to run the Esther Project, a code-named influencer campaign designed to recruit five to six social media personalities at a time, each posting dozens of pieces of content monthly across Instagram and TikTok. Both firms were also contracted through Havas, which appears to be serving as a hub for the ministry's US spending.



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HAVE A NOSH:

With the rare exception of Chanukah being super early and beginning in late November, November is the one month without Jewish holidays, so it is a challenge to find appropriate recipes to share with you. I decided to give you a great turkey breast dinner that you might consider if your Thanksgiving celebration is for just a few guests and preparing a whole turkey is simply too much. This is a “go-to” recipe for any time, not limited to Thanksgiving. I'm also giving you a couple delicious cranberry sauce recipes ... the second one limited by not always being able to find rhubarb – fresh or frozen - in the grocery stores. I have room so I'm giving you an easy, garlic-y ‘Broccoli Salad’ side dish to serve with the turkey-kugel dinner. Enjoy! MHB



Turkey Breast Over Rice-Pearl Barley-Vermicelli Kugel

For each cup of grains you will need two cups of chicken broth. The quantities given here make a generous kugel.

1 cup rice
1 cup pearl barley
1 cup angel hair pasta, broken into 1" pieces
6 cups chicken broth

1 medium onion, chopped
3 or 4 celery stalks, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced.
About 1/3 cup salad oil

Raw half turkey breast, with skin
Lightly season with salt, pepper and paprika

Heat about 1/4 cup oil in large skillet. Lightly brown onion, celery and garlic. Push to side and add grains. Add a little more oil, if needed. Sauté until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Pour into large baking dish. Stir in the chicken broth. Top with turkey breast, season and cover with lid or aluminum foil. Bake at 350 degrees for about two hours, until turkey breast internal temperature is 160 degrees.

Marmalade Cranberry Sauce

1 lb. fresh or frozen cranberries
1½ cups sugar
1 cup sliced, toasted almonds
1 cup orange marmalade

3 Tablespoons orange liqueur
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind (optional)

Rinse and pick over the fresh cranberries. If frozen, there is no need to defrost. Combine cranberries and sugar in a casserole dish. Cover and bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 1 hour. Add remaining ingredients, stir and refrigerate. Enough for 10 servings.

Rhubarb and Dried Cranberry Sauce

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup finely minced onion
½ cup finely minced celery
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup dry white wine

1 cup chicken stock
¾ cup diced rhubarb
¼ cup dried cranberries
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
½ cup sugar or honey

Heat oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, celery and garlic and saute until the vegetables are uniformly brown. Stir in the wine, scraping the bottom of the pan. Add the stock, rhubarb, dried cranberries, vinegar and sugar or honey. Cook over medium heat and simmer until the sauce thickens, about 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper, cover and keep at a very low simmer until ready to serve.

Broccoli with Garlic & Soy

1 head garlic, peeled (about 16 cloves)
1 cup good olive oil
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon kosher salt

4 stalks broccoli, cut into florets (8 cups of florets)
2 tablespoons soy sauce

Put the garlic cloves and oil in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook uncovered over low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, until the garlic is browned and tender. Turn off the heat and add the red pepper flakes and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Immediately pour into a heat-proof container to stop the cooking. Allow to cool to room temperature.

For the salad, blanch the broccoli florets in a large pot of boiling salted water for 2 to 3 minutes, until crisp-tender. Drain well and immerse immediately into a large bowl of ice water until the broccoli is cooled. This process stops the cooking and sets the bright green color. Drain well.

In a large bowl, toss the broccoli with 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 cup of the oil used to cook the garlic, the soy sauce, and 8 or more cloves of cooked garlic. Taste for seasonings and serve cold or at room temperature.



Simchas

Congratulations to **Carol Fragen** (right) on being honored by the Mizell Center as one of their "most devoted patrons" at an exciting,



one-night only performance by Tony and Grammy-nominated actor, singer and songwriter **Cheyenne Jackson**

on November 12, being held at the Palm Springs Cultural Center. Carol is equally devoted to our desert Jewish community, where currently she is President of Temple Isaiah, is a long-time Board Member of the Jewish Federation of the Desert, where she

continues to say "yes" to co-chairing the major annual fundraising events of the Jewish Federation and is a past president of Women's Philanthropy ... Email or call Miriam Bent with your Simchas: mhbentjcn@earthlink.net or 760-835-1022.



Classifieds

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WRITER, EDITOR, PROOFREADER, COPYWRITER

... I have a 'whey' 'weigh' 'way' with words. Contact Tina Levine at prunehaven@protonmail.com or call or text 310-993-1668.

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Candle Lighting Times

November

Friday, November 7	Shabbat Vayeira	4:05 pm
Friday, November 14	Shabbat Chaye Sarah	4:00 pm
Friday, November 21	Shabbat Toldot	3:56 pm
Friday, November 28	Shabbat Vayetze	3:54 pm



We Mourn the Passing of...

Judy Egendorf, Marlene Haberman, Barry Jacobson, Serene Lazar, Samuel Oberman, Liela Carol Schwartz, and Bill Silverman. Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. May their memories endure as a blessing.



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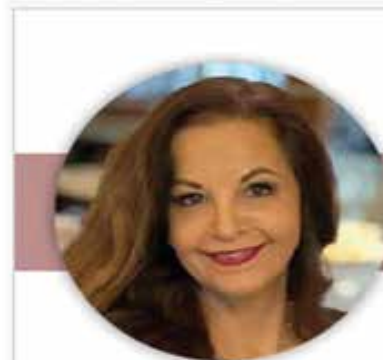
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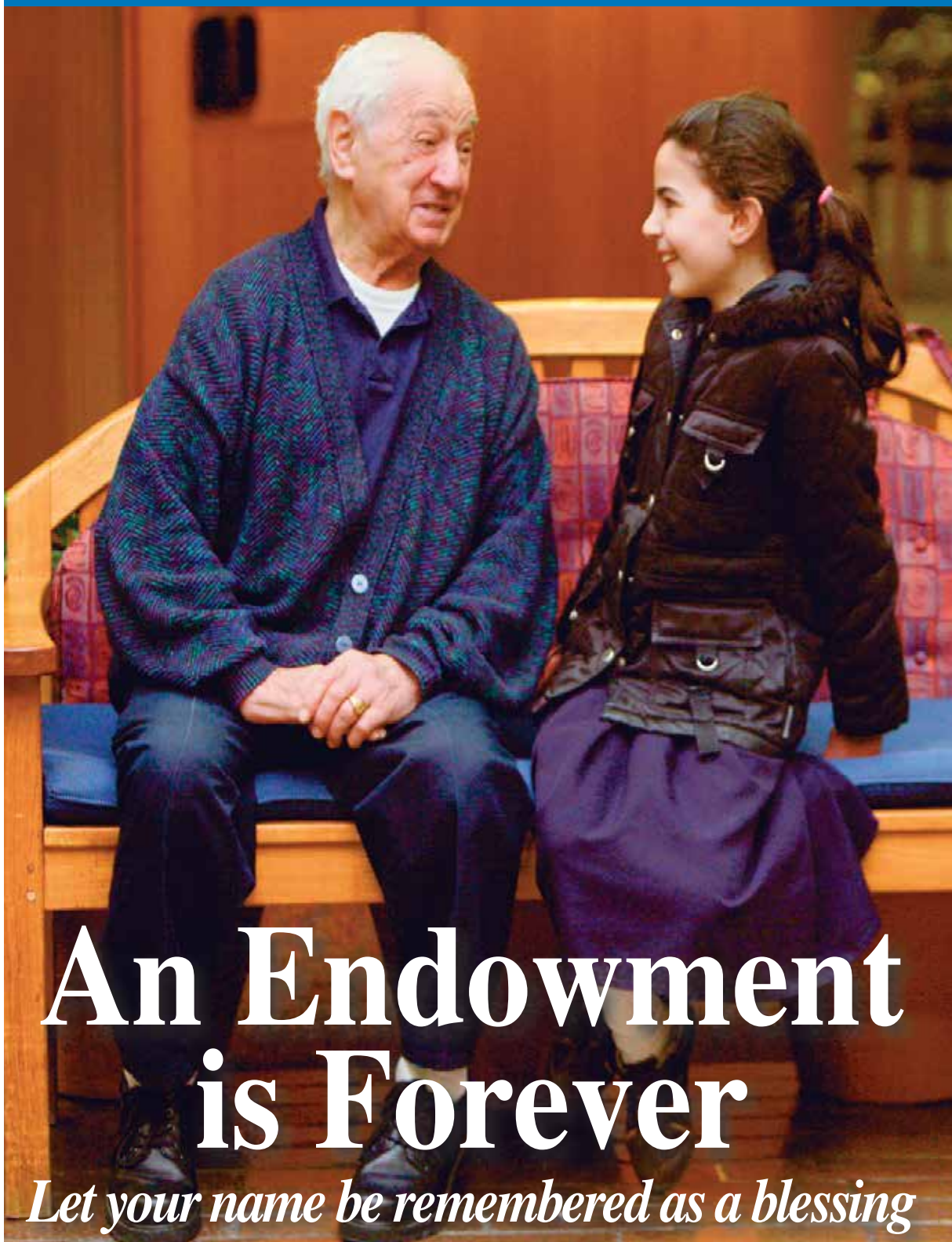
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For more information and to explore options, please contact Danny Labin, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Federation of the Desert, at danny.labin@jfedps.org or 760-324-4737.

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The Power of Community.**



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