You Asked…

Jewish El Paso – Connecting El Paso to Las Cruces and beyond…

You asked us to become more relevant, investing in Jewish life. And we are…

We believe in, and wholeheartedly support, formal and informal Jewish education. We are focusing our resources on our Jewish future, on caring for our seniors, on mental health, on guaranteeing the availability of Kosher food deliveries, on emergency funding for those in need, on holiday meals and treats, and on ensuring our community partners have the support they need to succeed.

We build relationships with local, national and international leaders and organizations to engender strong partnerships to tackle the 21st challenges and opportunities head on. We bring our community together through film, volunteer and leadership opportunities and innovative and engaging programming. We chose our new look, based on the wonderful colors of the landscape of El Paso and Las Cruces and the magnificent sunsets. We chose the colors in the flame to represent the diversity that makes up our exceptional community.

We hope you find this website and our new look easier to navigate, and that our community calendar is more helpful in exploring the plethora of Jewish living and learning that El Paso and Las Cruces have to offer.

Jewish El Paso – Connecting El Paso to Las Cruces, is here for you, #Hereforgood.
FACES & Places
AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

Borderland’s Café Europa – It’s Just Lunch

ElPasoConnect: Relax @Relaxe
By Lori Gaman, Committee Co-Chair

“Do we express our unfeigned joy and thankfulness for having a great and good Queen to reign over us by toasting her in flat soda water? Forbid the deed!” – Victorian journalist Edward Spencer Mott (1844-1910)

Whether Queen Victoria or Queen Esther, Mott’s reference to the tradition of toasting resonates as Purim approaches. With a raised cup we say l’chayim! “To life!”

Often-unnoticed cultural rituals like “l’chayim” are wrapped up in history, custom, and myth. Upon a (very) cursory glance at traditional toasts from around the world, l’chayim appears unique. Many Asian cultures toast with words meaning: “Empty the glass!” (Kanpai! in Japan, Gun Bae! in South Korea, Gān Bēi! in China). Many European and Latin American cultures invoke the blessing of health (Salud! in many Spanish speaking countries, Saluti! in Italian, Za zdróvʹje! in Russian). The Latin prosit (goodness) makes its way into many cultures too (Proost! in Dutch, and the possible source of Cheers! in English).

While not an exhaustive study on toasting rituals around the world, a culture’s standard toast seems to speak to its values. Some “empty the cup” to honor the host. Others invoke blessings of lasting health or momentary joy. For the Jewish people, every gathering is a time to give thanks for life itself. Even when we raise a glass to bless a specific occasion (i.e., congratulating a wedding couple), we conclude with l’chayim. We emphasize how lucky we are to be alive.

So, perhaps it is no surprise that Purim traditionally involves imbibing (however, keep in mind the many Jewish principles encouraging us not to drink, and the obligations against risking our health by doing things like drinking to excess). Purim’s customs encourage us to reflect on the miracle of existence, individual and communal, every day. With “l’chayim” we make no assumptions about what tomorrow will bring. We pause to give thanks just for being alive.

From the first words we say when we wake up in the morning (Modeh/Modah ani l’fanecha – I give thanks to you, O Sovereign of Life, who has restored my soul to me) to the major themes of the bedtime Shema (including “Lay us down, O God, in peace. Raise us up [in the morning] to life”). Whatever else may be happening, we continually focus with gratitude on the most basic, most important aspect of existence when we say: To Life! Chag Purim Sameach – Happy Purim!
Thank You to our Donors and Supporters
Community Campaign 2022
as of February 28, 2022

Patron
Bob Shiloff

Leader
Jon and Arlene Sonnen

Sponsors
Dan Blumenfeld
Michael and Susan Jaffe
Arvin Robinson

Supporter
Eddie and Susie Goldman
Mike and Susan Jaffe
Debra Kanof
Carlos Kaplan
Sofia Kaplan
Judith Keller
Alan Krasne
Rebecca Krasne

Partner
Amy Goldfarb
Harvey Greenberg and Idelle Weisman
Judi Keller
Robert and Monika Kimball

Fellow
Julian Horowitz
Stuart Kelter and Leora Zeitlin
Joan Korn
Ken Korn
Gloria Lavis
Sondy Lillebo
Dorene Naparstek
Mimi Pittle
Lane Reedman

Friends
Randy and Lueetta Fertel
Rose Gaillardo - Herrera
Steve Geller
Mendle Goldberg
Sydney Goltz
Allen Green
Richie and Leslie Grodin
Holly Hernandez
Daniel and Linsey Kaplan
Marlene Levine

Jewish Film Festival
Sam Ellowitz
Adam and Dana Frank
Bary Fisher
Jack Heydemann
Ita and Becky Horowitz
Susan May

L’Chaim to Living
The Goldfarb Law Firm
Rose Jacobs
Robert and Monika Kimball
Bob and Elaine Krasne
Lauterbach Financial Advisors
Elizabeth Lewis
Michael and Barbara Mandel
Meyer and Mindy Marcus
Jon and Lory Rogers
Adam Rosenfield and Lauren Eisenberg

** Donor Advised Fund through The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso
*** Designated Fund through The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso

915-842-9554 | www.jewishelpaso.org
21, 348 meals packed at Rise Against Hunger!
We Rise By Lifting Others – A Special Thank You To…

**Supporter**
El Paso Subaru

**Chai Sustainer Sponsorship**
Shari and Stuart Schwartz

**Chai Life Sponsorship**
Michelle and Dan Blumenfeld
Cherryl and Les Lieberman

**Golden Ticket**
Stacy and Marshall Berry
Lee Chayes
Mark Fenenbock
Robert French
Erica Horton
Stuart Kahn
Joanne Turnbull
Alison and David Westermann

**Cherryll and Les Lieberman**
Marcy and Bruce Wagman

**Amber Vourazeris**

**Shari and Stuart Schwartz**

**General**
Andrew Grine
Duke Grine
Judith Grodin
Liz Grzela
Sarah Heller Pena
Marcelo Herrera
Marlo Herrera
Janeth Herrera
Victor Hollowell
Erica Horton
Joyce Jaffee
Lindsay Jaffee
Debra Kanof
Monika Kimball
Robert Kimball
Bob Krasne
Elaine Krasne
Zachary Krasne
Steve Lanski
Liam Lanski
Libi Lanski
Wendy Lanski
Marlene Levine
Ophra Leyser-Whalen
Kaley Mamone
Lily Mamone
Ed Mendez
Rebecca Mendez
Linda Miner
Robert Novick
William Orantes
Ezra Ozanich
Jericho Ozanich
Jackson Pena
Naomi R Estrada
Felicia Rubin
Marvin Rubin
Sonya Saunders
Marilyn Silverstein
Brian Small
Derrick Small
Noel Hollowell Small
Jacob Stevens
Susan Taylor
Aaron Weislow
Dina Westermann
Samuel Westermann
Eytan Whalen
Oren Whalen
Lisa Wolfe
Ben Zeidman
Isabel Zeidman
Katie Zeidman
Oliver Zeidman

915-842-9554 | www.jewishelpaso.org
Rise Against Hunger!
As we celebrate International Woman’s Day and in view of the upcoming holiday of Purim, it behooves us to pay homage to Queen Esther, our female ancestor and heroine of many a Purim Spiel. In fact, I’ve played her part myself and tried to transport myself into the year ca. 475 BCE to try to imagine her life at the court of the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in Shushan. As you know, the story begins however, when Esther was put to the test by Mordechai who beseeched her to save the Jewish people who had been condemned for extermination. Esther reluctantly agreed and devised a strategy to carry out Mordechai’s suggestion. Without her courage and love for our people, the Purim story would be quite different.

We must remember that just approaching the king uninvited was reason enough to be put to death. That act alone took courage, let alone her commitment to the strategy, steely will, and loyalty to our people. You can call her “action oriented” just as we describe our Jewish faith to the world, and Esther let her faith and values guide her actions. That tenacity ultimately led the King to reverse his decree to kill the Jews, to which he had previously agreed.

This Wonder Woman of ancient times clearly stepped out of her comfort zone and that takes courage. Modern women to a lesser degree, step out of their comfort zones every day to make the courageous decisions that are necessary for them to attain their full potential and fulfill their purpose on earth. Let’s salute them and be ever appreciative to Esther for her heroic action to save our ancestry.

Chag Purim Sameach,
Monika Kimball, President,
Jewish El Paso

Deborah and Jael, Two Brave Female Judges of the Bible

In Biblical times, judges were often prophets “instructed in Divine knowledge by the inspiration of the Spirit of G-d” and civic leaders, given authority to judge “Israel as G-d’s mouth to them; correcting abuses, and redressing grievances.” On many occasions, the judges also served as military commanders who led Israel in battle against foreign adversaries.

Deborah in the Bible was one of these Judges. She rendered her judgments beneath a date palm tree between Ramah in Benjamin and Bethel in the land of Ephraim.

Deborah’s story is contained in the Fourth and Fifth chapters of the book of Judges. There we learn that Deborah was called to deliver the Israelites from the Canaanites as the fifth Judge. Deborah led Israel against the Canaanites, their king Jabin, and their military general Sisera, calling on a Jewish warrior named Barak to command Israel’s army. To Deborah’s request, Barak famously replied, “if you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go” (Judges 4:8). Deborah agreed to accompany Barak. However, she informed him that, because of his hesitancy, “the honor shall not be yours… for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.” (Judges 4:9).

While G-d sent Deborah the prophetess to destroy the Canaanite army, the glory, however, went to another female Judge, Jael the Kenite. As Israel routed Sisera’s forces at Mount Tabor, Sisera, the Canaanite general, escaped, seeking refuge in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judges 4:17). But as Canaan’s top military leader slept soundly, Jael shoved a tent spike through Sisera’s head, killing him where he lay (Judges 4:21).

Acknowledged as one of the first pieces of Biblical poetry, Judges 5, contains the “song” of Deborah and Barak. They praise G-d, the Israelite warriors, and Jael, and scold the tribes that failed to join the fight. Deborah served G-d and Israel as a judge for forty years.

Debra Kanoff, Vice-President, Jewish El Paso
Up Close: Lori Gaman

Lori Gaman moved to El Paso with her husband of 36 years, Alan, and two sons (Harrison and Colin) in 1993. She grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri and made her way to Texas upon attending the University of Texas at Austin where she majored in Home Economics and Child Development. After moving to El Paso, Lori quickly established herself as a “professional volunteer” and started a small baking business out of her home. She has served in leadership roles in a number of community organizations including Kohlberg, Hornedo and Franklin PTAs, National Council of Jewish Women, the Jewish Federation, the Holocaust Museum and Study Center, YWCA, YWCA Foundation, El Paso FBI Citizens Alumni Academy, Junior League of El Paso, and Temple Mount Sinai. She and Alan own a business together, The Closet Factory, where Lori handles all the administrative duties and even helps on an occasional install of cabinets! In her spare time, she loves to cook, golf, play mahjong and cards, and travel.

What value do we need most in our world today?

I’m reminded of the song lyrics, “What the world needs now is love, sweet love…” The sky is the limit if we love one another and treat everybody with respect and kindness!

What do you value most in your friends?

A good friend is one that is honest and dependable – always there for advice, companionship, support, and a good laugh.

Who’s your favorite Jewish hero (living or not/fictional or not) and why?

My favorite Jewish hero is my Mom. She’s famous only to me but in her short life, she taught me the importance of everything we hold dear in our lives and in our Jewish faith – tikkun olam, tzedakah, avodah, and gemilut chesed.

What’s the best thing about being part of our Jewish community?

Our Jewish community opened their arms to us when we moved to El Paso and provided us with such a sense of belonging, connection, and friendship. Twenty-nine years later, they are still providing that and more!

As a co-chair of the L’Chaim! to Living Committee, what do you hope our community will experience at this event?

We’ve been through a rough 2 years of illness and isolation. We have learned to adapt to a lot of new things, but no matter how adept we’ve become at staying in our bubble or attending virtual gatherings, we can’t become complacent with that. Nothing can take the place of all of us being together in person. It’s time to reconnect, re-engage, and reunite! L’Chaim! – to Living, is our chance to do just that and I can’t wait!

Why is community important during difficult events or situations in life?

Community is all about being there for one another in challenging times – it’s what helps make the good times roll! It’s a comfort to knowing others, who share commonalities with you, are there when you need them most. I love that about our Jewish community!
Izzy Spoke

On Wednesday, February 6, Jewish El Paso welcomed Izzy Ezagui in a virtual community conversation on Zoom and Facebook Live.

Ezagui recounted his story from his humble beginning in Judaism, joining the IDF, losing his arm in battle, and how his injury did not stop him from re-enlisting in the IDF.

In 2011, Izzy was awarded him the highest accolade a soldier outside the battlefield can receive, by Shimon Peres, former President of Israel.

Izzy continues to serve in an elite unit in the reserves and delivers inspirational talks across the United States and internationally.

Hear his amazing story of triumph over tragedy on jewishelpaso.org.

This community conversation was generously underwritten by Marcia and Jerry Schwartz and supported by Joyce Davidoff and Mike White.

We are proud to partner with parents, families and community partners that understand the value of the Jewish summer camp experience in the life of a Jewish child.

We offer non-need based Campership & One Happy Camper awards, grant & scholarship funds to our partners to make Jewish overnight and local Jewish day camp experiences more available and/or accessible to the future leaders of the Jewish world...

Visit www.jewishelpaso.org for more information

915-842-9554
TEXAS NEURODIAGNOSTIC, HEADACHE & SLEEP DISORDERS CENTER, P.A.
BORIS KAIM, M.D. F.A.A.N., FAASM
Board Certified in Neurology, Psychiatry and Sleep Medicine
PRACTICE LIMITED TO CONSULTIVE NEUROLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY, NERVE CONDUCTION, EMG, SLEEP DISORDERS, AND TESTING FOR DIABETIC NEUROPATHIES.

2311 N. Mesa, Bldg. F • El Paso, Texas 79902
Phone: (915) 544-6400

Bea Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund
Applications are now being accepted
Applications must be received on or before May 16, for distribution by August 12, 2022
It was the wish of Ms. Weisz that proceeds from the fund would be given to a needy and worthy Jewish college student(s) in El Paso to enable him or her to pursue his or her studies

Applications are available online at www.jewishelpaso.org
In July of 2001 the Beatrice L. Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund was established.
L'Chaim
—To Living

Sunday, March 27, 2022 El Paso Zoo 2:30 - 8pm

Come celebrate our return to living

Join Jewish El Paso and our entire community in a celebration that will ignite the senses!

Indoor and Outdoor Activities:
See all the activities (including access to all zoo exhibits)
Hear the sounds of live entertainment
Smell the aroma of sumptuous food
Taste the refreshing linkages
Feel the sense of community again

www.jewishelpaso.org