

# JEWISH YOUNGSTOWN AREA JOURNAL

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L'Shana Tova!

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greetings and recipes.

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Area youth reflect  
on their time  
at this year's  
Maccabi Games.

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Scholarship  
deadlines are  
approaching.  
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WE STAND



WITH ISRAEL

## CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

September 12 ..... 7:18 p.m.  
September 19 ..... 7:06 p.m.  
September 22 ..... 7:01 p.m.  
September 23 ..... 7:58 p.m.\*  
September 26 ..... 6:54 p.m.  
October 1 ..... 6:46 p.m.  
October 3 ..... 6:43 p.m.  
October 6 ..... 6:38 p.m.  
October 7 ..... 7:35 p.m.\*

October 10 ..... 6:31 p.m.  
October 13 ..... 6:26 p.m.  
October 14 ..... 7:24 p.m.\*  
October 17 ..... 6:20 p.m.  
October 24 ..... 6:10 p.m.  
October 31 ..... 6:01 p.m.  
November 7 ..... 4:53 p.m.  
November 14 ..... 4:46 p.m.  
November 21 ..... 4:41 p.m.

\*Light from a preexisting flame

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## LISA'S LONG VIEW

### Reflecting on a memorable year

**A Message From Lisa Long**  
*Federation Chief Executive Officer*

Stepping into my new role as CEO of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation has been both humbling and inspiring. I am honored to have the privilege of leading an organization with such an extraordinary legacy and such a bright future.

In our most recent Annual Report we shared a line from the Talmud that has guided me in my work at the Federation and at home: "Whoever saves a life, it is as if they have saved an entire world." This isn't just a phrase, it is a call to action. During my time at the Federation, I have

seen that truth come alive, person by person, family by family, generation by generation.

This past year was one of real impact. At Heritage Manor, we sustained a strong census and financial health, while enhancing the quality of life for residents with new programs, equipment and a grief support group. Perhaps most touching were the intergenerational visits from our Early Learning Center children, because nothing says "community" like a three-year-old bonding with a

"great-grandparent."

At Levy Gardens, we worked hard to keep our tenants safe, comfortable and connected, creating not just a place to live, but a place to truly belong.

At the Jewish Community Center, the energy was palpable. We refreshed the Fitness Center, hosted record-breaking weeks at Camp JCC (289 children in one week!), expanded services with on-site therapy for our youngest learners and brought people together for holidays and celebrations.

At Jewish Family & Community Services, we continued to be a vital life-line, whether through counseling, senior outreach, financial assistance or simply showing up as a reminder that no one in our community is ever alone.

Across the Federation, we carried our voice into the wider world, advocating proudly for Israel, strengthening Holocaust education, combatting antisemitism in all forms and building bridges with schools, synagogues, and civic leaders.

In an especially exciting development,

we launched the capital campaign to expand Akiva Academy, which will welcome 190 students this fall, the highest enrollment in its history.

These accomplishments were made possible by our exceptional senior leadership team, a board that leads with wisdom and vision and the generosity of our donors and volunteers. Together, we didn't just function, we flourished.

As I look ahead, I see a Federation brimming with the opportunity to innovate, engage the next generation, strengthen our connections and expand our impact both locally and globally. We will keep the heart of our mission beating strong while also thinking boldly about the future.

To all who give of your time, resources, and passion...*todah rabah*. Thank you for believing in me, this community and our shared mission. I promise to bring my energy and whole heart to this role as we write the next chapter together.

May the coming year bring growth, good health, and peace here in the Mahoning and Shenango Valleys, and for the Jewish people everywhere.

envisioned Jewish day school was Sam Roth, who along with his co-chairs Monte Friedkin and Marvin Peskin, began the process, and in 1985 the Altschuler Akiva Academy opened for grades one and two on the second floor of the JCC.

By 1986, Akiva included grades kindergarten through third. In 1987, grade four was added, in 1988, grade five, in 1989 grade six, and in 2012 grades seven and eight. The school was named for Oscar Altschuler who was a founding member of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation.

The quick growth required expansion, and an Expansion Cabinet comprised of C. Kenneth Fibus, Aaron Grossman, Sam D. Roth, Victor Sperling, and Jerome Tamarkin was formed, followed by a Building Committee chaired by Martin Solomon. In 1989, it was announced enough money had been pledged to build the 10,000 square foot Akiva Academy which would house seven classrooms, a multipurpose room, a library, a teachers' work area, and an office. In 2012, the charter expanded again to add grades seven and eight.

Many changes have occurred in the



## NANCY'S NOTES

### Rooted in tradition, reaching for the future

**By Nancy Burnett**

"School days, school days, dear old golden rule days; reading and writing and 'rithmatic - taught to the tune of a hickory stick."

As the new school year begins for students throughout the area, my thoughts are with our Akiva Academy students — all 190 of them.

From humble beginnings, our school has blossomed forth into two separate entities — a kindergarten to fourth primary school and a grades five to eight middle school — all located on the expanded 19 acre Federation campus. What began as

a dream 40 years ago, is now becoming a reality as we prepare to open the Middle School doors this year to an ever-increasing student body. From these humble beginnings, many recognizable names appear — the Founding Fathers whose families continue to support Akiva Academy in its growth and success.

In 1979 following twelve years of research and lobbying, the Commission for Jewish Education was founded under the leadership of Abe Harshman and obtained a non-profit charter. The original capital campaign chair to raise funds for the

intervening years. Our enrollment has continued to increase and our reputation has flourished under the guidance of Principal Kathy Mioni who assumed leadership of Akiva in 2010 with 52 students enrolled in grades K-6. Every square inch of the school was being used, and again there was talk of the need for expansion. Solutions were sought, but it was when Allen Mirkin so generously donated to the Federation the former Allen's PharmaServ building that feasibility plans began to be studied in earnest. Now 40 years after the school first opened on the second floor of the JCC, we have 190 students and 25 staff celebrating the opening of a separate middle school for grades 5-8 with four new classrooms, a multipurpose room, and offices.

Where are those original students today? They are scattered across the globe with successful careers and fond memories. Many of those who returned to this area have now proudly enrolled their children at Akiva. With a strong Hebrew Judaic department and teachers from Israel, the students

*Nancy continued on page 42*

## ABOUT THE JOURNAL

**505 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, OH 44504-1314**  
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The Jewish Journal is a publication of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and has received major grants from the Schermer Trust, the Maurice and Florence Lipscher Charitable Trust, and ZOA.

November 5 is the deadline for articles and ads for the Hanukkah Issue. Submissions may be edited for length and/or clarity. The Jewish Journal does not assume the responsibility for the Kashruth of any product or service advertised on its pages.

The Jewish Journal is now accepting opinion columns. Send submissions to journal@jewishyoungstown.org as a Word document. Include name and contact information. Acceptance is at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for clarity.

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## Community members get 'first look' at Akiva expansion

Members of the community had a "first look" at the Altshuler Akiva Academy, Goldstone-Mirkin Family Middle School at the Suzi Solomon Campus in July.

"For those who joined us in March for the groundbreaking ceremony, you'll notice just how much progress has been made since that day," said Michael Barr, Youngstown Area Jewish Federation pres-

ident-elect.

Earlier this year, the Federation and Akiva Academy launched a 1.9 million dollar expansion campaign to build the new facility. The former Allen's PharmaServ building, donated to the Federation by Alan Mirkin, is being trans-

*First Look continued on page 42*



Members of the community had a "first look" at the Akiva expansion in July. Pictured from left are Michael Barr, Youngstown Area Jewish Federation president-elect; Christine Legow, and Elliott Legow.

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## Heritage Manor residents visit local gardens



Heritage Manor Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation residents recently visited Fellows Riverside Gardens in Mill Creek Park. The visit was initiated by Judy O'Driscoll. The group enjoyed walking around the gardens. Pictured is O'Driscoll.

## ADS clients enjoy swimming



Clients of Adult Day Services visited the JCC of Youngstown for swimming recently. One client, Frank Karcher, hadn't been swimming in 30 years. It felt wonderful, he noted. They plan to make it a regular activity. Pictured is Diana Magda.

## SENIOR LIVING by Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

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## Levy receives deficiency-free state survey



Levy Gardens Assisted Living received a deficiency-free survey from the Ohio Department of Health. A deficiency-free survey means Levy Gardens met all state and federal regulations and standards during an unannounced inspection, finding no shortcomings in care, services, safety, or environment. Staff celebrated in August. Pictured from left are Alisha Love, cook; Nicholas Hargate, director; Lori Reda, activities coordinator; and Aeiriel Hargate, LPN.

## Levy tenants catch up with former shliach



Marom Shmueli, former Youngstown Area Jewish Federation shliach, paid Levy Gardens Assisted Living tenants a Zoom visit recently. They enjoyed catching up with him.

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At Children of Israel, we are happy to share the good news that we have engaged Rabbi Menachem Berry to help lead the services at Children of Israel for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Rabbi Berry has joined Children of Israel on several special occasions in the past, and has shared his energy, joy and inspiring words with us on each of his visits.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS AT CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

### ROSH HASHANA SCHEDULE

**Monday, September 22 Eve of Rosh Hashana**

Evening Services 6:45 p.m.

Followed by Kiddush and meal at 8:30 p.m. All are welcome.

**Tuesday, September 23 First Day, Rosh Hashana**

Morning Services 9:00 a.m.

Pre-Shofar Kiddush at 11:15 a.m. First Sounding of the Shofar: 11:45 a.m. Kiddush and meal following final sounding of the Shofar at 1:45 p.m.

Tashlich (weather permitting): Walk together from Shul to the firehouse at 5:45 p.m.

**Tuesday, September 23, 6:45 p.m.**

Evening Services, Followed by Kiddush and Communal Meal at approximately 8:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 24 Second Day of Rosh Hashana**

Morning Services 9:00 a.m.

Light pre-Shofar Kiddush at 11:15 a.m. First sounding of the Shofar: 11:45 a.m. Kiddush and meal following final sounding of Shofar at 1:45 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 24, 6:45 p.m.**

Mincha, with Maariv, followed by Havdalah, 25 minutes after the conclusion of Rosh Hashana at 8:30 p.m.

**Thursday, September 25 is the Fast of Gedalia,**

which begins 72 minutes before sunrise and ends 41 minutes after sunset.

### YOM KIPPUR SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, October 1 Yom Kippur Eve, 6:00 p.m.**

Hattoras Nedorim (Annulment of Vows) and last refreshments before the fast.

6:30 p.m. Mincha

6:50 p.m. Kol Nidre, followed by Maariv (begin fasting by 7:01)

**Thursday, October 2 Yom Kippur Day,**

9:00 a.m. Morning Services and Torah Reading

11:45 a.m. Yizkor, Followed by Mussaf

5:45 p.m. Mincha/Afternoon Service

6:45 p.m. Ne'ilah (Followed by Shofar, Maariv, Kiddush Levana, Havdala and BREAK-FAST)

Time to end fast at home: 7:52 p.m. after Havdala (no flame or spices).

We will try to arrange hospitality for those seeking to be in close proximity to High Holiday services.

**Things to keep in mind for the Holidays regarding Candle Lighting:**

Monday, September 22, preferably by 7:01 p.m. (18 minutes before sunset or latest a minute before sunset)

Tuesday, September 23, after 8:07 p.m. (only by transferring from a fire source that remained lit from before the onset of Rosh Hashana)

Wednesday, October 1, 6:45 p.m. (latest: 7:01 p.m.)

**Wishing everyone a Shana Tova,  
a happy and sweet New Year!**

Want to support the Shul? Donate here!



## Rededication as renewal: a shared vision for the future of Jewish life in the valley

By Rabbi Courtney Berman and President Jason Bostocky, Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom



On the weekend of August 22 to 23, 2025, we had the extraordinary honor of rededicating our synagogue at 1119 Elm Street in Youngstown—a sacred space, built in 1914, that has been renewed in body and in spirit. After nearly a year of construction, our community gathered for Shabbat services and celebrations that marked not only the completion of physical renovations, but also a powerful moment of recommitment to the Jewish life we are building together in the Mahoning and Shenango Valleys.

There is a reading we sometimes open with on Friday nights that begins:

“We enter this sanctuary to welcome Shabbat. Within these walls, we sit surrounded by numberless generations.”

That sentiment has never felt truer. Our renewed building stands on a foundation laid by those who came before us—visionaries, builders, teachers, and families whose stories shaped each corner of this sanctuary. At every step of this renovation, we worked to honor their legacy, even as we made vital updates for security, accessibility, and spiritual vibrancy.

We are proud to say that what we've created is more than a renovated space. It is a renewed home for all. Our state-of-the-art adjustable *amud* (podium) is not simply a technical upgrade, but a theological declaration: All belong here. Every individual, regardless of physical ability, is entitled to stand before the Torah, to be seen, to be honored, and to lead. We believe this is what it means to live out the truth that every person is created *b'tzelem Elohim*—in the image of God.

The Torah portion we read on this reded-

ication Shabbat, *Re'eh*, offers us a challenge:

“Re'eh anochi noten lifneichem hayom bracha uklalah”—“See, I set before you today blessing and curse.”

It does not say “hear” or “read”—it says “see.” With clarity and intention. That call to see what is truly before us—to recognize both what we've inherited and what we must choose to build—guided this project from its first days.

Our building now includes a beautiful new elevator, modern social spaces, and a newly accessible outdoor gathering space—a literal and symbolic expansion of our welcome. But these improvements are not the end goal. Rather, they are the vessels through which community can thrive, where blessing is accessible, and where dignity is non-negotiable.

We want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude.

To the Securing Our Future Campaign Committee, led with extraordinary commitment by co-chairs Jason Bostocky and Booker Kessler: thank you for turning a dream into a reality. Your passion, persistence, and teamwork made this possible. We especially recognize our

Honorary Chairs—Pam and Sam Bernstine, Elliot Legow, and Sam A. Roth—as well as Marc Rubin, our dedicated building chair. Thank you to each committee member:

Doug Abbitello, Hannah Anderson, Mark Huberman, Cari Imberman, Tod Newman, Anita Shapiro, Bob Rawl, Samie Winick, and Alex Zoldan. Your efforts will be remembered in the very bricks and beams of this building.

We also thank our board of trustees and executive committee, whose wisdom and oversight guided every major decision. And we are deeply grateful to our Sisterhood and Brotherhood, who prepared our Rededication Shabbat dinner and Saturday lunch with the warmth and generosity that define our community.

A special and heartfelt thanks goes to our professional staff—Jenny, Lindsay, and others—and most especially to Sarah Wilschek, our executive director, who shepherded this project through every phase. From coordinating contractors to keeping

our programming vibrant during construction, Sarah's leadership was indispensable. As a token of our gratitude, the congregation presented her with a *tallit*. This traditional garment embraces the wearer just as she has embraced this community with care and devotion.

This moment of rededication also honors the larger story of who we are. Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom is the proud result of a successful merger between three historic communities: Temple Beth Israel of Sharon, Ohev Tzedek of Boardman, and Rodef Sholom of Youngstown. Each brought with it generations of memories, traditions, and values. The strength of our community today is proof of the wisdom and courage it

took to come together in unity and purpose.

We offer special thanks to the founding board of trustees, which ensured that the merger would lead not to compromise, but to growth. That merger—bold and forward-thinking—paved the way for everything we celebrated this weekend.

And so, on this holy Shabbat, we rededicated not only a building, but ourselves. To the work of Jewish life. To learning, to justice, to compassion, and to community. Let this space be a place where children learn to love Torah, where generations gather to pray, and where every soul is welcomed with dignity and joy.

May we continue, together, to go from strength to strength.

## OHEV BETH SHOLOM'S High Holidays | 2025 - 5786 Rosh Hashanah

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

Erev Rosh Hashanah Dinner | 5:30pm (RSVP required)  
Erev Rosh Hashanah Service | 8pm

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

\*\*Rosh Hashanah Children's Service | 9am  
\*\*Rosh Hashanah Morning Service | 10am  
Tashlich Service | 1pm (at Crandall Park)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

\*\*Rosh Hashanah Morning Service | 10am

### Cemetery Services

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

Ohev Tzedek Cemetery | 9am  
Tifereth Israel Cemetery | 10am  
Beth Israel Cemetery | 11am  
Rodef Sholom Cemetery | 11:30am  
Temple Israel Memorial Park Cemetery | 11:30am

### Yom Kippur

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2025

Kol Nidre Dinner | 5:30pm (RSVP required)  
Kol Nidre Service | 8pm

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025

\*\*Yom Kippur Children's Service | 9am  
\*\*Yom Kippur Morning Service | 10am  
Yizkor | 12:30pm  
Study Session | 1:15pm - 2:15pm  
Free Hour | 2:30pm - 3:30pm  
Afternoon Service through Neilah | 4pm - 6:15pm

Havdalah & Break Fast immediately following the conclusion of Neilah

Most services will have an online option

\*\*Babysitting available with RSVP

## From generation to generation: a rededication story from Youngstown, Ohio



**Sarah B. Wilschek**  
Congregation  
Ohev Beth Sholom  
Executive Director

our congregation embarked on an ambitious journey: to reimagine and rededicate our synagogue space at 1119 Elm Street in Youngstown, Ohio—not merely as a building, but as a sanctuary of belonging, accessibility, beauty, and continuity.

It began with a vision shared by our board of trustees and co-chairs, Booker Kessler and Jason Bostocky, alongside a team of dedicated professionals and volunteers. In 2023, our leadership team started exploring how to make our sacred space more inclusive, accessible, and dignified for all who enter—whether for a moment of prayer, a lifecycle event, or a community gathering.

But then came October 7.

In the wake of that horrific day, we paused our plans. Our hearts turned immediately toward supporting our extended Jewish family in Israel. It was only in early 2024 that we restarted conversations about our local sanctuary—with a renewed understanding of just how essential strong, rooted Jewish communities are.

We partnered with a former Youngstown architect, who brought our dreams to life with renderings that included an ADA-accessible covered entrance, reimagined lobbies, and an elevator large enough to accommodate every sacred occasion—including funerals. With feasibility confirmed by Strollo Architects, we launched our campaign at our 2024 Annual Meeting. Our goal: \$2 million and 100 percent participation. A daunting goal—but one that matched the size of our commitment to the future.

*"Take for Me an offering... from every person whose heart moves them, and let them build Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."*

—Exodus 25:2

These ancient words served as both anchor and aspiration as

The response? Incredible. From groundbreaking construction led by Murphy Construction and finishing work from Integra Construction, to details like custom wallpaper, elegant cabinetry, digital donor displays, and even a commissioned sculpture of our menorah logo by artist Tony Armeni—our congregation came alive with transformation. The final result: a renewed spiritual home that honors our legacy while building for tomorrow.

The beauty is in the details. From the Roth Atrium's soft seating designed by Megan Vickers and Soft Touch Furniture to the ADA lectern in our historic sanctuary crafted by AJ Silver, every choice reflects kavod—respect—and intention. Even the education hallway now echoes with playfulness and care, thanks to newly painted walls and joyful children's wallpaper.

This transformation wasn't just physical. It was spiritual and communal.

Donor recognition now lives throughout the building—not just on plaques, but in digital displays and archival exhibits that

*Youngstown continued on page 42*

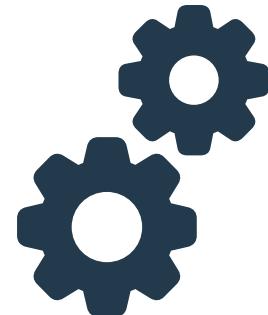


*Ohev Beth Sholom held a rededication following extensive renovations. Pictured from left are Executive Director Sarah Wilschek and Senior Rabbi, Rabbi Courtney Berman.*

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## Preparation is the key



Rabbi Seth Sternstein  
Temple El Emeth

rate, ascertaining that basic health care facilities are located nearby, packing a few changes of clothing, and other relevant activities, as well. Of course, the possibility of jumping in a car and simply leaving home for unknown destinations can also be a way of vacationing, but you're risking a lot. If it works out, great. But there are many ways such vacations can go wrong.

What's true of vacations is even more true of career. Most people try to plan out an educational path that will direct them toward a goal. Trying to become successful in any endeavor simply by trusting luck may work for a few people. But for the majority, it takes hard work, specific educational training, and dedication to a perceived goal. Over time, we develop an inner sense of what is required to be successful in our chosen profession.

That's also true of our inner spiritual lives. It takes hard work and dedication to move forward spiritually. That truth really hits home during the High Holidays. Extracting just a few minutes of spiritual uplift during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur can be difficult. Even rabbis have to work at it. Our tradition recognizes this difficulty and advises that, if you want to really feel spiritually connected, it's risky to arrive at the High Holidays without prior preparation.

That's why preparations for the *Yamim Noraim* begin 30 days before Rosh Hashanah. After every morning service (with the exception of Shabbat), we sound the *shofar*. The sound is designed

If you want to enjoy a nice vacation away from home, you probably need to make some preparations. There's choosing the right destination, reserving a good hotel, making certain your airline flights are accurate, ascertaining that basic health care facilities are located nearby, packing a few changes of clothing, and other relevant activities, as well. Of course, the possibility of jumping in a car and simply leaving home for unknown destinations can also be a way of vacationing, but you're risking a lot. If it works out, great. But there are many ways such vacations can go wrong.

There is another well-established practice of reciting certain prayers, called *selichot*, during this 30 day time period. While generally maintained in Sephardic communities, this practice can be adapted to Ashkenazic Jewish circles as well. There are books available to help prepare us for the "Days of Awe."

Here are just three suggestions:

"Meditations for the Days of Awe" by Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins

"Enter These Gates" by Alden Solovy

"This is Real and You Are Completely Unprepared: The Days of Awe as a Journey of Transformation" by Rabbi Allen Lew (z.l.) (By the way, Rabbi Lew, may his memory be a blessing, was a friend of mine, who combined principles of Zen Buddhism with Jewish practice. He had a fascinating personality.)

This is just a sampling of the books and resources available to help us prepare for the High Holidays. There are so many opportunities to use the waning days of summer to build up our spiritual resources for the new year. After two years of difficult times for Jews around the world, this Elul would be a good time to recharge our spiritual batteries. I know I need it. I'm guessing you do, as well. Feel free to contact me about your spiritual preparations for the new year. Maybe together, we can help each other experience a "spiritual high" that every Jew deserves.

Shanah Tovah from my home to yours.

## The Ohio State University MeshugaNotes

are coming to Temple El Emeth

Sunday, October 26, 2025 | 1:00 pm



# MESHUGANOTES

Founded in 1999, the MeshugaNotes were Ohio State's first a cappella group on campus. Affectionately known as the "Shugs," this energetic group has won over audiences around the region with its spirited performances. Their repertoire includes Israeli folk and popular songs, Yiddish tunes, OSU spirit songs, and contemporary English pop songs.

No charge to attend. Dessert reception to follow.

Advanced reservations are required.  
Call El Emeth at 330-759-1429.

## Cantor Mitchell Kowitz to serve as TEE High Holiday Cantor



Cantor Mitchell Kowitz will once again serve as Temple El Emeth's High Holiday Cantor this year. Cantor Kowitz comes to TEE from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and brings a wealth of cantorial, educational, and musical composition experience.

Cantor Kowitz received his bachelor's in music and composition from the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. He studied Bible, Talmud, and Cantillation at the Jewish Theological Seminary from 1983–1985. Cantor Kowitz was ordained in 1985 and is a member of the Cantors Assembly.

He most recently served as a Cantor at

Share Chesed Congregation in St. Louis Park, Minn., was the Cantor and teacher at Temple of Aaron in St. Paul for 25 years, and spent five years as Cantor at Congregation Beth Israel in Hammond, Ind.

Cantor Kowitz is a published composer and poet, and during his career has directed Bar and Bat Mitzvah training, written and produced original High Holiday music, performed cantorial concerts around the country and received awards in music composition. He has also sung with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and performed the National Anthem during the St. Paul Saints baseball games in 2015 and 2016.

## Guest speaker discusses Central Asian Bucharan Jews



Dr. Alanna Cooper discussed "The Bucharan Jews of Central Asia" at a Temple El Emeth program. Brunch was served prior to her talk. Cooper is the Abba Hillel Silver Chair of Jewish Studies at Case Western Reserve

University. She is an associate professor in the department of religious studies where she also serves as director of undergraduate studies. Pictured from left are Cooper and Rabbi Seth Sternstein.

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Craft Vendors Wanted | \$10 Per Space  
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## TEE holds annual musical service



Temple El Emeth held their annual Erev Shabbat musical service in July at the home of Sam and Terry Roth. Guests enjoyed an uplifting musical service with musicians Walt Mahovlich and Steven Greenman. They were treated to a delicious dinner by the Roths following the service. Pictured is Sam Roth (right) and Rabbi Seth Sternstein with the pictured musicians.

## Picnic held at TEE



Temple El Emeth recently held its annual Indoor/Outdoor Picnic. Pictured from left are Bill Laslo, Beth Finesilver, Alice Franklin, Doreen Spiegler, and Marsha Sternstein.

## Sisterhood bakes for Shabbat Kiddishes



El Emeth Sisterhood members gathered recently to bake for Kiddishes for Shabbat morning services. Pictured from left are (front) Jeannie Peskin, Diane Finesilver, Phyllis Friedman, Dorothy Schwebel, (back) Rochelle Miller, Susan Blecher, and Lisa Mirman. Missing from photo is Claudia Moss.

## HIGH HOLIDAY EVENTS AT TEMPLE EL EMETH

- Saturday, September 13**, Selichot program and service
- Monday, September 22**, Erev Rosh Hashanah Dinner and Musical Service
- Tuesday and Wednesday, September 23 and 24**, Rosh Hashanah services
- Sunday, September 28**, Tailgating Tashlich at Liberty Park
- Wednesday, October 1**, Kol Nidre dinner and service
- Thursday, October 2**, Yom Kippur service and Break the Fast
- Monday, October 6**, Adult Sukkah decorating with coffee and donuts
- Tuesday, October 7**, First day Sukkot services followed by BYOL (Bring your own dairy lunch) to eat in the Sukkah
- Wednesday, October 8**, Second day Sukkot services
- Tuesday, October 14**, Shimini Atzeret Services and Yizkor
- Tuesday, October 14**, Spaghetti dinner and Simchat Torah Celebration honoring Aaron Duval as Chatan Torah and Gregory Alper as Chatan Bereishet
- Wednesday, October 15**, Simchat Torah Services

Please call the Synagogue office for specific times and details of events and services. Security is present at all events and will check names of people attending at the entrance. Members and guests are asked to RSVP for all dinners and special events by calling the Synagogue at 330.759.1429.

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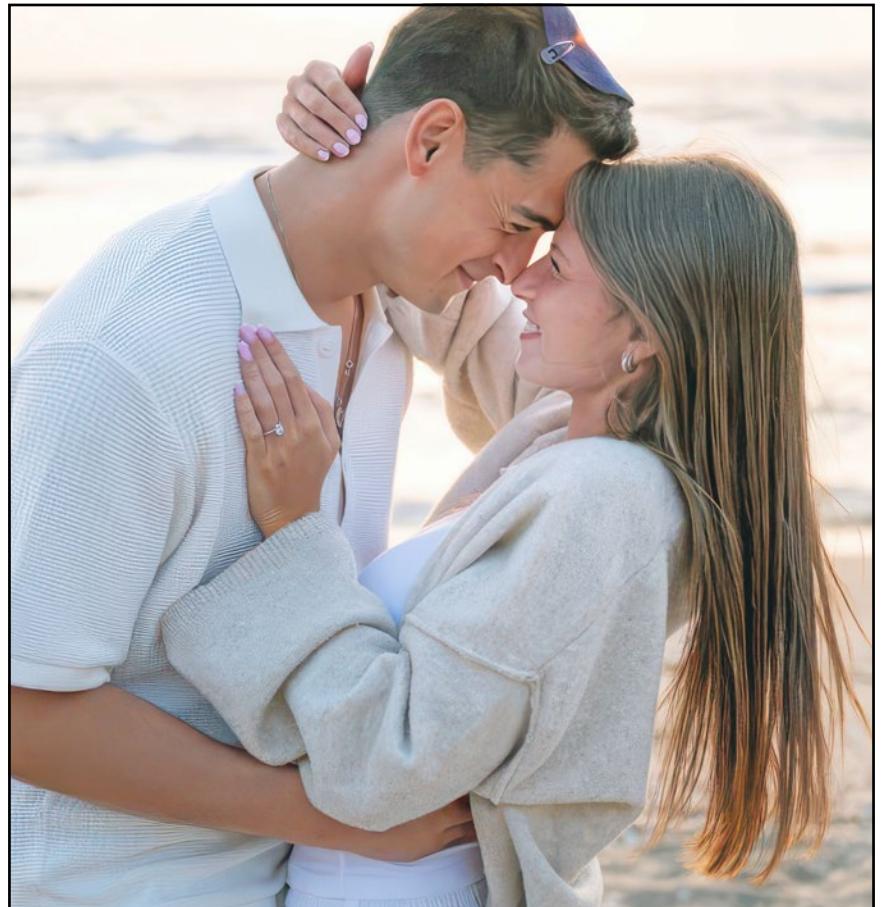
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## MAZEL TOV

Drew Samuelson and Rannanah Vorxman



Drew Samuelson and Rannanah Vorxman will be married Oct. 20, 2025 in Israel. Drew is the grandson of Claudia and Mel Moss. The couple resides in Israel.

## Maccabi Reflections

A group of seven young people from the greater Youngstown area traveled to Pittsburgh to participate in this year's Maccabi Games. They competed in basketball, soccer, and swimming. One acted as star reporter, recording the event though photos. Here are reflections on the experience from four participants.

### Blythe Hively

This was my third year at Maccabi and it did not disappoint. My past years at Maccabi were amazing as well, but this year might have been my favorite.

This year I felt more connected to the other teens around me and I felt the dorms had a big part in that. Maccabi overall is a Jewish enriching experience. I felt comfortable with my identity everywhere I went and there was not a minute where I felt judged by teens or any other people. Sometimes you would even have to stop and realize that everyone was Jewish. Everyone is different there, we all come from different parts of the worlds, different lives, but we all connect and become friends with one thing and that is being Jewish. No matter where you were from or what interests and views you had, everyone was still so supportive.

This year I walked out of Maccabi a more confident person and more comfortable with my identity than I have ever been in my life. One of my favorite moments from this Maccabi was on the last day when Team Ohio was gathered in the dorm hallways talking, listening to music, and chatting with the other teens around us because we all knew the next morning we would have to leave and say goodbye. In the past years, I had not really gotten to know the other Team Ohio members because we all had different sports and host families but this year we were in the dorms and I got to meet so many different people and connect to them on different levels. Maccabi will always be one of my favorite Jewish events because the experience is priceless and the people that I meet there never fail to make me smile.



Seven young people from the greater Youngstown area participated in this year's Maccabi Games. Pictured from left are Ivy Rawl, Tres Hively, Maddie Long, Blythe Hively, Antonio McNutt, Henry Long, and Thomas Rawl.

### Madeline Long

Maccabi not only gave me the opportunity to play soccer, but allowed me to be part of a tradition that connects me deeply to my Jewish identity.

The Maccabi Games have always been more than just a competition for me. They are a celebration of community, heritage, and pride. Walking onto the field surrounded by Jewish athletes from across the country—and even the world—reminds me that we share something special. We may come from different places, but we are all connected by our culture, history, and love for the games.

One of my favorite moments this year came during a close match when we were tied with just minutes left on the clock. The sun was setting, the stands were full of cheering families, and my teammates and I could feel the pressure. We pushed forward together, passing with perfect timing, and when the winning goal went in, the entire team rushed the field. It wasn't just about the win—it was the feeling of unity, pride, and joy we all shared in that moment. That's what Maccabi is about for me: playing

the sport I love while feeling connected to something bigger than myself.

Over the past years, I've made friendships and memories at Maccabi that I will carry with me for a lifetime, and this year was no different. Every game reminded me why I love being part of this incredible event.

Looking ahead, I'm already excited for next year's Maccabi Games. I can't wait to represent our community once again, grow as an athlete, and continue to strengthen my Jewish connection through sports.

### Henry Long

The 2025 JCC Maccabi Games was such a fun experience, just like last year. Even though I broke my foot in the second game, I was still able to play four games and my team ended up winning bronze in 3v3 basketball.

I was also awarded the yellow medal for the hostages still sadly being held hostage and was able to dedicate it to Alon Ohel who has been in captivity for over 670 days.

The atmosphere of Maccabi is so welcoming and inviting for young Jewish athletes who are trying to compete and make friends.

### Tres Hively

The 2025 Pittsburgh Maccabi experience was, without a doubt, one of the most memorable and impactful experiences of my year. This was my fourth year participating in the games, and each year has brought with it a unique sense of excitement, growth, and community. Returning to Maccabi feels like coming back to a second home, one filled with energy, support, and friendships that have lasted over the years.

Swimming, of course, was at the heart of my Maccabi experience. Each time I step onto the pool deck, I feel a sense of belonging that is hard to replicate anywhere else. The friendships I've developed over the years, strengthened each summer, have become a cornerstone of why I keep returning to Maccabi. Even when the meet is over or a race doesn't go exactly as planned, the support from my teammates and friends reminds me of the importance of community and mutual encouragement.

Beyond swimming, Maccabi provided countless opportunities for connection, growth, and joy. Participating in team events, social gatherings, and informal moments of laughter and conversation created memories that I will carry with me for a lifetime. I found myself constantly inspired by the sense of unity and shared purpose that permeates the entire Maccabi community. It is remarkable to be part of an organization where athletes, coaches, and volunteers come together to create an environment that is both challenging and nurturing. These experiences have not only strengthened my athletic abilities but have also shaped my perspective on leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Every year, as my time at Maccabi comes to an end, I find myself feeling a touch of homesickness, not for my physical home, but for the Maccabi experience itself. The friendships, the excitement of the competitions, the sense of being part of something larger than myself, all of these leave a lasting impression that lingers long after the games are over. The feeling of coming back, knowing that I will have the chance to return next year, brings a sense of belonging that is rare to find elsewhere.

Reflecting on my 2025 Maccabi experi-

*Maccabi continued on page 42*

## Pup provides support to hospital workers



Sweetie, named in honor of the Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, has officially been placed as a Crisis Care K-9 with Naples Comprehensive Health Hospital. Sweetie provides critical emotional support to hospital staff who work under intense pressure and

in high-stress environments every day. Her calming presence, gentle demeanor, and natural ability to sense emotional cues make her an incredible asset to the hospital team. The Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation has been a longtime annual supporter of this cause.

## Lippy Scholarship Fund applications due Oct. 26

The Youngstown Area Jewish Foundation is accepting applications for the Sandra Lippy Scholarship Fund for Young Adults. This scholarship fund was created in 1994 through gifts given in commemoration of Sandra Lippy's Bat Mitzvah. The fund assists teens, age 14 and older, in participating in the March of the Living, summer programs in Israel, and Jewish leadership camps/programs.

Jewish continuity and the communal experience is very important to Lippy, who herself studied at an ulpan in Israel. She hopes that this fund will help open the eyes and hearts of young people in the Valley and inspire them to step up to the plate and provide the leadership necessary to maintain a vibrant Jewish community. For an application, visit [yajfoundation.org/scholarships](http://yajfoundation.org/scholarships). The deadline to apply is Oct. 26.

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**Israel's Emergency Services System**

## Applications due Sep. 26 for the Christine Kraynak Memorial Scholarship Fund

Applications are being accepted for the Christine Kraynak Memorial Scholarship Fund. This scholarship is for individuals planning on or already attending Youngstown State University or Kent State University who are of Polish descent and/or able to demonstrate familial ties to the Holocaust (i.e., be a

descendant of a Survivor).

The award will be \$250 or five percent of the available funds, whichever is greater, and will be sent directly to the student's school. The deadline to apply is Sept. 26. Visit [yajfoundation/scholarships](http://yajfoundation/scholarships) for an application.



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## NAMI SEA: ART ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



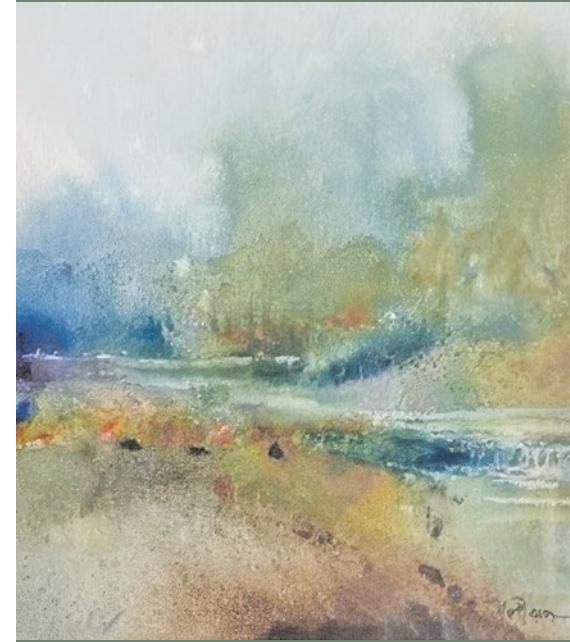
This exhibition explores how creative expression supports emotional healing and personal growth. Featuring heartfelt pet portraits with companion stories, reflective black-out poetry, and calming Zen Doodles, the show highlights how art can improve focus, reduce stress, foster emotional expression, encourage resilience, and build supportive community connections. Discover how creativity can be a powerful companion on the lifelong journey to recovery.

**Show Dates: September 26-October 5**

Don't miss the free **NAMI: Support Through Expressive Arts** workshop on mental health, wellness and healing | Tuesday, September 30 | 6:00 p.m. | 18+



## MAHONING VALLEY WATERCOLOR SOCIETY



Immerse yourself in the luminous world of the Mahoning Valley Watercolor Society, where regional artists, from ambitious newcomers to seasoned pros, capture the beauty of nature and everyday life through expressive watercolors that celebrate texture, light, and local inspiration in works inviting you to linger, reflect, and return for another look.

**Show Dates:**  
October 15-December 26

**Reception:**  
October 19 | 2:00-4:00 p.m.




**YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FEDERATION**  
**2025 JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL**  
in partnership with the YSU Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies

**"Guns & Moses"** Ages 18+

Mo Zaltzman, a Hasidic rabbi in a desert town, is shaken when his congregation is attacked. Police arrest a young white nationalist, but Mo doubts the boy's guilt. With no one else searching for answers, he steps into the role of detective. As bodies mount, Mo must master a gun and confront a terrifying choice: whether he can pull the trigger when lives are at stake, or whether his hesitation will cost everything. *A virtual Q & A with film director, author, influencer Salvador Litvak will follow the film.*

Monday, November 3 | 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.  
YSU Campus: CUSHWA HALL B112  
No charge to register. Donations welcome at the door.  
Register by October 31 at [jccyoungstown.org/filmfest](http://jccyoungstown.org/filmfest).

## Federation annual meeting held in August

The annual meeting of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation was held Aug. 20 at the JCC's Logan Campus. Included was a reception with music by Stellare Strings, a locally based string performance organization whose music at the event featured songs by famous Jewish artists.

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation voting membership (2024 campaign donors who are members of the Jewish community and were present in person or via Zoom) voted on the nominating committee's selections for the Youngstown Area Jewish Community Board.

Attorneys Michael Barr and Lee Burdman were elected to the Youngstown Area Jewish Community Board for terms ending in 2028.

Awards were presented to:

Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Service Award - Dr. Nancy Wagner

Abe Harshman Leadership Award - Howard Sniderman

Marvin & Sara Itts Community Service Award - Paul and Yetta Gluck

A new award, Ally of the Year, was presented to Pastor Juan Rivera.



Pictured from left are award winners Howard Sniderman, Dr. Nancy Wagner, Paul Gluck, Yetta Gluck, and Pastor Juan Rivera, with Mark Huberman, Youngstown Area Jewish Federation board president.



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## Wagner receives Esther Marks Volunteer Award

The Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Service Award is given in memory of Esther Marks to honor her dedication to service, tzedakah, justice, and righteousness, and to encourage others to follow in her example. The 2025 recipient of the Esther Marks Memorial Volunteer Service Award is Dr. Nancy Wagner.

Nancy began volunteering at an early age. "As a teen, I was president of my Temple youth group and have continued in that path as an adult, both in Jewish and secular roles, as part of committees and often in leadership. I feel it's my contribution to improve our communities and the world," said Nancy. She credits her family and the memory of her parents as her inspiration to improve our community. This included her career in the nursing field.

"As I moved along in my career as a nurse and a nursing professor and director at YSU, my students, their successes, and their impact on the health of our community were important to me. Different experiences in my role, including studying abroad in Mexico and Israel, were inspiring. And, in 2020, I led the creation of a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at YSU, providing the first vaccines to over 5,000 students, faculty, and their families," said Nancy.

Nancy retired in 2023 and continues to be involved at YSU in the role of Professor Emerita. Currently, she serves as the president of the Case Western Reserve University Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing Alumni Association in Cleveland, where she is a proud alumna of their doctoral program. "Our goal is to provide support to the current undergraduate and graduate students at the School of Nursing, including international travel, scholarships, and other needs," explained Nancy.

For the past six years, Nancy has served as

the chair of the Federation's Human Services Advisory Board. In that role, she is the lay leader overseeing Heritage Manor, Levy Gardens, and Jewish Family & Community Services. Through her role as chair, she is also a member of the Federation Board, Stanley Engel Fund, Mildred Engel Nurse Scholarship Fund, HR/Personnel, Budget, Capital, Organizational Evaluation and Planning, Levy Gardens, Senior Services Spirituality & Culture and JFCS Committees.

While there currently isn't an active chapter of Hadassah, she continues to work closely with the organization on the national and international levels on the Hadassah National Nurses Council and currently serves as the co-chair of the Hadassah Nurse Resource Committee to assist the Hadassah Henrietta Szold School of Nursing in Jerusalem with a long-term improvement plan.

Nancy gives this advice to anyone who is considering becoming a volunteer: "If sitting on a committee or board is not your interest, seek out other opportunities to make an impact. In addition to the Federation agencies, there are many opportunities in our community to provide service, especially to children and the elderly, or anything that you are passionate about. Even if you can only do a small act, it makes a big impact on others."

"As a volunteer and lay leader at the Federation, I continue to take pride in the services we offer to the Jewish and secular communities. Especially during the early COVID days, we collaboratively made very good decisions for the benefit of the residents, tenants, and clients. It was inspiring to be a part of those successes," said Nancy.

Nancy's hobbies include spending time with her husband, Barry, her children and grandchildren, and her cherished friends. She enjoys traveling and playing golf.

## Harshman Award highlights Sniderman's leadership

Howard Sniderman is this year's recipient of the Abe Harshman Leadership Award, which is given annually to recognize an individual's leadership and service to the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation and its agencies.

Born and raised in Youngstown, Howard graduated from the Rayen High School. He returned to the area after attending two years at Ohio State and began working in the family business, Steel City Milling Co.

His volunteer experience began as a basketball coach at the Jewish Community Center, coaching 10-and 11-year-old boys.

Irv Marks sparked Howard's interest in the JCC, and soon he was serving on the JCC board, as well as the Temple El Emeth board. He served on both boards for close to 50 years.

Howard was an assistant chef at Children of Israel, making breakfast every Sunday and chili once a year for their fundraiser. Next to Mervyn Hollander, he was the top sales person, peddling the chili as he was pedaling his bike at the JCC. By the way, he is still peddling his bike at the J every day — same time every day!

For years he helped place flags on the graves of Jewish veterans. Then one day he was asked to be the Jewish War Vets representative for Mahoning County. He was now responsible for retrieving and delivering over 500 flags to area synagogues. Volunteers from each synagogue then assisted him in distributing the flags to the cemeteries and decorating the appropriate gravesite. Howard held this role for 25 years, relinquishing it to

Art Einzig with the founding of the Youngstown Area Jewish Cemeteries Association. He said this was a highlight of his volunteer career.

Howard was a regular at Heritage Manor, assisting his wife, Linda, with the biography project and delivering flowers from the flower cart one Saturday a month. He could also be found flipping something on the grill or singing karaoke at Levy Gardens when Ronna Marlin, then activities coordinator, would call.

Howard didn't limit his volunteering to Jewish organizations and Federation agencies. In the mid 1980s he helped establish the Challenger Baseball League. He took great pride in giving the mentally and physically challenged an opportunity to participate in a team sport. This experience and connection with these young adults and their parents was one of the highlights of his volunteerism. He also volunteered at the Special Olympics in Columbus.

Howard volunteered once a week at Second Harvest Food Bank, tutored first and second graders at E.J. Blott Elementary School, and presently helps out once a month at Church Hill United Methodist Church in Liberty. Howard and his friend, Bert Newman, delivered Mobile Meals twice a month for many, many years through sleet and snow and rain and shine. They just retired, at their wives' request.

Howard Sniderman says he's always considered himself a soldier rather than a general. As you can see, his volunteer activities clearly show he was a general when the need arose.

## Pastor Juan Rivera recognized as Ally of the Year

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is pleased to announce that our good friend, Pastor Juan Rivera, lead Pastor of Victory Church in Lowellville, will be the initial recipient of the newly-established JCRC Ally of the Year award. The Ally of the Year will be an annual recognition that honors an individual or organization outside the Jewish community for their dedication to combating antisemitism and/or anti-Israel sentiment. Award recipients must be engaged with the Federation and/or its agencies or affiliated organizations within the broader Jewish community and/or Israel.

If you ask Pastor Juan about the origin story of his involvement with the Jewish community, it can start in two different ways. In his early childhood, growing up in a Christian home, the Jewish Bible characters were his constant companions. "I grew up in a Christian home where the Bible meant everything to us," said Juan, "My earliest spiritual heroes were Jewish—Abraham, Moses, Esther,

Ruth, David. I never saw them as distant historical figures; they were models of faith who shaped my worldview from a young age."

He also recalled a pivotal high school trip to Normandy, France, where his show choir performed for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. "Before the trip, we had Holocaust education. A Survivor came to speak with us to help us understand the context of the war and the significance of D-Day. "Schindler's List" had just come out, so we watched that, too. The experience opened my eyes to the very real, not-so-distant plight of the Jewish people during the Holocaust."

Pastor Juan and his wife, Deidre, became connected with the Federation and the Youngstown Jewish community about 15 years ago after taking their first trip to Israel. "That first trip to Israel was deeply significant," recalled Juan. "It was spiritual—almost esoteric—but hard to explain. In some ways, it was simple. Standing on the land, eating the food, breathing the air, meeting people.

It grounded what had always felt like an ancient, longed-for place in the reality of a modern nation and people. In Genesis, God tells Abraham, 'Those who bless you, I will bless.' We came back asking, how do we live that out? How can we be a blessing? One way, we thought, was through financial support. We wanted to build a bridge to the Jewish community, to say, we're here. We see you. It may sound strange, but we love you. But when we came back and looked for that bridge, we couldn't find one."

Juan began by donating money to Temple El Emeth and attending Federation events to get to know the community. He then became involved with advocating for Israel and creating bridges with Jewish communities through the Evangelical Christian space. He said that October 7, 2023, and the continuing crisis in Israel have been pivotal for him as he has enhanced his activism and commitment to education against antisemitism. He continues to lead trips to Israel with members of his

congregation, other pastors, and in conjunction with the JCRC. He has also brought 10/7 Survivors to speak at this church and participated in many JCRC programs. He has a dream to create the framework for other communities to create interfaith partnerships.

In addition to serving as the lead Pastor of Victory Church, Pastor Juan is a commissioner on the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs, and is a member of the executive board of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, where he was recently named as national President of the Conference's Hispanic Israel Leadership Coalition. In this role, Juan will oversee strategic partnerships, national initiatives, and public advocacy efforts to position the Hispanic church as a powerful ally to Israel and a bulwark against antisemitism.

Juan has been married for 28 years to Deidre, and is the proud father of Denise (Justis), Olivia, and Hadassah, and overjoyed grandfather to new baby boy Roman.

## *Best Wishes for a Happy New Year!*



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## *Made Fresh Daily At Each Location!*

## Glucks honored with Itts Award

On the lower level of the JCC is the Paul and Yetta Gluck School of Visual Arts. SoVA, which provides a space for classes for all ages that foster creativity, personal growth, and community through hands-on learning, was made possible through the generosity of the Glucks.

And for that reason, they are this year's recipients of the Marvin and Sara Itts Award. This award is given to a person or persons or an organization that made a noteworthy contribution of constructive value to the social, educational, civic or philanthropic betterment of the community.

Paul and Yetta wanted to do something meaningful for the community. After talking with then CEO Andrew Lipkin, and then Financial Resource Development Director, now CEO Lisa Long, they realized the JCC had dance and music programs but no visual arts programs. That's what was missing, Yetta said, and that's the direction they wanted to go. They wanted something that would impact the community in a positive way, and they feel SoVA does.

SoVA sees many people — from toddlers to seniors — benefitting from the wide variety of art classes available. Classes cover collage, watercolor painting, ceramics, and more. Open Studio is held weekly, for individuals to explore their creativity. SoVA teachers provide art classes for the Early Learning Center at the JCC, Camp JCC, and the afterschool JCare program. They also work with

Senior Living by Youngstown Area Jewish Federation participants, as well as community groups such as Camp FRIEND and the Fairhaven Foundation.

Working with so many individuals with a variety of abilities showed the need for a more inclusive space. To that end, SoVA will undergo a renovation, funded by the Glucks, later this year.

Currently, high tables and stools are being used in SoVA. A wheelchair accessible table will be added and the floor plan will be changed to be more user-friendly for those using canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. Stools with backs will also be added, as well as adaptable tools. No matter a person's ability or mobility, they will be able to participate in art classes.

"They are so supportive of all of the ideas we come to them with, especially when it involves teaching art to underserved populations. They love the idea of everyone being an artist," said Barbara Wilson, JCC Director of Cultural Arts & Jewish Engagement.

Paul and Yetta agree it's wonderful to be recognized with the Itts award, noting it's a good feeling. But that's not why they help and donate. They've worked hard and been successful, and their children were connected to the JCC, so they want to give back. And they hope when others see such an acknowledgement it gives them ideas of things they can do.

Yetta feels there are a lot of people out there that could do it and would do it if they just got the idea.

*Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!*

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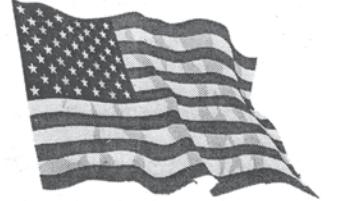
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YOUNGSTOWN AREA  
JEWISH FEDERATION  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

## FINANCIAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**\$1,728,298** in grant funding was received from August 2024 to June 2025 for the Federation and its agencies.

More than **176 donors** raised **\$511,377** for JFNA's Israel Emergency Campaign.

Three new funds were created within the Youngstown Area Jewish Foundation, totaling more than **\$134,702** in new funds invested.



Our 2023 Annual Campaign was a resounding success, raising

# \$1,300,279

This achievement was made possible by the unwavering support of more than **372 donors** who support our mission and vision.

The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, along with **Akiva Academy**, broke ground on a new middle school (5th-8th grades). The **\$1.9 million expansion** includes four classrooms, office spaces, and a multipurpose area designed for Shabbat services. In the next five years, this project will allow Akiva Academy to double its current student enrollment.

## JMEALS

JMeals, a partnership between JFCS and JCC, provides weekly meals in Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana counties to **more than 650 homebound individuals** who have limited resources.



*An older adult receiving our weekly nutritious meals also enjoys regular wellness check calls from our team throughout the week. These calls have become a meaningful part of her daily routine, offering her a **trusted connection** to our meals associate, whom she looks forward to speaking with. Like many of our clients, she shares a sense of **comfort and companionship** knowing that someone is checking in, listening, and caring.*

**JMEALS** 

## JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

After attending the Holocaust speaker event, one teacher shared that the impact of the Survivor's story was profound, saying **students were completely engaged** throughout her presentation. In the days that followed, the classroom became a space for **powerful conversations about equality, tolerance, and resilience**. Most importantly, her students grasped the vital role they play in carrying these stories forward so that history is neither forgotten nor repeated.

In response to rising antisemitic threats and broader security concerns, we **strengthened collaboration with local and federal law enforcement** to enhance the safety and resilience of our community.

**More than 1,200 students** from 15 school districts heard firsthand from a Holocaust survivor.

**Four additional teachers attended the CWB Poland Seminar**, bringing the local total to 15 educators who have participated in the program.

JCRC sponsored a bus trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the Nova Music Festival traveling exhibit, **bringing together Jews and non-Jews** to learn more about the massacre.

**JCRC**  
JEWISH  
COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS COUNCIL



## JEWISH FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES



JFCS facilitated multiple 10-week **Survivors of Suicide Support Group** in partnership with the Mahoning County Mental Health & Recovery Board, providing vital mental health support for those coping with loss.

Through our Aging Well programs, JFCS reached more than **125 older adults**, offering education and connection to help combat isolation.

Through JFCS Aging Well Grants, Ms. Evelyn received an Echo Dot from one of our senior outreach workers. Living alone and rarely seeing family, **she quickly embraced the technology**—making voice calls to her children, reconnecting with old friends, and joining daily trivia games that keep her mind active. The device became a regular part of her routine, playing her favorite music in the mornings and reminding her to take medications throughout the day. These grants were sponsored in partnership with Direction Home of Eastern Ohio and the Trumbull & Mahoning County Board of Mental Health & Recovery.

**JFCS**  
JEWISH FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

## JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF YOUNGSTOWN

The Fitness Center was renovated and now features brand new, **state-of-the-art** cardio machines, circuit equipment, and fresh flooring.



Camp JCC had more campers than ever. **289 kids** participated in week four alone.

The JCare after-school program **grew by 27%**, and J All Day **increased by 18%**, providing safe, educational spaces for students after school, on holidays, and during inclement weather closures.

Families are benefitting from our **partnership with TheraPeds**, who provides a Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist at our ELC, as well as other outside resources. Family engagement opportunities have brought our JCC community together.



**Over 50 people attended the Latke Lunch** held by the Cultural Arts & Jewish Engagement department. Other community Jewish holiday programming was offered for Passover, Tu B'Shevat, and Shavuot. Mitzvah-based Jewish Learning is being integrated into the ELC curriculum and Shabbat celebrations enhanced by our J.E Staff.



*A YSU football player could have trained on campus, but he valued the JCC's top-notch equipment and its more "exclusive" atmosphere. After three years of workouts at the J while playing for the Penguins, he reached a major career milestone, signing with the New York Giants as an undrafted free agent.*



## SENIOR LIVING

### BY YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FEDERATION

#### HERITAGE MANOR SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

Heritage Manor celebrated its **60th anniversary**, a milestone marking six decades of compassionate care and service to our community.

We launched a **Spirituality and Culture Committee** to ensure that we remain mission forward in all that we do.

*Forty-seven people gathered for a **community Shabbat** in the Schwebel Family Chapel. The service brought together members of local congregations, residents and tenants of Heritage Manor and Levy Gardens, and their families and friends.*



#### LEVY GARDENS ASSISTED LIVING



Levy Gardens began a multi-year plan to renovate apartments with new, modern furnishings, ensuring the comfort and safety of our tenants.

Our “Better Together” intergenerational program with students from Akiva Academy continued to be a great success, fostering meaningful bonds between generations.

*A new tenant was hesitant to move in. She'd recently lost her best friend and it was her first move alone since her husband's passing. She says she doesn't know where she'd be without the **love, care, and support** from our staff. She is thankful she came here and that we have become her family.*



## ADULT DAY SERVICES AT HERITAGE MANOR



Adult Day Services acquired a **new transportation bus** through grant funding, making it easier for residents to access appointments and community events.

Over the past year, we experienced **record-breaking participation.**

We partnered with community providers like the Kikel Dental Van and Sight for All United **to bring ancillary health care services directly to our residents.** This initiative decreases the burden on caregivers and ensures loved ones receive the care they need with ease.

*A husband found it necessary to leave his job to care for his wife after she suffered multiple strokes. Without income, they faced foreclosure on their home. Direction Home of Eastern Ohio referred him to us, and he enrolled his wife in our program, allowing him to return to work and **regain financial stability.***



**ADULT DAY SERVICES**  
AT HERITAGE MANOR

# ANNUAL CAMPAIGN FOR JEWISH NEEDS

### TOTAL ALLOCATIONS

We Were Able To Distribute in 2024

Local Causes	National Causes	Overseas Causes
\$2,162,619	\$76,950	\$190,369

# \$2,429,938

### 2023 CAMPAIGN | TOGETHER WE RAISED

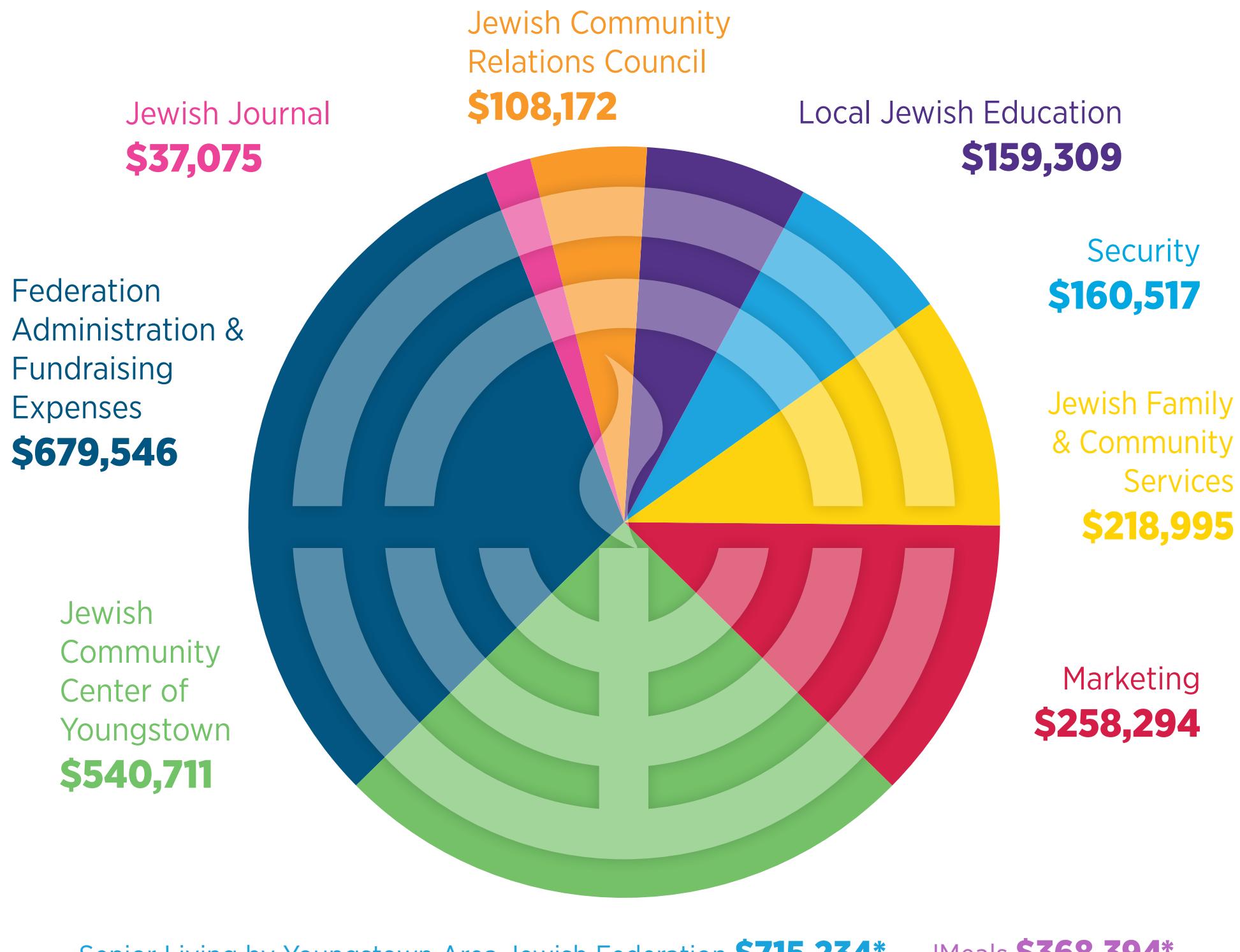
# \$1,300,279

### ENDOWMENT & RESERVE ALLOCATIONS

# \$46,031

### AGENCIES WITH SURPLUSES Senior Services & JMeals

# \$1,083,628

**LOCAL AGENCY & DEPARTMENT ALLOCATIONS** Total: \$2,162,619

\*Represents Surplus from Operations for Local Allocations



## A CLOSING LETTER FROM MARK HUBERMAN

In the Talmud, we are reminded: "Whoever saves a life, it is as if they have saved an entire world." That's not just a metaphor. For those of us privileged to serve this community this past year, it's been a daily call to action and a humbling reminder of the impact our work has, person by person, family by family, generation by generation.

As president of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, I am proud to report that this has been a year of real, measurable achievement, not just in intention, but in action. I've had the unique privilege of witnessing firsthand how each of our agencies not only fulfilled its mission, but innovated in ways that set a standard for Jewish communities across the country.

In leadership, success is rarely the work of one person. It's the result of people working together with shared values, clear goals, and mutual respect. That's what I've witnessed this year across the Federation.

Thanks to the exceptional teamwork of our staff, the dedication of our Board, and the generous support of our donors, this has been a banner year. What we've accomplished, in a community of our size, is nothing short of remarkable.

Our Federation didn't just function; it flourished.

At Heritage Manor, our strong census and financial performance were a testament to our reputation. Our private-room model and dedicated staffing philosophy put our residents first. We continued to set the highest standard for quality and compassion. We launched a Grief Support Group to help us not just care for our residents' medical needs, but also their emotional wellness. We invested in new equipment to improve clinical care and resident comfort. Residents were overjoyed when the youngest ones on our campus were heard in the

halls, as our Early Learning Center kids visited, building intergenerational bonds and reinforcing that the Federation truly serves everyone in our community, from baby to bubbe.

At Levy Gardens we continued to provide a warm, respectful, and engaging environment. We enhanced our security measures to ensure our tenants felt safe at home, while continuing to offer personalized, compassionate care. Every day we strove to enrich our tenant's lives, keeping them connected, active, and joyful.

The JCC continued to serve as the heart of our Jewish and general community, a place where lives were enriched, bodies were strengthened, and Jewish identity was nurtured from the earliest age. "Traffic" was up in the building, along with the spirit! The summer was fun... and a noisy one on our campus with a record 289 kids at Camp JCC in a single week, our highest enrollment ever! A major refresh was completed for the Fitness Center, including the addition of new equipment. In the Early Learning Center, on-site speech and occupational therapy is now offered, a major early intervention step. And, did you miss our Latke Lunch? Over 50 people showed up to celebrate Hanukkah with us... as well as joining in for meaningful celebrations of Tu B'Shevat, Passover, and Shavuot. This was not just programming. This was peoplehood in action.

At Jewish Family & Community Services, we continued to be a lifeline to our community, whether that meant senior outreach, financial assistance or just a friendly visit to someone in need of some kindness. Our confidential counseling, guardianship program, and case management continued to be rooted in dignity and care.

Our Federation continued to advocate proudly for Israel, educating on the

Holocaust through teacher support and community programming and combatting antisemitism in all its forms. This year we deepened partnerships with schools, synagogues, and civic leaders, ensuring the Jewish voice remains strong, informed, and respected.

The end of the year brought the commitment to enhance Hebrew and Judaic education as we began the capital project and campaign to expand Akiva Academy. Close to 190 students are set to start school on our expanded campus this year, the highest enrollment we've had in the school's history.

I could say the facts speak for themselves, but I'll say this instead: We did something truly special here. If I can draw upon my decades of experience as an attorney, I can tell you that evidence matters. And the evidence is that the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation delivered impact, care, and leadership in ways that were both broad in reach and deeply personal in effect.

These achievements, across agencies, across age groups, across our region, were only possible because of you.

In a world that often feels chaotic, our Federation remained clear in its purpose: to serve, support and sustain Jewish life in the Mahoning and Shenango Valleys.

But we didn't do this work alone. To our volunteers, staff, donors, board members, and staff — todah rabah!

May the coming year bring continued growth, good health, and peace for our community and the Jewish people everywhere.



## RESTRICTED FEDERATION AND AGENCY FUNDS

### YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FEDERATION

Oscar H. Altshuler Israel Youth Scholarship Fund  
 Rabbi Dr. Sidney M. Berkowitz and Harrison Berkowitz, his father, Memorial Fund  
 Barbara S. Drabkin, MD Endowment Fund—In Memory of her Mother, Rose H. Drabkin  
 Elder Family Endowment  
 Stanley Engel Memorial Fund to Benefit People  
 Sara & Marvin Itts Endowment Fund  
 Sam Kooperman Endowment Fund  
 Susan Kooperman Memorial Fund  
 Christine Kraynak Memorial Scholarship Fund  
 William & Dorothy Lackey Scholarship Fund  
 Joseph Levy Endowment  
 Sandra Lippy Scholarship Fund for Young Adults  
 Esther Marks Volunteer Service Award  
 Estelle Ortman Endowment Fund  
 David & Benita Penner Endowment  
 The Penner Family Endowment  
 Dr. Ernst & Sally Rose Endowment  
 E. Segall Youth Scholarship Fund  
 Howard Segall Endowment Fund  
 Jere David & Deborah Schwartz Lustig Designated Endowment Fund  
 Mannie Sherman Youth Scholarship Fund  
 Thomases Family Endowment  
 Thomases Leadership Endowment Fund  
 Youngstown Area Jewish Federation General Endowment  
 Bert Zusman Scholarships

### HERITAGE MANOR

Aged Care Endowment Fund  
 Mildred Engel Nurse Scholarship Endowment Fund  
 Heritage Manor Endowment Fund  
 Evelyn Heyman Endowment Fund  
 Home for the Aged Building Fund  
 HS Endowment Fund-Elderly  
 Bess Joseph Endowment Fund  
 Florence Kaufman Endowment Fund  
 Gary & Ellen Weiss Employee Emergency Fund

### JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

Barbara & David Alter Preschool Scholarship Fund  
 Oscar H. Altshuler Cultural Endowment Fund  
 Leon & Cecil Gelbman Memorial Endowment Fund  
 Paul & Yetta Gluck Visual Arts Endowment  
 Ruth Hollander Cultural Arts Endowment Fund  
 Daniel Lewis Early Childhood Endowment Fund  
 Jewish Community Center Endowment Fund  
 Helen Moyer Endowment Fund for Cultural Arts  
 Irv & Bea Ozer Memorial Fund  
 Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Endowment Fund

### JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Bill Vegh Memorial Holocaust Projects Fund

### JEWISH FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

B. Richard Burdman Family Endowment Fund  
 Helping Hand Fund  
 Louis & Sylvia Rosenblum Memorial Endowment Fund  
 Alvin Weisberg JFS Discretionary Fund

## PERPETUAL ANNUAL CAMPAIGN ENDOWMENTS

Anonymous  
 Bernard & Bernice M. Bloch  
 Louis & Helen Bloomberg  
 Marsha Burdman  
 Benjamin Edner & Florence Edner Kaufman  
 Cecile "Pinky" Ehrlich  
 Evelyn Felsenthal  
 M. Murray & Selma Fibus Memorial  
 Friedl Fisher  
 Morris I. & Phyllis J. Friedman Foundation  
 Vera Friedman  
 Abe Harshman Memorial Fund  
 Anita Lavine  
 Dr. David Levy  
 Harold & Marcy Libby  
 Irwin & Esther Marks  
 Myron & Alice Nadler  
 Dr. Ernst & Sally Rose  
 Mannie & Ethel Sherman  
 Ethel & Nate Sieman  
 Adeline Sniderman Family  
 Frances Schwebel Solomon  
 Irving Venger  
 Richard & Lois Werner Family  
 William Wolfort Memorial  
 Irwin Stovroff & Susan Strella

## LIVING LEGACY

Jeanne Fibus LOJE Endowment  
 Sandra Lippy Endowment  
 James & Roberta Pazol Endowment  
 Sam & Judy Roth PACE/LOJE

## CHARITABLE TRUST

Anonymous (3)  
 Louis & Marlene Epstein Charitable Remainder Unitrust

## CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

Anonymous (3)

## LION OF JUDAH ENDOWMENTS

Phyllis J. Friedman  
 Benita Penner

## PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS

Bonnie & Lee Burdman Family  
 Broida Family Foundation  
 Gary & Sherri Clayman  
 Janie B. Cowell  
 Dora & Leo Family Fund  
 Stacy & Richard Eastern  
 Dr. Milton E. & Frances Greenberg Memorial  
 Florence Harshman  
 Long Family Fund  
 Richard & Ronna Marlin  
 Lori & Alan Mirkin  
 Sam A. & Judy Roth  
 Sam D. & Terry Roth  
 Scharf Family  
 Neil & Harriet Schor Family Fund  
 Schwebel  
 Sabrina & Sam Shapiro Family Fund  
 Carol & Bruce Sherman  
 Morris & Esther Simon Family  
 Suzi Solomon Memorial  
 Torem Family  
 Stephen & Wendy Weiss Fund  
 Benjamin White  
 Bert Zusman  
 Cari Margulis Immerman Fund

## JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF YOUNGSTOWN UPCOMING EVENTS



### ROSH HASHANAH APPLES AND HONEY

*Rosh Hashanah is a celebration of the Jewish New Year. It's the first of the High Holidays, a 10 day period that ends with Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Celebrate with us by enjoying complimentary apples and honey!* | Monday, September 22

### CULTURAL ARTS & JEWISH ENGAGEMENT (CAJE)

#### VETERAN'S BREAKFAST CLUB (AGES 18+)

*The Berlin Airlift* | Wednesday, September 10

*Operation Pastorius: The Nazi Plan to Blow Up America* | Wednesday, November 12

#### GROOVE WITH A GROWN UP (AGES 2-5) Select Thursdays

*Under the Sea*: September | *Around the Campfire*: October | *Barnyard Boogie*: November

#### THE THEATER TOOLKIT WORKSHOP SERIES (AGES 8-14)

*Scene Work*: September 21 | *Set Design & Scenery*: October 19 | *The Audio Experience*: November 16

#### SUSAN KANTERMAN BOOK CLUB

October: "A Beautiful Rival: A Novel of Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden" by Gill Paul

November: "One in Six Million: The Baby by the Roadside and the Man Who Retraced a Holocaust Survivor's Lost Identity" by Jewish Book Council Author Amy Fish With Virtual Author Visit

#### PAUL AND YETTA GLUCK SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

*Water Color Landscape: Autumn Horizons* (Ages 18+) | Tuesday, September 16

*Celebrate with Cider: Wire Pumpkin Centerpieces* (Ages 16+) | Wednesday, October 29

*Make & Take Tzedakah: Finger Knit Scarf* (Ages 13+) | November 11 & 13

*Craft & Kvell* (Ages 18+)

*Dot Art Tree Trivet*: September 19 | *Decoupage Fall Pumpkins*: October 17

*Marbled Holiday Card Printmaking*: November 21

#### YOUTH

#### PARENT'S NIGHT OUT (Grades K-6)

| Saturday, October 18

#### SPORTS & REC

#### PICKLEBALL FOUNDATIONS CLINIC (Ages 18+)

| Saturdays, October 18–November 8

#### WELLNESS

#### IMMUNIZATION CLINIC

| Thursday, September 18

#### AGING WELL

**CAREGIVER CAFE** (Ages 18+) | Mondays, September 22, October 6, 20, November 3 & 17

**TECH TUESDAY** (Ages 60+) | Tuesdays, September 16, October 21, November 4 & 18

**GRIEF GROUP** (Ages 18+) | Wednesdays, September 17, October 22, and November 19

**KINSHIP PROGRAM** (Ages 60+) | Wednesdays, September 10, October 1, November 12 & 26

**LUNCH BUNCH** (Ages 60+) | September 18, October 16, November 20

CHECK OUT OUR FULL SLATE OF OFFERINGS AT [JCCYOUNGSTOWN.ORG](http://JCCYOUNGSTOWN.ORG)!

L'Shanah Tovah

*Rick & Susan Sokolov*



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HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

## Bessie O. Anderson

Bessie O. Anderson, age 90, of Youngstown, passed away on Aug. 6, 2025, at St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital.

Born Feb. 3, 1935, in Toledo, Ohio, Bessie was the daughter of Herbert W. and Elizabeth P. Osgood.

She was a graduate of The Rayen School and later graduated from Case Western Reserve.

Managing the family's business of apartment rentals, Bessie was known to run a tight ship. She was the face of the company, and her husband was the numbers guy. She was also known around the community for her skills as a Master Gardener. She was responsible for beautifying Liberty Township, Squaw Creek Country Club, the Jewish Community Center, Heritage Manor, and other places that held deep meaning to her.

Bessie was also a proud member of Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom, formerly Rodef Sholom, in Youngstown, Ohio. Later in life, she volunteered for the congregation to make blankets, hats, scarves, and other items for those in need and to show her appreciation for those in service. Her family also knew that during their lifecycle events, they could count



on Grandma Bessie for a custom afghan, marking their births, marriages, and other occasions.

Bessie will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by her family: her husband of 69 years, Godfrey J. Anderson; her sons, David (Marcee) Anderson of Dayton, Ohio, Steven (Terri) Anderson of Girard, Ohio, and Michael (Kimberly) Anderson of Palisades, Calif.; nine grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.

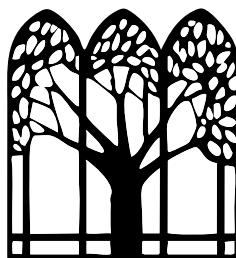
Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Sidney Siegel, and sister, Susan.

Services were at Congregation Ohev Beth Sholom.

The family wants to thank the staff at Heritage Manor for the care they have provided over the past two years.

Memorial contributions may be made to Heritage Manor, 516 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, Ohio 44505, or Animal Welfare League of Trumbull County, P.O. Box 66, Vienna, Ohio 44473.

Funeral arrangements are entrusted to the care of Stewart-Kyle Funeral Home. Family and friends are invited to visit the funeral home's website at [stewart-kyle.com](http://stewart-kyle.com) to share memories and condolences.



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## Marvin S. Lebby

Marvin S. Lebby, age 93, lifetime resident of New Castle, passed away the morning of July 17, 2025, at UPMC Jameson Hospital.

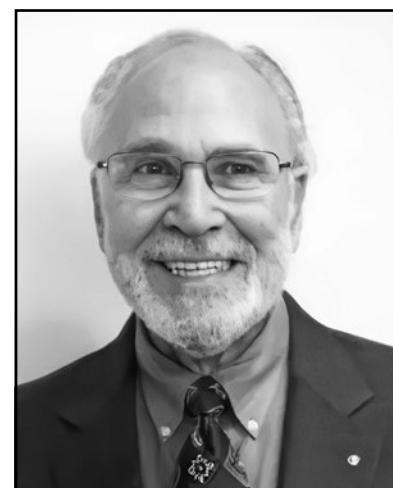
Born Oct. 18, 1931, in New Castle, he was the son of Jack and Bea (Edelestein) Lebby.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Geraldine "Gerry" Kaye (Ginsburg) Lebby, on June 20, 2018.

Following his education from Penn State University, Marvin entered the U.S. Army in 1951 during the Korean War, where he achieved the rank of sergeant.

In 1954, Marvin, along with his father, Jack, purchased the Williams-Cleaveland Company, where Marv served as president from 1970 until 2002 when his son, Glenn, succeeded him. Even through retirement, he continued daily to frequent the business.

Throughout his lifetime in New Castle, he was well known for being active



in many organizations, including the Lawrence County Community Foundation and the Cathedral Foundation. He was a lifelong member of Temple Israel in New Castle until its closing, when he became a member of Congregation Rodef Sholom in Youngstown, Ohio.

He is survived by his son, Glenn Lebby of New Castle; one daughter, Miriam Lebby (Bruce Currie) of Concord, N.H.; and four grandchildren.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was preceded in death by a daughter-in-law, Kathy Lebby; and his stepmother, Rosalyn (Schwartz) Lebby.

Burial was in Temple Israel Memorial Park.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Cathedral Foundation, 110 E. Lincoln Ave., New Castle, PA 16101 or the Crisis Shelter of Lawrence County, now "Arise," 1218 W. State St., New Castle, PA 16101.

## Blanche Weiss

Blanche Weiss, 94, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. passed away on Aug. 26, 2025. Blanche was born in Cleveland, Ohio to Joseph and Pearl Lukin.

Blanche lived a vibrant life that ended one month shy of her 95th birthday. Blanche is survived by her beloved husband of 72 years, Sanford Weiss; her cherished children Bradley (Joan) Weiss and Ronald (Patricia) Weiss, her son in law Arthur Perry, her brother Robert (Marcia) Lukin; her adoring grandchildren Benjamin, Meredith, Julia, Stephani, James, and Nicholas.



Blanche was preceded in death by her daughter Bedonna Perry and her sister Florence Rothenberg.

A funeral and committal service for Blanche was held Aug. 31, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at IJ Morris at Star of David of the Palm Beaches, 9321 Memorial Park Road, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Blanche's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society's ovarian cancer campaign or The Butler Institute of American Art.



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## OUR SERVICES

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Our professional staff offers educational support on a variety of topics to meet client needs. We provide assistance to those facing difficult life decisions, members of the aging community, those living with mental health disorders, and those that need developmental support.

### OUTREACH SERVICES

Our outreach coordinator and social workers welcome the opportunity to talk with elders and their families.

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## It isn't Yom Kippur break fast at my house without this egg casserole

By Skye Estroff



Our family's approach to Yom Kippur break fast is a Southern one. Many North Americans associate this feast with an array of sweet *kugels*, bagels with all of the accoutrements, *rugelach* in every flavor, blintzes, and maybe a special cake or two. Chances are you have never seen a spread filled with egg casserole, cream cheese grits, and homemade biscuits.

Before the early 1900s, my family had not either. How did this menu come to be for a half-Sephardi, half-Ashkenazi Jewish family? It's a funny story.

I recently recovered my great-grandpa's autobiography that had been stowed away in storage. He detailed the lengths that it would take to acquire kosher food in Georgia in the early 20th century. Quick synopsis: It required special connections and effort to secure the holiday food necessities from the certified grocer. The "good stuff" was reserved for the residents of Atlanta, Augusta, and Savannah, while little was set aside for small town Jewish families. My family was one of the latter so we had no choice but to incorporate ingredients that were more accessible into our meal planning. Eggs, grits, and flour were much easier to secure than specialty meats. Thus, Southern-style cuisine became intertwined with our family meals and traditions.

All of this to say that I've grown accustomed to this style of break fast. I prefer it

to the regretful annual reminder that my stomach is not meant to digest mounds of mayonnaise-laden proteins or seconds of sugar immediately after 24 hours without. Simple, flavorful, and easily digestible foods are the strength and strategy in our Southern-inspired menu.

The hearty pièce de résistance of our table is my mom's egg casserole. It's silky, cheesy, and smells amazing coming out of the oven. Egg casserole can be made in advance; refrigerate overnight and forget it until an hour before sunset.

When going in for the bake, know that the egg mixture will be settled so the ratio of bread to egg mixture will look skewed. It's not. The "casserole" bakes like a soufflé, so the egg mixture will rise and create a pillowy texture to complement the crusty bits of challah that are exposed at the top.

Feel free to modify this recipe to use any kind of bread (i.e. whole wheat, gluten-free, sourdough, etc.), milk instead of half-and-half or a different sharp cheese (Gruyere or Manchego would be nice). That's the essence of my mom's style of Southern Jewish cooking — make it tasty, but creatively configure the ingredients to work for the specific group you're hosting. Serve her egg casserole alongside cream cheese grits, thick-cut biscuits plus a little bit of fruit and not only will you be covered for the holiday, you'll get a taste of the lesser known tradition that we hold so dear.

### Notes:

The casserole needs to chill in the fridge for a couple of hours, or overnight, before baking.

Egg casserole can be made in advance; refrigerate overnight and forget it until an hour before sunset (start from Step 7).

Total Time: 3 hours - overnight

Yield: Serves 4-6

### Ingredients:

8 oz challah, cubed (half a challah)  
1½ cups shredded yellow cheddar cheese  
6 large eggs  
2 cups half-and-half  
1 tsp mustard powder  
½ tsp salt  
¼ tsp black pepper  
½ tsp garlic powder  
½ tsp onion powder

### Instructions:

1. Spread the cubed challah across the bottom of a 9×13 baking dish.
2. Sprinkle the shredded cheese evenly

over the bread cubes.

3. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, mustard powder, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder until well combined.
4. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the bread and cheese in the baking dish.
5. Cover the dish with plastic wrap or foil and refrigerate it overnight (or at least a couple of hours) to allow the bread to absorb the egg mixture.
6. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
7. Remove the casserole from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature for about 15 minutes while the oven preheats.
8. Bake, uncovered, for 45-50 minutes or until the top is golden brown and the casserole is set in the middle. You can insert a knife in the center to check if it's fully cooked (it should come out clean).
9. Let the casserole cool for a few minutes before cutting and serving.

*This story originally appeared on The Nosher.*

HIGH HOLY DAYS 5786-2025

ISRAEL BONDS

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## This Sephardi Rosh Hashanah soup is steeped in symbolism

By Sharon Gomperts and Rachel Sheff

Every Rosh Hashanah, my mother Rica made a special and delicious *simanim* soup, which contained all the “simanim” (signs), symbolic vegetables that are used in the Sephardic Rosh Hashanah *seder*. Rooted in Kabbalah and with a clever play on the Aramaic names of the vegetables, at the *seder*, Sephardim say blessings over these vegetables, which include butternut squash, zucchini and Swiss chard.

My mother and father were born in Larache, an ancient port city founded by the Phoenicians on the northwestern coast of Morocco. Providentially located where the Loukkos River meets the Atlantic Ocean, Larache is the most important city in the Tetouan-Tanger region of Morocco. Larache is also where my ancestors found refuge after the Expulsion from Spain in 1492.

My paternal grandfather Salomon Emquies was the proprietor of a spice shop (so appropriate that Sharon and I are the Sephardic Spice Girls). My maternal grandfather Moshe Bensabat was the chief Rabbi of Larache. He was the *mohel*, the *shochet*, and conducted all the weddings.

One of the last wedding ceremonies

that he performed before he made *aliyah* (emigrated to Israel) was that of my parents. Soon after, my parents moved to Casablanca, where my two older brothers and I were born.

When we emigrated to Los Angeles, my parents brought the jewelry that both sets of grandparents gifted my mother. They brought the *menorah* they had received as a wedding gift from her parents. And they brought with them the rich religious traditions of their childhood homes.

A treasured Spanish Moroccan custom, this recipe has been handed down over generations. This soup includes apples for a “sweet year,” as well as beef cheek meat or beef neck bones, which symbolize the ram’s head and the fervent wish that we should be “the head and not the tail.” In making this soup, my mother would soak the leeks and Swiss chard. She would peel the apple, carrots, sweet potatoes, and turnip. She would patiently chop all the vegetables. Then everything would slowly simmer with the meat in a big pot.

After the *brachot* (blessings), my mother would serve this nutritious, flavorful soup as the first course of our meal, a tasty con-

nection to the many generations that came before us, passing down the faith and the Mesorah (Oral Torah).

Over time, as more and more of my family became vegetarian, my mother started making this soup without meat. This year, I want to go back and make my mother’s original recipe. To accommodate all my guests, I will cook the meat cheeks separately in my pressure cooker, then the meat eaters can add it to their bowl of soup.

### Notes:

This recipe makes a very large pot, so you should have enough to serve this soup for two meals.

Store soup in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator for five to seven days.

Total Time: 3 hours 35 minutes

Yield: A lot!

### Ingredients:

#### For the meat:

- 3–4 lb beef cheek meat
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp white pepper

salt, to taste

pinch of saffron (optional)

1 cup water

#### For the soup:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4 leeks, washed thoroughly and sliced thinly
- 1 bunch Swiss chard, with stem removed and chopped thinly
- 2 cups butternut squash, cubed (or acorn or Delicata squash)
- 1 large green apple or quince, peeled and cubed
- 2 large zucchini, peeled and diced
- 2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 medium Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 large turnip, peeled and cubed
- 4 celery stalks, diced
- 3 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 parsnip, peeled and diced
- 1/2 small cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp chicken consommé powder
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 1 tsp turmeric

#### Instructions:

1. For the meat: In a pressure cooker or large pot, add oil and warm over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for five minutes. Add meat, bay leaf and spices. Cook for one hour in a pressure cooker or until tender in the pot.
2. For the soup: In a very large pot warm oil over medium heat, then add sliced leeks. Sauté for five minutes until they start to soften.
3. Add all the ingredients, except Swiss chard, zucchini, and butternut squash (set them aside).
4. Pour enough water to cover the top of the vegetables. Bring to a boil, cover the pot then lower heat to medium and simmer vegetables for one hour.
5. Add the zucchini and butternut squash. Simmer for another 30 minutes.
6. Add the Swiss chard, continue to cook on a simmer for an additional 30 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning.

*This story originally appeared on The Nosher.*



Photo credit:  
The Sephardic Spice Girls

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## These easy Israeli honey cookies are iconic

By Vered Guttman



Photo credit  
Vered Guttman

Apples dipped in honey and honey cakes are popular across the Jewish world around Rosh Hashanah. But if you grew up in Israel, you most likely came across a unique variation of honey treats: *duvshaniyot*. These dense, dark, round honey cookies are a must in many families' High Holidays *nosh* rotation.

The modest *duvshaniyot* (their name derives from the Hebrew word *dvash*, meaning honey) seem to have been part of the Israeli repertoire forever and you can find them on the cookie shelves in every supermarket in the country. They are cheap, *pareve*, and last forever, so no wonder they have become a regular for Rosh Hashanah afternoon tea, for breaking the fast on Yom Kippur, and for dipping in a cold glass of milk in the Sukkah. But these unassuming cookies hold a long history, as most Jewish and Israeli dishes do.

*Duvshaniyot* are the Israeli adaptation of a popular Russian cookie called *pryaniki*. Dating back to medieval Russia, *pryaniki* were made with honey, rye flour, and berry juice, and were known simply as "honey bread." Starting around the 12th or 13th centuries, when Russia started opening up to imports from the Middle East and India, spices and dried fruit were added to the cookie. In different regions throughout Russia, people experimented with new additions to this cookie, from jam filling to a later invention of sweetened condensed milk. Some versions were imprinted using delicate wooden forms, and some were simply

rolled by hand and dipped in sugar glaze — the same version that's still popular in Israel today.

People sometimes confuse *pryaniki* with German *lebkuchen* (aka gingerbread cookies), but it is rare to see ginger added to these classic Russian cookies, and even *lebkuchen* don't always have ginger in them. Traditionally, *pryaniki* were spiced with cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, coriander, and even black pepper and cumin. In fact, their name, *pryaniki*, comes from the Russian word for spiced, *pryanik*.

Different versions of *pryaniki* can be found around Eastern Europe, like *piernik* in Poland and *lect* cookies in Slovenia, which are heart-shaped, painted red and artfully decorated with colorful icing. These Eastern European versions were traditionally served around Christmas, but were adapted by Jews for their own holidays, mainly Rosh Hashanah, for the use of the symbolic honey.

From Eastern Europe, the little honey cookie made its way to Israel and the United States. "The Settlement Cook Book," a classic 1901 American Jewish cookbook by Lizzie Black Kander, includes two versions of *lebkuchen*, both with citrus and almonds, but no ginger. Even more interesting, is that neither include honey, but instead call for brown sugar or molasses.

An early Israeli cookbook, "Folklore Cookbook" by Molly Bar-David, has recipes for honey cookies that are similar to *pryaniki* and for *lebkuchen*. Bar-David suggests adding ginger to the honey cookies and calls for mar-

garine instead of butter, maybe to keep the cookies pareve.

Today, Israeli manufacturers of *duvshaniyot* must be doing a good job, as I notice the same Israeli brand cookies at many Russian stores in the United States. But maybe because *duvshaniyot* are readily available in every supermarket, most Israelis do not prepare them at home. That's a shame, because as is the case with most baked goods, homemade is better. And when the recipe is as easy as the one below, there's no reason not to.

You can add any of the classic gingerbread cookie spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, coriander, clove, and even black pepper and cumin) as well as cocoa powder, strong coffee or chopped chocolate. Candied citrus peel or any tart candied fruit, as well as citrus zest. You can try to replace some of the flour with rye flour to be closer to the original Russian version, or replace some of the flour with almond meal and make it closer to the German *lebkuchen*. It's up to you.

Some recipes, including centuries-old recipes, suggest letting the dough rest for a few hours and up to a week before baking the cookies. This will deepen its flavors and will make rolling the dough easier. But even if you bake it right away, the cookies will improve with time, so I suggest baking them at least two days before serving. You can easily prepare them the week before Rosh Hashanah and then serve them for break the fast on Yom Kippur.

### Notes:

The cookie dough needs to chill in the refrigerator for four hours, or up to overnight.

The cookies will improve with time, so I suggest baking them at least two days before serving, though you can keep them in a sealed container at room temperature up to a month.

Total Time: 4 hours 35 minutes

Yield: 30 cookies

### Ingredients:

For the cookies:

- ¾ cup honey
- ¼ cup light or dark brown sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp each cardamom, ginger, nutmeg, allspice

⅛ tsp black pepper

2 large eggs, at room temperature

1 tsp lemon or orange zest

1 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp baking soda

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (you can substitute half with rye flour)

### For the sugar glaze:

2 cups powdered sugar

1 tsp lemon juice

2–3 Tbsp water

### Instructions:

1. Place a saucepan with ½ inch water on a burner and turn to medium heat. Put a large metal or glass bowl over the saucepan and bring water to simmer. Once the water boils add honey, sugar, butter, and spices to the bowl and mix until butter melts and all the ingredients incorporate. Remove bowl from the heat and let cool for about 30 minutes.
2. Add eggs and lemon zest to the bowl and mix.
3. Add baking powder, baking soda, and flour to the mixture and mix with a wooden spoon or a spatula until smooth. Cover bowl and place in the fridge for four hours and up to overnight.
4. When you're ready to bake, turn the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Use your hands to roll 1-inch-round cookies and place them 2 inches apart on the baking sheet.
6. Bake for 13-15 minutes, switching between baking sheets after seven minutes, until cookies are just golden at the bottom. Do not over-bake, as the cookies will become too hard. Transfer to a cooling rack until completely cold.
7. To make the sugar glaze, mix powdered sugar, lemon juice and 2 Tbsp water with a spoon in a medium bowl. If the mixture seems too dry, add up to 1 Tbsp more water and keep on mixing until a smooth glaze is formed.
8. Dip the cookie tops in the glaze and put back on the cooling rack to set.

*This story originally appeared on The Nosher.*

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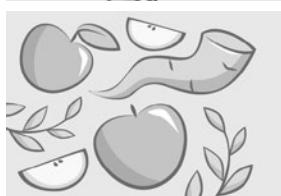
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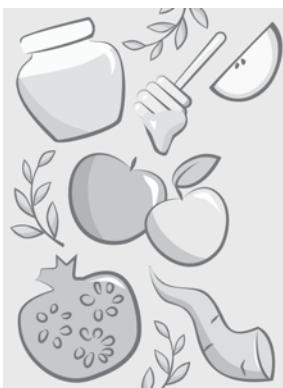
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*Nancy continued from page 2*

experience not only a solid education in the fundamentals, but a global perspective not often found in public schools allowing a seamless transition to area high schools.

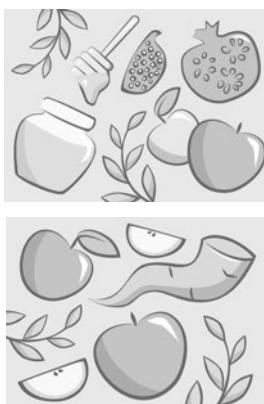
The Altshuler Akiva Academy, Goldstone-Mirkin Family Middle School at the Suzi Solomon Campus will add to the footprint of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. While the number of Jewish students has declined significantly, the impact of a Jewish education is far-reaching, exposing youth of all backgrounds to universal moral principles, and in so doing combats antisemitism at its roots.

The 2025 Akiva Capital Campaign

Committee has raised over \$1.2 million to fund this ambitious endeavor but is still seeking contributions in any amount— with naming opportunities still available. Contact Courtney Lockshaw at [clockshaw@jewishyoungstown.org](mailto:clockshaw@jewishyoungstown.org) for information on donating.

As the 2025–2026 school year begins, we can all look with pride at what Akiva Academy has become — an educational model attracting students from 30 different area schools and truly embodying the words: Rooted in Tradition, Reaching for the Future.

Special thanks to Nic Bush, Elise Skolnick, and Kathy Mioni for their research help.



*First Look continued from page 3*

formed to house four classrooms for grades five through eight. It will include a multipurpose room, a security office, a teacher resource room, administrative offices, and a conference room.

“Jewish education in our area is stronger than ever thanks to Akiva Academy,” Barr said. “As one of the most unique schools in our area, Akiva integrates secular and Jewish studies to support the cognitive, creative, social, and emotional growth of every student. Under the leadership of Principal Kathy Mioni, the school

### Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year From The Medvin Taylor Family

### Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year From Elise & David Skolnick

has earned a reputation for academic excellence. This has sparked significant interest from families, with enrollment filling up just weeks after opening.”

The expansion will allow the Jewish day school to double its enrollment in the next five years.

“Expanding Akiva Academy has long been a priority due to increasing enrollment demands,” said Nancy Burnett, Commission for Jewish Education president. “For years, the greatest challenge has been space. We had simply outgrown our existing campus across the street, with no room for further expansion.”



### Chaya and Sandy Kessler and Family Wish You a New Year of Health, Happiness, and Peace

everywhere—in the buffed floors, in the newly accessible entrance, in the way our sanctuary now welcomes every age and stage of life with dignity.

The rededication of our building was also a rededication of our mission: to be a vibrant center of ritual Jewish life in Youngstown. To be a home for the generations who came before us, and those still to come.

As we now gather in this sacred space—accessible, inclusive, beautiful—we are reminded that it was not only built with wood, stone, and steel, but with love, generosity, and the kind of hope that only community can provide.

Our menorah sculpture outside the building is not just art. It’s a statement. Soon to be joined by the words: “Ohev Beth Sholom: From Generation to Generation,” it reflects our enduring truth—that Jewish continuity is not passive. It is built, brick by brick, gift by gift, heart by heart.

*Maccabi continued from page 14*

ence, I am reminded of how much this program has shaped me over the years and deepened my Jewish identity. It has strengthened my dedication to swimming, taught me perseverance, and allowed me to connect with a commu-

nity that is supportive, inspiring, and full of joy. The friendships I’ve made and the environment of Maccabi have made this journey truly unforgettable. I am deeply grateful to the Youngstown community and the Federation for giving teens the opportunity to experience Maccabi each year.

## Israel opens new embassy in Zambia, once home to a historic Jewish community

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) — Israel has opened an embassy in Zambia, more than half a century after it was shuttered following the Yom Kippur war and as the African nation's Jewish population has dwindled to near zero.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and Zambian Foreign Minister Mulambo Haimbe opened the embassy together in August.

"It's an honor to be in Lusaka for the opening of Israel's embassy," Sa'ar tweeted, adding that the two countries were "enhancing our partnership in agriculture, health, and much more."

Zambia and Israel first established diplomatic ties in 1966, but Zambia severed its ties with Israel in 1973 following the Yom Kippur War at the urging of the Organization of African Unity.

The two countries reestablished

diplomatic ties in 1991, and in 2015, Zambia opened an embassy in Tel Aviv. The new embassy comes as Israel looks to strengthen ties across Africa as its alliances elsewhere in the world have frayed.

As of last year, Zambia was home to just 11 Jews, but throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, hundreds settled there after fleeing persecution in Europe. The community shrank sharply after Zambia gained independence from British colonial rule in 1964 and its leader declared that only native Zambians could receive work permits, prompting much of the country's Jewish population to leave.

In Livingstone, the Gateway Jewish Museum, which was opened in 2013, chronicles the history of Jews in the Southern African nation.



Zambian Foreign Minister Mulambo Haimbe and Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar meet to open a new Israeli embassy in Zambia. (Gideon Sa'ar / X)

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## Jewish baseball fans made an exhaustive list of players—but missed Monte Pfeiffer

By Scott Barancik

(JTA) — For the first time in decades, a long forgotten major league baseball player has been posthumously identified as Jewish.

Monte Pfeiffer, who played a single game for the Philadelphia Athletics some 112 years ago, had vanished into baseball obscurity — until a sharp-eyed Yankees fan uncovered a surprising truth written in Hebrew. The discovery, rooted in dusty box scores, old newspaper articles, and genealogical detective work, adds Pfeiffer to the rarest of rosters: Jewish major leaguers.

“It’s really like fishing: You throw out your line, and nothing, nothing, nothing,” said Zak Kranc, a 27-year-old lawyer from Connecticut. “Then when you get a hit, you start reeling.”

Such finds are rare. Only about 200 of the more than 23,000 men to play major league baseball since 1871 have been conclusively identified as Jews. It’s a surprisingly tiny fraternity, given the outsized number of honors they have earned over the years, including Rookie of the Year, Most Valuable Player, Cy Young Award, and Gold Glove.

Journalist and author David Spaner did most of the detective work in the 1990s. He spent a year sifting through records at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, phoning players and their relatives, and assembling family trees, all in an effort to find unknown Jews. The Vancouver native went on to reveal dozens of newly discovered Jews in “Total Baseball,” a scholarly series edited in part by a baseball historian born to Holocaust survivors.

“There was a form the Hall of Fame sent to family members of the deceased,” Spaner said in an interview. “One of the questions concerned nationality, and a number of players put ‘Jewish’ on it.” He also scrutinized players of unknown heritage who had Jewish-sounding names, and that too yielded discoveries. But Pfeiffer, a German name often associated with Jews, somehow escaped detection.

Thanks to Kranc (pronounced “Krantz”), Pfeiffer is unknown no more.

Montefiore “Monte” Pfeiffer, also

known as Moshe Ben Shmuel Yosef, was born in New York City in 1890 to Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe: Fanny Pfeiffer and husband Samuel, a seller of women’s hats. He began playing baseball for money in 1911, at age 19, for the Haverhill (Massachusetts) Hustlers.

Statistically speaking, Pfeiffer was a middling hitter and error-prone fielder. But he thrilled fans with his speed and jaw-dropping plays. Reporters, too, were dazzled by his exploits, comparing the 5-foot-4-inch infielder to legends like future Hall of Fame inductee Honus Wagner. The Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) Record called Pfeiffer a “sawed off giant” who carried “a lot of hitting power in his broad shoulders,” according to writer Darren Gibson.

The 1913 season saw breakthroughs for Pfeiffer, as well as a breakdown. Playing for Joe McCarthy, the Wilkes-Barre Coal Barons manager who later led the New York Yankees to seven World Series titles, Pfeiffer attracted major-league scouts — but not before vowing to quit baseball and return to his Bronx pool hall over an alleged antisemitic incident.

According to contemporary news reports, a teammate allegedly told a young woman Pfeiffer fancied that the player was “a Jew and a tightwad who never spent a nickel” — an insult that enraged the shortstop and nearly drove him to quit baseball. Despite McCarthy initially claiming to be “through with ball players that fall in love,” he convinced Pfeiffer to return.

Lucky for Pfeiffer. He wasn’t back on the diamond for long before Connie Mack, legendary manager of the Philadelphia Athletics, chose to rest his “\$100,000 infield” for the 1913 World Series and yank three young men, including Pfeiffer, out of regional obscurity to temporarily replace them. The Philadelphia Inquirer cheekily dubbed the trio the “Kindergarten Brood.”

Pfeiffer made his debut in enemy territory: Griffith Stadium, home of the Washington Senators. An estimated 15,000 fans, far above the team’s 4,000 average, would crowd the stands on Sept. 29, 1913 to celebrate George McBride

Day, in honor of the Senators’ team captain and shortstop. U.S. Vice President Thomas Marshall would make an on-field presentation.

Observers predicted the three rookies would hit nothing but air against fearsome pitcher Walter Johnson, who arrived that day with a 35-7 record and an ERA hovering just above 1.00. Even Detroit Tigers legend Ty Cobb — a cutthroat Hall of Fame centerfielder who ended the major-league career of another Jewish ballplayer, Jesse “Tiny” Baker, by brutally spiking him with his cleats — was terrified the first time he faced Johnson. “Something went past me that made me flinch,” he said, according to Ken Burns’ documentary “Baseball.” “The thing just hissed with danger.”

Although the Senators wound up blanking Philadelphia 1-0, Pfeiffer never buckled, even after Johnson grazed his sleeve with a pitch. The Washington Times Herald said the 23-year-old “played a smashing good game at short” despite flubbing a grounder. The Washington Post said the “stocky little shortfielder... made several sensational stops” and was “robbed” of a sure hit off Johnson in the 6th inning.

Gibson, who has profiled more than 60 one-game players for the Society of American Baseball Research, sees Pfeiffer as a hard-luck case. “I found it wildly unfortunate that in his one major-league game, Pfeiffer had to square off against Johnson,” he said in an email.

The story of how Kranc discovered Pfeiffer is remarkable in its own right.

The antitrust attorney’s first exposure to Jewish ballplayers came at his bar mitzvah, when he received a framed collection of baseball cards. “It was just a cool thing,” he said. “And I kind of put it to the side.”

Years later, when COVID hit, Kranc thought about the collection. “Everyone was hunkered down and just looking for something to do, looking for an escape from all of the isolation and difficulties,” he said. “And I was like, hey, you know, I like being Jewish. I love baseball, right? I’m going to take this up a level.” He began

to hunt for more Jewish baseball cards and autographs — and to search for an undiscovered player.

Several months ago, Kranc was casually scrolling through the website Baseball Reference when he spied a feature called “Cup of Coffee Players” — a nod to those whose big-league careers lasted just one game. Paging through the bios of hundreds of men, he stumbled upon a player listed as “Monte Pfeffer” who had been buried in Acacia Cemetery, a Jewish cemetery in Queens. A few clicks of the mouse took him to Find a Grave, where he located a tombstone he surmised was Pfeiffer’s.

“I saw the Hebrew writing, and I said to myself, ‘Okay, I think we have something here,’” Kranc recalled. He continues to be awed by his unlikely discovery. “I would venture to say the odds of this particular event happening are lower than a perfect game, a triple play, or almost anything else we might find on the field.”

Like Spaner and others before him, Kranc took a disciplined approach to confirming Pfeiffer’s Jewishness.

He gathered photos, inspected family trees, read obituaries, and hunted down cemetery records. He also found a descendant, the Honorable Louis “Lou” Meisinger.

Meisinger, a retired California judge and entertainment lawyer, never met his great-uncle Monte Pfeiffer, but they shared an important connection: Meisinger’s late mother, Eleanor, was raised with Pfeiffer’s daughter, Frances. Meisinger also briefly owned Pfeiffer’s mitt, though he didn’t understand its significance at the time. “My mother gave me the glove, which she said was given to her by her Uncle Izzy, presumably Monte’s brother,” he said in an interview. “I used the glove in Little League and, unfortunately, discarded it when I graduated to better equipment. It was not in good shape.”

Like many other Jewish sports fans, Meisinger enjoys reading about Jewish athletes. But “there was no family lore

*Baseball continues on page 45*

## Murray shares spiritual journey



**By Eric Murray**  
Youngstown Area  
Jewish Federation  
Executive Director  
of Senior Services

This year has been a spiritual journey, with many surprises and an element of things coming full circle. When I first arrived at the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, I discovered that Rabbi Joseph Schoenberger was holding a longstanding Jewish-Catholic dialogue with Father George Balasko. As a Catholic I wondered how that worked, how can two "significantly different" religious groups find so much common ground to build off of and share? It has since lingered in the back of my mind but I made great strides this year in realizing the beauty of Rabbi's work.

Several events this year have challenged me to gain a deeper understanding of my Catholic roots, my undeniable connection to Judaism, and what it means to me as a husband, father, churchgoer, and employee of the Federation.

Our youngest daughter was confirmed earlier this year, as my wife and I carefully planned final details of a summer trip to Italy, mostly to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary. These events spawned many questions that I

had never deeply considered such as the history and location of the Vatican, the Passover Seder, why I feel spiritually connected to the nearly 4,000 years of Jewish tradition, the role of Christianity in the spread of antisemitism, and the good work that has been over the last 60 years bringing Catholics and Jews closer together.

A real turning point for me was when Pope Francis passed. I had the honor of attending the Pope's memorial service at St. Columba Cathedral as member of the group representing the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. The Pope's passing allowed me to stumble upon the work of the early 1960s by Pope John Paul XXIII and Pope John VI to restore respectful and new found relationships between the Catholic Church and the Jewish Community.

In my conversation with Board President Mark Huberman before the memorial mass, he spoke of a book, an "Encyclical Letter" written by Pope John XXIII outlining basic human rights, that had been given to his late father by a close Catholic friend. In addition, through my desire to learn more about Pope Francis I discovered a book that was written by Pope Francis and his close friend, Rabbi Abraham Skorka, "On Heaven and Earth."

During the more detailed planning process when I looked at maps of the cities we were going to visit, I saw sections denoted as Jewish Ghetto which drove my overall interest in learning more, I was particularly drawn to see



Pictured is a sign at the entrance to the Venice ghetto.

the Jewish ghetto in Venice, not knowing its history but knowing my work at the Federation had open my eyes.

Located in the Cannaregio district, the Venice Ghetto is considered to be the oldest ghetto in Europe, dating back to 1516. At that time, approximately 700 Jews were forced into the ghetto, Ghetto Nuovo. There are Synagogues, kosher restaurants, signs, plaques, and other acknowledgments of the area's history, including the barbed wire above "Monumento Vittime della Shoah" (the Monument of the Victims of the Holocaust). The Monument, seven his-

tory telling plaques of the Holocaust, was erected in 1980 to remember the 246 Jews who were deported by the Nazis. I didn't feel like a tourist, I felt like I needed to see this place with my own eyes.

In a span of about six months I have witnessed, learned, and participated in a deepening relationship with my faith that would have never existed if not for my job at the Federation. When my wife and I dreamed about this trip, prior to our wedding, I would have never imagined a Jewish theme would be woven into my future relationships and faith life.

### Baseball continued from page 44

about [Pfeiffer], other than that he once played in the major leagues. Nobody provided any details."

Alas, Pfeiffer's major league tenure was as scant as the details. When the Athletics returned to Griffith Stadium a day after losing to Johnson's Nationals, Pfeiffer's two cohorts were in the lineup, but he had been cut loose.

The Wilkes-Barre Record reported that

the rookie was "struck on the head by a batted ball and rendered unconscious."

Pfeiffer's career swiftly nosedived. In true journeyman fashion, he began the 1914 season with the Kansas City (Missouri) Blues of the American Association, traveled north to join the Marinette-Menominee (Wisconsin) Twins of the Wisconsin-Illinois League, and signed with the Topeka (Kansas) Jayhawks of the Western League. The following year, in 1915, Pfeiffer wrapped up

his baseball sojourn in Manitoba, Canada with the St. Boniface Bonnies of the Northern League. His best batting average over the two seasons was a dismal .176.

Pfeiffer also suffered misfortune at home. Things briefly had looked up in late 1914 when he married 18-year-old Rose Schechter, a Jewish native of New York City who soon became pregnant. But two weeks after giving birth to their daughter, Schechter died. Pfeiffer, presumably bereft and unprepared to raise the infant, asked

his older sister Mamie to do so. He went on to work as a signal or subway repairman — public records are unclear — and briefly enlist in the military during World War I. As far as we know, the widower never remarried. He was just 49 years old when he died of heart disease in 1941.

Today, Monte Pfeiffer's great-great-grandnephew Aric Berg pitches for Fordham University — a reminder that, more than a century after his lone appearance, Pfeiffer's story is still being written.

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Participants will be able to register to vote and check their voter registration status. Absentee ballot request forms and polling site location information will be available. This registration drive is on National Voter Registration Day in conjunction with the League of Women Voters. *League of Women Voters non-partisan candidate information will be available at the JCC in October.*



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