Lighting the World
Felicia Rubin may have been named Fraidl at birth after her paternal grandmother, but her father named her Felicia for good reason: she is a person whose happy smile can light up a room. Her warmth and generous nature have made a difference in our community for many years.

Felicia has been an active part of Congregation B’nai Zion, since she moved here from Mexico and married Irving Rubin in 1966. Both were dedicated to the synagogue and her involvement includes serving as a member of Chevra Kadisha for over 25 years, the shul’s president and vice president, and sisterhood president.

Felicia enjoys travelling to New Jersey, Israel, and around the world. She speaks five languages: English, Spanish, Hebrew, Yiddish, and German. Felicia’s mother was born in Dresden, Germany, and her father was born in Tarnow, Poland. Her parents, who were cousins, married after Neftali survived two and a half years in Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Bergen-Belsen. After Felicia and Irving raised their family and were involved in their electronics business, their lives changed dramatically in 1991: a multi-car and bus accident left Irving with traumatic brain injuries. For 15 years, Felicia sought the best-possible care for her husband in hospitals and rehab centers in Dallas, Scottsdale, and El Paso and made sure he regularly attended B’nai Zion services.

For decades, Felicia has been a leader with her time and resources in our Jewish community. In December, she is sponsoring the Jewish Federation’s Lego Marathon in memory of her beloved husband.

What do you value most in your friends?
Honesty and that they are real friends.

What might we be surprised to learn about your interests/hobbies?
I love to bake and cook and create my own recipes. Something that people may not know is that I enjoy gift wrapping and being creative with it. I like to travel and this year I went on a three-and-a-half-month trip that included an African safari with my daughter-in-law from Israel and a long cruise all over Asia.

Who’s your favorite Jewish hero?
Author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. I met him twice. One time was at the Hillel at Boston University, where two of my children went to school. I donated a multi-purpose room to the Hillel in Irving’s honor; it serves as a sort of Holocaust museum on Holocaust Remembrance Day. The other time, I sat in on one of his classes at Boston University. He was an amazing man and he had a speaking style unlike anyone else.

What’s your favorite Hanukkah memory?
Many years, my father’s father would give me a Hershey chocolate bar and it was such a treat. I also remember receiving some furry slippers and liking them so much that I didn’t want them to be on the floor, so I brought them into the bed with me.

What message do you have for people who could be but who are not involved in the Jewish community?
Join organizations that are important to you and that you really like. For me the shul (Congregation B’nai Zion) is like my second home. I worry that some young people are not as interested. People need to be involved; you learn new things and meet other people.

Born: Outside Mexico City to Edith and Neftali Frankel
Married: Irving Rubin, 1966
Children: Marvin, El Paso; Steven, Jerusalem; Betty, Teaneck, NJ. Ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, with one on the way.
Jewish communities: Shaking up how we think

I had been feeling a sense of urgency for quite some time in the work I do as a lay leader for the Jewish community and, it was with this sentiment that Robert Fenske, Dorri Fenebock, JFNA Small Federations National Board member and I attended FEDLab, the Jewish Federation of North America’s revamped General Assembly.

It was an experiment with the leaders of Jewish Federations, partner agencies and other innovative organizations coming together to lay the groundwork for local and collective action. The energy, creativity and intention (kavanah) in the room were palpable. It was clear to every participant that minds were open and people were willing to listen and speak the truth.

The 850 leaders were divided into tracks: Action for Good, EngageJewish and Security. We ate, prayed, sang and listened to inspiring speakers, and then we gathered in small groups to create opportunity for intimate conversations only to rejoin in small groups to create opportunity for collective synthesis. The aim of the conversations was to stay actionable, holistic, empathetic, honest, relational, creative and rigorous.

Research says that only 35 percent of Jews are engaged. It’s troublesome, but research also says that 94 percent of Jews are PROUD of being Jewish, giving us great hope and confidence that 94 percent of Jews are PROUD of being Jewish given our rich traditions—exciting and creative and helps our children better identify with Jewish tradition.

Are we delivering on our missions?

Right now, Federations touch more Jewish lives than any other organization in the world. We distribute over $3 billion in aid which includes: social services, education, humanitarian and crisis relief. Federations protect and enhance the well-being of Jews locally and worldwide. The mission and core values are not what needs to change; it’s the way we go about fulfilling our missions.

We all know that change goes hand in hand with resistance. At FEDLab we learned how to navigate these complex challenges along with strategies and approaches to embrace and create the change that is needed.

Amazing speakers

One night we heard from Lior Zoref, author of “Mind-Sharing: The Art of Crowdsourcing Everything!” Check out his TED Talk with a 1,800-pound ox on stage! He taught us that “Great minds think alike, clever minds think together.” We are part of a network with some 500 Jewish communities. This collective power gives us the resources to affect real change and positive outcomes in our communities, worldwide.

More than 200 rockets were fired on Israel during the conference, but didn’t deter Isaac Herzog, chairman of the executive board for The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), from addressing us in dialogue with Mark Wilf, JFNA board chair. The seriousness of his words was in real time as he spoke about JFNA’s long and important relationship with Israel and world Jewry. His message was hopeful and positive, while stressing the magnitude of anti-Semitism rising to levels we have not witnessed since the Holocaust. Yet we must not let it deter us from celebrating Jewish life in each and every way we identify as Jewish.

I returned from FEDLab full of energy and hope, ready to continue the work we have been doing and I ask you all to ask yourselves how you can get involved as we continue to explore new paths forward for a vibrant, thriving and secure Jewish community. I wish you all a bright season and I hope to see you at one or all of the many, exciting programs in our community.

Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso

Jewish Voice?

Be a “Friend of The Voice” and send your donation to The Voice, Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso, 7110 North Mesa, El Paso, TX 79912. Thank you!

Due Date for the January issue of the Voice: Dec. 10
Due Date for the February issue of the Voice: Jan. 13

915-842-9554 | www.jewishelpaso.org

The Jewish Voice of El Paso, published ten times a year, is dedicated to informing, educating, and uniting the Jewish community by providing news items of local, national, Israeli and international concern.

The Jewish Voice will consider for publication any materials submitted that support the mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso and have relevance and appeal to the El Paso Jewish community. Articles are subject to editing at the editor’s discretion and are subject to space limitations.

Letters cannot be longer than 150 words and articles must be kept to a maximum of 300 words. Please email to thevoice@jfedelpaso.org

Opinions are those of individual writers and not necessarily those of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso. The Jewish Voice is not responsible for the Kashrut of any product or eating establishment advertised herein.

Executive Director: Robert French
Campaign Director: Sue Berndah
President: Janet Kent Wechter
Office: 915-842-6564
7110 North Mesa, El Paso, TX 79912

Editor: Cindy Graff Cohen
Layout and Design: Blaize Garcia
Advertising Pap: Robert Pitar
Printing: PDX Printing

915-842-9554 | www.jewishelpaso.org

Due Date for the January issue of the Voice: Dec. 10
Due Date for the February issue of the Voice: Jan. 13
Friends of the Jewish Voice

The Jewish Voice is mailed at no charge to members of the Jewish community in El Paso and Las Cruces to keep us all aware of our many opportunities for community-building, service, and education here on the Border.

Valerie Barnett
Ira and Irene Batt
Bernadine Belkin
Moshe and Eilynn Bork
Dorothy Borschow
Rachel Eckman
Samuel Ellowitz
Loree Furman
Jay Gladstein
Edward and Susie Goldman
Estelle Goldman
Mary Hines
Stuart and Frances Kahn
Marc Kaplan
Robert and Monika Kimball
Martin and Jody Klein
Joan and Ken Korn
Robert and Elaine Krasne
David Luna
James McCarthy
Sandra McCue Deutsch
Morton and Leannor
Mendelsohn
David and Cindy Metrikin
Ron Roth
Norman and Sylvia Samet
Tibor and Ann Schaechnen
Loli Scott
Anne Spier
Frances Williams
Elinor Williamson
Erich Zameret

Thank you for your generosity! To help pay for printing and postage, please call 915-842-9554 or mail your check to Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso, 7110 Mesa Street, El Paso, Texas 79912.

The January Summer Camp Issue will include reports from a few first-time campers as well as camp pictures from anyone who ever attended a Jewish camp at any time, whether it was 2019 or 1962.

All submissions due: Tuesday, December 10, 2019
Sweet success at “Top Chef-El Paso”

PJ Library’s second edition of “Top Chef-El Paso” on Sunday, November 3, was another successful outing for our Jewish community’s young children and their families. Nearly two dozen attendees—whose ages ranged from 18 months to over 50—gathered upstairs in the Whole Foods community room to make creative “dessert pizzas” and learn about PJ Library.

Alison Westermann, our local PJ Library professional, welcomed the group and explained the activity and then participants had about 40 minutes to design and create dessert pizzas. Some of the ingredients included flour tortillas for the base, chocolate hazelnut spread for the “sauce,” and assorted fruits for the toppings. Some participants preferred to pile on as many pieces of fruit as possible, while others took a step back and made pictures with their food.

You can see even more pictures from this event on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/pjlibraryelpaso).

PJ Library is made possible through a partnership between the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso.

To find out more about PJ Library’s distribution of Jewish books for children and our upcoming local events:
• Visit our Facebook page
• Visit the national website: www.pjlibrary.org
• Call Alison Westermann at 915-443-4084
• Email pjlibrary@jfedelpaso.org
MICHAEL SOLOMONOV DINNER

Join us for an unforgettable evening. An opportunity to enjoy dinner cooked by a formidable icon in the food world and a major force in bringing Israeli cuisine to the United States.

An informal dialogue with Chef Solomonov moderated by Rebecca Krasne will follow dinner.

Registration is available online and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Space is limited. Location will be sent prior to the event.

Tickets go on sale December 2019

www.jewishelpaso.org/jff
Thank you, Sylvia: 50 years!

Since 1968, Sylvia Cohen has been a key part of the Jewish Federation, including her most recent role since 2015 as co-founder and coordinator of Borderland's Café Europa, the Federation’s bi-weekly lunch get-togethers for those of us over 65. At long last, she is retiring this month; however, as she told the crowd at her November 20 retirement luncheon, she will still be involved, but as an attendee rather than organizer.

Nearly 40 long-time friends and members of the Jewish community joined in the celebration at the Greenery and many shared their many happy memories of Sylvia with the group. Her cousin, Ira Bati, reviewed just a few of her accomplishments, starting with her first Jewish Community Center job as senior adult director of the Golden Social Club.

She worked with the Yiddish Food Festival, Jewish Family Services, and different age groups, including young teenagers and Jewish singles. She helped get Chai Manor started and in 1994 she became the first executive director of El Paso’s Holocaust Museum, retiring at age 75. She taught Hebrew at Temple Mount Sinai for 30 years and continues to teach.

Sylvia Cohen has played an important role in the history of the Jewish community in many ways, bringing her incomparable work ethic, high standards, and creativity to projects and groups of all kinds. The entire Jewish community thanks her and wishes her the very best!
In the last year, more than 1,500 area school children have developed the habit – and discovered the joy – of charitable giving, thanks to a new program launched by Rabbi Levi Greenberg of Chabad El Paso and administered by the El Paso Community Foundation. The program, called Acts of Random Kindness or ARK, encourages tzedakah by distributing free plastic banks in the shape of an ark to schools.

Charitable giving habit
Rabbi Greenberg got the idea of distributing the arks, which have two words written on top – Give and Share -- from another Chabad’s successful ARK program in South Africa. The group distributed special yellow arks with two words written on top: Fill and Share.

“Tzedakah is one of the few universal mitzvot that is applicable to everyone,” he said. “Everyone likes the idea of sharing.”

Quoting the leader of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, Rabbi Menachim Mendel Schneerson of righteous memory, known as “The Rebbe,” Rabbi Greenberg stressed that regular giving helps not only others, but ourselves. “The more you give, the more it changes your character. When you have a box to collect your donations right in front of you, it’s a physical reminder to give.”

He went on to add that a unique aspect of charitable giving in Judaism is that we are encouraged to give six days a week. If more people made a habit of giving to good causes, they, too, could help make the world a better place.

In the summer of 2018 Rabbi Greenberg, along with Shari and Stuart Schwartz, members of Temple Mount Sinai, met with staff members of the El Paso Community Foundation to discuss the ARK program for schools. In quick order, the Foundation agreed to take on the project, with input and participation from Rabbi Greenberg.

“The ARK Project is attractive to the Foundation for several reasons, but the biggest part of it is that it puts into practice the idea of philanthropy as a habit,” said Eric Pearson, president/CEO of the El Paso Community Foundation.

Empowering kids
“Rabbi Greenberg had a simple idea, and the Foundation had the capacity to immediately start with the ARK movement through its Classroom Fund,” Pearson added. “It was easy to activate, and has the simple premise of teaching kids to care – and empowering them to take action every single day.”

Rabbi Greenberg says that the program is still in the process of development, but so far it has been very successful and rewarding to students and teachers alike at three schools, two public and one private. The program has generated important classroom discussions about giving.

It starts with a school assembly and distribution of the ark tzedakah boxes, continues with the students’ coins and occasional currency collected each day, and ends with the students voting on where the funds will go. So far, recipients have included the El Paso Humane Society, El Pasoans Fighting Hunger, Annunciation House, and the El Paso Children’s Hospital.

Teaching the habit of giving is particularly powerful for young people. “It is crucial that children be involved in learning to share with others,” he said. “Giving a gift every day leaves a powerful impact on a young mind.”

Rabbi Greenberg believes that El Paso is the only community so far in the United States to be conducting the ARK program on such a large scale – a program he also likes to call Acts of Routine Kindness.

Cindy Geoff Cohen
Editor
The Jewish Voice
At The J Center for Early Learning we focus our students’ attention on ten core Jewish values throughout the year. We assign one value to each month so we can weave these values throughout our curriculum each day. Our children learn about: community (kehilla), respect (kavod), and trustworthiness (emunah), amongst others.

November’s value was caring (chesed) which is about being kind, helping people in need and loving thy neighbor as yourself (Leviticus/ Vayikra 19:18). The children learn about taking care of themselves, their families, our community and our planet.

In several classes the students were learning about taking care of the planet by reducing the amount of garbage we create, reusing whatever we can and recycling whatever can’t be reused. The children are leading the class’s exploration into what happens to something when it gets discarded in the trash or recycling bin, and how that affects our planet and our future.

The children are also learning that you’re never too young to help take care of our community. The teachers have been reading stories and talking about the importance of giving to those in need, emphasizing the joy that comes from helping others.

One way the children get to practice this value is by participating in our annual canned food drive. We have a basket under a “Giving Tree” in our courtyard and invite our students, and their families, to bring canned food and dry goods which will then be donated to El Pasoan’s Fighting Hunger. The children’s excitement grew each day with the growing bounty in the baskets, and the joy of knowing that they are helping to make a difference.

Taking care of one another is another aspect of caring that the children get to practice in their classes each day. One of the job assignments in each class is to be the “Kindness Reporter.” This helps to focus the children’s attention on acts that demonstrate kindness. The kindness reporter records and reports helpful acts, and then shares them with the class during class meetings. This helps the class focus on acts of kindness and helpfulness, operating on the Conscious Discipline Powers of Attention (what you focus on, you get more of), Unity (we are all in this together) and Love (seeing the best in others).

May we all learn to focus on being kind and seeing the best in others as we go throughout our days as well.

Meg Birk
Director
J Center for Early Learning

Holocaust Museum show focuses on love and forgiveness

In addition to the permanent historical exhibits, the El Paso Holocaust Museum is currently hosting a temporary exhibit for all ages entitled XOXO: Love & Forgiveness. The exhibit has been called a “hands-on, interactive exploration of emotions, thoughts, actions, and reactions.”

Created in 2014 by the Pittsburgh Children’s Museum, XOXO has traveled all over the country and continues to spread the exploration of love and forgiveness. In a world full of negativity, anger, and hate, XOXO emphasizes kindness, empathy, and standing up for yourself and others.

Love takes on a new focus at the exhibit. One of the displays includes a quote from Fred Rogers: “Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is let people know that they are loved and capable of loving.”

Participants are encouraged to take a deep breath and consider what makes them happy, sad, or mad. They can ask questions, listen and learn about themselves and the people around them. Using facial expressions, words, movement and art making, XOXO explores what love and forgiveness mean to each person.

This free exhibit is on view at the museum until Tuesday, December 31. The El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center is located at 715 North Oregon Street and is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. For information, call 915-351-0048.
**Light Up Your Life with the Jewish Federation**

Visit jewiselpaso.org/community-calendar for information and registration or call 842-9554

---

December 4, Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.: Borderlands Café Europa and Congregation B’nai Zion Book Zone with Melanie Benjamin, Federation office, 7110 N. Mesa Street

December 8, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.: Build the World’s Largest LEGO Menorah, Don Haskins Rec Center, 7400 High Ridge

December 10, Tuesday, 11:59 p.m.: The Jewish Voice due date for January issue “2019 Baby Announcements” and “I Went to Jewish Camp!” pictures

December 10, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.: Build the City of Jerusalem in LEGO interfaith program, Vino Nuevo Church, 988 Kessler

December 17, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.: ElPasoConnect Chanukah Bash for those of us in our 20s, 30s, and 40s (private home address given upon reservation)

December 10, Tuesday, 11:59 p.m.: The Jewish Voice due date for January issue "2019 Baby Announcements" and "I Went to Jewish Camp!" pictures

December 23, Monday, 5:30 p.m.: Community Chanukah Celebration and Candle Lighting, San Jacinto Plaza Downtown

**Mark Your 2020 Calendars**

January 12, 26; February 9, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.: 2020 El Paso Jewish Film Festival, Alamo Drafthouse

January 22, Wednesday, 6:00 p.m.: 2020 El Paso Jewish Film Festival, Flix Brewhouse

January 23, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.: Pacesetters Campaign Kick-off. Address upon RSVP.

February 16, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.: Rise Against Hunger, Don Haskins Rec Center, 7400 High Ridge Drive

February 20, Thursday, 6:00 p.m.: 2020 El Paso Jewish Film Festival Special Event Dinner with Celebrity Chef Michael Solomonov (private home address given upon reservation)

February 23, Sunday, 12:30 p.m.: 2020 El Paso Jewish Film Festival with Lunch, Alamo Drafthouse

---

**CELEBRATE CHANUKAH WITH B’NAI ZION AND STEVE KATZ**

Growing up in the sixties folk and rock music scene, Steve Katz was a founding member of Blood, Sweat & Tears. He recorded three albums as a member of the Blues Project, and produced albums for Lou Reed and the Irish group, Horslips. Steve recently released his first solo album, Yif Jugelte. He still performs and is a professional photographer and does book talks.

In Blood, Sweat, and My Rock ’n Roll Years Steve Katz recounts fascinating stories in an insightful, intelligent, sometimes wistful and sometimes funny style that makes this one of the few rock memoirs worth reading from beginning to end. It is an honest and personal account of a life at the edge of the spotlight.

---

**NEED PRINTING?**

WE ARE A FULL SERVICE PRINTING SHOP

**Flyers • Business Cards • Postcards • Catalogs • Envelopes • Coupons • Tickets • And Many More**

**Printing**

PDX

100 Porrifio Diaz • El Paso, TX 79902
915.544.6688 • www.pdxprinting.com
FACES AND PLACES

TEMPLE BETH-EL, LAS CRUCES

Past and upcoming B’nai Mitzvah students at Family Shabbat Service

Eight mayoral candidates at TBE Social Action/Adult Education forum

TEMPLE MOUNT SINAI

“83 is the new 13!”
Bob and Elaine Krasne, Bob Blumenfeld, and Shelly Gopin celebrate their b’nai mitzvah

Havdalah in the Hood: Beer Tasting 101

TMS members in Nathan and Letty Stevens’ backyard

B’NAI ZION BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Pet owners of all ages brought their companions to Rabbi Scott Rosenberg for a special blessing
Chanukah Celebration
San Jacinto Plaza
Downtown El Paso

Monday, December 23, 2019
5:30 - 6:30pm

Community Celebration • Candle-lighting
Refreshments

www.jewishelpaso.org