ON THE COVER:
Youngstown JCC staff and volunteers help out at Pittsburgh JCC.
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Community Hanukkah celebrations.
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JCRC “adopts” a family.
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Commentary

Musings with Mary Lou

Amazing Woman

By Mary Lou Finesilver

I would like to talk to you about this amazing young woman I know. I have known her since she was three weeks old, and even then she was amazing. She was not the happiest baby until they discovered she was lactose intolerant. Now, how did it take the doctors so long to figure that out? Usually they put the blame on the mother. Baby’s system is upset... the mother must be nervous or eating the wrong thing. Poor new mother; it’s hard enough to take care of your first child and sometimes the doctors can be a little insensitive. Anyway, once that was settled, she did well. She was a beautiful baby, with a big smile and great laugh. She was an active kid. By the time she was three, maybe four, she was doing gymnastics. Nothing was too much of a challenge for her. You show her once, she was off. It was sometimes a little frightening to watch this little kid do her stuff. The natural next step was dance, and she was quite good and extremely dedicated. Loved the lessons, rehearsals, costumes and makeup. She always loved makeup. Even as a little toddler, I think like most girls, she wanted to be made up with eye shadow and lipstick. And, of course, don’t try to wipe it off before she was ready.

Katie also belonged to Brownies and I was lucky once to go to a meeting. That was right up her alley, “Pomp and Circumstance.” She did pretty well in school. Didn’t like to read, however. She received a lot of help with that, then it was determined she has a little ADD. That explained the problem with reading.

She graduated high school in 2004. She then went looking for a college and ended up at the University of Hartford. She loved college life. Maybe a little too much. Katie makes friends very quickly. She loved college life. She was determined she has a little ADD. That was where she is now, teaching English to Israeli kids and learning Hebrew at Ben Gurion University. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is my amazing granddaughter Katharine Sydney Finesilver.

Group from Youngstown Area Celebrates Shabbat with Tree of Life Congregants

By Neil Yutkin

Co-president, Ohev Tzedek-Shaarei Torah

When the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue first occurred peoples’ reactions were all very similar: the initial reaction was horror and shock, followed immediately by scanning your mind to see if you knew anyone who might have been there. Sympathy for those who were lost was almost instantaneous, with a great desire to want to do something to show empathy to those of the three congregations using that synagogue.

And then the problem became what to do. Here in Youngstown, the best idea came from Alan Samuels, a New Castle resident who just recently started attending all three synagogues here after his shul closed in New Castle. While becoming a full member at Rodef, Sholom, he also has joined El Emeth and Ohev Tzedeck as associate member, and does occasionally attend both. Being a member of the board of Rodef, he brought his idea before their board and they immediately agreed.

His idea was to charter a bus to take Youngstown Synagogue congregants to celebrate a Sabbath with the congregants of the Tree of Life, at the synagogue they are temporarily worshipping at, and provide the Kiddush following the service.

We pulled out of the JCC parking lot a little after 8 a.m. on the morning of the Dec. 8 with a nearly full bus. There were also numerous people who chose to drive themselves for various reasons. In all, our delegation totaled over sixty people with Rodef, Ohev, and El Emeth all being represented.

On the trip down, Rabbi Muller addressed a problem that many of those on the bus seemed to be having: what do we say, and how do we approach those people from Tree of Life? His advice was to introduce ourselves, and to let them take the lead, and follow their direction in conversation. If they want or did not want to discuss the incident, that choice would be made by them.

The service began at about 9:45 a.m., and since it was the last day of Hanukkah as well as Rosh Hodesh it was somewhat long. But it did not seem to matter to those who attended. With a Synagogue filled with more than 125 people, the comradery helped to keep all who attended absorbed. The most poignant part of the service was when the Rabbi led Andrea Wedner, Rose Mallinger’s daughter, onto the Bimah to say the prayer that her mom usually led on Shabbat. Her arm was still in a sling from her injury when her mom was killed. Ironically, the prayer that Rose generally led was the prayer for peace. There was not a dry eye in the shul.

Following the service, the Kiddush was prepared by Art Einzig, and was the perfect melding ground for the two congregations to blend. Conversations took place between members of the Youngstown and Pittsburgh communities, and people from both cities seemed to genuinely derive satisfaction from the event.

Our return was an hour later than scheduled, but there were no complaints from those who attended. Thanks to Alan Samuels and Rodef Sholom for arranging the trip.
Doron Krakow, president and CEO of JCC Association of North America, visited Youngstown in December to thank Executive Director Michael Rawl, staff and volunteers for leading the way with JResponse in Pittsburgh.

JResponse was established to enable skilled professionals from one JCC to lend a hand at another in the aftermath of a crisis. Though originally planned as a response to natural disasters, JResponse’s inaugural deployment followed the Tree of Life massacre in Pittsburgh.

“We never planned that JResponse was going to be about reaching into a community that had been devastated by the slaughter of Jews at prayer,” Krakow said.

However, he noted, “The JCC is where everybody went when the disaster struck. It was the town square. It’s where you went.”

Employees were working 16-hour days, and getting tired. When asked what they needed, Brian Schreiber, president and CEO of the Pittsburgh JCC, said, ‘My people are tired. Can you help us give them a day off?’

Three days later, staff and volunteers from the Youngstown JCC showed up in Pittsburgh to give 10 staff members a day off. And they showed up again three days later. Rawl said Youngstown staff members would help any other days needed, as well.

“It was a beautiful moment,” Krakow said. “In the midst of terrible suffering and tragedy here was a shining example of what we do, what we can do to help.”

Courtney Lockshaw, Youngstown JCC assistant membership marketing manager, was nervous about going but said it turned out to be a great experience.

“We were briefed on the current situation and welcomed by an overwhelmed staff who shared their gratitude and tears of how happy they were just to have us show up for the day,” she said.

“I think interacting with fresh faces was a good distraction for all the staff and members, even if it was just for a few days.”

She worked in their membership office for the day.

“At first I felt a little more in the way than helpful but as the day went on, I quickly picked up some of the easier tasks,” she said.

“By the end of the day, I was giving people tours and helping sign them up for membership.”

Sarah Wilschek, JCC community development manager, worked at the Pittsburgh JCC front desk for a day.

“It was a really good showing of solidarity and they realize they

JResponders continued on page 17
El Emeth

Temple El Emeth Events

Jan. 2
Jewish Christian Dialogue - Refreshments will be at 12:30 p.m. The program will feature Sister Mary Ann Spangler HM from the College Retreat Ministry. She will speak about “Common Dynamics of Disbelief Among Youth.” The program begins at 1 p.m and all are welcome to attend.

Jan. 3 and 4
Liberty Food Pantry at Churchill United Methodist Church will have set up on Thursday evening, Jan. 3 from 7 to 8 p.m. and food distribution will take place on Friday morning, Jan. 4 from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. El Emeth volunteers are asked to call the Synagogue office to volunteer and we will pass your name on to the pantry chairs.

Jan. 17
Temple El Emeth will host a PJ Library event on at the Synagogue. Activities are from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Children 8 and under and their parents are invited to come celebrate the New Year of the trees with all their friends from PJ Library. There will be crafts, stories and special activities to celebrate the holiday. PJ Library is a Jewish family engagement program implemented on a local level throughout North America. Jewish children 6 months to 8 years of age are mailed free, high-quality Jewish literature on a monthly basis. Our JCC and local Synagogues rotate hosting family programs for the children. Please RSVP to Emily Blau at 330.746.3250 ext. 152.

Jan. 19
Tu B’Shevat Seder and Kiddush Luncheon - An abbreviated Shabbat morning service will begin at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Tu B’Shevat Seder at 11:30 a.m. A Kiddush Luncheon will begin at noon. Reservations may be made by calling the Synagogue office at 330.759.1429 by Jan. 17. There is no charge for lunch but reservations are necessary so we can plan accordingly. January birthdays will also be celebrated.

Jan. 28
Shmoozing wih Shmulik at Temple - Sam Kooperman leads the group in Yiddish stories, jokes and music. Refreshments are served.

Daily Minyans
Sunday through Friday evening at 5:45 p.m. and on Saturday, Jan. 5 and 12 at 5:15 p.m. and Jan. 19 and 26 at 5:30 p.m. Friday morning minyans are at 7 a.m. and Saturday morning Shabbat services at 9:30 a.m.

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Temple El Emeth Holds Annual Hanukkah Event

El Emeth held their annual Hanukkah Happening for Kids in early December. Twenty children with parents and grandparents attended the event. Children enjoyed singing Hanukkah songs with Kobi Sigler then made a variety of Hanukkah crafts. They lit the menorah and enjoyed Hanukkah latkes and cookies.

Bella Vickers made Hanukkah jewelry with the help of her Grandmother, Terrie Chudakoff, at an event at Temple El Emeth.
Cold and Snowy

President’s Message

Neil Yutkin, Co-President
Ohev Tzedek-Shaarei Torah

With the seasonal holidays finally over, traffic goes back to normal, and the hard part of the winter has begun. The next two months generally end up being the coldest of the year, and the snowiest. People tend to retreat into a “let’s just stay in” attitude. Or the snowbirds go back to Florida/Arizona.

The next two months also provide little in Jewish holidays. In fact, beside Tu Bishvat on Jan. 21, there is not even a fast day until March 20 (the Fast of Esther) followed the next day by Purim.

This year, Ohev Tzedek is going to combine Shabbat Shirah (the Sabbath of Song) and a Tu Bishavat Seder. We will joyously celebrate with a musical Shabbat service and follow it with the traditional fruit and nut Seder that celebrates the New Year of Trees.

Our service will be open to any who wish to attend, but reservations must be made for us to set the Seder tables. Please make a reservation by Jan. 14 for Shabbat Shirah on Jan. 19. Services start at the normal time to be followed by the Tu Bishavat Seder Kiddush. Our office number is 330.758.2321.

Rosh Chodesh Group Meets at Levy Gardens

Levy Gardens tenants hosted the Ohev Tzedek Rosh Chodesh group in December. Pictured are Carol Gottesman (left) and Helen Passell.

Levy Gardens tenants hosted the Ohev Tzedek Rosh Chodesh group for its monthly meeting in December.

Rosh Chodesh is the observance of the new moon welcoming each new Hebrew month. It is a celebration of renewal and reaffirmation of spiritual values, friendship, and sisterhood.

Long considered a holiday for women, Rosh Chodesh is mentioned in the Torah (the book of Numbers) as a festival day on which it is commanded to be joyful. At Ohev Tzedek, it is a time for women to gather, recite traditional liturgy, share a meal, and foster Jewish identity.

The Journey Beyond Bitter Waters

Rabbi Dario Hunter
Ohev Tzedek-Shaarei Torah

Parshat Beshalach is read on the Shabbat morning of January 19 (the 13 th of Shevat) this year. Its close proximity to Tu b’Shevat (Jan. 20-21, the 15 th of Shevat), the ‘New Year for the Trees,’ carries profound meaning considering the events in the Parshah.

After the Jewish people were allowed to leave Egypt, a hard-hearted Pharaoh pursued them and they found themselves caught between the threatening approach of his troops and the sea. In a remarkable miracle, the sea split to allow them to pass. It then subsequently closed upon Pharaoh’s pursuing troops. The people exclaimed in awe and gratitude, “this is my G-d” (Shemot 15:2).

But in the desert the people were shaken by the experience of great thirst and hunger. For three days, they traveled without water and when they finally found water, that water was too bitter to drink.

A Chassidic explanation further fleshes out the source of this ‘bitterness’ The Ba’al Shem Tov held that the water was not really bitter; rather the people found it to be a bitter circumstance to be set free from Egypt and not have fresh water to drink. Having seen the awesome power of G-d in working miracles, they perhaps thought the path forward would be easier. But being a free people is not an easy responsibility to bear.

In response to their crying out in thirst, the water was sweetened by Hashem through the act of throwing a tree into it. He told the people that by listening to His voice, they could avoid all the diseases of Egypt for “I, the L-rd, heal you” (Shemot 15:26).

In this instance, the tree represents the Etz Chaim, the Tree of Life, that is the Torah, for “[i]t is a tree of life for those who grasp it” (Mishlei 3:18). Seven weeks after the Exodus, the Jewish people would receive this life-sustaining gift.

This year, another holiday coincides with Tu b’Shevat – Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Although it is a secular holiday, it must be noted that throughout MLK’s struggles on the path to equal rights for all, he was clearly cognizant of the Biblical story of Exodus and how faith in Hashem sustained the Jewish people in their journeys. In his last speech, the day before his assassination, he alluded to Moses’ mountaintop view of the Promised Land (Devarim 34:1-4) stating, “I just want to do G-d’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain…. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But… we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.”

He encouraged his people to push through the bitterness, exclaiming “We aren’t going to let dogs or water hoses turn us around…. We are going on.”

That faith in Hashem and in His Word can sustain us through the bitterness of life and all its earthly challenges. Unlike mankind, faith can transcend mortality and even when the injustices of every age’s Pharaoh seem insurmountable it continues to bear fruit.

This Tu b’Shevat, we think not just of the gift of our beautiful environment, but of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations. We pray that each successive generation will carry on the success of those who have grasped onto the Tree of Life and in doing so born the fruits of hope for future generations.
Rabbi’s Message

Rabbi Frank Muller

In just a few days we will celebrate the start of a new secular calendar year. Half a million or more people will descend on Times Square in New York City to watch the famous ball drop, a time-honored tradition in our country signaling the promise of better days ahead, a brighter future, for all of us, individually, and collectively as a nation.

Looking back, 2018 was quite a mixed blessing, to say the least. On the one hand, the economy improved, the unemployment rate dropped, and people spent more money on goods and services than in previous years. On the other hand, the stock market took a serious downturn towards the end of the year with the uncertainty of what will happen regarding trade tariffs with China in the year ahead.

Politically and socially, 2018 saw the exacerbation of the deep divisions within our country. There was more gridlock in Congress, a rising tide of incivility and hate speech, more gun violence and mass shootings than in any one year previous to this, and so very tragically, the worst incident of anti-Semitism in American history with the murder of 11 worshipers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

So how can we maintain a sense of hope and optimism in the face of all these terrible and tumultuous happenings? How can we ring in the new year with faith in a better future, with a belief in a safer, saner world? Although there are no adequate answers as to why bad things happen, the bitter sting of tragedy can be mitigated by the love and support of good people who genuinely care. It is the compassion and caring of friends and neighbors that can make a real difference.

Faith communities have come together in the aftermath of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. This month our Temple has invited several churches to join with us in celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. An interfaith service has been planned for Friday evening, Jan. 18. Please make every effort to join us in the Sanctuary at 6 p.m., followed by a potluck dinner and a program. Together with other religious congregations we can help to make 2019 a year of greater peace, tolerance and understanding. Let our voices rise up as one unified community that we will not give in to hate, intolerance, bigotry and violence, which can act as a deterrent to would-be killers. May we move closer to the dream of Dr. King that our society will one day be able to live together in harmony, justice and peace. When the big ball drops at midnight on Dec. 31, let our hope and optimism lead to the hard work that must be done. As it says in our prayerbook, Mishkan T’filah, “Let our voices rise up as one unified community.”

“A Shabbat to be Together”

Editors Note: The following remarks were delivered by Rabbi Muller, speaking on behalf of the Jewish Community of Youngstown at the Shabbat Service on Saturday, Dec. 8, at Congregation Rodef Shalom in Pittsburgh, where Or L’Simcha “Tree of Life Congregation is temporarily holding their religious events. Our Temple sponsored a bus trip to show our love, friendship and support to the members of Tree of Life who suffered the loss of eleven of their fellow congregants in the tragic shooting inside the synagogue on Oct. 27.

To the Rabbi, Cantor, Officers, Board Members and Congregants of Or L’Simcha “Tree of Life Congregation, we of Congregation Rodef Shalom, Congregation Ohev Tzedek, Temple El Emeth, the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and the Jewish community of Youngstown, are very pleased to have the privilege of praying together with you today.

All of you have been in the forefront of our hearts and minds these past six weeks, since the day tragedy struck your synagogue on that fateful Shabbat morning of Oct. 27. Throughout this sad time we have been saying Kaddish for the 11 precious souls whose lives were so brutally extinguished. We have been praying for the families who have lost loved ones, as well as you, their friends and fellow congregants who have endured the trauma of this unconscionable act of violence. We are here today to show our love, concern and support, and to convey the message that you are not alone in your suffering. This cowardly act was an attack on every Jew in America, and while we cannot possibly fathom the depth of your pain, we want you to know that we stand with you and are ready to do whatever we can to be of help and assistance. Judaism believes that no matter how deep we traverse the valley of the shadows, we can emerge into the light once again.

And light is certainly the major theme this week as we celebrate the Festival of Hanukkah. You know, a candle is a small thing. But one candle can light another. And see how its own light increases, as a candle gives its flame to the other. Each one of us is such a light. Light is the power to dispel darkness.

Throughout history, children of darkness have tried to snuff this passage of light through heinous acts of terror, persecution and violence against the Jewish people. But always in the end they fail. For always, somewhere in the world, the light remains; ready to burn its brightest where it is dark.

This beautiful synagogue, the idyllic Jewish neighborhood of Squirrel Hill, and the city of Pittsburgh have experienced very dark days this past month and a half. But there have been so many lights shining into the darkness - the outpouring of friendship and love from the interfaith community, the caring and support from the Jewish community, locally, regionally and nationally, the sympathy and compassion expressed from the thousands of visits, phone calls, cards, letters and emails from good people across the country and all over the world. And most importantly, the light from within that each of you still possess. In time, the flicker will once again become a flame of bright light as you, one day soon God-willing, experience a transition from the pain of bereavement to the blessing of memory. May the memory of those who have been lost shine ever brightly into your lives, inspiring you, and all of us, to value our Jewish heritage and participate in the life of the synagogue with even greater passion and commitment. Then truly, the 11 indomitable spirits who perished, will not have died in vain. As Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary wrote in his well-known song for Hanukkah, “Light One Candle,” “Don’t let the light go out, it’s lasted for so many years. Don’t let the light go out, let it shine through our love and our tears.”

SHABBAT SHALOM!

Rodef Sholom Events

Jan. 1
Office Closed

Jan. 4
Lay-led Shabbat Service 6 p.m. in Rodef Sholom Tamarkin Chapel

Jan. 11
Shabbat Service 6 p.m. in Rodef Sholom Tamarkin Chapel

Jan. 12
Tot Shabbat 10 a.m. in Rodef Sholom Wilkoff Library

Jan. 13
Sisterhood Meeting and Presentation from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in JCC Adult Lounge

Jan. 18
Martin Luther King Interfaith Shabbat Service at 6 p.m. in Rodef Sholom Sanctuary

Jan. 25
Tu B’ishvat Seder at 6 p.m. in Rodef Sholom Handler Hall
Levy Gardens Director Has Long History with Federation

By Elise Skolnick

Sara Miller’s first job, as a teenager, was with the Federation. She’s now director of Levy Gardens Assisted Living Facility.

Miller and her family moved to Boardman when she was in kindergarten. Her father worked in the steel mills and her mother was director of the day care.

“I came here as a kid,” Miller said. “I would go to work with her.”

She attended day camp, and later became a camp counselor.

When she decided to pursue a career in nursing, she applied for, and received, the Mildred Engel Nursing Scholarship from the Federation.

To receive the scholarship, Miller committed to working for a year at Heritage Manor Rehabilitation & Retirement Community following graduation from Kent State University’s nursing program.

“I started there as a midnight nurse and I loved it,” she said. “I stayed there for 8 ½ years. It wasn’t anything I ever expected that I would want to do. I thought I was just going to do my year; go back up to Cleveland, to that area, and get a job in a hospital, but I loved it. I love long-term care. I love getting to know the patients.”

Levy Gardens is different than other area assisted living facilities, she notes. The facility is smaller than many.

“We have the opportunity to really get to know everybody that’s living there,” she said. “They say it feels more like a family. They’re not lost in a big high rise of 80 apartments or anything like that.”

It’s also the only Jewish assisted living facility in the area, so programming is centered around Jewish traditions and holiday celebrations, she said.

“We really focus on quality of care,” Miller said. “We just do whatever it takes to make sure all of the tenant’s needs are taken care of.”

Miller holds a BSN RN from Kent State University. The majority of her Levy Gardens responsibilities center around maintaining standards of care and complying with state regulations.

She lives in Boardman with her husband Aaron, and her children Ella and Evan.

Sara Miller, director of Levy Gardens, says they focus on quality of care for tenants.

Choir Performs at Heritage Manor

The Austintown Fitch High School Choir entertained Heritage Manor residents at a show in December.

The Austintown Fitch High School Choir entertained Heritage Manor residents at a show in December.
Human Services

A Variety of Activities Are Offered to Levy Gardens Tenants

By Elise Skolnick

Ronna Marlin, Levy Gardens Assisted Living Facility program coordinator, aims to keep tenants socially active and out in the community.

"I try to do things to get everybody out," she said. "I feel it’s important to be in the community. I don’t force anybody to do anything. They do what they want to do. But I do encourage them to get out of their apartments. I feel part of living in assisted living is the socialization."

A variety of activities – including exercise, entertainment, speakers, art classes, religious discussions, and more – are offered Monday through Friday, and some Sundays. Danny Mirkin, a tenant, provides a movie or music on Saturday evenings. Some programs are free, others involve a fee. Transportation is provided.

Marlin tries to accommodate requests. "I’ll do my best," she says. Some activities are more popular than others, but that’s fine with Marlin.

"To me, if I get one person, it’s a good turnout because that means that person wants to do something," she said. "If it’s important for one person, it’s important for me."

Marlin works part-time at Levy, noted Sara Miller, director. "But she’s moving," she said. "She puts in the work of a full-time employee in those short hours that she’s there. She’s got something planned just about every single day."

The activities are important for the tenants, Miller said. "A lot of them, that’s what they’re there for," she said. "A lot of them, they’re pretty independent, they don’t need a lot of help. But they chose to move to Levy Gardens for that companionship and for something to do."

Mirkin says Marlin offers a good selection of activities and he likes them. He participates frequently.

"She keeps us busy," he said. He likes to do the art projects. "I’m a lousy artist, but I do try," he said.

The Levy Gardens activities are posted monthly at levygardens.org.

JFS and Akiva Academy Coat, Hat, and Glove Drive a Success

Jewish Family Services and Akiva Academy teamed up for a winter coat, hat, and glove drive. "The amount of donations we received proves that we are ‘stronger together,'” said Ken Bielecki, JFS director.

Over 80 coats and numerous gloves and hats were donated to Youngstown City Schools to benefit children and adolescents in need.
Liptalk: Supporting Family

A Message from Andy Lipkin
Federation Executive Vice-President

Family is important to me. So I jumped at the chance to support my family – my immediate family and my extended Federation family – at "A Shabbat to be Together" in Pittsburgh at the beginning of December.

This trip, the brain child of Alan Samuels of New Castle, Pa., brought our caring community to the community that was hurting in Pittsburgh. About 75 people from the Youngstown area attended Shabbat services on Dec. 8 at Rodef Shalom Congregation where the Tree of Life Congregation is temporarily holding services. Rabbi Frank Muller said it well when he told the Tree of Life congregation, "We are here today to show our love, concern and support, and to convey the message that you are not alone in your suffering.”

My wife Hilari and I arrived in Pittsburgh the night before. We wanted to spend some time with our daughter, Rachel, and our future son-in-law, Scott. As I mentioned in a previous column, Rachel has struggled somewhat, as many in Pittsburgh have, with the tragedy. With helping to plan a vigil and a number of other community events, arranging for Shiva meals, and delivering victim fund money to the injured, she has been in the thick of things. At the same time, she’s busy preparing for her upcoming wedding. A couple of weeks after the tragedy, she was getting ready to attend her bridal shower in New Jersey and started to feel sad and wondered how she could be celebrating anything when 11 people were killed, others were wounded and a community was still grappling with "why.”

I hoped that attending this Shabbat service would bring some closure, as well as be an expression of our community's support for our fellow Jews in Pittsburgh. I don't think you can put complete closure on something like this, but I hoped for some sort of closure for our community, for me personally, and for Rachel.

As the day progressed, I clearly saw our connection to the Pittsburgh Jewish community. I watched as Ronna Marlin, Levy Gardens program director and wife of Federation president Rick Marlin, hugged Andrea Wedner. Andrea was hurt in the shooting and her mother, Rose Mallinger, was killed. Ronna grew up next door to the Mallingers. At the end of the service, Sam Schachner, president of the Synagogue, announced upcoming events, including his son’s bar mitzvah the following week. He mentioned his aunt and uncle – Howard and Jackie Kramer - lived in Youngstown for a long time. Later, I introduced Rachel to him. Your uncle delivered my daughter; I told him.

I’m so proud of how our Federation family and the community have come together to rally around each other and our Jewish family in Pittsburgh. Our community vigil on Nov. 1 was attended by over 600 people of many different faiths. This shows the strength of the relationships Bonnie Deutsch Burdman, Federation director of community relations/government affairs, has created with the interfaith community, politicians and others. I am so proud that our Jewish Community Center and Federation staff and volunteers from Youngstown were the first JResponders to step up and give some relief to staff members at the Pittsburgh JCC. JResponse was conceived as a way for staff from JCCs throughout the country to lend a hand in the aftermath of a natural disaster like a hurricane, a wildfire or a mudslide. No one imagined it would be needed for a tragedy such as the shooting in Pittsburgh, but we stepped up when needed. When I met Brian Schreiber, JCC president and CEO, at the oneg following the service he told me how much he appreciates us and our willingness to help.

Throughout the day, I also spoke with numerous people who traveled from Youngstown for "A Shabbat to be Together" and with members of the Tree of Life community. They were all happy we made this trip. Rabbi Jeffrey Myers thanked us for coming. We’re such a caring community and this struck home. Pittsburgh is just an hour away from us. And we know they would be there for us.

Ursuline Student Raises Money for Victims of Terror Fund

Vy Hoang, a student at Ursuline High School, hosted a fundraiser at Ursuline following the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting. Vy sold blue ribbons and held a dress down day to collect money.

She presented a check for $700 to the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. It, along with other local donations, will be sent to the Pittsburgh Federation for their Victims of Terror Fund.

Pictured from left to right are Matthew Sammartino, Ursuline principal; Vy Hoang; Lisa Long, Federation financial resource development director; Emily Blau, Jewish Community Center programming manager and camp director; and Dr. Linda Miller, Ursuline religious education department chair.
Isreal Heading to Elections as Coalition Dissolves

By Sam Sokol

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel will hold new elections in April after the heads of all six coalition parties announced Monday that they were dissolving the government.

The current government’s term was set to end in November.

“Out of national and budgetary responsibility, the leaders of the coalition parties decided, unanimously and unanimously to dissolve the Knesset and go to new elections at the beginning of April after a four-year term,” the party heads said in a joint statement, The Times of Israel reported.

The party heads added that “the partnership in the Knesset and in the government will continue during the elections.”

According to Jerusalem Post political correspondent Gil Hoffman, the “coalition heads decided to go to elections at the beginning of April because they couldn’t reach agreement on the ultra-Orthodox enlistment bill” — legislation addressing a judge’s order that could mean that all members of the haredi Orthodox community are subject to the military draft.

Israel had appeared to have narrowly avoided a coalition collapse last month following the resignation of Yisrael Beiteinu party head Avigdor Liberman, the defense minister, and his call for new elections over what he described as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s “capitulation to terror” in accepting a cease-fire with Hamas.

With Yisrael Beiteinu out of the government, the coalition led by Netanyahu still had the narrowest of majorities in the 120-member Knesset with 61 seats. Further cracks began to form when Education Minister Naftali Bennett, the Jewish Home party leader, threatened to leave unless he was appointed to replace Liberman. Instead, Netanyahu kept the defense portfolio for himself and Bennett backed down.

Netanyahu is currently in charge of the foreign affairs, defense, health and immigration absorption ministries.

Elections are slated to be held on April 9, Haaretz reported, citing Netanyahu as telling lawmakers that “it’s too difficult [to pass laws]; we need elections.”

The new elections could also forestall American efforts to negotiate a deal between Israel and the Palestinians. The White House is reported to have decided to hold off on launching its peace initiative until after the election.

“The upcoming election in Israel on April 9 is one of many factors we are considering in evaluating the timing of the release of the peace plan,” a senior White House official told JTA on Monday.

New Castle Event Highlights Youngstown Area Resources

Sam and Pam Bernstine hosted a reception at their New Castle home in late November. The event introduced former Temple Hadar Israel members to the resources offered in the Youngstown area.

“Temple Hadar Israel closed a year ago,” Sam said. “This was the end of one chapter; and tonight, I hope, marks the start of another. It is our hope that after tonight our two communities will take further steps to becoming one. Coming together can only make our greater Jewish community stronger.”

Thomases Family Endowment Awards Grant to OH WOW!

The Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation awarded $12,500 to the Roger & Gloria Jones Children’s Center for Science & Technology. The grant will be used to help defray the costs of field trips and outreach to schools and organizations across the Valley. TFE has supported OH WOW! since 2011. Pictured left to right are Lisa Long, Federation financial resource development director; Andi Baroff, Thomases Family Endowment board member; Suzanne Barbati, OH WOW! president & executive director; W. Gregg Sturrus, executive director; and Bruce Sherman, both OH WOW! board members.
Tax Law Changes May Impact Giving

By Lisa Long
Financial Resource Development Director

If you itemize your deductions, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act may impact how you donate this year. The new law did not eliminate tax deductions for charitable gifts, but did nearly double the standard deduction to $24,000 for joint and $12,000 for single filers. This means charitable contributions are still deductible, but your donations won’t help you save on your taxes if you don’t exceed the new, higher standard deduction.

Here are some strategies to consider:

1. Bunching Your Gifts: Consider making a multi-year campaign gift (pre-paying future pledges) to the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation this year.

2. Use A Philanthropic Fund: Consider creating or adding to a Philanthropic Fund with the Federation. This means you can claim the charitable deduction in 2018 and make gifts to various charities over subsequent years out of the fund.

3. Give Appreciated Assets: Donate appreciated securities or assets to avoid capital gains taxes.

Please discuss the 2018 tax law changes with your financial advisor before the end of the year to maximize your benefit. Federation staff is also happy to discuss your passion for the community and help you create a lasting legacy. Contact Lisa Long at 330.746.3250 ext 175 or llong@jewishyoungstown.org

Hope Center Holds Youth Arts Celebration

Nearly 300 people attended the Hope Center for Arts and Technology’s fall Youth Arts Celebration. Almost 60 students from six regional schools participated. The Thomases Family Endowment provides funding for the Hope Center.
Liz Rubino Studios
For more information on the studio offerings, contact Liz Rubino at 330.509.0891 or coaching@lirubino.com.
Liz Rubino offers private sessions in voice, acting, drama therapy, junior voice, and junior acting. Voice lessons are conducted primarily online.

Voice Lessons:
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To register call the Bursar’s office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195

JCC School of Dance
For more information on the studio offerings, contact Eri Rabp-Pitchik at 330.333.2219 or jccschoolofdance@jewishyoungstown.org

Parent & Me Program
Ages 4 Months - 4 Years
Bitty Babies (4 months to pre-walking)
This class introduces gross motor skills to babies with the interaction of a caregiver.
Session I: January 19 - February 16 | Saturdays, 10:30-11:00 a.m.
Session II: March 2 - March 30 | Saturdays, 10:30-11:00 a.m.

Music & Movement (18-36 months)
A class that focuses on parent-led activities that build coordination, listening skills, and social awareness.
Session I: January 19 - February 16 | Saturdays, 11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Session II: March 2 - March 30 | Saturdays, 11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Dance Discovery (Ages 3-4)
Parents participate while children use their minds and bodies to move to a variety of song styles.
Session I: January 19 - February 16 | Saturdays, 12:15-1:00 p.m.
Session II: March 2 - March 30 | Saturdays, 12:15-1:00 p.m.

Creative Movement Program
AGES 4-6
Creative Movement I (Ages 4-5)
This class explores beginning ballet and tap dance principles.
Spring Session: January 17 - April 4 | Thursdays, 4:00-4:45 p.m.

Creative Movement II (Ages 5-6)
This class continues to explore beginning ballet and tap principles to build balance, coordination, and confidence.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 5:30-6:15 p.m.

Mini Program
AGES 6-7
Mini Tap (Ages 6-7)
This class expands upon tap skills learned in the Creative Movement Program.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 4:00-4:30 p.m.

Mini Ballet (Ages 6-7)
This class expands upon ballet skills learned in the Creative Movement Program.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 4:30-5:00 p.m.

Mini Acro/Jazz (Ages 6-7)
A class that teaches the beginning principles of jazz dance and tumbling in a safe and controlled environment.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 5:00-5:30 p.m.

Dance Curriculum Program
AGES 7-18
DC I: Tap (Ages 7-10)
Students learn the percussive dance style known as tap.
Spring Session: January 17 - April 4 | Thursdays, 4:45-5:30 p.m.

DC I: Jazz (Ages 7-10)
This class teaches the art of classic jazz dancing.
Spring Session: January 17 - April 4 | Thursdays, 5:30-6:15 p.m.

DC I: Ballet (Ages 7-10)
A class that emphasizes the basic principles of ballet and challenges students to remember patterns and choreography.
Spring Session: January 17 - April 4 | Thursdays, 6:15-7:00 p.m.

DC I/II: Acro (Ages 7-13)
This class introduces students to basic tumbling and acrobatic stretches and exercises.
Spring Session: January 23 - April 10 | Wednesdays, 4:00-4:45 p.m.

DC I/II: Beginner Baton (Ages 7-13)
This class introduces the art of baton twirling to beginner level students.
Spring Session: January 23 - April 10 | Wednesdays, 4:45-5:30 p.m.

DC I/II: Intermediate Baton (Ages 7-13)
This class expands upon basic baton skills. Students will also learn more complex patterns and choreography.
Spring Session: January 18 - April 5 | Fridays, 6:15-7:00 p.m.

DC I: Tap (Ages 10-13)
A class for the experienced dance student to build upon basic principles and steps.
Spring Session: January 18 - April 5 | Fridays, 4:00-4:45 p.m.

DC I: Ballet (Ages 10-13)
A class that builds upon principles of ballet movements and body positions.
Spring Session: January 18 - April 5 | Fridays, 4:45-5:30 p.m.

DC I: Jazz (Ages 10-13)
A class for dance student to continue learning the principles of classic jazz dancing.
Spring Session: January 18 - April 5 | Fridays, 5:30-6:15 p.m.

DC III: Baton (Ages 13-18)
A class designed for high school students with twirling experience looking to maintain and improve their skills for majorette teams and/or tryouts.
Spring Session: January 23 - April 10 | Wednesdays, 7:00-7:45 p.m.

DC III: Majorette Prep (Ages 13-18)
A class designed for high school students with little baton knowledge looking to expand their skills for majorette teams or tryouts.
Session I: January 23 - February 20 | Wednesdays, 7:45-8:30 p.m.
Session II: March 6 - April 3 | Wednesdays, 7:45-8:30 p.m.

DC III: Musical Theater Jazz (Ages 13-18)
A class created for high school students looking to gain an edge at theater auditions by improving their overall dance technique.
Session I: January 24 - February 21 | Thursdays, 7:00-7:45 p.m.
Session II: March 7 - April 4 | Thursdays, 7:00-7:45 p.m.

Adult Dance Programs
Ages 16+
Adult Ballet I
A beginner class designed for adults to improve strength, posture, and balance.
Spring Session: January 23 - April 10 | Wednesday, 5:30-6:15 p.m.

Adult Tap I
A beginner to intermediate class for adults to stay fit while learning how to create rhythms with their feet.
Spring Session: January 23 - April 10 | Wednesday, 6:15-7:00 p.m.

Adult Ballet II
An advanced beginner to intermediate level class introducing the basic principles of ballet.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 7:15-8:00 p.m.

Adult Tap II
An intermediate class for adults to explore the percussive dance style known as tap.
Spring Session: January 22 - April 9 | Tuesdays, 6:15-7:00 p.m.

Adult Drop-In Class
Guest teachers lead a 90 minute advanced level class held twice a month with each class focusing on a different genre of dance.
Spring Session: January 26 - March 23 2nd & 4th Saturday of each month 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Cost: $15/class

Spring Showcase
Our dance students showcase their talents in this end of session performance.
Date: Saturday, April 13
Time: 3:30 p.m.

For more information and pricing visit jccyoungstown.org

JCC School of Music
This exciting program features piano, violin, guitar, percussion, and voice lessons housed at the JCC!
To register call the Bursar’s office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195
EARLY LEARNING CENTER

For more information on the Early Learning Center, contact Ben Katz, Director of Early Learning at 330.746.3250 ext. 119 or bkatz@jewishyoungstown.org.

Ages 6 weeks - Pre-Kindergarten

New Infant & Toddler Private Swim Lessons
Free one-on-one swim lessons with children six months to three years to encourage children to become comfortable in the water from a young age.

New Enrichment Programming with Community Partners
Students will engage in a wide variety of enrichment offerings in art, music, and science programs brought to us by SMARTS, YSU Dana School of Music, and OH WOW! Science Center.

FITNESS

For more information on fitness programs, contact Shelia Cornell at 330.746.3250 ext. 182 or scornell@jewishyoungstown.org.

Get fit fast with Personal Training at the JCC!

Personal Training Benefits:
- personalized safe and effective fitness programs
- achievement of goals in a short time period
- improved muscle coordination, strength, endurance, and flexibility
To register call: 330.746.3250 ext. 182

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Open Gym Youth Basketball
Children ages five and up can join us for kid-friendly basketball time in our gym. Bring your own ball, or borrow one of ours.

**Date:** Fridays
**Time:** 4:00–5:30 p.m.

Wallyball
A fantastic way to get in shape and have fun! Play in our racquetball court. Equipment is provided.

**Tuesdays:** 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
**Fridays:** 5:00–6:30 p.m.

Racquetball
A great way to make friends and stay in shape. Call or visit the JCC Welcome Desk to reserve your court. Equipment not provided.

Ping-Pong
Want to play ping-pong with your friends? The JCC ping-pong table is now in the lower level Multi-Purpose Room. Paddles and balls are provided.

Pickleball
Join us in the JCC gymnasium for a fun-filled game of pickleball. A cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, this fast-paced game is fun for players of all skill levels.

**Equipment is provided.**

**Date:** Mondays & Wednesdays
**Time:** 8:00–11:00 a.m.
**Location:** Gymnasium

**Date:** Tuesdays & Thursdays
**Time:** 4:30 -7:30 p.m.
**Location:** Gymnasium

**Date:** Sundays
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
**Location:** Gymnasium

JCC Spring Pickleball Shootout
Any Doubles Combination (Men’s, Women’s, Mixed)

**Date:** Sunday, March 3
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.
**Location:** Gymnasium

Any doubles combination with skill levels of 3.0, 3.5, and 4.0+. Medals will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. The tournament coordinator may limit or combine skill levels based upon registration numbers. Early registration is suggested.

Register by Sunday, February 24 at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195.

Open Play Basketball
This time is reserved for basketball only. Shoot hoops with friends or join a pick-up game in our gym.

**Date:** Tuesdays & Thursdays
**Time:** 7:30-9:00 p.m.

**Date:** Fridays
**Time:** 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Mamanet
Join other women in a modified version of volleyball. Mamanet promotes exercise, and is a great way to build community with other women. Free and open to all.

Open Gym:
**Date:** Mondays
**Time:** 5:30-7:00 p.m.
**Location:** Gymnasium or Racquetball Court

Boot Camp Blitz
Join us for an intense circuit class that will work every muscle in your body. We’ll move through a variety of exercises designed to build strength and endurance while raising your heart rate.

**Date:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday
**Time:** 12:00 - 12:55 p.m.

**Date:** Tuesday
**Time:** 4:30 - 5:25 p.m.

Neighborhood Health Watch with Mercy Health
During this free screening, a small sample of blood will be taken to check total cholesterol and glucose levels. There will also be a blood pressure check. Participants should fast eight hours prior to testing.

**Date:** Friday, January 18
**Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
**Location:** JCC Library

Register by Friday, January 11 at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195

Managing Medications
Joe Bleacher, from Accudose Pharmacy will discuss medication related adverse events such as drug interactions or medication side effects. He will also address the proper way to take medications and talk about why it can be confusing.

**Date:** Thursday, January 10
**Time:** 12:00-1:00 p.m.
**Location:** Multi-Purpose Room

Register online at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195

continued on next page
**AQUATICS**

For more information on Aquatics, contact Shawn Chrystal at 330.746.3250 ext. 112 or aquatics@jewishyoungstown.org

To enroll in any of our group or private swim lessons call 330.746.3250 ext. 195

### Group Lessons

**You & Me Baby**
This is a monthly class where parents assist their children in the water. Children will learn how to float and improve their water skills. Recommended ages: 6 - 36 months. Swim pants or swim diapers are required.

**Level 3:**
Children will focus on breaststroke, butterfly, and backstroke.

**Level 4:**
Children will continue to refine the four swim strokes and diving.

**Session 1:** January 7 - February 14
**Session 2:** February 18 - March 21
**Session 3:** March 25 - April 4
**Time:** 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
**Monday - Thursday**  
**Practice**

We are part of the Splash Swim League.

**Cost:** $75/Member | $150/Non Member

**Winter Swim Team**
We are part of the Splash Swim League. Practice

**Monday - Thursday**  
**Time:** 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
**$75/Member | $150/Non Member**

**Session 1:** January 7 - February 14  
**Session 2:** February 18 - March 21  
**Session 3:** March 25 - April 4  
Akiva and ELC pick-up is available.

**Learn-To-Swim: Ages 3+**
Children will be placed into the appropriate level by the swim instructors

**Level 1:** Basic swimming skills will be taught such as floating, blowing bubbles and the correct body positions for freestyle and backstroke.

**Level 2:** Children will learn arm motions for freestyle and backstroke as well as the correct breathing patterns for both strokes.

**Level 3:** Children will focus on breaststroke, butterfly, and diving while refining freestyle and backstroke techniques.

**Level 4:** Children will continue to refine the four swim strokes and diving.

**Date:** Saturdays  
**Time:** 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.  
**Cost:** $30/Member | $40/Non Member

### Private Swim Lessons

Swimmers of any age or level can benefit from private swim lessons. Learn to swim or improve your skills with one of our certified swim instructors.

Private lessons are also great for triathletes.

**Four 30-minute lessons**
**Cost:** $82/Member | $110/Non Member

**YOUTH & FAMILY**

Water Women
This free class is designed for women with little or no swimming ability. Participants will learn the skills needed to feel safe in the water. This program is funded by Chemical Bank. Lessons will be limited to 12 women per session.

**Date:** Saturdays  
**Time:** 10:45-11:45 a.m.  
**Session 1:** January 12-February 16  
**Session 2:** February 23-March 30  
**Session 3:** April 6 - May 11
**Register online at jccyoungstown.org**

P.A.L.S.+ Private Swimming Lessons
The JCC offers free one-on-one swim lessons for persons who are on the autism spectrum or who have developmental disabilities. This program is funded by Autism Speaks and the Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. To apply visit jccyoungstown.org/pals.

SwimSafe 500
This program provides free swim safety lessons for children in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Scholarships are provided by The United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, The Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and The Redwoods Group. To apply visit jccyoungstown.org/swimsafe500.

**Camp JCC**

For more information on Camp, contact Emily Blau at 330.746.3250 ext. 152 or eblau@jewishyoungstown.org

Registration Opens January 27!
Camp JCC is designed for campers entering grades 1-8 and is open to everyone! We will also have a new home in 2019! Construction will begin in the spring on a new outdoor space that will include a new pavilion. Campers will enjoy a shaded area for outdoor activities, and we are creating more play space on our grounds.

**Camp Open House and Pool Party**
Come with your campers to our Open House Pool Party on Sunday, January 27 to find out what awesome things we have in store! We will have a parent information session and free swim in our indoor pool. Staff will also be there to help with registration and you will be able to put your name in our raffle for $150 off your camp fees!

**Date:** Sunday, January 27  
**Open House:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
**Parent Information Session:** 1:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Adult Lounge

Everyone who registers at the Open House will receive:
• $25 off each registered camper in addition to $50 Early Bird Discount
• A chance to win a raffle for $150 off your camp fees

The first 50 campers registered at our Open House will also receive:
• An exclusive Camp JCC long sleeve shirt
• JCC clip-on water bottle

Register before March 31st and receive an Early Bird Discount of $50 off your camp fees!
*Not applicable for single week sessions

Register online at jccyoungstown.org

An initial deposit of $75 is required at registration and will go towards the cost of your camp fees.
JCC Israeli Scholar Series
Israel scholars living in the U.S will speak about their fields of study. These programs are free and open to the public, a light lunch will be provided at each program. Register online at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office: 330.746.3250 ext. 195.

The ‘Small-Talk” of our Body: How Information is Being Transferred
Scientist Shlomit Kenigsberg will discuss the exciting field of exosome research and its applications. Exomes have been found to carry important signals to distant parts of the body. Isolating and studying these cells is now used for the diagnosis of various pathological conditions such as cancer and Alzheimer’s disease.

About the Speaker:
Shlomit Kenigsberg, PhD, MBA, MO3, is a scientist, entrepreneur, and mentor. She currently holds a managing position at the Juno Fertility clinic in Canada. She obtained her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and a Master’s in Business Administration from Ben-Gurion University in Israel.

Date: Friday, January 18
Time: 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Location: Multi-Purpose Room
Register by Monday, January 14

Adult Program
African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem
Established in 1966, the Black Hebrew Israelites is a very unique community in Israel made up of African-Americans who moved to Israel under the belief that they are the descendants of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Hear the fascinating story of Rookamah Goldston, who was raised as part of this unique community with many distinct rituals.

Date: Thursday, January 24
Time: 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Location: Multi-Purpose Room
Register by Monday, January 21 at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 195

JCC Journeys
The Phantom of the Opera
Cameron Mackintosh’s spectacular new production of The Phantom of the Opera will make a triumphant return to Cleveland as part of its North American Tour. Critics are raving that this breathtaking production is “bigger and better than ever before.” The beloved story and thrilling score - with songs like “Music of the Night” and “All I Ask Of You” - will be performed by a cast and orchestra of 52, making this one of the largest productions now on tour.

Price includes orchestra seat, transportation and tip for the bus driver. After the play, the bus will drop the group off at a restaurant or area with choice of restaurants and dinner

will be on your own. Space is limited and registration ends on February 28. Any ticket requests after February 28 are subject to availability. No refunds after purchase.

Date: Sunday, April 14
Location: Cleveland, OH
Leave JCC: 11:00 a.m.
Showtime: 1:00 p.m.
Run Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
Return to the JCC: 8:00 p.m. approximately
$71/Member | $95/ Non Member
Register online at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 195

Adult Education
The JCC is now offering a series of classes for adults to further their Jewish education. These classes will be held on Thursdays and everyone is welcome to participate!

Modern Hebrew Conversation
Taught by Hebrew and Judaic instructor Matan Norani, this class is for participants who can already read and understand Hebrew, but wish to improve their skills.

Dates: Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31, February 7, 14
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Location: JCC
$18/Member | $25/Non Member

Hebrew Primer
Israeli educator Gon Erez will teach this crash course in Hebrew reading. Once completed, you will be able to phonetically read any Hebrew word. You can choose from an afternoon (lunch included) or evening class. You must attend the same class time weekly.

Dates: Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31, February 7, 14
Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m. or 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Location: JCC
$25/Member | $35/Non Member (afternoon class)
$18/Member | $25/Non Member (evening class)

Mussar (Morals) Class
Want to be happier and more fulfilled? Rabbi Dario will teach us about the Jewish spiritual practice of Mussar. This practice gives guidance on how to live a meaningful and ethical life. Rabbi Elya Lopian described Mussar as “teaching the heart what the mind already understands.”

Dates: Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31, February 7, 14
Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Location: JCC
$18/Member | $25/Non Member

Register online at jccyoungstown.org or contact the Bursar’s Office at 330.746.3250 ext. 195
Upcoming Exhibitions
Far closer by Jaclyn Silverman & R. Clarke-Davis
A collaborative photography exhibition comprised of recent work by Jaclyn Silverman and fellow artist and educator R. Clarke-Davis explores identities and environments, with connections to a sense of place and community.
Exhibit Dates: January 10 - February 21
Opening Reception: Thursday, January 10
Time: 5:30-7:00 p.m.

BBYO Reunion Held
Youngstown BBYO alumni, advisors, and city directors reunited at Kravitz Delicatessen over the Thanksgiving holiday. About 20 people enjoyed reminiscing. Pictured from left to right are Henry Kessler, Courtney Lockshaw, Devra Silverman, Rachel Lipkin, Eli Kravitz and Sarah Wilschek.

Further Your Jewish Education with JCC Classes
The Jewish Community Center is offering a series of Jewish education classes for adults.
Hebrew Primer is a crash course in reading Hebrew. Participants will be able to read, phonetically, any Hebrew word by the end of the course. It will be taught by Gon Erez.
Modern Hebrew Conversation is for those with some knowledge of Hebrew vocabulary but wish to improve it. The instructor is Matan Norani.
Rabbi Dario Hunter will lead Mussar. Mussar is a Jewish spiritual practice that gives concrete instructions on how to live a meaningful and ethical life.
All classes are offered on Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 17 through Feb. 14. The cost is $18 for members and $25 for non members. Hebrew Primer is also being offered from noon to 1 p.m. Jan. 17 through Feb. 14. The cost is $25 for members and $35 for non members. A light lunch is included.
Registration is required by Jan. 10. To register, call 330.746.3250, ext. 195.
J-Away Program Offers In-Home Exercise for Homebound Seniors

Youngstown area seniors who are homebound have the opportunity to exercise with a personal trainer through the J-Away program.

The J-Away program gives them the chance to exercise and increase their health and wellness levels through a comprehensive in-home exercise program conducted by certified personal trainers.

“Being able to keep them physically moving really does change their life,” said Amy Haskett, a personal trainer.

She includes light aerobics and balance and coordination exercises, as well as exercises that help with every day activities such as washing dishes and folding laundry.

“So it’s really so much more than exercise,” Haskett said.

Grant funding helps defray costs for participants. Each 30-minute session is $3.50 for qualified individuals. Eligible participants are identified based on financial and physical needs. For more information, contact Shelia Cornell at 330.746.3250 ext. 182.
Marilyn Oyer

Marilyn Oyer, 84, passed away Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018, surrounded by her family.

Marilyn was born Aug. 7, 1934, in Youngstown to Marvin and Sara Itts. Marilyn was a lifelong resident and active member of the community.

She is survived by her three children and their spouses, Randy and Rosanne Oyer, Jay and Amy Oyer, and Charlie and Susie White; seven grandchildren, Elizabeth (Geoff) Oyer, Hillary (Nick) Linardopoulos, Katie (Brian) Lindenberg, Ben White, Laura (Ebon) Eka, Melissa (Evan) Oyer-Klein, and Zachary Oyer; three great-grandchildren, Jack Martin Lindenberg, Sophia Linardopoulos, and Harold Wyatt; as well as her brother and sister, Phyllis (Mace) Landau, Robert (Linda) Itts.

The funeral service was, Dec. 16, at Temple Rodef Sholom.

Memorial contributions may be made to Temple Rodef Sholom or to The Mahoning Valley Historical Society.

Arrangements were handled by the Shriver-Allison-Courtley-Weller-King Funeral Home in Youngstown.-Weller-King Funeral Home.

Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell

Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell, 48, died unexpectedly on Dec. 6, 2018 at her home in New Albany, Ohio. Her memorial service was Dec. 9 at Temple Beth Shalom in New Albany.

Alexandria was born on Nov. 2, 1970 in Los Angeles, Calif. to Emily Kirsch and Anthony Loew. She graduated from Weston High School in Weston, Conn. in 1988 and obtained her Bachelor’s degree, in early childhood development, from Ohio State University in 1992. She married Alan Howard Klodell on Sept. 1, 1996. They have three daughters: Claire 20, Caroline 18, and Jane 13.

Alexandria stayed in Ohio and was heavily involved in the local community in addition to working as an administrative assistant at the New Albany Primary School. Her family paid this tribute to her:

“Alexandria was a loving, genuine, kind and empathetic person who was both beautiful inside and out, she cared passionately for children and early childhood education, she will be profoundly missed.”

She is survived by her husband and three daughters, along with her brother, Anthony and his wife, Mininali; her brother, Graham and his wife, Michelle; her brother, Daniel; her sister, Grace and her husband, Kent; her father, Anthony and step mother, Anne; her mother, Emily; her mother-in-law, Ruthie Klodell; brother and sisters-in-law, Michael and Kelly Klodell, Kathie Klodell, Karen and Joe Frecker; multiple nieces and nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory should be sent to: Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell, The Fund for Primary School Writing Initiative c/o New Albany Community Foundation, 220 Market Street, Suite 205, New Albany, OH 43054.

Checks made payable to The New Albany Community Foundation.

Dr. Milton M. Yarmy

Dr. Milton M. Yarmy, 107, a long-time and well-known Youngstown physician passed away in Youngstown on Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2018. Services will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, at the Itts Memorial Chapel at El Emeth Granada Cemetery in Youngstown. Friends may call one-half hour prior to services.

Dr. Yarmy was born on July 27, 1911, in Youngstown, a son of Sigmund and Sadie Yarmy. He graduated from The Rayen School and received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan. He obtained his medical degree from Wayne State School of Medicine in Detroit. He completed his graduate work in Internal Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

In 1948, he was certified in Internal Medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He was on the staff of Northside Hospital and served on its board for many years. One of his special medical interests was in the treatment and management of diabetes. He treated generations of families in the Youngstown area and was well known for the tireless hours he spent making house calls to treat his patients. He was known for his compassionate bedside manner.

He was a member of the Mahoning County Medical Society, the American Medical Association and a life member of the American College of Physicians. He prided himself in keeping up to date on all the emerging medical procedures, research and treatments.

In June of 2003, he was honored at a ceremony at the Ohio State Capitol in Columbus as a member of a select group of Ohio physicians with accreditation from the Governor of Ohio for his many years of distinguished service to the citizens of Ohio. He was also granted the distinction of being granted Physician Emeritus Status by the Ohio Medical Board.

He was instrumental in establishing the Heritage Manor Jewish Home for the Aged as well as serving on the home’s Medical Committee. He was a member of Rodef Sholom and El Emeth Congregations. He belonged to Squaw Creek Country Club where he enjoyed his regular golf games with his friends and played until the age of 101.

He married the love of his life, Lillian Fine, in 1937 after they met at the University of Michigan. They were married for 77 blissful years until her passing in 2014. He treated her like a queen and was a true gentleman both personally and professionally.

He is survived by three children, Karen Fellheimer (Ronald) of Pontiac, Ill, Janie Yarmy and Richard Yarmy, both of Youngstown. Also surviving are two grandchildren, Hon. Mark Fellheimer (Colleen) and Elizabeth Fellheimer (Larame), both of Pontiac, Ill., and five great-grandchildren, Zachary Morgan, Katie, Roman, and Ben. His sister, Jean Shagrin, preceded him in death.

Dr. Yarmy enjoyed the fine arts, including the opera and Shakespeare. He and Lillian traveled every summer to Stratford, Canada to attend the Shakespeare Festival. He was a voracious reader enjoying intricate spy novels and reading the New York Times up to the day he passed away. He enjoyed spending winters in Naples, Fla. in retirement.

Above all else, he loved his family and was extremely proud of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and of all their accomplishments. He will be greatly missed.

In memory of Dr. Yarmy, donations may be made to Liberty Public Library, Angels for Animals, the Pontiac Public Library, Livingston County Humane Society or a charity of the donor’s choice.

Special thanks to all of Dr. Yarmy’s caregivers over the years.

Arrangements are being handled by the Shriver-Allison-Courtley-Weller-King Funeral Home.

Marilyn Oyer

Marilyn Oyer, 84, passed away Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018, surrounded by her family.

Marilyn was born Aug. 7, 1934, in Youngstown to Marvin and Sara Itts. Marilyn was a lifelong resident and active member of the community. She graduated from The Rayen School in 1952 and attended the University of Michigan. She was a board member at a number of organizations including Temple Rodef Sholom (president), Hadassah (president), The Mahoning Valley Historical Society (board member), The Youngstown Symphony (board member), Jewish Community Center (board member), and Heritage Manor (board member).

She was not only known for her work at Temple Rodef Sholom, where she was the first female president, but also for how she affected so many lives. Family was her main focus and priority. She was known to all who loved her as a pillar of the community and her legacy will live on in every person that knew her.

Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell

Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell, 48, died unexpectedly on Dec. 6, 2018 at her home in New Albany, Ohio. Her memorial service was Dec. 9 at Temple Beth Shalom in New Albany.

Alexandria was born on Nov. 2, 1970 in Los Angeles, Calif. to Emily Kirsch and Anthony Loew. She graduated from Weston High School in Weston, Conn. in 1988 and obtained her Bachelor’s degree, in early childhood development, from Ohio State University in 1992. She married Alan Howard Klodell on Sept. 1, 1996. They have three daughters: Claire 20, Caroline 18, and Jane 13. Alexandria stayed in Ohio and was heavily involved in the local community in addition to working as an administrative assistant at The New Albany Primary School. Her family paid this tribute to her:

“Alexandria was a loving, genuine, kind and empathetic person who was both beautiful inside and out, she cared passionately for children and early childhood education, she will be profoundly missed.”

She is survived by her husband and three daughters, along with her brother, Anthony and his wife, Mininali; her brother, Graham and his wife, Michelle; her brother, Daniel; her sister, Grace and her husband, Kent; her father, Anthony and step mother, Anne; her mother, Emily; her mother-in-law, Ruthie Klodell; brother and sisters-in-law, Michael and Kelly Klodell, Kathie Klodell, Karen and Joe Frecker; multiple nieces and nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory should be sent to: Isadora Alexandria Loew Klodell, The Fund for Primary School Writing Initiative c/o New Albany Community Foundation, 220 Market Street, Suite 205, New Albany, OH 43054.

Checks made payable to The New Albany Community Foundation.
How to Tell if Your Child or Grandchild is Traumatized by the Pittsburgh Shooting, and What to Do About It

By Ben Harris

(JTA) -- Within 24 hours of the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Judith Cohen’s cellphone was ringing incessantly with offers of help from around the world.

A psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of trauma and grief in children and adolescents, Cohen is one of the developers of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, a therapeutic model that adapts the principles of cognitive behavior therapy for victims of post-traumatic stress.

“It was not just thoughts and prayers, but practical stuff,” Cohen said of the telephone calls.

“Literally within 24 hours I had tons of resources.” For weeks after the shooting, Pittsburgh’s Jews were in shock, with many reporting fear of going to synagogue or displaying outward signs of Jewish identification. The fear and anxiety extended to children, too.

Trauma experts say these are normal responses in the wake of an event like the October 27 attack, which claimed 11 lives. Symptoms of trauma may include disturbance in sleep pattern, changes in appetite, loss of concentration, loss of interest in social activities and heightened anxiety.

“It’s obvious that you should allow for a certain kind of change for a certain period of time — days, sometimes a week or two,” said Professor Esi Galili-Weissstub, the head of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and an internationally recognized expert in trauma therapy. “But if it proceeds for three or four weeks — or if it doesn’t improve or if its extreme — that’s more alarming.”

That’s when professional intervention may be required, she said.

With its long history of deadly terrorism, Israel has become a global leader in treating trauma victims. Galili-Weissstub has been at the forefront of that effort, consulting with and training mental health professionals in the wake of disasters around the world, including after the 2017 earthquake near Mexico City, the 2004 East Asian tsunami in Sri Lanka, and the U.S. hurricanes in New Orleans and Houston.

Part of what Galili-Weissstub and her colleagues do in crisis situations is a kind of psychic triage, meeting with those affected in an effort to determine who is at maximum risk of a serious trauma reaction. They also provide training and support to local mental health professionals, who often are in a better position to respond to the particular needs of local communities.

One of the most important responses in the wake of a traumatic incident like Pittsburgh is for the community to come together, according to Galili-Weissstub.

“That’s our security blanket in a way: to meet with people and to talk,” she said. “We start with talking about the event, but eventually we do things together. That’s very important, because it does strengthen the community ties. Same goes with the family - to have a family dinner, to go have a day out, a picnic, to spend more time together is all very important because it is the support system.”

In cases of more serious trauma reactions, psychologists use a number of tools. One of the most widely applied is Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

This approach proceeds through a number of steps, beginning with helping those affected gain awareness of what they’ve suffered and understand that trauma symptoms are reversible.

Psychologists teach coping strategies for adverse emotional reactions and attempt to correct for cognitive distortions - false beliefs that result from the trauma, like the idea that one is weak or at serious risk. The final stage aims to recreate the narrative of the trauma in a person’s mind.

“In a person suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, the traumatic event is still experienced,” said Dr. Fortu Benarroch, director of the clinic for pediatric traumatic stress at Hadassah. “It is not just a memory of something that happened in the past, but is something that they are experiencing and re-experiencing all the time. We want an internal process to be done in order that this experience will be encoded in a different way, in a way that will turn it into just another memory, just like any memory that we have of bad things that happened to us in the past.”

While children and adolescents directly connected to the Pittsburgh shooting may have suffered trauma most acutely, even children farther removed from the massacre may be traumatized, experts say.

Part of the professional response to a mass event like Pittsburgh is to reassure people that their feelings will subside in time. For young children especially, voices of adult reassurance are crucial because kids often pick up subtle messages from the media or close relations and ascribe meaning to those messages.

“Whether or not we talk to young children, young children try to give meaning to what they hear,” said Alicia Lieberman, a psychiatry professor at the University of California San Francisco and an expert in treating trauma in children. “And so it’s better for us to tell them, for example, ‘Mommy and daddy are upset because a very bad man hurt people and he shouldn’t have done that. And we are doing lots of things to keep everybody safe.’”

That kind of reassurance was one of the themes of the resource sheets prepared after Pittsburgh by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, a federally funded effort to improve standards of care for children who experience trauma. The sheets included advice for parents, caregivers, and mental health professionals about responding to grief and trauma, recognizing signs of deeper mental disturbance, and reassuring parents that things will get better.

“Having trouble sleeping, feeling sad, angry, confused, having trouble paying attention, feeling numb or jumpy, not being able to get your mind off it - those kinds of things are pretty typical reactions,” said Cohen, who is a member of the network. “In this early stage, those are expected. It will take time to get back to normal before it’s considered pathology.”

Ultimately, Cohen said, most kids are able to recover fairly quickly.

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Netanyahu’s Recent Visit to Brazil Marks the End of An Era of Strained Ties

By Marcus M Gilban

RIO DE JANEIRO (JTA) — Following years of diplomatic tensions, Israel and Brazil appear set to place their relationship on a new footing with Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu’s upcoming visit, the first for a sitting prime minister. Netanyahu was invited to attend incoming President Jair Bolsonaro’s inauguration on Jan. 1.

Netanyahu’s five-day visit, which was scheduled to start on Dec. 27, will mark the end of nearly 15 years of tensions between Jerusalem and Brasilia, which had reached a nadir in 2014, when a senior Israeli diplomat called Brazil a “diplomatic dwarf” in response to the Latin American country’s decision to recall its ambassador to protest Israel’s attack on Hamas during that summer’s Gaza war.

Brazil is “not just another country. It’s a country with nearly a quarter of a billion people, a superpower. And they’re changing their relations with Israel from one extreme to the other, including on the issue of Jerusalem,” Netanyahu told members of his ruling Likud party in the Knesset on Monday.

“This visit is unique, historical, a turnover in the relationship between Israel and Brazil. It’s a great start of year 2019,” Israeli Ambassador to Brazil Yossi Shelley, told JTA over the phone from Jerusalem on Sunday, where he attended a conference of ambassadors from Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Bolsonaro is a highly divisive figure among Brazilian Jews due to his ardently pro-Israel positions, on one hand, and history of racist and homophobic statements, on the other.

In November, his son was reported to have told Trump adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner that he would move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem, prompting enthusiastic praise from settlement activist Dani Dayan. Dayan was later assigned to the consulate in New York.

Netanyahu has worked hard to strengthen relations with many emergent figures on the nationalist right. Bolsonaro, sometime’s referred to as Brazil’s Trump, is an ultra-conservative populist who has praised his country’s former military dictatorship and, like Trump, threatened to use the power of the state against his political opponents.

Immediately after the election, Bolsonaro began to take steps to indicate his desire for closer relations with Jerusalem. Israeli Ambassador Shelley was the very first diplomat welcomed by the president-elect less than 24 hours after his electoral victory.

“Bolsonaro stood out among the many candidates for including the State of Israel in the major speeches he made during the campaign. He is a lover of the people and the State of Israel,” said Israel’s honorary consul in Rio, Osias Wurman, who also joined the private meeting.

In September 2017, Netanyahu spent several days in Latin America visiting Argentina, Colombia and Mexico but did not come to Brazil. When David Ben-Gurion traveled to Latin America’s biggest country in 1969, he was no longer Prime Minister.

Surprising to some is the fact that Netanyahu will not visit Sao Paulo, Brazil’s largest city and home to half of Brazil’s Jewish community. Brazil is home to a 120,000-strong Jewish community, half living in Sao Paulo. The embassy in Brasilia and the Sao Paulo consulate have been Israel’s only diplomatic institutions in Brazil since the Rio de Janeiro consulate was closed several years ago. Israel has honorary consuls in Rio and Belo Horizonte.

Brazil played a crucial role in the creation of the State of Israel. The late Brazilian diplomat Oswaldo Aranha presided over the U.N. General Assembly vote held on Nov. 29, 1947 and heavily lobbied for the majority in
A Lot of the Bread in the US Will No Longer Be Kosher

By Ben Sales

NEW YORK (JTA) — The largest baking company in the United States will be removing kosher certification from nearly all of its bread and rolls.

Bimbo Bakeries USA confirmed to JTA that it will be removing the certification. The company produces brands including Arnold, Sara Lee, Stroehmann, Freihofer’s and others. Two of its major brands, Entenmann’s and Thomas, will remain certified kosher. A couple of rye breads also will retain their certifications.

“Removing the kosher certification from some of our products was strictly a business-process decision to enable more efficient operations, and it was one we did not make lightly,” Bimbo said in a statement. “Thomas’ and Entenmann’s products as well as Arnold’s and Levy’s Rye Breads will remain kosher-certified. It is important to note that we have heard our consumers’ concerns and are working with kosher certification organizations and discussing alternative solutions.”

The company did not say when the decision will take effect, and the kosher certification agencies do not know, though they assume it will be sometime next year.

The decision will make it much harder for those outside major Jewish population centers to buy kosher bread, say executives at the Orthodox Union and Kof-K, the kosher agencies that certify the vast majority of Bimbo’s kosher products in the U.S. Rabbi Ari Senter, Kof-K’s kosher administrator, said the agency has received hundreds of concerned calls since the decision was first reported earlier this month.

“We’ve been hearing from a lot of consumers that they’re concerned about this,” said Rabbi Menachem Genack, the rabbinic administrator of the O.U.’s kosher division, the largest in the country. “If you live throughout the United States, it’s not always so easy to get kosher bread. In terms of kosher bread, Bimbo plays a critical role.”

Genack explained that the decision stems from a mix of corporate efficiency and obscure kosher laws: Bimbo wants the flexibility to produce its breads on the same factory lines as breads that contain dairy products. Because traditional Jewish law says meat and dairy products cannot be consumed at the same meal, breads for the kosher market must be strictly nondairy unless they appear and are marketed as obviously dairy - like cheese bread, says Senter.

“Thereir primary concern is one of flexibility within their plants, that they can produce it on other lines that are not necessarily designated for kosher,” Genack said. Both agencies are in ongoing conversation with Bimbo hoping to salvage some more kosher brands and clarify when the changes will take effect. Until then, most breads remain kosher certified.

Bimbo Bakeries USA is the U.S. division of Grupo Bimbo, the Mexican company that is the world’s largest bakery. The company, whose name is pronounced “Beem-bo” and is derived from the Italian word “bambino,” capped an aggressive move into the U.S. market with its 2011 acquisition of the Sara Lee Corp.

According to KosherFest, a large trade show of kosher foods, there are 1.3 million year-round Jewish consumers of kosher foods in the United States and 35 million non-Jewish consumers of kosher products. According to the Mintel market research firm, more than 40 percent of new foods launched in 2014 claimed to be kosher.

Brazil from page 20

favor of the resolution that partitioned the British Mandate of Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab. For his efforts, he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1948.

“Oswaldo Aranha is regarded by the Jewish people as the great craftsman of the fulfillment of our millennial dream of 2,000 years: the state of Israel,” Wurman told JTA last year during the celebration of Israel’s 70th anniversary.

In 2017, a record 700 Brazilian Jews moved to Israel, according to The Jewish Agency, most of them seeking a better quality of life, fleeing urban violence and impoverishment. That’s more than three times the annual average of about 200 new Brazilian immigrants and a 45-year record for the South American country.

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“I think the core message is: Your kids are going to be OK,” Cohen said. “It takes time. It’s very difficult, but your kids are resilient and so are you.”

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc., which is celebrating the 100th year of Hadassah Medical Organization, the Henrietta Szold Hadassah-Hebrew University School of Nursing and the Hadassah Ophthalmology Department. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team.
Community Celebrates Hanukkah

Akiva Academy students celebrated Hanukkah Dec. 6 at Congregation Rodef Sholom. The program theme was “Stronger Together.”

A community-wide Hanukkah celebration was held at Congregation Rodef Sholom Dec. 9. Nationally-renowned Jewish singer/songwriter Sheldon Low performed.

Heritage Manor held its annual Hanukkah party Dec. 4. Pictured from left to right are Shirley Kessler; Rabbi Frank Muller; Bobbie Berkowitz, activities director; and Erwin Schwartz.

Levy Garden’s annual Hanukkah party was Dec. 5. Pictured is Danny Mirkin.

“Our Gang” celebrated Hanukkah Dec. 3 at the Jewish Community Center! Hilari Lipkin played guitar.
New Dror Israel Program Will Allow Young Adults to Experience Living and Working in Israel

Research shows that young Jewish adults in the diaspora are distancing themselves more and more from Israel. A new program offered by Dror Israel aims to combat that.

The program will allow young adults aged 21 to 29 from all over the world to experience living and working in Israeli society.

Dror Israel is an educational movement working to effect meaningful, long-term educational and social change in Israeli society in order to promote solidarity, social activism, democracy and equality.

Participants in the Urban Kibbutz Social Change program will share a house in Haifa, and will take part in community projects and activities. Each week, they will spend a day hiking and touring the country, learning about local communities and the challenges facing Israel. They will also participate in regular educational and cultural/social meetings with a group of Israeli peers and learn Hebrew. Participants will work on various social projects, including a research fellowship, an internship at a human rights organization focused on combating genocide, a teaching fellowship, or an internship at an online news site.

The four-month pilot program will begin in February and include 10 to 20 participants. The cost is $7,500 per person and does not include airfare.

In the past decade, Dror Israel has established 16 educators’ kibbutzim in the social and geographic periphery of Israel. There are currently 1,500 young adults living in these kibbutzim, all in their 20s and 30s, who work daily in the organization’s educational, cultural and social activities with over 100,000 children, teens and adults.

For more information about Urbuan Kibbutz Social Change, contact Bria Gray, program coordinator, at briagray@gmail.com.

JCRC Social Action Committee Helps Local Family

The Jewish Community Relations Council social action committee regularly volunteers with Project MKC, but this holiday season they decided to do more.

Each month, committee members help repackaged diapers into specific quantities for the agency to distribute to their partner agencies. That’s how Samie Winick, chair of the social action committee learned of the Adopt A Family program.

Through this program, local businesses and families adopt a family chosen from a referral program through local schools’ guidance counselors and selected through a committee.

The committee adopted a family with five children, aged 1 ½ to 11 years old. The committee donated toys, books and clothes for the children, as well as a basket of food for the family. They also provided gift bags, tissue paper and wrapping paper.

Committee members wanted to share their good fortune with others, said Winick.

“Also, I think it’s just important as Jews and the idea of tikkun olam and repairing the world,” she added. “It’s good for us to participate in our community in any way that we can.”

This year, 115 businesses and families donated items to 358 children through the project.

Project MKC is “a small agency with a very large impact,” Winick said.

Project MKC, a nonprofit organization, provides diapers, clothing, toys and other necessities to kids and families through various programs.

History of Antisemitism to be Discussed

Torah Study for Christians, with Rev. George Balasko, will be held at 1 p.m. Jan. 16 at Villa Maria Education & Spirituality Center in Villa Maria, Pa. The topic of this session will be “History of Antisemitism.” It is co-sponsored by Jewish/Christian Studies and the B’nai B’rith Guardian of the Menorah.

A free will offering will be taken. Pre-registration is requested. To register, visit vmesc.org or call 330.964.8886.

Sam Kooperman Endowment

Applications for camp scholarships and study in Israel are being accepted.

The deadline to apply for camp scholarships is Dec. 31.

The deadline to apply for study in Israel scholarships is Dec. 31 & June 30.

For more information, contact Lisa Long at 330.746.3250 ext. 175 or llong@jewishyoungstown.org
7 of the Most Heartwarming Jewish Stories of 2018

By Josefin Dolsten

(JTA) — This year hasn't been an easy one. From shootings that claimed many innocent lives, including at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, to political turmoil in the United States and abroad, there have been many moments of sorrow.

But there were bright spots too. As 2018 comes to a close, JTA looked back at some of the heartwarming stories we reported on this year, from a group of German volunteers who are fixing Holocaust survivors’ houses to an Iranian refugee who raised money for Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue. Here are some of the highlights, sorted chronologically.

A 95-year-old Holocaust survivor teaches summer campers Yiddish

There’s one teacher at Camp Kinder Ring in Hopewell Junction, N.Y., who always keeps kids captivated with his stories: Mikhl Baran, a 95-year-old Holocaust survivor from Lithuania.

“I ask them to call me Mikhl,” Baran told JTA, noting that the name is the Yiddish form of Michael. “That’s already, in a sense, imbuing the idea that Yiddish is a great national treasure of the Jewish people.”

Camp Kinder Ring, started in 1927 by the Workmen’s Circle, was originally a Yiddish-language camp, but today the mamaloshen isn’t heard quite as often. That's why Baran's lessons — both about Yiddish and the world in which it was spoken — hold a special significance.

“I worry a great deal because my generation is passing already,” he said.

“It's almost gone. And we are the remnant. If we will not tell the story, who will?”

A Florida congressman’s kids use hamantaschen to help end gun violence

Gabby, Serena and Cole Deutch wanted to do something after 17 people were killed in February at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Since Purim was around the corner, the college-aged trio — whose father Ted Deutch is a Democratic congressman representing the district where the shooting took place - came up with the idea to bake and sell hamantaschen, the traditional pastry eaten during the holiday.

They started recruiting friends at campuses around the country to do the same and urged them to donate the proceeds to groups fighting gun violence as well as the families of the Parkland victims.

Gabby Deutch, a student at Yale University, said she was happy to make a difference.

“I was feeling disappointed by a lack of response, at least on Yale's campus,” she told JTA, “and a lot of people since this has become public have come up to me and really expressed gratitude that something is happening about it, which makes me feel like there are people who care about this issue.”

J.K. Rowling uses Twitter to fight anti-Semitism

The Harry Potter author, who is not Jewish, has taken it upon herself to fight Jew hatred online.

Amid debates about anti-Semitism in British politics in April, J.K. Rowling used Twitter to define the term for her 14-plus million Twitter followers.

“Most UK Jews in my timeline are currently having to field this kind of crap, so perhaps some of us non-Jews should start shouldering the burden,” she said in response to a user arguing that “Judaism is a religion not a race.”

“Antisemites think this is a clever argument, so tell us, do: were atheist Jews exempted from wearing the yellow star? #antisemitism,” Rowling continued.

But she didn't stop there. In August, she called out a fellow British writer on Twitter over his criticism of Jewish complaints about anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. And her latest book,

“Lethal White,” which came out in September, comments on the dangers of anti-Semitism by including a character whose obsessive anti-Zionism morphs into anti-Jewish hatred.

A German group renovates Holocaust survivors’ homes for free

The Saxon Friends of Israel brings volunteers from Germany to Israel to fix the houses of Holocaust survivors living there. The group’s efforts drew publicity in October when a rabbi met one of its volunteers on a flight and posted about it on Facebook. Rabbi Zalmen Wishedski described his meeting with a 54-year-old house builder named Roland who had been traveling to the Jewish state twice a year for around five years to help Holocaust survivors.

“I cannot change or repair the whole world, I cannot repair all my people did 70 years ago,” the rabbi recalled Roland telling him. “All I can do is painting. It's what I'm doing, bringing a little bit of good to the world.”

In a promotional video, one volunteer explains that both of his parents were avid Nazis and that he is the only one in his family who wants to “deal with the issue.”

10 American baseball players become Israeli citizens to help country make the Olympics

Ten American baseball players became Israeli citizens so they could play on the country’s national team in international competitions leading up to the 2020 Olympics. The Jewish athletes made aliyah in October. They want to represent Israel in 2020 in Tokyo. Some of the players also represented Israel in last year’s World Baseball Classic, where Team Israel shocked followers by reaching the quarterfinals.

“These players showed great enthusiasm for working in Israel to reach the Olympics in particular and to develop the game in Israel in general, and the players who played in the World Championship were exposed to Israel and saw how they can help the country become a force to be reckoned with in international baseball,” Israel Baseball Association President Peter Kurz told JTA.

“I would say I was a cross between nervous and determined to get these out,” Diamond told JTA. “Sometimes you just have to put your head down and do the work and worry about your feelings later.”

A rabbi saves 4 Torah scrolls from being burned in the California wildfires

At 3 o’clock in the morning, a neighbor roused Rabbi Barry Diamond from sleep to let him know that their Southern California neighborhood had been given a voluntary evacuation order due to the wildfires that were ravaging the state that November. About 20 minutes later, the rabbi arrived at Temple Adat Elohim, the Reform synagogue in Thousand Oaks where he works, to see fire surrounding the area by the building.

But that didn't deter Diamond, 56, from dashing into the synagogue to save his congregation’s holiest objects. He ran in twice, grabbing four Torah scrolls, one of which had survived the Holocaust, as well as the Book of Esther scroll traditionally read on Purim.

“I would say I was a cross between nervous and determined to get these out,” Diamond told JTA. “Sometimes you just have to put your head down and do the work and worry about your feelings later.”

An Iranian refugee raises over $1.2 million for the Pittsburgh synagogue

Khashayar “Shay” Khatiri was moved to action shortly after hearing about the shooting at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue that left 11 dead in October. So the Iran native and Washington D.C. resident, who is not Jewish, started a fundraiser through the GoFundMe website. Donations started pouring in, quickly reaching more than $1.2 million.

Khatiri, who is seeking political asylum due to his political activism against the Iranian government, says that he was happy to see people coming together to aid the synagogue.

“It was nice to see that people really cared and wanted to help the survivors,” he said.