Let's Keep Connecting!

Zooming with the Federation and Moms on Mother's Day
Coronado High School graduate Macy Jordan Gluck may be 18, but I told her she sounds older, both in her ideas and her ability to express them. She said she should thank her two older sisters for that. “Leah and Ali were seven and five years older than me,” Macy laughs. “They were my cool sisters who gave me wisdom beyond my years.”

As we think about new beginnings this month, our community’s seniors got short shrift their last semester and yet, they are thrilled to launch the next chapter. For Macy, the future brings a scholarship to Texas Tech and the opportunity to explore journalism and creative writing. Her plans also include getting involved in a new Jewish community in Lubbock and joining Hillel.

Jewish communal involvement is a big part of Macy’s life, from her nine years of Jewish summer camp to her leadership in her congregation. “I would say that our Jewish community shaped me,” she adds.

For four years, she served as a teacher’s assistant at Temple Mount Sinai’s Religious School and was the president of Mount Sinai Temple Youth (MSTY) group from 2018 to 2020. At the regional level of the National Federation Temple Youth organization (NFTY), she was the NFTY-SW photographer/historian. “Being part of NFTY has been one of the best things that has happened to me,” she says.

Her willingness to step up and lead earned her a spot at the Union of Reform Judaism’s last year of the Kutz Leadership Camp in upstate New York last summer. “Never before had I learned so much about being a good person as I did that summer,” she remembers. “Meeting so many good people in one place was incredible.”

Prior to that, she loved spending eight consecutive summers at Camp Young Judea, where she received the camp’s Mensch Award for Good Citizenship and Best Camper Award.

The Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso also recognized her commitment, naming her Volunteer of the Year in 2018.

Working with kids at Temple from first through eighth grade stands out among her many good memories. “Teaching the middle-schoolers was really fun and I loved all the volunteer work we did. We spent every other week on a volunteer trip to different organizations around town.”

“We made sure that Sunday School was not just about learning the Jewish holidays” she adds. “It was about learning the lifestyle of being Jewish and its emphasis on loving and accepting others and sharing the beauty of being kind.”

Cindy Grinfeld Cohen
Editor, The Jewish Voice

What do you value most in your friends?
I love making friends and I really consider everyone a friend, but I value authenticity above everything else. I think being your most authentic self is really important and I value that in others.

What might we be surprised to learn about your interests/hobbies?
My hobbies include writing, reading, exercising, painting, knitting, dancing, and music – I played in the Coronado band. People might not know that I like comic books, superheroes and graphic novels. I was president of ThunderCon, a one-day Comic-Con-style celebration of music, dance, and fine arts, at Coronado this year, but it didn’t take place this spring.

What are your plans for this year? Where would you like to see yourself five years from now?
This is the big year! Graduation, moving away to college, and starting a new and independent chapter in my life. There is a lot of uncertainty in the world right now. Graduation has already been affected and I am not sure if college will be too, but I wouldn’t be surprised. I am just hoping that throughout this year I can grow and learn and become better. Wow, five years into the future is a lot for me. I hope to have gotten a good education and I hope to get the opportunity to travel and learn and volunteer. I just hope I am making a difference in the world for the better.

Who’s your favorite Jewish hero?
Abby Stein (author, activist, former rabbi, and first openly transgender woman raised in a Hasidic community) came to El Paso a few years ago and I got to meet her and share a meal with her, as well as listen to her life story. I think because I feel a deep connection with her and she is an advocate for women and the LGBTQ+ community, she is my favorite Jewish hero.

What is your favorite Jewish holiday and why?
Tu B’Shvat would have to be my favorite Jewish holiday. I think celebrating nature and really connecting with the earth is so important; especially in the new age of technology. It’s a good reminder to be humble and respect the land we live on.

What would you say to encourage young people to take part in local Jewish activities?
You have nothing to lose! I think a lot of young people (well, really everyone) fear the unknown. They fear being unable to fit in or hating it or losing something, but really participating in new things teaches us so much, regardless if you hate it or not. How would you know that you hate it if you never give it a chance? Encourage young people like me to try and keep an open mind, because you really have nothing to lose from the experience.

What is a favorite memory of your time at Temple Mount Sinai?
I liked being the MSTY representative to Temple’s board of directors. It was part of my job as youth group president and I was only 16, but they treated me like an adult. There I was among highly educated and accomplished leaders and it set me on a track for other good things. The experience taught me a lot about leadership. Temple has just made me such a better person and I cherish every single memory.

What would you say to encourage others to take leadership roles in our Jewish community?
The most important thing to remember is that young people are the future. Each individual has power and it is so important that you fight for what you care about and believe in. That is what life is all about.

What’s the best thing about being part of El Paso’s Jewish community?
I wish I could say everything. If I had to pick one thing, it’s the people. I mean, I really love everyone in this community and everyone I have ever met has made me better. Every conversation, every “wow you’ve gotten so tall,” every hug, just everything I love this community with everything I have because I would not be the person I am without it.
Venitchazek! We will be strong -- together

I am proud our Federation engages all generations, connects our board members with resources and training, and supports our community members, Jewish schools, synagogues, other partner agencies and the greater El Paso community. Our tornado relief efforts were improved and our security, programs and the Jewish Film Festival were enhanced. I believe our community is more united.

As we move forward, I hope we have learned that we are capable of stepping out of our boxes and taking risks. Our experience has given us strength.

From: Janet Kent Wechter
**Perpetual Tzedakah: One couple’s gift for giving**

As second-generation Americans, Jack and I were fortunate to grow up with our “pioneering” grandparents of El Paso. It was a time when our Jewish community was very small and close knit. We all knew each other or were related to each other! Our roots grew deep.

Why create an endowment for this unique community? When I lived in Jerusalem, back in the 70s, I had a friend who never passed a street beggar without giving him a few coins of Tzedakah. I asked him once if he ever got tired of it and his answer is probably one of the reasons that I was motivated to honor our obligation of Tzedakah and to establish an endowment in our community. He told me that these beggars did him a favor— that they gave him an opportunity to fulfill his mitzvah of giving, that he didn’t have to go out of his way to find someone to honor his obligation to give.

When our community established the El Paso Jewish Community Foundation, it gave us an opportunity to create an endowment which is “a gift that keeps giving” long after our ability or opportunity to give in person ends. I am only embarrassed that I procrastinated and took so long to take the first step to create this perpetual offering of Tzedakah. It helps us fulfill the mitzvah of giving, “without having to go out of our way to find a way to fulfill that mitzvah.”

Growing up in El Paso’s Jewish community reinforced the pride and importance of embracing our heritage. Own it – it is a treasure.

Benita Neumann

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**Foundation has filed for favorable tax treatment**

One of the most beneficial tax methods for senior citizens to donate to charities is to make their donations directly out of their Individual Retirement Account (IRA). As long as the senior citizen (now generally at least 72 years of age) is subject to a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), donations to a qualified retirement account (IRA) need not be reported to the IRS as income for the year. Hence, these IRA distribution donations are not included in the calculation of income for the year.

When you decide to donate your IRA distribution to charity, the IRS requires you to receive a written acknowledgment of the donation from the charity. The acknowledgment must include the amount of the distribution and the date of the distribution.

IRA donations are considered charitable contributions to a qualified charity for the year in which the distribution is made. The distribution is treated as income for the year, but the IRS allows you to exclude the amount of the donation from your taxable income.

Donations to a Donor-Advised Fund do not qualify for this beneficial tax treatment.

As a separate Public Charity, qualified donors may establish a Designated Fund with the Foundation and fund it with RMDs from their IRAs as soon as the Foundation has received official designation as a Public Charity. Please note, donations to a Donor-Advised Fund do not qualify for this beneficial tax treatment.

Cliff Eisenberg, Foundation president, and Robert French, Foundation executive director, welcome you to contact them to discuss the establishment of a Designated Fund in your name. As always, prospective donors should consult with their tax advisor concerning their reporting requirements of any planned tax transactions.

Established in 2002, The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso is committed to protect the fund’s principal while generating current income for the Jewish community of El Paso and Las Cruces. More than $4,000,000 has been given back to the community since 2004; $533,000 was distributed to local Jewish organizations and projects in 2019. As of December 31, 2019, the Foundation held assets of $11,970,000.

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**Readers Write: Fed’s Seder delivery**

“Please extend my thanks for the Seder in a Box! Yesterday was a tough day and I can’t begin to tell you how much I appreciate being included. Good tears.”

“We greatly appreciate being included in the Passover meal distribution for seniors. This community gesture helped to break the loneliness of our prolonged self-quarantine.”

“We are so appreciative of the Passover Seder meals we received from the Federation and Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso. It certainly made the holiday special. Thank you so much for including us.”

“Thank you for including me – it was super nice.”

“Thank you all for the seder package of plate, food and book.”

“Thank you for the food that was delivered to my house, I really appreciated it and that it is a beautiful thing.”

“Thank you again for the Passover Dinner that Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation sponsored. Such a treat and all so very good. We are most appreciative of the Jewish community of El Paso.”

“You are all doing such an outstanding job. Kudos it is very much appreciated.”

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**Call-in events for June**

**Puppy Love and the Cat’s Meow**

with Deb Benedict
CEO Of El Paso Humane Society

Wednesday, July 8, 2020 | 11:30 am

**Harvesting Wisdom with Legacy Letters**

with Joanne Turnbull

Wednesday, July 29, 2020 | 11:30 am

**Zoom Meeting ID 818 9321 5592**

Check weekly email for registration dates to have a light lunch delivered to your home.

We look forward to “seeing” you.

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**Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso Board**

President: Cliff Eisenberg
Vice President: Stuart P. Shiloff
Vice President: Alan Krasne
Treasurer: Rose Schecter
Secretary: Robin Furman
Executive Director: Robert French

Board Members: Robert Beckoff, Marcia Dahlberg, Brenda Ehrlich, Joyce Jaffee, Robert Krasne, Meyer Marcus, Cindy Metrikin, Jerry Rubin, Shari Schwartz, Robert Shiloff and Randy Wechter

JFED Board Representative: Janet Wechter

For more information, visit jcfep.org or call 915-842-9554
Zoo Zooming with bugs, bunny, and bird

Over 60 kids and parents took a virtual walk on the wild side through the El Paso Zoo’s Zoom classroom in May. Presented by the PJ Library in partnership with the J Center for Early Learning, the successful event combined story time and animal encounters to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Lag B’Omer.

It’s a day that is often celebrated with gatherings, bonfires and barbecues, as well as trips. Since we couldn’t gather physically, we gathered virtually to observe the essence of the holiday. Students and PJ Library families listened to local PJ Library specialist Alison Westermann read the story “Why Dogs Have Wet Noses.” From their own kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms, the children intently followed the pictures on the screen.

The program then was turned over to the El Paso Zoo’s education specialist and “Zoo Adventure” coordinator Sarah Murphy. She led a segment where students learned about some of the animals in the zoo’s collection and why it’s so important to care for these creatures, even the creepy-crawly ones! We got to see three creatures “close up” — a bunny, some hissing cockroaches, and a bird, which was very talkative. The students were delighted with it!

Students had time to ask very insightful questions, followed by a follow-up lesson with their preschool teachers to reinforce the field trip. It was a terrific partnership and PJ Library looks forward to strengthening the connection between and among all the partner agencies of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso during these times of virtual programming as well as in the future when we can gather again physically. For more information about PJ Library, check out our Facebook page: facebook.com/pjlibraryelpaso
Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso

Executive Committee 2020-22

Monika R. Kimball
President
Retired Professor/Director of ESL Programs
Born: Berlin, Germany
Spouse: Robert Kimball, Ph.D.
Children: Angela F. Brockman and Claudene E. Blake
I believe in the JFED’s mission and wish to support its programs on behalf of the El Paso and Las Cruces communities and abroad.

Leslie Beckoff
First Vice President – Governance
Volunteer
Born: Ottawa, Ontario
Spouse: Robert Beckoff
Daughter: Jordan Beckoff (David Feiner)
Working as a volunteer with the Jewish Federation is my way of giving back, both with my time and contributions, because building a strong, secure and happy Jewish community in El Paso is our future. The Jewish Federation also allows me to help combat the increase of anti-Semitism and it supports Jews worldwide and in Israel. As it has been said, “We are Stronger Together.”

Debra P. Kanof
Second Vice President – JCRC Chair
(Jewish Community Relations Council)
Attorney
Born: New York, N.Y.
Children: None, unless you count my dog, Harper Lee Kanof
Why have I chosen to serve on our JFED board? It chose me.

Bill Stein, Ph.D.
Secretary
Retired Research Scientist/Engineering Instructor
Born: Louisville, Kentucky
Spouse: Susan Michelson
Children: Sarah, David, Scott and Barbara
I have a strong commitment to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the greater Jewish community of El Paso and Las Cruces. I believe that, as a board member of the Jewish Federation, I have the opportunity to fulfill this commitment.

Dan Sonnen
Treasurer
Wealth Advisor
Born: Fort Worth
Spouse: Vanessa Sonnen
Son: David
I serve on the JFED board so that I can have a positive impact on the outcomes of local Jewish philanthropy, something I have been passionate about since my Birthright Israel trip.

Janet Wechter
Immediate Past President
Interior Designer
Born: Shreveport, Louisiana
Spouse: Randy Wechter
Children: Ryan and Jenny
I choose to serve on the JFED board because I believe in its mission. I also serve so that my volunteer work will benefit the greater El Paso Jewish community and the Federation’s partner agencies around the globe and its relationship to Israel.

“I chose to serve the Federation as president out of a sense of duty to and love for my Jewish communities here and in Las Cruces. That may sound like a platitude, but I truly mean it. I can assure you that despite the pandemic and the lack of in-person meetings, YOUR Federation Leadership and its dedicated staff have been working remotely in keeping with its mission and will continued to do so.

I will contact many of you in the near future and hope that we can work together to enhance the goals of the Federation, to be vigilant in fighting antisemitism and to always remember that WE ARE ONE.

If ever there were a time to support the ideals and promises of this Federation, it is now. We need your involvement, your volunteer spirit and, of course, your financial support. Not just for us locally, but also for our Jewish communities here and abroad.

I look forward to working with you and our Federation. If I can be of help to you in any way, please contact me via the Federation office.”

83rd Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 18
6:00 p.m.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89778591869
Join Us Virtually as We Celebrate Our Jewish Community

Watch your email for zoom link

Enjoy a video presentation on the Federation’s past year
See who wins the iPad raffle for Jewish Community Demographic Survey early respondents
Thank Janet Wechter for her service to our community and the Jewish world as Board President
Thank outgoing Board members: Shari Ehrlich, Eitan Lavi, Ophra Leyser-Whalen, and Peter Svarzbein

First-Year Board Members 2020-22

Robin Farman
Campaign Co-Chair
Community Volunteer and Full-time Wife, Mother and Daughter
Born: Richmond, Virginia
Spouse: Tony Farman
Children: Adam Farman (Wendy), Jordan Farman (Allison)
I am serving because of my strong commitment to the local and world Jewish community and my love of Israel. With coronavirus making life more challenging at the moment, my commitment of time and presence to an organization like JFED that impacts so many people in need locally has been very personally rewarding.

Ben Kaufman
Not pictured: second-year board member

Tatiana Judith Avila
Communication and Marketing Coordinator
St. Davids and Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare
Born: El Centro, California
Father Spouse: Engaged to Peter Suchanek
Children: None. My only since what I raised, Venice Michelle – and two dogs
I am actively involved in several local/national boards, nonprofits, and organizations. I enjoy contributing to the community in any way possible. When approached about this opportunity, I was delighted. I would love to help grow this amazing organization, as well as elevate Jewish identity and community and an organization that fosters and promotes Jewish identity and community.

Dana Frank
Volunteer Senator
Born: El Paso
Spouse: Adam Frank
Children: Drew, Jamie and Lane
I chose to serve on the JFED board because I am first and foremost, a community member. I hope to contribute and continue the 2020 Film Festival, the amazing work and impact it has on the Jewish community of El Paso.

Noel Hollowell-Small
Entrepreneur at Palm Beauty Brands
Born: Los Angeles
Spouse: Brian Small
Children: Derrick and Evelynn
We passionately seek and maintain strong Jewish community, regardless of affiliation, and I hope to accomplish this by serving on our Jewish Federation board.

Second-Year Board Members 2020-21

Lea Chayes
CEO, 681 Investments
Born: Jerusalem, Israel
Partner: Steve Newman
Children: Jason Chayes (Lea), Mia Feller (Yael), and Adam Chayes (Roe)
I am an experienced time filler. I think that our strongest bond is our community and our religious unity. This is the time to come together as a community to preserve and strengthen our Jewish community and our neighbors and friends.

Cesar Carrasco
Professor, Civil Engineering
Born: Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua
Children: Sofer (Yaniv), and Adam Chayes (Roe)
I served on the JFED board, and I found the work interesting and beneficial to the Jewish Community. I enjoyed working with the other volunteers and leadership. Many organizations worry about their individual needs. The JFED encouraged and helped fund several of these worthwhile groups. The leadership showed direction and helped them focus on what they each did best.

Wendy Lanski
Campaign Co-Chair
Moms and Community Volunteer
Born: St Louis, Missouri
Spouse: Dr. Steven Lanski
Children: Luffy Chaya and Luca Hanan
I discovered in my late 20s that my whole maternal family was Jewish. It was then I “found myself.” Fast forward, I’m committed to and passionate about making Jewish life, education and community a priority for my family. The El Paso Jewish Community is unique and the Jewish Federation is at the heart of it all.

Marc Ellman, M.D.
Children’s Orthopaedic Specialist in Cerebral Palsy
Born: Peekskill, New York
I have seen some of the wonderful things that the Federation has been doing and would be honored to be a part of that. This has become even more special to me as my father sadly passed away from COVID-19; he was very happy when I decided I’m joining the Federation board. Judaism was very important to him and one of the most important things in the world to him is participation in the Federation.

Carlos Kaplan
Small business owner at First Finance Co.
Born: Mexico City
Spouse: Sofia
Children: Jonathan and Allexa
I have previously served on the JFED board and I found the work interesting and beneficial to the Jewish Community. I enjoyed working with the other volunteers and leadership. Many organizations worry about their individual needs. The JFED encouraged and helped fund several of these worthwhile groups. The leadership showed direction and helped them focus on what they each did best.

Stephanie Calvo
Editor-in-Chief
Born: Providence, Rhode Island
Children: Daniel Calvo (Ryley), Luis Calvo (Brianna), Andre Calvo
I serve on the Board to promote the organization that fosters and supports a continuously evolving Jewish identity and community and goodwill towards others.

Martha Eisenberg
Play at being “Gaga” to our seven grandchildren
Born: El Paso
Spouse: Cliff Eisenberg
Children: Jana Eisenberg (Staim Magazinn), Dr. Laura Eisenberg (Adam Rosenfield), Emerit Eisenberg (Cheryl)
I love El Paso and want to see the Jewish community thrive not only for my grand children, but for our entire community.
Mazel Tov to 2020 Graduates!

Julian Cohen
Silva Health Magnet High School
Plans: Attend Texas Tech University and major in Kinesiology.
Grandparents: Kenneth and Sandra Levine and Julius and Shirley Cohen (of blessed memory)

It is important to stay active with Judaism and to never forget your roots. By taking part in USY, I have done just that: meeting new people, having incredible experiences and reconnecting with my faith. To me, everyone should give it a try; you never know what you are missing.

Elise Ehrlich
Coronado High School
Plans: Attend Washington University in St. Louis to major in history on the school's premed track.
Parents: William and Jennifer Ehrlich
Brother: Adin
Grandparents: Herb and Brenda Ehrlich

Never be afraid to push yourself to do your best. It's easy to be satisfied with an average grade, but pushing yourself in your studies to learn the material and get a higher grade involves more work and it's worth it in the end. Success doesn't come easy; it comes with patience and devotion.

Conner Fraker
Coronado High School
Plans: Attend Texas Tech.
Parents: Liz and Trey Fraker
Siblings: Andrew and Zachary
Grandparents: Gloria Dembovicius, Tony Alvillar, Rusty Fraker

I would tell the other graduates that all your hard work has paid off. Your life is just beginning and the best days are yet to come. The sky is the limit!

Brenda Hamicha
American University
Plans: After graduating in political science with certificate in Spanish translation, return to Washington, D.C. and continue to work at the State Department or other government position for a year before pursuing graduate school.
Parents: Dina and Dani Hamicha
Sisters: Shirly and Denise

Work hard and don’t give up. As cliché as it may sound, it’s the truth. Anything in life can be achieved with hard work and with not giving up. No dream is too big!

Alexandra (Jita) Holderman
Franklin High School
Plans: Attend Texas Tech, major in biology and minor in business.
Parents: Christopher and Patricia Holderman
Siblings: Twin Madison, Wesley and Lauren
Grandmother: Jeanne Moye (of blessed memory); Uncle: John Moye

I’d encourage students to work as hard as possible right now to the best of their abilities, even in difficult circumstances, because hard work now is the best way to guarantee the ability to reap amazing rewards in the future.

Madison Holderman
Coronado High School
Plans: Attend Texas Tech; major in nutrition.
Parents: Christopher and Patricia Holderman
Siblings: Twin Jita, Wesley and Lauren
Grandmother: Jeanne Moye (of blessed memory); Uncle: John Moye

No matter what the movies say, high school isn’t as bad as it seems. Don’t be afraid to be yourself and make sure to love what you do and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.

Emily Zenner
Coronado High School
Plans: Attend Yale University with hopes of pursuing a career in medicine or law.
Mother: Elisa Kahn
Siblings: Jacob and Julia
Grandparents: Frances and Stuart Kahn

I’d encourage students to work as hard as possible right now to the best of their ability, even in difficult circumstances, because hard work now is the best way to guarantee the ability to reap amazing rewards in the future.

Grace Marks
Las Cruces High School
Plans: Attend University of New Mexico to study music and business.
Parents: Ross and Debra Marks
Siblings: Kagan and Mason Marks
Grandparents: Mark (of blessed memory) and Stefanie Medoff

Always pursue what you want to do in life, no matter if someone tells you that you cannot succeed that way. It is your life and you are to write your story. Spend time with family, although in teenage years they may seem a tad annoying to you, when you look back on these years you will always remember those who helped you through, let them be your family.

Elijah-James Hagins
Coronado High School
Plans: Attend Temple University in Philadelphia.
Parents: Sarah Williams and Andre Hagins
Grandparents: Bill and Yolanda Radcliffe and Brian Williams
Siblings: Noah and Hannah

Don’t be afraid to jump into new things or to test your comfort zone. Life is all about discovery and you might just find who you are doing something you may have never thought yourself capable of.

Tony Alvillar, Rusty Fraker
Grandparents: Gloria Dembovicius, Tony Alvillar, Rusty Fraker

I would tell the other graduates that all your hard work has paid off. Your life is just beginning and the best days are yet to come. The sky is the limit!

Brenda Hamicha
American University
Plans: After graduating in political science with certificate in Spanish translation, return to Washington, D.C. and continue to work at the State Department or other government position for a year before pursuing graduate school.
Parents: Dina and Dani Hamicha
Sisters: Shirly and Denise

Work hard and don’t give up. As cliché as it may sound, it’s the truth. Anything in life can be achieved with hard work and with not giving up. No dream is too big!
New school set for inaugural year

Enthusiastic parents, a united board, and strong educators have fast-tracked The Cherry Hill School to a great start. Classrooms are set up and waiting for students, along with a computer lab, art room, and science lab. Kids and staff hope to be at the Congregation B’nai Zion August 10, pending the same concerns that every school and house of worship share with COVID-19 this year.

The inaugural first-grade class is ready to go, with potential for a second-grade class and an additional first-grade room if needed, says Susie Gibson, head of school administration. Classes are limited to twelve students each.

For parents whose pre-schoolers have come up through the Jewish Center for Early Learning at Temple Mount Sinai, the good news is that the new elementary school will combine elements of Reggio Emilia student-driven curriculum along with proven pedagogical practices of Finland, one of the world’s top countries in educational innovation and achievement. Kids and parents had a chance to visit and try out learning activities at one of the school’s open houses in February.

Joining Susie will be Sandy Garza, head of curriculum, and language teacher Amanda Martin. Classes will go beyond the usual first-grade fare and will introduce foreign languages, art, music, science, technology, engineering, the arts, math, computers, sports and more.

Students will work on their Hebrew vocabulary following the Moskowitz “Learning Hebrew Through Movement” program. Outdoor adventure education is another important part of the program, promoting teamwork, personal development, and environmental stewardship.

The school will use Jewish teachings to teach universal lessons of respect, kindness, empathy and charity, with the goal to give children the confidence that they need to make good choices and make a difference in our world.

Learning on the road

Earlier this year, Susie and Sandy were inspired from their visits to other schools following the Reggio Emilia philosophy and open enrollment Judiacs. Wendy Lanski, mother of an enrolled first-grade student and wife of the school’s board chair, pediatric emergency physician, Dr. Steve Lanski, joined the research trip.

“This experience gave both Sandy and me a baseline of information to consider and build on at The Cherry Hill School,” says Susie.

The College School in St. Louis and The Lippman Jewish Day School in Akron gave the women insights into classroom setup, daily schedules, learning environments, and even extra-curricular classes.

In Akron, they gained a better understanding of how the school’s Jewish strand incorporated Judaic studies. In St. Louis, they saw the impact of using a model of inquiry learning generated from student interest and exploration. “We can provide a higher level of academics and create a culture of thinkers,” adds Susie.

“We left the tour feeling very enthusiastic for the opportunity to build upon this experience and a vision to facilitate the learning process that addresses the whole child.”

The J Center for Early Learning is an especially magical place. We get to share so many new beginnings with the children, and their families, from taking first steps to hearing first words and so much in between.

Often, we are our students’ first school and their first experience being away from Mom and Dad for a good part of the day. As they get older we get to help them as they read their first words and, with that, begin to open up an entire world of learning.

However, one of our favorite firsts has to be their very first friendships. Many of our students start with us when they are just one or two years old so, often they don’t even remember when they first met their friends. What they do know, though, is how much they love laughing, playing and discovering things together.

Walk into any one of our classrooms and you’ll see students working together, helping, and encouraging one another. They are there to cheer each other on, every single day, and to cheer each other up, whenever that’s needed, too. This is why you’ll often hear talk of our “J family” and it’s one of the many reasons we can’t wait until we can all be together once again.

Meg Birk
Director
J Center for Early Learning

Chaplain’s Catering

Gerry Chaplain

3950 Doniphan, Suite P
El Paso, Texas 79922
(915) 585-0595
goodfood@whc.net

New beginnings every day at The J
Antisemitism has been called “the longest hatred,” and it’s an apt characterization. It has been around for centuries, and it persists. It is why the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 and as antisemitism often signals a rise in other types of hatred, it is why ADL has a two-part mission: “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all.”

ADL has just released a comprehensive report on the history of antisemitism entitled “Antisemitism Uncovered” which can be read at antisemitism.adl.org. It includes a definition of antisemitism, put simply, “hatred toward Jews,” and information on how antisemitic tropes and stereotypes began and continue to be used today.

Antisemitism and the pandemic

While anti-Jewish hatred shares characteristics with other types of hate, it often is based on contradictory logic that envisions Jews both as overly powerful, and very weak, or even subhuman.

For example, ADL’s Center on Extremism has been monitoring posts by extremists about Jews and COVID-19. The posts alternately blame Jews for spreading the virus in order to control the world and profit and offer examples of Jews being sick and weak with the virus or illustrations of Jews as the virus itself.

Responding to and reporting antisemitism

ADL has vehicles for reporting and tracking antisemitism. If you see an antisemitic incident or crime, report it to us at www.adl.org/reportincident. The incident will be investigated and addressed by ADL, if appropriate, and it will be entered into our yearly “Audit of Antisemitic Incidents,” which helps us and law enforcement see trends and respond to them. If judged to be a true antisemitic incident, it will show up on our “Antisemitism Tracker” and may appear on ADL’s “H.E.A.T. Map,” which tracks Hate, Extremism, Antisemitism, and Terrorism.

Antisemitism is at a high right now. We must address it immediately, effectively, and comprehensively, before it gets worse. Know that ADL has fought antisemitism for 107 years, and will continue that fight as long as it is needed, and we can be successful, with your help.

Dena Marks
Senior Associate Director
ADL’s Southwest Regional Office - Houston
(sister of Ronnie Marks of blessed memory)

News from Our ADL Region: “Antisemitism Uncovered”

Antisemitism has been called “the longest hatred,” and it’s an apt characterization. It has been around for centuries, and it persists. It is why the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 and as antisemitism often signals a rise in other types of hatred, it is why ADL has a two-part mission: “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all.”

ADL has just released a comprehensive report on the history of antisemitism entitled “Antisemitism Uncovered” which can be read at antisemitism.adl.org. It includes a definition of antisemitism, put simply, “hatred toward Jews,” and information on how antisemitic tropes and stereotypes began and continue to be used today.

Antisemitism and the pandemic

While anti-Jewish hatred shares characteristics with other types of hate, it often is based on contradictory logic that envisions Jews both as overly powerful, and very weak, or even subhuman.

For example, ADL’s Center on Extremism has been monitoring posts by extremists about Jews and COVID-19. The posts alternately blame Jews for spreading the virus in order to control the world and profit and offer examples of Jews being sick and weak with the virus or illustrations of Jews as the virus itself.

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We had a plan…

They were demonstrating one of the most central Jewish values that has sustained our community over the centuries: adaptability.

significant family and communal events. I have been reviewing some of those materials in recent weeks. These materials describe my presence at special moments in people’s lives. They recount my reflections on the meaning of Jewish holidays and personal and congregational milestones.

Timelines of my favorite science fiction series do intrigue me. What I do know is this: I was ordained almost 39 years ago. I have notebooks containing articles by me and about me from local and national press, Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs, High Holy Day sermons, and photos from music as a way to give voice to what we hold inside our Jewish souls. And they demonstrate how much Rhonda and I have done together to make Judaism come to life for the communities where we have lived.

During our last Religious School session, held on Zoom, I asked the members of our learning community what Jewish values they believe are important now, more than ever before. They cited principles that could have been chosen at most any time: being attentive to one’s own health; community; practicing Judaism at home; kindness/Chesed; remembrance; family; generosity; peace in the home/shalom bayit; tzedakah; acceptance; patience; connection; compassion; joy/simcha; and gratitude.

Soon after the conclusion of our online meeting, one of the parents called me and asked Rhonda and me to go outside on our driveway. The Religious School families had organized a thank-you drive-by caravan for our years serving Temple and the Religious School.

They were demonstrating one of the most central Jewish values that has sustained our community over the centuries: adaptability. I can only think as their cars passed by our home, that God had blessed their secret plan…and that God was laughing and smiling at their success.

And that is how I will go into the next chapter of my rabbinate: ready to expect the unexpected, and prepared to serve in any way I can no matter where I will be. Rhonda and I thank Temple Beth-El, the Las Cruces community, and the regional Jewish community for the opportunity to be partners in enhancing Jewish life. May we always be strong and gain greater strength for ourselves, so that we can strengthen one another.

Rabbi Larry Karol
Temple Beth-El
2011-20

Rabbi Larry Karol:
Congratulations on Your Retirement
With Best Wishes Always

Temple Beth-El and the Jewish community of Las Cruces and El Paso extend our deepest gratitude to Rabbi Larry and his wife Rhonda for their service, their wisdom and especially their friendship.

Career of scholarship and leadership

• 1981: Ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati
• 1981-2011: Three decades serving congregations in Dayton, Ohio; Topeka, Kansas, and Dover, New Hampshire
• 2011: Became the fifth full-time spiritual leader of Temple Beth-El, a congregation launched in 1953

We had a plan for 2020.

After my retirement from the active congregational rabbinate at Temple Beth-El at the end of June, Rhonda and I were going to move to a community in the Midwest that we knew quite well. We had not yet determined what it might be to do in terms of activities and service to local organizations, but we believed that our connections would organically develop over time.

Normally, I might describe a need to alter our course for the coming months by referring to the Yiddish saying, Mann Planiert, Un Gott Lacht (Man Plans, and God Laughs).

I don’t believe in a God who would laugh at what is happening now. I do believe in a God who would help us to be grateful for our lives, guide us to find new ways to promote healing for ourselves and others, and inspire us to sustain communal hope and to brighten our days enough so that we won’t lose our sense of humor.

My path in May and June toward retirement was always going to include organizing and downsizing files and my collection of books. I had planned to continue leading weekly study groups, conduct worship services, bring the Religious School year to a close (on May 3), officiate at a group Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah (on May 2), and hold a Confirmation service for our oldest students in Religious School.

Most of that is still happening, just not in person. Confirmation will wait until the meaning of Jewish holidays and personal and congregational milestones.

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MY FUNNY QUARANTINE
Back by Popular Demand
An Evening with Comedian
Elon Gold
Sunday, June 7
Cocktails: 7:45 pm
w/ Michael Mandel
Show Begins: 8:15 pm
ZOOM and Facebook
Please register: https://conta.cc/3bHGCAH
Donation to our 2020 Community Campaign requested so that we may continue to do our vitally important work in our community during these unprecedented times
www.jewishelpaso.org/give • LetsConnect@JFedElPaso.org