



Hebrew School students spreading kindness (and PB & J!) at Old Pine Community Center, in partnership with our Food Insecurity Committee

SOCIETY HILL
SYNAGOGUE

KESHER

MARCH • APRIL • MAY 2025 • • • ADAR • NISAN • IYAR • SIVAN 5785

IN THIS ISSUE

COMMUNAL WARMTH • SPIRITUAL DEPTH • JEWISH LIFE

HANHAGAH: NOTES FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

President Lisa Eizen	Pages 3-4
Rabbi Nathan Kamesar	Pages 5-8
Hazzan Jessi Roemer	Pages 9-10

KEHILLAH: UPDATES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Playschool	Page 11
Ann Spak Thal Hebrew School	Page 13
Social Action Committee	Page 14
Inclusion Corner	Page 15
Member Spotlights	Pages 16-17
L'Dor V'Dor: Generational Cohort Groups	Pages 18-19
Coolanu	Page 20
Murder Mystery Dinner Theater	Page 20
Israel Committee	Page 21
Men's Club	Page 21

TODOT U'SMAHOT: THANKS AND CELEBRATIONS

Community News	Page 23
Spring Birthdays	Pages 24-25
Spring Anniversaries	Page 26
Contributions	Pages 26-29

LA'ATID: LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Purim	Page 30
Passover	Page 30
Spring Calendar At-A-Glance	Page 31



From the President's Desk

FIVE-STAR LEADERSHIP, NEW BEGINNINGS, AND A GROWING COMMUNITY

by Lisa Eizen

One of the duties of the President of our congregation is to meet with the Rabbi, Cantor, and Executive Director to do a Leadership Review. Pertinent combinations of committee chairs, staff, peers, and Executive Committee members are polled on multiple aspects of each person's job performance, and their responses are tallied and reported. It was a pleasure for me to do this task because, needless to say, **Rabbi Nathan, Hazzan Jessi, and Executive Director Sahar all received five-star reviews.** They all work well as a team, respect each other and those with whom they work, and they are good at their jobs.

Rabbi Nathan excels as a spiritual leader. His sermons and writings inspire us. He has an exciting vision for our community and is able to carry it forward and motivate all of us to embrace it and enable it. He is adept at expanding our membership and retaining it by understanding its diversity. He is knowledgeable about resource development, and is also able to navigate the challenging issues that we as Jews find ourselves dealing with at present and helping us to process them. As a teacher, he leads several

interesting and informative Adult Education courses, and he has brought in thoughtful Scholars-in-Residence to enrich our congregation.

One interesting component of the Leadership Review is the Self-Evaluation section. It allows the reviewer to learn things about the employee that they would never know. Rabbi Nathan took singing lessons! He chose to do so because music is such an important part of Jewish ritual.

The caliber of Hazzan Jessi's musical work on Shabbat speaks (or sings) for itself. Her coordination and performance with her musical accompanists on Friday nights has totally engaged us and grown attendance. She is a pillar of the service-leading on Shabbat.

And of course, there are the annual Rock Purimspiels that she so effectively produces and which everyone so enjoys. Hazzan Jessi is also a strong support for the Hebrew School and the B'nei Mitzvah program by bringing song and prayer within each student's reach. She also leads "How To" classes to get people comfortable with

Shabbat and handling the Torah.

I learned from her self-evaluation that Jessi teaches prayer and cantorial skills at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, which she says helps her to hone her own skills.

Sahar Oz, our Executive Director, is an outstanding representative for Society Hill Synagogue. He is respectful and highly approachable. He is aware of and attuned to the various constituencies in our community and their needs. He has very effective problem-solving skills, which makes him an able manager of our building operations. Membership recruitment comes naturally to him, and he has definitely contributed to the growth of our congregation. All of our services, meetings, and events run smoothly under his oversight, and he is a wonderful resource to our Board of Directors.

Sahar's self-evaluation revealed that since October 7, he has more frequently attended security webinars, the content of which has impacted our security preparedness and procedures.

As I previewed in my last *Keshet*

article, we have started the process of creating a new strategic plan. At the end of January, Board members and committee chairs met with Rabbi David Teutsch as a first step. Rabbi Teutsch was President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College from 1993 to 2001. After stepping down from the presidency, he stayed at the college, where he became the Director of the Levin-Lieber Program in Jewish Ethics. He is a well-known consultant and trainer.

At the first meeting, we constructed a proposed framework to use. We will review our mission, values, goals, and the implications of our growth, determine our space needs and accessibility issues, and assess our financial position. The keys to planning are communication,

both among planners and the broader community; welcoming input at all levels; and the coordination of existing committees with any new ones.

We will begin our strategic work after the Board approves the final plan, and you, our community, will be apprised and consulted along the way.

The recent creation of a Rosh Hodesh group to provide a space to center the voices and needs of women at Society Hill Synagogue was historically a first. A Sisterhood, a staple of American Jewish congregations back in the day, was frowned upon until now in the spirit of egalitarianism. The fact that it's been so successful is a *simhah* (a joy)! Building on this success, a Men's Club has formed. Learn more on page 21 of this *Kesher*.



The winners of our Boldly Hanukkah Sweater Contest at our annual Hanukkah Happening; LilyFish Gomberg.

The New Member Shabbat at the end of January was well attended by so many new members who, at this writing, number 61 over the past year. In the congenial spirit of our community, please welcome any new faces that you see and make room for them at your table. If you see me at Onegs or Kiddushes, please join mine.

Take the Next Step in Your Planning

SUSTAIN JEWISH LIFE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

There are various ways to leave a bequest to Society Hill Synagogue! Gifts in wills, trusts, IRA beneficiary designations, and no-longer-needed life insurance policies enable you to make a meaningful impact on your community for years to come.

Your personal financial advisor can help you explore these options, and volunteer congregants are also available to chat (without serving as professional advisors).

To learn more and plan ahead, please contact our Executive Director, Sahar Oz, at 215-922-6590 x3 or soz@societyhillsynagogue.org.





From the Rabbi's Desk

TIME FOR A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN AT SOCIETY HILL SYNAGOGUE

by Rabbi Nathan Kamesar

I love this community. Perhaps that's something of a banal statement from a rabbi about the community they serve, but that doesn't make it any less true: this is the synagogue community in which I married my wife, celebrated both of my daughters' namings, and really learned what it means to experience the rhythms of Jewish life in community together — Shabbat after Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah after Rosh Hashanah, Congregation Annual Meeting after Congregation Annual Meeting.

Sure, I've been part of Jewish communities before. I grew up at Germantown Jewish Centre in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia; spent formative years at Temple Beth Israel in Eugene, Oregon; and had impactful experiences at campus Hillels associated with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the University of California, Berkeley. But Society Hill Synagogue is the one Jewish community in which I've most deeply felt how **being connected to Jewish community can uplift one's life; can reveal meaning and holiness layered into one's being; can make one feel**

strengthened through one's interconnection with others in ways that may not show up in other aspects of our lives.

As such, I've deeply concerned myself not only with the lives of the individuals that make up this community, to the extent I am able to do that, but invested myself in **the community as a whole organism — how to sustain it, how to nurture it, how to keep it alive and growing**, a task that is contributed to by so many volunteers, clergy, and staff.

While in rabbinical school, I found myself drawn to study communities as living, breathing organisms which need tending to in all sorts of holistic ways. So I earned my Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Policy and Social Practice (a program founded, coincidentally, by a longtime member of Society Hill Synagogue, **Richard Gelles, z"l**).

So I spend as much time thinking about and working on my role as "Rabbi as Organizational Leader" as I do "Rabbi as Teacher of Torah" and "Rabbi as Pastoral Caregiver," the

three primary facets of my responsibilities here.

This showed up significantly when we were beginning to return to in-person synagogue life after some of the earliest, most intense phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to navigating the medical challenges associated with that time, we recognized that we needed a plan to both (a) re-engage with in-person synagogue life, and (b) spur the growth of this community, whose membership in the mid-2010s had decreased to somewhere just over 250 households. Growth is not necessarily a value for its own sake, but when we believe in what we are offering here as a community, the way in which we believe being a part of this community or communities like it can add strength, nourishment, interconnection, and, dare we say, holiness, to our lives, we want to ensure that we are connecting to the broader Jewish community.

So after I began as senior rabbi in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic, I started to formulate the beginnings of a draft **Strategic Plan** for the

synagogue, to help us achieve this re-engagement and growth. After conversations with my fellow clergy and staff, and the Board of Directors at Society Hill Synagogue, the plan boiled down to four key planks, which I have written about in several past *Kesher* editions:

Our Previous Strategic Plan (2022)

(1) Re-invest in Shabbat and make it the centerpiece of our community. Even recognizing that many synagogue members are not regular week-to-week synagogue goers, Shabbat still serves as the consistent community gathering point; the weekly opportunity for members to connect with one another, with their Judaism, and — through the mysterious and potentially awesome pathways of prayer, music, and Torah learning — with God, with the Divine, with whatever you want to call that source of life beyond, and within, ourselves.

This was important for at least two reasons: (a) given that our mission as a synagogue is essentially to enrich people's lives through their engagement with the rhythms of Jewish communal living, Shabbat is a clear way to do this; and (b) Shabbat — even for people who do not necessarily plan to be regular synagogue attendees — is often the time that people “try on a synagogue community for size;” when they drop in on a synagogue to see if it's the right fit for them when they're looking

for a new community. If we were to invest in Shabbat, I believed — and the rest of the leadership agreed with me — making it a regular moment of vibrancy in the life of Society Hill Synagogue, then all of those times when people randomly (or not so randomly) dropped in to try us out would result in them experiencing a synagogue of life and dynamism, of which they would want to be a part.



Students in the Ann Spak Thal Hebrew School participating in a lesson; LilyFish Gomberg.

In order to bring this to fruition, we did several things. For a number of reasons, including our goals for Shabbat, we **moved our weekend Hebrew School experience from Sundays to Shabbat**. In addition to creating more of an immersive educational experience, equipping students with the capacity to understand, navigate, and take advantage of the opportunities present in Shabbat, moving Hebrew School from Sundays to Saturdays brought two communities together — our Hebrew School community and our regular Shabbat-goers — and contributed to the experience of vibrancy on an average Shabbat.

Additionally, **we invested in meals associated with every service**, giving people the opportunity to build community and connect with one another after services. We also expanded **TGISHabbat** from monthly to weekly, with **musicians every Friday night** adding a sense of dynamism and life to our nighttime Sanctuary service.

As a result, we have increased from approximately 10-15 attendees per standard Friday night service (on a Shabbat with no B'nei Mitzvah or special programs) to approximately **50 attendees per standard Friday night** (although perhaps “standard” Shabbat is an oxymoron; every Shabbat is sacred!). We have also grown from about 25 attendees per typical Saturday morning to approximately **65 attendees every Saturday**, not including all of the Hebrew School students who attend or the families who stay for lunch. Of course, Shabbatot with B'nei Mitzvah or other special programs draw even more people!

(2) Elevate the quality of our communications about who we are and what we offer. We used to describe ourselves as “the best kept secret in Jewish Philadelphia.” In order to achieve the growth goals we had in mind, we knew we wanted to up our communications game: how we described ourselves; the consistency with which we used elements of communications; the platforms — social media

and beyond — that we used to tell our story. We scraped together the funds to **hire a full-time Communications Manager**, LilyFish Gomberg, who has helped us to elevate and enhance our communications, profiling so many of the people who make up this congregation, showing to the broader Jewish community why being part of Society Hill Synagogue is such a compelling experience.



Our Young Friends Sukkot Happy Hour with Tribe 12; LilyFish Gomberg.

3) Expand the non-religious, but rather social and communal programs of the synagogue.

While, as a rabbi, I have a bias toward sharing that, indeed, even in a secularly-driven world, religion and spirituality have something to offer, I recognize that people want to be part of Jewish community for reasons beyond religion: communality, bonding, connections, and fun!

We wanted to develop more social programs, and they have blossomed beyond what I imagined, as evidenced throughout this newsletter: Young Friends (20s-30s), Young Families, Triple Chai (54+), Coolanu: Culture and Community, Book Club, Mah Jongg Club, a Rosh Hodesh group, a newly forming Men's Club, and more.

4) Become conscientiously more inclusive. Not everyone feels comfortable entering a synagogue, even if they want to be a part of it. It takes more conscientiousness than we might imagine to ensure that certain populations that have historically had a harder time accessing synagogue life feel included.

Thankfully, our **Inclusion Committee** and its various subcommittees have done a tremendous job ensuring that those who have had a harder time accessing synagogue life — people who are in interfaith families/relationships, people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people of color, people with disabilities — feel included and embraced here at Society Hill Synagogue.



Congregants at our Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month Brunch 'n' Learn with Tech OWL (see more on Page 15); Submitted.

Additions to the 2022 Strategic Plan

Over the course of the last couple of years, as these elements of the plan began to get implemented and solidified, we introduced new strategic initiatives each year, including **(a) expanding our award-winning Young Families Shabbat** from once per month on Friday evenings to twice per month, **adding a monthly Saturday**

morning service; (b) featuring pairs of our Hebrew School classes at six Friday night services over the course of our school year, bringing the Hebrew School community together with our Friday night regulars; **(c) introducing twice-annual Scholar-in-Residence Shabbatot**, thus far with renowned rabbis and scholars Michael Strassfeld, Simcha Raphael, Sharon Kleinbaum, and Sharon Anisfeld Cohen; and **(d) strengthening our Hebrew School by expanding the director position from a part-time Hebrew School Director to a full-time Director of Youth and Family Education**, for which the hiring process has begun.

When we rolled out this plan in early 2022, we had 290 member households, with 68 students in our Hebrew School, and we set an ambitious goal for ourselves of 360 member households and 90 students in our Hebrew School, to be achieved within five years.

It's three years later, and our community has 375 member households and 105 students in our Hebrew School.

I don't like to rely too much on numbers; human beings are not numbers, and no one likes to feel like one.

Still, these figures are at least evocative of the level of life and vibrancy in this synagogue, which is something we do care about very much, in our efforts

to feel deeply connected in Jewish community, bringing a sense of support, nourishment, and connection to our lives.

This plan and its implementation were made possible in part through a successful capital campaign in 2017-2019, to which so many of our members contributed. This led to the construction of the Paula Kline Learning Center, the Ferst Family Courtyard, an expanded Social Hall in honor of Charlene Hirsch, and other improvements throughout our historic building. This facilitated more space for our community, which meant we could enroll more students in our Playschool and Hebrew School and host meaningful events in our courtyard and social hall, enabling us to reinvest the resources from these initiatives to implement our plan and the strengthen our community.

While the principles of this strategic plan remain sound — we continue to promote all of its elements, and the values and character of our community remain true to its founding

vision — a synagogue community of 375 households in this space presents different challenges and opportunities than did a synagogue community of 290 households just three years ago.

New Strategic Plan (2025)

So it is time for a new strategic plan, upon which this synagogue is embarking. We are being supported in our efforts by Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D., the former President of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and a respected author and organizational consultant. There are a number of questions that confront us as we begin to develop a new strategic plan:

- 1) In what ways is our historic building supporting our communal needs, and **what opportunities are there to improve the capacity of our physical space to support our communal efforts** to serve as a source of strength and nourishment to so many?
- 2) In what ways is our historic Sanctuary lifting our souls and connecting us, and what

opportunities are there to **improve the accessibility of the Sanctuary** and to otherwise enhance the experience of our programs and services?

3) Over the course of all of this growth, **what implications are there for the experience of our members?** What do we need to be giving more attention to in our ever-evolving community?

These questions and more are ones we want to be deliberative about and questions to which we want to formulate thoughtful, internally cohesive answers.

In the months to come, there will be ways you can get involved with sharing your insights on these questions, your dreams for the future of this community, your imaginings on how Jewish life can continue to develop in the 21st century and beyond — continuing from something like 3,500 years of existence, helping people find holiness and meaning and connectedness.

I feel so blessed to be a part of this community. I only hope I can help serve it in return.

Shouts and Whispers: On Saying “We Jews” in Today’s World • Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld

March 28-29 • Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat

Over 100 years ago, Franz Rosenzweig wrote about the commitment and transformation that take place “when in the confusion of the world, we once quietly say, ‘we Jews.’” What does it mean to say “We Jews” in today’s turbulent world? Why does it matter, what gets in the way, and what possibilities emerge when we shout it, when we sing it, and when we whisper it?

Join us on Friday evening for TGIShabbat services and learning with **Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, President of Hebrew College**, during dinner, and on Saturday morning for services, Kiddush lunch, and Rabbi Cohen Anisfeld and Rabbi Kamesar in conversation about issues confronting the Jewish world and how our Jewishness calls on us to respond to this moment of political turbulence. **RSVP: societyhillssynagogue.org/shouts-and-whispers**



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From the Hazzan's Desk

THE BRAVE CHOICE

by Hazzan Jessi Roemer

I've been thinking about the Exodus story.

As Jews, the Exodus dominates our foundational narrative and practice: it is referenced at least 87 times in the canon of Torah, Haftarah, and Psalms. We read it early in the mid-winter Torah cycle, we actively re-enact it at Pesah, and it returns repeatedly in our texts to remind us of our obligation to maintain our moral center.

It is compelling to me that in an otherwise male-centered set of texts, this foundational story of our liberation — the liberation that colors every subsequent aspect of Torah; instruction, prayer, and commentary — is set in motion by five women, each of whom refuses in her own position to comply with the unjust orders of a tyrant.

Shifra and Puah — the midwives who spare baby Moshe — are not Hebrews, but they “[fear] God” and refuse to follow Pharaoh’s order to kill male Hebrew babies (Exodus 1:17). Uncowed by Pharaoh’s attempt to force others to do his cruel work for him, Shifra and Puah see the face of God in each human being, and they resist at their own level of influence,

putting their own lives at risk to save the Hebrew children whom they are delivering.

Yokheved, Moshe’s mother, displays a different kind of bravery and resistance. Keeping her son alive in secret for the first three months against Pharaoh’s order was no doubt difficult, but for a mother, that’s not bravery; it’s instinct. The brave part was giving him up, trusting Miriam to keep watch, trusting the river to carry him to the hands of someone who could save him, and allowing the adoption of her son by someone else, so that he could live and so that she could stay close to him.



Miriam, Moshe’s sister, follows and guards Moshe through the reeds, facilitates a banned alliance, and guarantees Yokheved’s return to Moshe as his nursemaid.

Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh, makes use of her station to defy her father’s decree and adopt the child she finds in the reeds, wrapped in a blanket that clearly identifies him as Hebrew.

It takes patient resistance at many levels — each person within their sphere — to set the story of liberation in motion.

“*Min hameitzar karati Yah,*” says the psalmist, “*Va’anani b’merhav Yah*” — “I called out to Yah from the narrow place, and Yah answered me with expansiveness (Psalms 118).” When we are in a narrow place, we may feel that it’s the narrowest place that’s ever been, and that no one has been in as dire straights as this.

But the way out is always to believe that **something different is possible**. Every step of the Exodus story is prefaced by someone’s belief in a different reality to come; Shifra and Puah had to believe in a future for the Hebrew babies they were saving against Pharaoh’s decree, Yokheved and Miriam had to believe that Moshe could thrive if given the chance, Batya had to believe that she could love a Hebrew child as well as an Egyptian child. Later, an adult Moshe had to shift from non-belief to belief in himself in order to face Pharaoh and liberate his people from slavery.

Nothing ever gets accomplished by checking out, or by pre-assuming defeat.

No one thought the enslavement of the Hebrews would ever change, until it did — after a campaign of very persistent resistance and a lot of deliberate consequences for Pharaoh’s behavior. No one imagined the sea would split for the Hebrews, until it did — but only after the Hebrews, instead of turning back, had walked right up to the water’s edge, willing a way through.



As in so many situations, the only way out is through. **May we be strong enough to resist injustice in every place we can, knowing that we can bring about a different future.**

At Society Hill Synagogue, after our Intergenerational **Rock Purimspiel** on **March 13** (don’t miss it!), we will celebrate the bravery of the Exodus story on **Sunday, April 6, at 3:00 pm**, in a pre-Pesah concert, **Min HaMeitzar: From the Narrow Place**, with **MIRYAM Baroque Ensemble**. This immersive, participatory musical experience invites the *kahal* (community) into the heart of the music, dissolving the traditional divide between performer and audience. Join us as we lift our voices in song and spirit, preparing for the season of liberation.

The following week, with immense gratitude, I will commence a **three-month sabbatical**, lasting from the second day of Pesah (April 14) to the fourth week of July, with the exception of Hazel Saltzman’s Bat Mitzvah service on May 3. I will be leading services on the first day of Pesah (April 13).

During my sabbatical, my duties will be covered in-house: prayer-leading by our marvelous lay leaders; TGIShabbat by our wonderful rabbi and fabulous musicians; and teaching duties by my delightful fellow teachers in the Hebrew School. Our B’nei Mitzvah tutors are set up to guide students through this period, with Rabbi Kamesar on call if needed. Sahar Oz and our amazing office staff are the address for anything building- or logistics-related. Contact the Rabbi for any other time-bound questions — ritual, pastoral, B’nei Mitzvah related, or otherwise — that you may have during this time. If you have a question that can wait until my return, please email me in late July or August!

Thank you so much for this opportunity. I look forward to celebrating Purim and the start of Pesah with you, and then to returning to you in late July refreshed and ready to go!

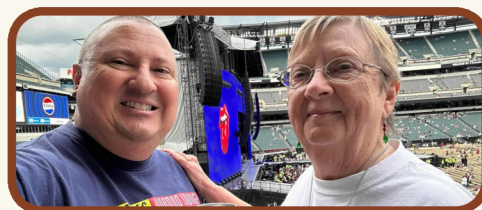
On behalf of my husband, Paul, and daughter, Olivia, I want to thank you all for your love and support that we've received after suddenly losing my mother-in-law, Kathy McKoskey. Your kindness and love in your calls, cards, emails, and attendance at her funeral meant so much to us.

In my almost 19 years working here, I knew I had a second family at Society Hill Synagogue, but you will never know how much I appreciate you all!

Much love, Leanne and family

A NOTE OF THANKS

Leanne Bendetti, Office Administrator



Leanne (left), Paul (top right), and Olivia (bottom right) with Leanne’s mother-in-law, Kathy; Leanne Bendetti.



Playschool

LAUGHTER, LEARNING, AND LEVITY: PURIM AND PASSOVER AT PLAYSCHOOL

by Megan Nachod

Life at our Playschool is rarely quiet, but Purim adds a whole other layer of excitement and energy! The costumes and *groggers* (noisemakers) appeal to the kids and their enthusiasm. We will be decorating masks, eating hamantaschen, and filling *groggers* to ensure we can drown out wicked Haman's name. Everyone is very good at making noise with *groggers* — it almost seems like a natural talent! It's the stopping that gets challenging and requires some practice.

We will also invite families to join in our **Purim Parade** when we celebrate the holiday as a school. It's hard to find a cuter spectacle than a line of children dressed up in their Purim costumes. Our parade is sure to be filled with multiple kings, queens, Paw Patrol characters, and at least one Elsa or Anna from Frozen. Hopefully we will also be spending more and more time outside with warmer weather around Purim. Heading outdoors without piling on layers of coats and mittens sounds lovely after this winter.

We will pivot to **Passover** preparation almost as soon as

Purim concludes. Our Pesah preparations include crafting memorable items for the Seder table, reading great books that explain the story of Passover, and singing song after song. The toddlers are particularly fond of shaking their fingers and saying, "No, no, no!" in the classic "Let My People Go." It is not surprising to see kids hopping like frogs, either. Our study of Passover concludes with a **child-friendly Seder** at school. No calm and sedate Seders here!



Students sampling matzah, vegetables, and haroset at last year's Playschool Seder; LilyFish Gomberg.

We will celebrate the springtime by planting flowers and watching how the world changes as it warms up. We are lucky enough to have several outdoor spaces for play and observation, and they are even more popular when we get to play in spring sunshine, surrounded by growing plants and birdsong.

We have opened our summer camp registration! Our popular summer camp for **children ages 18 months to 5 years old** runs from **Wednesday, June 4, through Friday, August 15**, and each week features a different fun theme. Registration is flexible, and children can attend five days per week for the full summer session or for selected weeks, or the same three or four days per week for the full summer session or for selected weeks. If you'd like your child to join us for summer fun or if you know someone who is interested, reach out to megan@societyhillssynagogue.org. **Camp fills up quickly**, so be sure to register today to guarantee your child's spot! Summer camp registration can be found on the Playschool webpage.

Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year continues, and the registration form can also be found on the Playschool webpage. **Only a few spots remain**, so don't wait if you are interested!

I want to wish you all *Hag Purim Same'ah* (Happy Purim) and *Hag Pesah Same'ah* (Happy Passover). Enjoy the spring!

REMEMBERING FORMER PLAYSCHOOL DIRECTOR GLORIA PARRIS

by Staci Schwartz

The first time I met Gloria Parris — known affectionately to hundreds of tiny Playschool students as Miss Gloria — was back in 2000 when she was hired as the new Playschool Director. Coincidentally, I had recently become the new chair of the Playschool Committee, so we had a great time learning the ropes together.

Extremely conscientious and with many years of teaching experience under her belt, Gloria hit the ground running as she interviewed and hired additional Playschool staff, prepared lesson plans, and ordered supplies. I learned so much from her while we worked together to develop marketing materials for the school, planned back-to-school nights for parents, and organized open houses and other outreach opportunities to publicize our wonderful Playschool. Gloria was easygoing, knowledgeable, and detail-oriented, so the transition into her new position was seamless.

In addition to her administrative duties, Gloria also worked as one of the full-time teachers in the classroom for 3- and 4-year-olds. Whether she was leading circle time, teaching kids to choose the appropriate attire for Mr. Weather Bear, reading a story, or supervising an art

project, she was always so good at modeling kind behavior and making sure that everyone felt welcome in the classroom.



Gloria absolutely loved working with young children, and she always provided a calming and reassuring presence for hesitant kids who were attending school or camp for the first time. She treated all of her young students like the unique and special individuals that they were. Her top priority was making sure the play environment was safe for every child, and her attention was never divided while supervising the kids in her class.

In her quiet way, Gloria guided many teachers and teachers' aides to become better and more observant educators.

As the years went by, in addition to running the regular Playschool program, Gloria worked with her talented staff to develop a popular summer camp curriculum, an Afternoon Arts program, and other extended care options for busy parents. She happily made room in the students' schedules for yoga instruction and regular field trips to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Every year, she and the other teachers enthusiastically participated in the Hanukkah Happening, Purim Carnival, and Spring Fair — events which always took place on weekends, outside of regular school hours.

During her 18 years at Society Hill Synagogue, Miss Gloria touched the lives of so many students, parents, lay leaders, clergy, and co-workers. Her accomplishments, friendship, and kindness will always be remembered.

We offer our deepest condolences to Gloria's beloved family, of whom she was extremely proud: daughters Laurie Porter (Craig) and Jaimie Pomianek (Jeff), and grandchildren Allie, Ethan, Taylor, and Jordan.

May Gloria's memory be for a blessing.



Ann Spak Thal Hebrew School

FROM MEGILLAH TO MITZVOT: SPRING EVENTS AT HEBREW SCHOOL

by Mike Roe

Our students know that my favorite time of every year is February and March — because, as we enter Adar, I know Purim is coming up. We have so many events to celebrate in the coming months for Hebrew School, and I really hope to see our community coming out to be with one another and creating positive experiences for our students.

Please mark your calendars for all of our Purim festivities, and make note that pre-registration is required for all Purim events. Links to register can be found in our weekly emails. On **Sunday, March 9**, we'll kick things off with our **Purim Carnival**, a day of fun, games, prizes, costumes, and more. We have three timed entry slots you can choose between: 9:30 - 10:45 am, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm, 12:30 - 1:45 pm.

The fun continues on **Thursday, March 13**, beginning at 5:30 pm with our **Purim dinner, Hamantaschen Bake-Off, Scotch Tasting, and Rock Purimspiel**. All of our students in *Kitot Gimel-Zayin* (3rd-7th grades) participate in the Rock Purimspiel, rehearsals have begun, and we're excited!

The Purim festivities conclude on **Friday, March 14**, at noon, with the synagogue's "**Traditional Megillah Reading**."

This spring, we have three B'nei Mitzvah to celebrate in our school community! We hope that you will come to join us, as each celebration is a unique opportunity to hear our students share their reflections and chant texts and celebrate traditions that bring us all together. Please mark your calendars for the following dates: **March 8** for the Bat Mitzvah of **Sophie Spiegel**, **April 5** for the **Bar Mitzvah of Aaron Wolson**, and **May 3** for the Bat Mitzvah of **Hazel Saltzman**.

We also have our two remaining class TGISHabbat services. A favorite of students and families alike, it's a spectacular sight to see our students on the bimah for TGISHabbat, helping to lead our community with song and spirit as we kick off Shabbat. *Kitot Hey* and *Vav* (5th and 6th grades) will help lead services on **Friday, March 21**, and *Kitah Zayin* and *Tikhon* (7th grade and Hebrew High) take the lead on **Friday, April 24**.

This year, Hebrew School will be closed for our **Pesah break** from **Saturday, April 12**, to **Saturday, April 19**. Classes will resume for our students in *Kitot Gimel-Zayin* (3rd-7th grades) on **Tuesday, April 22**.

Our final day of classes will take place on **May 17**. Another community favorite is our "Final Day Festivities." We invite everyone to come join us as we recognize the students and teachers for their amazing work over the course of the year, and of course, we will end our year with "Sensational Shabbat Sundaes."

Until then, the Hebrew School teachers and I wish everyone a joyful month of Adar, *Hag Purim Same'ah v'Hag Pesah Same'ah*.



A teacher and student sound out Hebrew words together at Hebrew School; LilyFish Gomberg.

Social Action Committee

TURNING THE PAGE: NEW CHAPTERS IN SOCIAL ACTION

by Steve Morley



The Social Action Committee continues its engagement with food insecurity, Vare-Washington Elementary School, and addressing policy issues through POWER. As our Get Out The Vote campaign has ended, we are looking to repair the world in new ways. **All Society Hill Synagogue members will receive a brief poll in early March which asks where you would like to see our community put its efforts for social action.** Please respond — and please join us! If you have questions or comments, contact me at socialaction@societyhillsynagogue.org.

The Social Action committee is sponsoring a **Lunch 'n' Learn on April 26** featuring **Book Smiles**, a South Jersey nonprofit with a mission of providing books to children. Book Smiles raises money for children's reading material through monetary donations as well as book donations, including adult books which are sold to raise money for children's books. So, all you "People of The Book" with overstuffed shelves, get ready to give your old books some new life and benefit a lot of kids as we learn about a crucial issue in our community and kick off a book drive!



The Society Hill Synagogue involvement with the library at **Vare-Washington Elementary School** has become a victim of our own success, with the lion's share of the work being done by parents at the school! Our committee remains engaged at Vare-Washington, but we are also exploring **helping a school without a library get one up and running**. Stay tuned for more information.



If you are inclined to work more on policy issues, than (or in addition to) these hands-on initiatives, **POWER Interfaith** is a rewarding place to engage. POWER is focusing now on the issue of **housing justice**. Philadelphia is in the midst of a housing crisis, with far too many community members struggling to find affordable, safe homes. POWER is building collective influence by bringing together neighbors, congregations, and faith leaders to advocate for housing for all. Two key elements of the campaign are: 1) gathering personal stories of insecure, unsafe housing or actual homelessness, and 2) building relationships with every member of City Council to advance concrete actions for safe, affordable housing for all Philadelphians. For more information, contact our POWER liaisons at power@societyhillsynagogue.org.

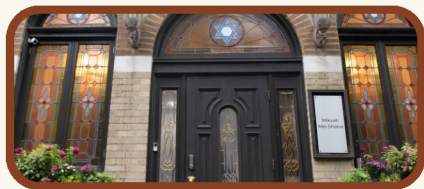
Lastly, our **Food Insecurity Committee**, led by Laurie Krivo and Bob Kaufman, is thriving! If you're interested in packaging and preparing food at Old Pine Community Center (OPCC), please email foodinsecurity@societyhillsynagogue.org to be added to their volunteer list and receive notifications about upcoming opportunities.

The Inclusion Corner

OHEL PATU'AH – THE OPEN TENT

by the Inclusion Committee

This year's learning and engagement opportunities have included two Lunch 'n' Learns, a Brunch 'n' Learn, and an excursion to the Weitzman for a Philadelphia Jewish Film + Media (PJFM) event, followed by dinner and discussion.



Street view of Mikvah Mei Shalva in Center City. Immersing in a Mikvah is part of the Jewish conversion process.

Join the Subcommittee on Interfaith Inclusion after services on **Saturday, March 15**, for a Lunch 'n' Learn panel discussion on experiences with conversion! This lay-led exchange will include congregant stories of the good, the bad, the transcendent, and the quotidian. We hope to explore various journeys in consideration of **conversion, dynamics with the Jewish community, and relationships with family** — and to create space for dialogue on a complex social topic. Thanks for helping us to create a synagogue that embraces those who grow into Judaism just as warmly as those born into it!

If you would like to participate in the Inclusion Committee or subcommittee conversations, please contact Debbie Stewart at inclusion@societyhillsynagogue.org, or reach out directly to a subcommittee chairperson.



The Abayudaya Jewish communities of Uganda; Peter Decherney.

The Subcommittee for Inclusion of People of Color is synthesizing the extraordinary discussion after the December screening of **Rabbi Angela Buchdahl's sermon** on rethinking race in the Jewish community. Meanwhile, we met at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History on February 20 for a Philadelphia Jewish Film + Media event and discussion of **the Abayudaya Jewish community in Uganda**. We dined afterward to discuss and commune. We look forward to offering additional programs to nurture a welcoming place for People of Color at Society Hill Synagogue.

To mark **Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM)**, the Subcommittee for Disability Inclusion arranged an excellent Brunch 'n' Learn exploring assistive technology (AT) with TechOWL, a valuable resource at Temple University. We had hands-on learning about TechOwl's resources, which are available to Pennsylvanians with disabilities of any age to "imagine, discover, explore, decide, get" the AT they need. We discovered accessibility features and more on our smartphones and enjoyed giveaways! Have a need? atinfo@temple.edu, 800-204-7428, or techowlpa.org.



Congregants at our JDAIM Brunch 'n' Learn with Tech OWL; submitted.

Subcommittee Chairpeople:

Interfaith Inclusion:

Gail Massey

Inclusion of People of Color:

Jared Susco

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion:

Marty Rosenberg

Disability Inclusion:

Amy Goldman



MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



Every week, Society Hill Synagogue spotlights one of our marvelous members on social media and in our eNews! Here are the members who have been spotlighted this past quarter.

You can learn more about them on our social media or at societyhillssynagogue.org/member-spotlights



MARINA CRUZ

"I love Shabbat services, especially singing with Hazzan Jessi and the other musicians! I am also impressed with the new Rosh Hodesh gatherings taking place at the synagogue; I especially loved the Kislev gathering about resilience."

EVE FRIEDMAN

I was raised in a Reform synagogue, with more-than-typical observance in the home (my parents kept a kosher kitchen, and my father davened [prayed] with tefillin every morning). Perhaps because of that combination, I had a hard time finding the right fit in a synagogue as an adult. Reform liturgy no longer appealed to me, but egalitarian was a must. It was a plus for me that Society Hill Synagogue was not affiliated with a movement of Judaism, and I found the special combination I was searching for.



LARRY GOLDFINGER

We moved to Philly in spring of 2008 and came to Society Hill Synagogue for the first time soon after. I recall that my wife, Jackie, and I both felt immediately welcomed and comfortable. In particular, we felt a connection with Rabbi Winokur's famous aphorism, "don't let your theology get in the way of your religion," as its spirit so clearly permeated the religious and social life here, and it represented something we had been seeking for a long time, but had not yet found.

MARC SCHWARTZ

"My wife, Staci, and I were initially drawn to the intellectual approach to Judaism that Rabbi Ivan Caine demonstrated during services, as well as his devotion to Jewish traditions. These features have been further nourished by our subsequent rabbis, Avi Winokur and now Nathan Kamesar. We love how the Society Hill Synagogue community has always made us feel surrounded by friends, and we appreciate the balance we strike between traditional Jewish values and practices while remaining open to trying new ideas to support each member on their individual Jewish journey."



DEBBIE WEISSBACH

"Since moving to Philadelphia, Society Hill Synagogue has become a second home in which I can engage spiritually and educationally, as well as through social action. The community is warm and welcoming, and we have made many new friends. Rabbi Nathan Kamesar and Hazzan Jessi Roemer lead beautiful services that are engaging and inclusive."



VAL AND MIKE YASNER

"We enjoy the praying on Shabbat and holidays, the learning with Rabbi Nathan's courses and Scholars-In-Residence, and the meals we all share together. We really love how genuinely warm and welcoming the Society Hill Synagogue community is."



RENEE EDELMAN

"I love our warm and welcoming community. There is a lot of discussion about the decline of 'third places' in our society — places outside of work and home where people can find belonging and friendship — but at Society Hill Synagogue, no one is ever 'bowling alone,' to borrow the title of a famous book on the topic."



EVAN SCHWARTZ CHRISMER

"One reason I love Society Hill Synagogue is the Hebrew School. The teaching is very good, and the students are amazingly kind. There isn't one bad thing to say about anyone or anything at Hebrew School, and I'm so happy to get to learn here."



TOVA STIFANO-WALTON

"Marc and I were warmly welcomed during our first visit, and that warmth and sense of community remain genuine and evident. I love having a spiritual home where I can walk to and 'just be.' I was also very taken by how the Rabbi includes both children and adults in our Torah discussion before he delivers his D'var Torah."



L'DOR V'DOR: GENERATIONAL COHORT GROUPS

TRIPLE CHAI (AGES 54+)

By Natalie Landro and Robin Cohen

We had two very exciting speaker events in January and February, which each drew over 40 attendees!

In January, we heard from a Jewish attorney active in his synagogue who committed a white collar crime and was incarcerated for five years. When he was released, he began to give back to the incarcerated population, and he now works at the Petey Greene Program to help folks when they are released from prison.

In February, we discussed the VIDOCQ Society and its work to solve "cold cases," and explored the "Detective Mystique" with Howard Lebofsky, Esquire, and retired Chief Detective Jack Maxwell. The topic fascinated everyone!

We are so excited for our upcoming trip to Morocco! We leave in April, and we'll be exploring Morocco's rich Jewish history. There are only two spots available, so reach out to us today at triplechai@societyhillsynagogue.org if you want to join us!



Chief Detective Jack Maxwell, Triple Chai Co-Chairs Robin Cohen and Natalie Landro, and Howard Lebofsky, Esquire, at the VIDOCQ event in February; submitted.

Upcoming Events:

**Tour of the Museum for Art in Wood • Sunday, March 23 @ 11:30 am • Cost: \$5 at the door
Register by March 18**

The Museum for Art in Wood is a worldwide leader in contemporary wood art and creativity. This tour includes both a temporary exhibition and the permanent collection, showcasing over a thousand wooden sculptures. The tour will begin at 11:30 am, with lunch following. Lunch isn't included in the \$5 charge.

**Knock Knock... Jews There? A Talmudic Take on Comedy • Sunday, May 18 @ 7:00 pm
Cost: \$18 Society Hill Synagogue Members • \$40 General Public • Register by May 15**

Why are there so many funny Jewish comedians, and where does our sense of humor come from? Join comedic actress **Sharon Geller** as she delights the audience with humorous stories and jokes that will tickle your funny bone and other body parts as well! Sharon Geller has appeared on *Saturday Night Live* four times and on *The TODAY Show* with Al Roker as "Lucy." She is in the national touring company of the off-Broadway hit, *Old Jews Telling Jokes*, and teaches Comedy Improv at the Walnut Street Theatre.

Register for these events and more at: societyhillsynagogue.org/triple-chai

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YOUNG FAMILIES SHABBAT

Our popular Young Families Shabbat celebrations, led by Society Hill Synagogue parents Joanna and Micah Hart, blend guitar grooves, singing, instruments for all ages, blessings, dancing, and the company of new friends and familiar faces! A delicious dairy vegetarian dinner or lunch is always included. You can RSVP for any or all of them via the quick and easy form on our website.

Here are the dates for upcoming Young Families Shabbatot:

- Friday, Mar. 21 @ 5:45 pm with Dinner
- Friday, Apr. 4 @ 5:45 pm with Dinner
- Friday, May 2 @ 5:45 pm with Dinner
- Friday, Jun. 6 @ 5:45 pm with Dinner
- Saturday, Mar. 1 @ 11:15 am with Lunch
- Saturday, Apr. 26 @ 11:15 am with Lunch
- Saturday, May 10 @ 11:15 am with Lunch

All of these dates are also available on the synagogue's calendar and in the Facebook event for Young Families Shabbat. Please spread the word and reach out to youngfamilies@societyhillsynagogue.org with any questions. We look forward to getting to know you!



YOUNG FRIENDS (20s-30s)

By Anna Wiener, Alexis Rosen, and Louis Polcin

The Young Friends kicked off 2025 with a fantastic happy hour in **January** at Love City Brewing, where 15 friends gathered to reconnect and welcome the new year. In **February**, we came together at Rittenhouse Square Park for a park clean-up in honor of Tu BiSh'vat (the Jewish new year for the trees). This event was a meaningful way to give back to our community while strengthening our connections with one another.



Young Friends gathered in Rittenhouse Square Park for our Tu BiSh'vat inspired Park Clean-Up & Coffee event in February; Alexis Rosen.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to partner with the Israel Connections Subcommittee for an Israeli happy hour and dinner with special guest, **Jordan Davis**, on **Thursday, April 10, at 6:00 pm** here in our courtyard (rain location: social hall). Jordan, a native of Wyoming and student at the University of Pennsylvania, works with **Birthright Israel** and will discuss what it's like to be a Jewish student on an American college campus since October 7, and how Birthright — **which is now available to participants ages 18-40** — can provide a firsthand experience that connects you to Jewish heritage, and gives a sense of community support and belonging while exploring the people and land of Israel.

Admission to the happy hour and dinner costs \$5, and there will be assorted Israeli wines and beers. Register for this event and more at: societyhillsynagogue.org/young-friends

Coolanu: Culture and Community

FROM HAMANTASCHEN TO KOSHER HOT DOGS



by Elliot Landes and Lesli Reich

It was so lovely to spend a wintery Sunday afternoon together on February 23, roasting marshmallows and drinking hot cocoa. Everyone had a great time — the kids and the adults!



Winter fun at the Landes' home in February; Elliot and Morgan Landes.

Our tradition teaches that when the Hebrew month of Adar begins, our joy rises — and so does our dough! Coolanu's next event will be our **third annual Hamantaschen Bake-Off** on **March 13**, just before the Rock Purimspiel. There are still available slots for bakers and judges; contact coolanu@societyhillssynagogue.org to sign up! Judging will take place during dinner, so all competing hamantaschen should be in the Social Hall and ready to be judged by 5:45 pm. **Your hamantaschen trophy awaits!**

Celebrate Lag Ba'Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer, on **Thursday, May 15, 6:00-8:00 pm**. Lag Ba'Omer is celebrated with bonfires and outdoor parties — our courtyard is the perfect venue for this!

We'll grill kosher meat and vegetarian burgers and hot dogs, enjoy s'mores, and sip drinks. There will be arts and crafts projects and nerf archery. Admission is free for Society Hill Synagogue members, and for the general public: **\$30 for ages 13+** and **\$15 for kids under 13**.

MURDER MYSTERY DINNER THEATER

by Judy Lalli

Our congregation's Society Hill Players Dinner Theater group is proud to bring us a thrilling evening of dinner, drama, and detective work on **Sunday, April 27, at 5:30 pm**.

This year's production, presented by **The Murder Mystery Company**, features a Roaring '20s theme.

Don't miss this chance to dine, delight, and discover "whodunnit" right here at Society Hill Synagogue.

Lucky you!

You've been invited to the Dunn Speakeasy for the wedding of the year. But in this "Married to the Mob" event, you never know whom to trust. With two powerful families merging, someone is bound to lose power — and someone else will lose their life. Get on the trolley and help solve the case alongside your fellow detectives.

It could even be one of you!



No rehearsals — just show up and enjoy! This evening promises fun for everyone, whether you jump into character or prefer to sit back and watch the action unfold, while enjoying a delicious dinner and finding clues to crack the case. **You're invited to dress up for this '20s mafia wedding. Props provided!**

Tickets

Members: \$36 Advance,
\$45 at the Door
General Public: \$56 Advance,
\$65 at the Door

Register to join us at societyhillssynagogue.org/murdermystery2025

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Israel Connections Subcommittee

REMEMBRANCE & CELEBRATION



Congregants Holden and Felise Nagelberg, Val and Mike Yasner, David Levine, Rob Einhorn, and Rafi Licht at the Israel Connections Subcommittee Lunch 'n' Learn; submitted.

by David Levine

It was wonderful to be together with so many congregants and friends at our January Shabbat Kiddush Lunch 'n' Learn, **Making a Difference: My Volunteer Experience in Israel!**

We had an inspiring and moving conversation with panelists **Holden and Felise Nagelberg, Val and Mike Yasner, Rob Einhorn, and Rafi Licht**, who shared their experiences volunteering with various organizations in Israel before and since October 7, 2023. More information about the organizations is available at: societyhillsynagogue.org/israel

Come together on **Wednesday, April 30, at 6:00 pm** to observe **Yom Hazikaron**, Remembrance Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism, and to celebrate **Yom Ha'atzma'ut**, Israel's Independence Day.

Different from how most Americans experience Memorial Day and Independence Day, in Israel, Yom Hazikaron immediately precedes Yom Ha'atzma'ut — a profound, emotional acknowledgement that freedom isn't free.

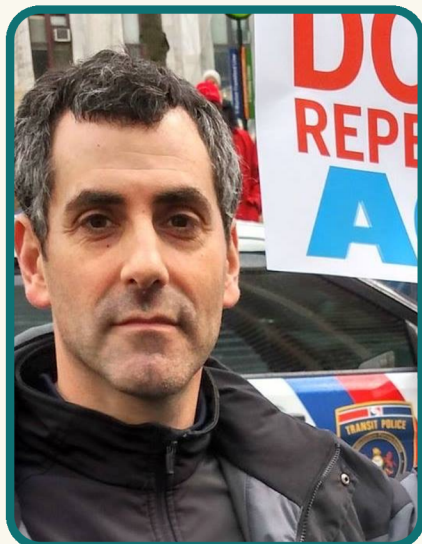
The somber nature of Yom Hazikaron is juxtaposed with the joy and exhilaration of Yom

Ha'atzma'ut. As the State of Israel marks its 77th year of independence, we will seek to channel this unique blend of emotions with a 25-minute Yom Hazikaron ceremony, including poems, songs, and prayers in memory of the fallen, which will conclude with the siren heard throughout Israel on Yom Hazikaron, as everything stops, and people stand at attention.

We will then celebrate Yom Ha'atzma'ut with an Israeli dinner, backgammon, Israel bingo, and a giant Israel map puzzle, soundtracked by Israeli pop music. Join us to **remember and rejoice — Am Yisrael Hai!**

SOCIETY HILL SYNAGOGUE'S NEW MEN'S CLUB

by Harry Oxman



Dr. David Oxman, M.D.; submitted.

The newly formed Society Hill Synagogue **Men's Club** held its first two organizational meetings on Wednesday, January 29, and Wednesday, February 12, drawing thirteen participants.

At the second meeting, after discussing plans for the future, the group welcomed **Dr. Ron Kaiser**, who gave an insightful presentation on the aging process.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 2**, and will feature a presentation by **David Oxman, M.D.**, titled, *Americans Hate Their Health Insurance: How Did We Get Here and Where Do We Go?*

The Men's Club looks forward to welcoming even more participants at this upcoming gathering. For more about the group and its activities, please email me at mensclub@societyhillsynagogue.org.

JACK M. BARRACK HEBREW ACADEMY

Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy is a Jewish community day school for students in grades 6-12 that offers a college-preparatory curriculum combining in-depth critical analysis, rigorous text study, experiential education, and a focus on Jewish values.

“I would tell any parent that is considering Barrack that this is an amazing place.

The sense of community here, the warmth of all of the teachers, the dual curriculum, the success rate of getting into colleges... Barrack has exceeded all expectations. We made the absolute right choice for our son and our family.”

Scott and Brooke Borsky, upper school parents

Through academic excellence and a commitment to Jewish learning, we prepare our students for success and leadership, inspiring them to be ethical, wise, and involved Jewish adults. Barrack students develop a lifelong appreciation of learning, an understanding of their place in history, a commitment to Jewish identity, and passion to reach their potential.

We invite you to explore Barrack and begin a journey of discovery with us.



Visit our website to learn more.

COMMUNITY NEWS



Mazal Tov to:

Robin Cohen on the engagement of her daughter, **Brittany Cohen**, to **Adam Saslow**

Mitchell and Carolyn Davis on the wedding of their son, **Perry Davis**, and **Ashley Friedman**

Neil Cohen and Debbie Weissbach on the wedding of their son, **Ben Cohen**, and **Dylan Morpurgo**

Maddie Sweitzer and Zac Winkler and their families, including Zac's parents and fellow Society Hill Synagogue members, **Nancy and David Winkler**, on Maddie and Zac's wedding

Kim and Ben Woll, and big brother **Joseph**, on the birth of their daughter and sister, **Eve Rebecca Woll**

Billy and Kellen Boardman on their wedding

Ben Cohen and Stacey Ramirez on their wedding

Sara Leshen-Gross and Dan Gross, and big brother **Hershel**, on the birth of their daughter and sister, **Hannah Miriam Gross**

David Pressel and Jill Feldman on their engagement



Welcome New Members:

Andrea and David Allon

Talia Maas and Zackary Enish, and their children, **Liel and Noam**

Ellen Adelman

Matthew Cohen and Erika Pleskunas

Judi and Stuart Deglin

Judy Wertheim



Condolences to:

The family of **Gloria Parris**

Leanne Bendetti, her husband, **Paul**, and their daughter, **Olivia**, on the passing of Paul's mother, **Kathleen "Kathy" McKoskey**

Alex Urevick-Ackelsberg and **Amy Wilson** and their children, **Chaya and Ari**, on the passing of Alex's mother, **Patricia Urevick**

Claire Dubin on the passing of her brother, **Israel Dubin**

Joanna and Micah Hart and their children, **Toby and Matilda**, on the passing of Joanna's father, **Richard Lee**

Ron and Robin Feinberg on the passing of Ron's mother, **Esther Feinberg**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March Birthdays

Theodore Danoff
Caroline Kamesar
Marsha Cohen
Josh Cooper
Susan Fisher
Libby Rosof
Marc Cohen
Raphael Englander
Mayah Gold
Linda Rosenstein
Layna Brock
Angela Lashbrook
Polina Ferd
Sandi Foxx-Jones
Sam Marion
Sophia Spiegel
Ben Woll
Jaclyn Polakoff
Amy Finkel
Mirit Schwartz
Matthew Cohen
Darryl Hazelwood
Ann Lebowitz
Zachary Lilien
Emanuel Maiberg
Diane Danoff
Miles Skolnik
Alan Casnoff
Marjorie Goldstein
William Hauptman
Rachel Ladenson
Lysander Michaels-Koenig
Richard Braemer
Jonah Cohen
Jordan Fox
Leo Kastenber
Rafi Licht
Gdaly Berlin
Anna Elbaum
Marc Greenberg
Jeremey Newberg
Jane Peskin

Ezekiel Hazelwood
Dinah Lovitch
Ellie Wilson
Margot Englander
Jackie Goldfinger
Sarina Kaplan
Julie Liedman
Staci Schwartz
Richard Frantz
Benni Kauderwood
Odilia Kirshenbaum
Erica Ginsburg
Amalya Wolf Weiss
Nancy Moses
Isabella Schwartz
Stewart Fisher
Rachel Howe
Daniel Strunk
Ashley Toal
Eleanor Oxman
Anthony Padilla
Isabella Lieberman
Daniel Sztul
Aaron Silberstein
Barbara Zamarin
Amy Goldman
Bob Kaufman
Maya Litwack
Stephanie Reinitz
Claire Flamendorf
Jake Rainwater
Carole Rochester
Louisa Slutsky
Louis Golding
Elliot Landes
Hannah Marion
Stephanie Wolson

April Birthdays

David English
Rick Summers
Ezra Gellman
Morgan Landes
Susan Leshnoff
Leah Jordan
Felicity Lowe
Megan Nachod
Joshua Brugger
Zev Epstein
Ana Atach
Alan Casper
Bob Blacksberg
Benji Nachod
Alan Ominsky
Barbara Rottenberg
Sarah Fernberger
David Mink
Michelle Bass
Miriam Silberstein
Julian Tablin-Wolf
Samantha Goodman
Evelyn Segal
Becca Richards
Tobey Dichter
Brian Englander
Alex Imas
Stephen Brown
Hannah Davidson
Meredith Buse
Ethan Gutstadt
Rabbi Nathan Kamesar
Leily Schoenhaus
Mary Fish
Matilda Hart
Saul Imas
Bruce Katcher
Adina Siff
Robert Bass
Amelia Ruggieri
Amy Trachtenberg
Bruce Hirsch



MORE BIRTHDAYS

Iris Levine
Asher Bruton
Rafael Mesznik
Darren Seltzer
David Miller
Esme Oxman
Scott Siff
Thomas Borawski
Nancy Machinist
Jessica Mono
Zachary Fernberger
Beverly Michaels
Alex Seldin
Alexander Goldstein
Luke Makuen
Carl Levitsky
Murray Dubin
Levi Goldstein
Wally Morano
Harry Feinberg
Maxine Mann
Leslie Richards
Leon Sakkal
Beth Schwartz
Motty Seal
Stella Wolson
Josephine Cooper
Ron Klein
Madeline Mohajer
Bill Goldberg
Billie Katz



May Birthdays

Noah Chrismer
Aislinn Bohren
Barbara Einhorn
Hayden Gellman
Ilene Hollin
Renee Edelman
Jessica Tropea
Steven Datlof
Jacob Fishman
Mindy Fingerman
Lynn Gottlieb
Seth Lieberman
Liz Abrams-Morley
Eliana Hazelwood
Emily Perschetz
Rose Morano
Kim Woll
Allison Kirshner Oz
Lincoln Kornberg
Larry Spector
Susan Banchek
Dylan Howe
Lev Silber
Alan Berlin
Linda Glass
Wayne Spilove
Merrily Williams
Emma Schwartz Chrismer
Randi Kamine

Joan Roller
Kinney Zalesne
Carter Reich
David Winkler
Rian Berger
Edgar Michaels-Koenig
Rona Buchalter
Davida Krupnick
Ruby Snell
Ella Roe
Lindsay Gorsen
Mariel Kornblith Martin
Barbara Behar
Jayne Bird
Tammy Noth
Stefanie Rosen
Eric Raab
Arielle Schwartz
Robin Ireland
Hazel Saltzman
Julia Sztul
Kathy Kaplan
Marilyn Deutsch
LilyFish Gomberg
Sahar Oz
Ethan Honig
David Makuen
Cat Nguyen
Julie Wilson
Rebecca Mann



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

March Anniversaries

Maxine Mann & Jay Goodman
Arnie & Linda Freedman
David & Rebecca Makuen
Joe Manko & Jennifer Porges
Jenny & Adam Saltzman
Seth & Rachel Cohen
Louis & Mirit Schwartz
Steve Morley & Liz Abrams-Morley
Bruce & Carol Katcher
Jordan & Rebecca Fishman
Myer & Miriam Magen
Joanna Lack & Brendan Lowe
Ed & Rivka Weinstein
Judy & Tony Lalli
Edgar & Barbara Einhorn
Howard Sedran & Martha Levine

April Anniversaries

David & Pam Levine
Randi Kamine & Hop Sears
Angela Lashbrook & Emanuel Maiberg
Carl & Roberta Dranoff
Alexander & Andrea Ehrlich
Josh & Stephanie Wolson
Mary Fish & Mark Dembert



May Anniversaries

Jonathan Grode & Jayne Bird
Max Goldberg & Maria Chambers-Goldberg
Megan Helzner & Jason Flamendorf
Mark & Carol Brugger
Josh Lehrer & Laura Gessman
Brooke & Matthew Salzman
Holman & Gail Massey
Anna & Philip Wiener
Justin Lilien & Ami Fisher
Amelia Ruggieri & Shara Epstein
Dan & Dana Feinberg
Irv & Sharon Shapiro
Steve Cohen & Naomi Basickes
Robert & Barbara Behar
Sarina Kaplan & Adam Elbaum
Laurie Krivo & Bob Kaufman
Ric & Carmen Hayman
Ira & Lynne Rubinfeld
Ron & Robin Feinberg
Alex Unger & Lori Landew

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

General Fund

**In Appreciation of
Society Hill Synagogue**
Stu & Bev Berman
Dan & Stephanie Wechsler
David Silver

In Honor of

**Engagement of Robin Cohen's Daughter, Brittany
Natalie Landro**

Birth of Aviv Silber, Son of Mari & Abe Silber
Terry Graboyes

Carmen Hayman
Merle Salkin

Lisa Eizen
Merle Salkin

Bar Mitzvah Anniversary of Jerry Silverman
Merle Salkin
Brian & Gilah Sietz

In Memory of

**Kathy McKoskey, Mother-in-Law of
Leanne Bendetti**
Len & Gail Pogach
Mark Dembert & Mary Fish
Lois Vederman
Alice Levy & Motty Seal
Jerry & Joan Roller

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

End of the Year Appeal

Mark Dembert & Mary Fish
Mark Steinberger & Ann Lebowitz
Marina Cruz
Tony & Judy Lalli
Ed Hollin
Kinney Zalesne & Scott Siff
David & Pam Levine
Ashley Toal & Jonathan Wetstein
Judy Rohtbart
Jerry & Joan Roller
Terri Soifer & Jake Rainwater
Ben Cohen & Stacey Ramirez
Dan & Barbara Rottenberg
Sam Mink & Anthony Padilla
Joseph Freedman
Carter & Lesli Reich
Iris Levine
Leslie Weiss & Neil Bunis
Gdaly & Eva Berlin
Laurie Magid & Jeff Miller
Alice Sayles
Mark & Carol Brugger
Hilary Levine & Tyler McKinley
David Pressel & Jill Feldman
Linda Joy Goldner
Marc Walton & Tova Stifano-Walton
Mitchell & Carolyn Davis
Harvey & Vikki Wiener
Stephen Cohen & Naomi Basicckes
Alice Levy & Motty Seal
Debbie Stewart
Marc & Anita Cohen
Rabbi Nathan & Caroline Kamesar
Sahar Oz & Allison Kirshner Oz
Kathy Kaplan
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Rabbi Avi Winokur & Susan Berman
Alan & Lynn Gottlieb
Beverly Levy

Murray Dubin & Libby Rosof
Martin & Shira Angert
Alex Tablin-Wolf & Cat Nguyen
Roy Hamilton & Dawn Mechanic-Hamilton
Stephanie Ben-Salem
Emily Haney-Caron
Eileen Abrahams
Anne Ballen Ladenson
Bob Blacksberg & Terry Novick
Dan Bogen & Erica Ginsburg
Francine Cohen
Marilyn Deutsch
Rob Einhorn
Steven & Lisa Eizen
Adele Fine & Burt Ginsberg
Len & Deena Friedland
Frank Giorgilli
Laurie Gold
Marc & Nancy Goldenberg
Micah & Joanna Hart
Bonny Hohenberger & Nathan Farbman
Randi Kamine & Hop Sears
Carl Levitsky
Fred & Dinah Lovitch
Jeremy Peskin & Sara Manning Peskin
Jared Susco & Chris Stearns
Jonathan Weiss & Abigail Wolf
Steven & Stephanie Weiss
David & Nancy Winkler
Stanley & Judith Woloff
Mitchell Bach & Elayne Bloom
Robert & Barbara Behar
Josh Cooper & Jamie Cooperstein
Ron & Robin Feinberg
Marjorie Goldstein
Elana Hunter
Howard Lander
Myer & Miriam Magen
Harry & Eleanor Oxman
Ben Schindler & Becky Rohtbart
Rick Summers & Merrily Williams
Anna & Philip Wiener
Flora Wolf
Howard Sedran & Martha Levine
Liz Sall
David & Judi Mink
Nancy Morgenstern
Rafi Licht & Gabrielle Applebaum
Arnie Wolf & Fern Tablin
Stephen Kastenbergl & Robin Ireland
Steven Gendler
Stuart & Beverly Berman
Keith Dashefsky
Linda Glass
Seth & Rachel Cohen
Stuart & Fern Fisher

MARCH • APRIL • MAY 2025 • • • ADAR • NISAN • IYAR • SIVAN 5785

Social Action Fund
Vare-Washington Elementary School Winter Coat Drive

Len & Deena Friedland
David & Pam Levine

In Honor of

Beth Cohen & Bruce Barris
Colin Kelso

Lyn Kirshenbaum, on her Recent Retirement
Ric & Carmen Hayman

In Memory of

Esther Feinberg, Mother of Ron Feinberg
Nancy Morgenstern
Sandi & Barry Tannen

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Marilyn Laufer, Sister of Barbara Behar
Robert & Barbara Behar

Erwin R. Goldman, Father of Amy Goldman
Karl Janowitz & Amy Goldman

Sylvia Ewens, Mother of Wilma Bass
Robert & Wilma Bass

Estelle Rosenberg, Aunt of Robert Bass
Robert & Wilma Bass

Bernard G. Dembert, Father of Mark Dembert
Mark Dembert & Mary Fish

Cele Braverman, Mother of Marilyn Deutsch
Marilyn Deutsch

William G. Sarnacki, Friend
Carl Kaplan

Thedra Giorgilli, Mother of Frank Giorgilli
Frank Giorgilli

Sandy Basickes, Mother of Naomi Basickes
Steve Cohen & Naomi Basickes

Hilda H. Harwitz, Grandmother of Betta Kolansky
Betta Kolansky

H. Newton Garber, Father of Gail Pogach
Len & Gail Pogach

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

In Honor of
Society Hill Synagogue
Judy Wertheim

Paula & Larry Ninerell's Grandson's Bar Mitzvah
Stanley & Judith Woloff

Rabbi Kamesar's Consecration of our Marriage
Stephen Kastenbergs & Robin Ireland

Society Hill Synagogue and its Wonderful Programming
Leslie Dashefsky

Bar Mitzvah of Jerry Silverman
Donna Tartasky

Wedding of Zac and Maddie Winkler
David & Nancy Winkler

In Memory of

Philip Feiner
Stephen & Pelley Brown

Kathy McKoskey, Mother-in-Law of Leanne Bendetti
Donna Tartasky

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

William J. Levy, Husband of Beverly Levy
Beverly Levy

Henry & Lena Yager, Parents of Beverly Levy
Beverly Levy

Etta Blask, Grandmother of Judith Woloff
Stanley & Judith Woloff

Pauline Schertz Rosen, Mother of Pelley Brown
Stephen & Pelley Brown

Isadore Schertz, Grandfather of Pelley Brown
Stephen & Pelley Brown

William & Myrtle Manheimer, Parents of Joyce Norden
Joyce Norden

Isadore Goldenberg, Father of Marc Goldenberg
Marc & Nancy Goldenberg

Meyer Tartasky, Father of Donna Tartasky
Donna Tartasky

Clarence Lovitch, Father of Fred Lovitch
Fred & Dinah Lovitch

Geoffrey Michaels, Husband of Beverly Michaels
Beverly Michaels

Hazzan's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of
Philip Feiner
Stephen & Pelley Brown

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Debbie Weissbach's Birthday

Daniel Cohen

Leanne Bendetti's Help with Winter Coat Drive

Jerry & Joan Roller

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Marcia Hirtenstein, Friend of Debbie Weissbach

Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach

Herbert Weissbach, Father of Debbie Weissbach

Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach

Arthur & Miriam Shore, Parents of Joanna Bottaro

Andrew & Joanna Bottaro

Dorothy Siegel Goldman, Mother of Amy Goldman

Karl Janowitz & Amy Goldman

Pearl Janowitz, Mother of Karl Janowitz

Karl Janowitz & Amy Goldman

Mary Dubin, Mother of Murray Dubin

Murray Dubin & Libby Rosof

Roy Rieder, Father of Joan Roller

Jerry & Joan Roller

Food Insecurity Fund

In Honor of

Jerry Silverman's Fall Jewish Walking Tour

Carter & Lesli Reich

Society Hill Synagogue's Work on Food Insecurity

Ruth Peterson

Sarah Levitsky

Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach, Auf Ruf of Ben

Cohen & Dylan Morpurgo

Judy Rohtbart

In Memory of

Gloria Schwartz, Mother of Marc Schwartz

Carter & Lesli Reich

Kathy McKoskey, Mother-in-Law of Leanne Bendetti

Carter & Lesli Reich

Julius Wartell, Grandfather of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Irene Teller, Mother of Judy Rohtbart

Judy Rohtbart

Kiddush Fund

In Honor of

Jerry Silverman on his Special Birthday

Stanley & Judith Woloff

Bar Mitzvah of Evan Schwartz Chrismer

David & Pam Levine

In Memory of

Esther Feinberg, Mother of Ron Feinberg

Ric & Carmen Hayman

David & Pam Levine

Speedy Recovery to

Pam Levine

Ric & Carmen Hayman

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

William J. Levy, Father of Alice Levy

Alice Levy & Motty Seal

Marjorie Seal, Mother of Motty Seal

Alice Levy & Motty Seal

Anita Reich, Mother of Carter Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Joan Fries, Mother of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Katie Loeb

Barbara Spector

Betty Kaplan, Grandmother of Pam Levine

Daivd & Pam Levine

Norman Chernick, Father of Carolyn

Mitchell & Carolyn Davis

Leon Spector, Father of Barbara Spector

Barbara Spector

Adult Education Fund

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Leon Magen, Father of Myer Magen

Myer & Miriam Magen

Rose Greenberg, Mother of Miriam Magen

Myer & Miriam Magen

Harry Greenberg, Father of Miriam Magen

Myer & Miriam Magen

Morris & Dorothy Serlin, Parents of David Serlin

David Serlin & Susan Denbo

CELEBRATE PURIM WITH US!

Get your costumes ready for carnival games on **March 9**, our annual Purim dinner, hamantaschen bake-off, Scotch tasting, and the Rock Purimspiel on **March 13**, and our "Traditional" Megillah reading on **March 14**.

There's something for all ages!

Learn more and register at:

www.societyhillsynagogue.org/purim



PESAH SECOND NIGHT SEDER

Sunday, Apr. 13 @ 6:00-9:00 pm

Register by March 17 at www.societyhillsynagogue.org/pesah

Celebrate Pesah (Passover) at our annual Second Night Seder with Society Hill Synagogue members, family, and friends. Led by **Rabbi Nathan Kamesar**, we'll march through the *Haggadah* together with interactive readings and interpretations as we envision ourselves journeying from Egyptian bondage to freedom. Enjoy a delicious Kosher for Passover meal catered by Panache by Foodarama, including wine — and you're also welcome to bring your own additional Kosher for Passover wine.

Admission for Society Hill Synagogue members is \$60 per adult (ages 13+) and \$40 per child (under age 13), and for the General Public, admission is \$80 per adult (ages 13+) and \$50 per child (under age 13).

Menu

Entrées:

- **Option 1:** Tender Roast Prime Brisket of Beef Au Jus
- **Option 2:** Rolled Eggplant with Roasted Red Pepper & Portobello Mushroom Stuffing
- **Option 3:** Atlantic Salmon Fillet Poached with Lemon, Dill, White Wine

Along With:

- Gefilte Fish, String Beans, Potato & Onion Kugel
- Mixed Green Salad
- Pickles, Sour Tomatoes, Olives & Matzah
- Sweet Tray with Passover Cakes & Cookies, and Fresh Fruit

Each table also receives a Seder Plate, a Bottle of Red Wine, and a Bottle of White Wine.



SPRING 2025 CALENDAR

MARCH

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

CALENDAR KEY:

- = Book Club
- = B'nei Mitzvah
- = Rosh Hodesh
- = Men's Club
- = Young Families Shabbat
- = Save the Date for a Special Event

Special Events:

- 3/1 — SONGS FROM THE VOID: Darshan Concert
- 3/8 — Bat Mitzvah of Sophia Spiegel
- 3/9 — Purim Carnival
- 3/13 — Dinner, Scotch, Bake-Off & Rock Purimspiel
- 3/14 — "Traditional" Megillah Reading
- 3/15 — Interfaith Inclusion Lunch 'n' Learn
- 3/21 — TGIShabbat featuring *Kitot Hey* and *Vav*
- 3/23 — Triple Chai: Museum for Art in Wood
- 3/28-29 — Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat with Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld
- 4/5 — Bar Mitzvah of Aaron Wolson
- 4/6 — *Min HaMeitzar*: MIRYAM Concert
- 4/10 — Young Friends: Birthright Israel Happy Hour
- 4/13 — Pesah Second Night Seder
- 4/17 — Young Friends: Matzah Pizza Night
- 4/25 — TGIShabbat featuring *Kitah Zayin* and *Tikhon*
- 4/26 — Social Action Lunch 'n' Learn
- 4/27 — Murder Mystery Dinner Theater
- 4/30 — Yom Hazikaron & Yom Ha'atzma'ut
- 5/3 — Bat Mitzvah of Hazel Saltzman
- 5/15 — Lag Ba'Omer Barbecue & Celebration
- 5/17 — Last day of Hebrew School Classes
- 5/18 — Triple Chai: Knock Knock... Jews There?

This calendar is subject to change.

For up-to-date information, check www.societyhillsynagogue.org/calendar or contact our office.

You can add our **Society Hill Synagogue Community Calendar** to your own personal Google Calendar! Visit our website calendar and click "Add this calendar to your Google Calendar."

**SOCIETY HILL
SYNAGOGUE**

418 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

215.922.6590

www.societyhillsynagogue.org

Lisa Eizen, President

Rabbi Nathan Kamesar

Rabbi Avi Winokur, Rabbi Emeritus

Hazzan Jessi Roemer

Sahar Oz, Executive Director

LilyFish Gomberg, Communications Manager



Mail To: