**Up Close: Blanca & Cesar Carrasco**

Blanca M. Garza Beagle Enriquez is the Program Manager for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives at the Department of Civil Engineering at UTEP. She was born in Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico and grew up in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. She is married to Cesar J. Carrasco and have two children, Rebecca and Joel Alejandro. She became very involved with the Jewish community by volunteering at Jewish El Paso, Congregation B’nai Zion’s Sisterhood, and currently at the Anusim Center of El Paso.

Cesar J. Carrasco is a professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at UTEP. He was born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Cesar was the president of Congregation B’nai Zion and has been a member of Jewish El Paso for many years serving as board member for three years and being involved in multiple committees including the one organizing the Shofars Across Borders program.

What value(s) do we need most in our world today?

Tolerance and respect

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

The people that lead and work at the Anti-Defamation League for their work combating antisemitism and extremism as well as protecting people’s civil rights.

Please share your journey to Judaism and what it means to you

What started with an inquiry about the possibility of having Jewish (crypto) ancestors who were expelled from Spain because of our last names, lead us to Rabbi Stephen Leon’s work with the Anusim, and to become part of the Jewish community.

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

Getting to know people who share the same ideals as us to make this a better world.

Why is it important to you to be involved in the Jewish community?

Both of us have been very active at Jewish El Paso because we believe that it plays a very important role in bringing together the Jewish community in the region.

What is the significance of the Shofars Across Borders program?

It’s a way to reach out to create “community” by showing support to our Jewish brothers and sisters in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua and other parts of Mexico.

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**Social & Personal**

**Baruch Dayan haEmet – May G-D bring Comfort to...**

...to Marvin Abrams on the death of his wife Charlene Abrams
...to the Armour family on the death of Rick Armour
...to the Teplitz family on the death of Bob Teplitz
...to the Crohn family on the death of Gloria Crohn
...to Mr. & Mrs. Gary Weiser on the death of David Galatzan
...to the Gluck family on the death of Doris Gluck
...to the Gluck family on the death of Gail Gluck
...to the Kaplan family on the death of Pearl Kaplan
...to Rabbi Ben & Katie Zeidman on the death of Shirley Harris
...to the Lauterbach family on the death of Bernard Lauterbach

**Mazel Tov – Congratulations**

...to Mariska Valdes, for being called to Torah as a Bat Mitzvah.
...to Alexandra Goldsteen, for being called to Torah as a Bat Mitzvah.
...to Dan & Vanessa Sonnen on the birth of their son, Eric Andrew Sonnen, on July 2, 2022. Grandparents are Jon & Arlene Sonnen.
...to Jack & Sandy Peitzer on the marriage of their daughter Tara

**Yom Huledet Sameach – Happy Birthday**

...to Benjamin Galvan, August 7

*To post your announcement please visit www.jewishelpaso.org

Jewish El Paso | www.jewishelpaso.org | 915-842-9554

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**Shofar Across Borders**

Sunday, September 18 at 2pm

The sound of the Shofar breaks the quiet of a desert afternoon where Texas, New Mexico and Mexico meet

Watch for details

Jewish El Paso | 915-842-9554 | www.jewishelpaso.org
The year was 1921. Facing the economic and emotional damages families felt as Syria began to depart from French Rule, the merchant Helfon Marcus decided to create a better life for himself and his family by leaving Aleppo, Syria. He gathered his wife Latife, their newborn Mordecai (Morris) and their two year old Menahem (Clement), and boarded a bare assenger ship heading towards Ellis Island. With no beds, no kosher meals, and limited resources, the teenager Latife left everything she knew to follow her 37 year old husband to America. The journey took 3 months: from Aleppo, Syria to Ellis Island, NY New York to Galveston, TX Texas and ending in El Paso, TX Texas. Upon arrival in the United States U.S., a customs agent logged the family name as Marcus instead of Marcos.

Solomon, who already resided in El Paso, invited his brother Helfon to join him peddling dry goods and linen door to door by horse and buggy in south El Paso. Meanwhile Latife was home caring for the family. By the time she was 20 she had 6 children: Clement, Morris, Esther, Eddie, Sarah, and Jenny. Latife and Helfon continued to speak Arabic at home, and little by little Latife learned English. They bonded with the Middle Eastern and Mexican communities throughout the area. Latife became well known on both sides of the border for her Syrian cooking.

In the early 1940’s the synagogue became a huge part of their lives and Latife began playing cards with the women of the Jewish Community. The 3 boys joined the U.S. Army to serve in World War II.


In 1946 Morris and his brother Eddie went into the grocery business and started the Big 8 Food Stores. Everyone in the family worked in the grocery store. Gito Helfon ran the adjacent liquor store; (Gito is Arabic for Grandpa). In 1951 Sarah married Max Intebi. They had 3 children: David, Lettie, and Charlie. In the early 60’s Eddie and his wife Alice moved to Mexico City. They had 6 children: Linda, Fred, Sammy, Sarah, Isaac and Morris. In the 1970’s, Morris sold the Big 8 Food Fair Store.

He and his sons went into the real estate business Marcus Investments, now known as Mimco. Sarah worked as Morris’ assistant and continued to take care of her family.

Latife and Helfon left a legacy of 177 and counting children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren, who currently reside in the United States and Mexico. Latife was the family matriarch. Her boundless energy created an atmosphere of boldness, strong work ethics, and pride in the Marcus heritage. Her legacy continues through the diversity of what her offspring bring to the world as realtors, artists, doctors, architects, accountants, entrepreneurs, free thinkers, and grounded individuals.
Our family is honored and blessed to have monthly groups of the actual IDF soldiers who protect OUR Holy land and are here, in Las Cruces, to train for the Iron Dome come over to our house for Kosher food, BBQs, and just a good time. Have you ever seen a Soldier with his head bowed in prayer by the Western wall? The Rebbe remarked several times on the visual power of soldiers in prayer at the Kotel (especially in Tefillin). There is a stunning contrast between the supreme confidence that is natural to soldiers and the simple humility which compels them to stand with bowed heads next to an ancient, sacred wall asking for Heavenly assistance.

This blend of self-confidence and selflessness is what the Torah wishes for all of us. It suits us to recognize the frailty of our own power, dependent as we are on G-d for each and every breath we gratefully take. But we must also know and never forget our inherent strengths and capabilities; after all, G-d Himself depends on us for the fulfillment of the Torah and the perfection of His universe. We are at once completely powerless and completely powerful. They do not contradict one another - in fact, they complement each other.

A soldier is a symbol of a nation’s might, and few nations have soldiers as mighty as Israel’s. When that same soldier begs for Divine aid, it is no less spectacular than Moshe Rabbanu pleading with G-d before parting the sea with his walking staff. Completely powerless and completely powerful. It is the truest form of power.

I hope that these fighters know how much their acts of faith are admired by everyone who sees them. Their acts of war have brought Israel salvation more than once; their acts of faith bring Israel a salvation no less urgent.

And in the spirit of the Israeli commanders’ war cry of - not “Attack!” but - “Follow me!”, leading from the front and inspiring others to follow after them, it suits us to follow their lead here as well. With all our natural gifts of smarts, looks, wealth, fitness, family, connections and success, at no point is it beneath us to stand humbly before G-d - at the Western Wall or at our living room wall or boardroom wall or the back wall of our local Shul - and whisper a prayer for continued Divine aid.

We are completely powerless and completely powerful. By praying every day and saying the Shma Yisrael every morning and every night, we remind ourselves of that truth. We also honor the faithful fighters of the IDF, and we live the kind of life that we should be proud of.

With wishes for a healthy summer!

By Maurice Kubby JWV Post #749
Commander Scott P. Stevens

The Jewish War Veterans, Maurice Kubby Post #749 of El Paso, Texas, commemorated Memorial Day by placing flags on the gravesites of our local Jewish veterans. They organized about 30 participants that included members of the Post, Temple Mount Sinai (Reform) and Congregation B’nai Zion (Conservative). It was a beautiful day enjoyed by all.

Our community recognizes that there are many Jewish-Americans among us whom have patriotically served their country in its times of need. Our community recognizes that the military contributions made by our Jewish veterans (Women as well as Men) of all services, since the American Revolution have been significant and important to our nation and should not be forgotten.

To that end they placed 316 flags at our veterans’ graves which were provided by the Post through community donations. They request of the congregations of the El Paso & Las Cruces Jewish communities to inform the Post of all family members that have served their country so that they may honor them on Memorial Day from this day forward.

Photos courtesy of Brian Kanof

Expressions of Gratitude on Memorial Day

We are once again offering freshly prepared Challah and Apple and Honey Sticks for the New Year.

(We will need volunteer help with delivery - to homebound only - and distribution on Thursday, September 29.)

Order deadline | Wednesday, September 21 at 12pm

Orders available for pick-up and delivery (homebound only)

Thursday, September 29 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Jewish El Paso | www.jewishelpaso.org | 915-842-9554

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Rachel Kallman grew up in the beautiful border city of El Paso, Texas. From graduating preschool at the Jewish Community Center to being Bat Mitzvahed at Temple Mount Sinai, the El Paso Jewish Community is her home. While pursuing a degree in Social Work at The University of Texas Austin, she created a second home in the Austin Jewish community as a Hebrew and Sunday School teacher for Kindergarten through 5th grade at Temple Beth Shalom. She served as a Social Justice Fellow with Texas Hillel and as a Resource Coordinator for Shalom Austin’s Mitzvah Knitters program.

Rachel believes that while every individual’s Jewish story is diverse, the shared history of resilience, resistance, and tolerance connects all Jewish people, urging them to think critically, to act with empathy, and to be anti-oppressive.

At the end of the summer, Rachel will be moving nearly 2,000 miles away to New York City to participate in the Avodah Jewish Service Corps. Avodah connects young Jewish Social Justice advocates to nonprofits in five national program cities to live and learn in a communal, pluralistic, and unique year of service and exploration of Jewish identity.

Rachel will be serving as a Youth Advocate for End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT), an international organization fighting against child trafficking and sexual exploitation through policy, community education, and direct service. She hopes to apply these experiences in her future career as a Social Worker in the field of restorative and juvenile justice.

Support Rachel in her Avodah journey: https://donate.avodah.net/RachelK.
Late El Paso Dentist’s Legacy Honored as Second Class of Hunt School of Dental Medicine Students are Introduced

Dr. Ross Fruithandler's family and El Paso dental community welcome class of 2026

EL PASO, Texas — The life and legacy of a beloved El Paso-area dentist was celebrated as the second class of the Hunt School of Dental Medicine was formally introduced on Monday. Family and friends of Ross C. Fruithandler, D.D.S., who passed away at the age of 59 on March 31, 2021, were on hand to welcome the class of 2026 to Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso.

Before welcoming the new class of dental students, the Fruithandler family was present for the unveiling of the Dr. Ross C. Fruithandler Dental Suite at the Texas Tech Dental Oral Health Clinic.

Dr. Fruithandler’s wife, Linda, said it was a touching tribute to her late husband, who had a successful career while making time for the important things such as his community, friends and, above all, family.

“In between your birth date and death date, there is always a dash. Well, Ross made that dash count,” said Linda Fruithandler, who was accompanied by her son Corey. “It may not have been as long as we wanted it to be, but he made it count. I want to say to the dental students who are about to start their journey to do the same. You will be stressed at times and constantly challenged, but you get to make that dash count.”

Dr. Fruithandler served the El Paso community as an endodontist from 1989 to 2019. He held membership in the El Paso District Dental Society for 31 years. Dr. Fruithandler was a supporter of the new Hunt School of Dental Medicine and helped select the inaugural class by generously volunteering to serve on the Applications and Interview Committee in 2020.

The dental suite that bears Dr. Fruithandler’s name will include a plaque detailing his career and, above all, family.

While making time for the important things, Ross was a supporter of his beloved community. His contributions to his community are important to me as it was to Dr. Fruithandler. We have a dental school and dental clinic that is serving the community, which is one of the biggest reasons why I chose the Hunt School of Dental Medicine.”

Hunt School of Dental Medicine faculty, community leaders and Texas Tech Dental Oral Health Clinic staff were also on hand to welcome the new class. Hunt School of Dental Medicine Dean Richard Black, D.D.S., M.S., told students that the El Paso community – which has long faced a shortage of dentists – will embrace the new students.

“I’ve been anticipating this moment for a long time. The preparation and admission process has been worth it because this school is absolutely excellent, and everything, including the faculty and staff, is top-notch,” said Angelica Quinones, a University of Texas at El Paso and Parkland High School graduate. “Hearing everyone talk today highlighted the amount of care and generosity in the El Paso dental community. Everybody is supportive and willing to lend a hand, and I’m excited to one day be a dentist here.”

Class of 2026 by the numbers

Of the 62 new students, 34% are first-generation college students, and 67% speak more than one language. More than a third come from the West Texas and Texas border regions, including 11 from El Paso. The class of 2026 includes the school’s first three students from southern New Mexico. Thanks to a partnership between the Hunt School of Dental Medicine and the New Mexico Higher Education Department, all three students from the neighboring state will receive tuition assistance. As part of the partnership, the agency covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition for New Mexico students who otherwise would be required to pay the higher out-of-state tuition to attend the Texas school.

The class of 2026 joins the school’s first class of 40 students, who in one year experienced more than 2,490 first-time patient encounters in the Texas Tech Dental Oral Health Clinic.

“Our inaugural class has spent the past year setting a high bar. However, the class of 2026 is up to the challenge and will help us further establish our school as the premier dental school in the region,” Dr. Black said. “It was a joy to interview and admit the second class. They’re intelligent, hungry and excited to learn. I believe they’ll set the tone for generations to come.”

The class of 2026 brings an average GPA of 3.7 and an average Dental Admission Test score of 20 out of 30. According to the American Dental Association, the national average score for the DAT is 18.

*story rephrased from El Paso Herald Post
JScreen's national public health initiative is based out of Emory University School of Medicine’s Department of Human Genetics in Atlanta. This non-profit is dedicated to preventing Jewish genetic diseases through easily accessible genetic testing and counseling. People register for JScreen testing from home at www.jscreen.org and testing is done on a saliva sample that is mailed to the lab. Genetic counselors provide results via phone or secure video conferencing.

JScreen’s original focus was on reproductive carrier screening for diseases such as Tay-Sachs that are more common in the Jewish population, and diseases like cystic fibrosis that are found in the general population. JScreen’s reproductive screening panel includes over 200 disease genes. JScreen has provided this type of screening for thousands of participants over the past seven years and has offered high-risk couples essential information and options to help them have healthy children.

JScreen’s newly launched national cancer genetic testing initiative, JScreen and Emory’s Winship Cancer Institute conducted the Atlanta PEACH BRCA pilot study in July 2019 to assess the Jewish community’s interest in testing for the BRCA genes via JScreen’s at-home process. The study enrolled over 500 eligible participants in 6 months. Results confirmed an interest in at-home cancer genetic testing for BRCA and other cancer susceptibility genes and helped to inform the national launch.

Unlike direct-to-consumer companies, JScreen offers highly accurate testing, utilizing state-of-the-art genetic sequencing technology. Genetic changes that are identified are actionable, meaning if a person tests positive, prevention is possible. Licensed genetic counselors provide information via phone or secure video conferencing, ensuring people fully understand their results. JScreen believes the combination of education, access to premier screening technologies and personalized, confidential support are the keys to preventing devastating diseases.

“Launching our new cancer program and providing convenient and affordable access to cancer genetic testing will help save lives. We are thrilled to bring this important resource to the Jewish community,” said Karen Aronovitz Grinzaid, MS, CGC, Assistant Professor of Human Genetics at Emory University School of Medicine and JScreen’s Executive Director. “Over the years, we have helped thousands of people plan for the health of their future children. Now we are also helping people avoid cancer by giving them the life-saving information they need to be proactive about their own health.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
Sarah Abelsohn, who carries a mutation in the BRCA2 gene, shared her experience about how genetic screening saved her life and helped create the life of her beautiful baby daughter. “The word BRCA always played a big part in my life. When my mother battled breast cancer from when I was 2, passing away when I was 20, I always knew what BRCA was. When my mother got tested, it was still a very new concept and we did not really know what to expect, as she was one of the first people to get tested for it.” “After my mother passed away, my dad and I had a discussion, agreeing we’d rather know if our story with BRCA and cancer ends now, or if it carries on with me. I have always felt knowing is power and would rather know early whether I had it or not. A few months after my mother passed away, I took the test and sure enough I was BRCA2 positive. Honestly, when the doctor called me with the results, I wasn’t even shocked, as I had a gut feeling, I was positive. Once I knew, I knew it would just be a matter of time before I would do the preventive surgery, as for me it was a no brainer. I’d rather get it behind me than have it always be in the back of my mind!”

L’CHAIM Magazine: Please share your family history and experience so that you may help others learn about preventing breast cancer or survive through early treatment. Is your family of Ashkenazi descent, and what role does this play in identifying the BRCA gene?
Sarah Abelsohn: My family is Ashkenazi. My dad is South African, born and raised in Cape Town and moved to San Diego over 40 years ago. My mom was born and raised in New York; discovering she and her only sister were BRCA2 positive. We have never seen anything BRCA-related on my dad’s side.
Knowing I was BRCA2 positive, following my preventive surgery I decided to undergo in vitro fertilization (IVF) with preimplantation genetic testing (PGT) to prevent my offspring from having the BRCA2 mutation. Although IVF is no fun feat, I knew raising children who were not BRCA carriers was one last thing to worry about. If I could give that to my children, somehow patching it up in getting rid of BRCA, why not? My husband and I decided to ensure any embryos we used for the pregnancy were BRCA free. Over 90% of the embryos had the BRCA mutation, which is crazy to think about. Had I not done IVF, my children would most likely have had the mutation. Now I like having this ridiculous BRCA free baby girl!”

Although it is amazing to learn how early this disease can be identified. With current screening methods, so many lives can be saved, including those of future generations.

L’CHAIM: How do you believe JScreen is helpful for educators of people about this disease and in what ways has this not been a focus in the past?
Abelsohn: I honestly just thought it’s getting the word out, with conferences and lectures, speaking about it whenever you can because to so many it’s such a private matter. Sometimes they don’t know where to go to get the information they need. Many times, personal stories and experiences help others get through their experiences or having the support of someone who went through it can be the most helpful through difficult times.

L’CHAIM: What is your life like now? Mazel Tov on the birth of your daughter! What will you share with her about your family history to keep her safe in the future?
Abelsohn: I am so blessed! I honestly feel overwhelmed with gratitude every time I look at my beautiful daughter, Ellie Capri. I will always share with her about our family history as it is important to know where you come from and who your family is. I will also share the steps I took to ensure she has a fruitful and healthy life. I always talk to her about her late grandmother, (my mom), and how I know she is smiling down on her, kvelling over her beautiful granddaughter!

L’CHAIM: What role has JScreen played in your life and how can it dramatically improve the lives of others? I understand you participated in a JScreen panel.
Abelsohn: I think JScreen has the opportunity to really change lives! As I’ve said before, I’m a big believer that knowledge is power. Having the knowledge can really change the trajectory of your life, allowing you to plan and giving you the tools to do so. Being able to test at home and know your results quickly is something changing people’s lives for the better, hopefully allowing us to beat this awful disease.
For more information, visit www.jscreen.org.

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The Cherry Hill School - Camp Chai

Hugs, Handshakes, BBQ & Iron Dome

Jewish El Paso - Community Leadership Meeting

The J Center for Early Learning - Camp Shamayim
Borderland’s Cafe Europa - Together for Shabbat


Borderlands Café Europa – Vignettes of A Jewish Woman

ElPasoConnect - Sun City Sunsets
In 2001, a generous donation was made to the Jewish Community Endowment Fund in the memory of Beatrice L. Weisz, pursuant to her wishes as memorialized in her Last Will. The gift was made “for the purpose of establishing a memorial scholarship fund in Beatrice L. Weisz’ memory, the annual income of which shall be given to a needy and worthy Jewish College Student to enable him or her to pursue his or her studies.”

Each year, the Fund, now administered by the Jewish Community Foundation, provides its annual income for distribution to a qualifying Jewish College Student. As was the case last year, this year there is a tie. Congratulations to Andrew Cabrera and Max Intebi as this year’s scholarship recipients. Each of these young men’s accomplishments are legion and would take pages to describe. Briefly, Andrew’s dedication to volunteerism, especially at Temple Mount Sinai, his recent involvement with the El Paso Holocaust Museum, his attention to national Jewish Youth causes, along with his outstanding academic record mirror the expectations for the Weisz recipient. Likewise, Max has distinguished himself through his volunteerism and membership at Congregation B’nai Zion and at Temple Mt. Sinai, his astronomical grades and his commitment not only to Judaism, but also to his Hispanic Heritage, which also make him a model Weisz recipient. Jewish El Paso says Mazeltov to these special young men and their families. The future is brighter with them in it.

Rabbi Bery and Chenchie Schmukler and family had the distinct honor and privilege to host a group of the Israeli Defense Forces while they collaborated with, and trained at, White Sands Missile Range working on the Iron Dome program. Delicious food—BBQ, sides and desserts, hugs and handshakes greeted the group, but the most palpable was the sense of family, the feeling of coming home and that Am Yisrael Chai: wherever we are and whoever we are, we are one. Though they moved from one desert to another, the cultural differences and physical distance from loved ones and all that is familiar makes training so far from home and comfort very difficult. However, the camaraderie, the schmoozing, the toasting of L’chaim in abundance, and the utmost respect for the bravery and commitment of being on the frontlines of defending OUR country, made for a most memorable and enjoyable evening. The BBQ was generously underwritten by Randy & Janet Wechter through a partnership with Jewish El Paso.

BEATRICE L. WEIZ SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS NAMED

Hugs, Handshakes, BBQ & Iron Dome

International Lion of Judah Conference December 11-13, 2022 | Phoenix, AZ, Biltmore Hotel

Join us in Phoenix, AZ from Sunday, December 11 to Tuesday, December 13 for the International Lion of Judah Conference. The premier gathering of dynamic, philanthropic Jewish women. Together, we will examine the changing face of our world, be inspired, give back, and empower one another to do more.

Jewish El Paso | www.jewishelpaso.org | 915-842-9554

Those we honor with Tributes

Federation Café Europa

TO: Robert French with thanks for all you do and have done for our community FROM: Rochelle Saks

TO: Deb Benedict with Best Wishes for a Happy Birthday FROM: Rochelle Saks

TO: Irene and Ira Batt with Best Wishes for a Complete and Speedy Recovery FROM: Rochelle Saks

TO: Charlotte Roth with Best Wishes for a Happy 90th Birthday FROM: Ruth Erlich, and Joani Schonberg

TO: Marge Hauptman in Memory of her Beloved Husband Guy FROM: Rochelle Saks

TO: Ira Batt with Best Wishes for a Very Happy Birthday FROM: John and Lourdes Eger

TO: Ira Batt with Best Wishes for a Complete and Speedy Recovery FROM: Rochelle Saks
Thank you to our Volunteers
(List current as of 7-13 and listed alphabetically)

Phil and Sally Alkon
Tatiana Avila
Wendy Axelrod
Mike Batkin
Leslie Beckoff
Anne Berkson
Stacy Berry
Logan Berry
Rylee Berry
Michael Blau
Allen and Michelle Blum
Stephanie Calvo
Cesar and Blanca Carrasco
Bill Carvajal
Leah Chayes
Michael and Teresa Cherno
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letsconnect@jewishelpaso.org or 915-842-9554
If your name is not reflected on the list above and you have volunteered in 2022, please call our office at 915-842-9554 so we can update our records