

The Westchester Jewish Council Introduces Its New President, Michael Mittelman

The Westchester Jewish Council proudly announces the appointment of Michael Mittelman as its new President, effective immediately.

He previously served as a member of WJC's Board of Directors for six years and then transitioned to the organization's executive committee as an officer for the past two years. Michael brings a wealth of experience and a passion for our mission and is poised to lead the Council into its next chapter.

"I am incredibly honored to assume the role of President of the Westchester Jewish Council and continue the organization's strong legacy of connecting the Westchester Jewish community to other faith and ethnic communities, elected officials, the State of Israel, and members of the Jewish community itself," said Mittelman. "Looking ahead, we intend to broaden our reach to serve more members of the Jewish community, continue to support Israel in this post-October 7 era, and ensure that we deepen our relationships throughout the county to help us stand strongly against antisemitism wherever it may appear."

During his time with WJC, Michael has taken roles on the organization's nominating, membership, Israel affairs, and gala committees. He also helped launch and led the organization's combating antisemitism committee. His contributions in fighting antisemitism in Westchester include efforts to educate the community and advocate for the adoption by local governments of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the development of a seminar on antisemitism for county school superintendents and speaking out against a ceasefire resolution before the Yonkers City Council.

"A new Council president is always an exciting time for the community and the lay and professional leaders of the Council look forward to

'going from strength to strength' under Michael's dedicated leadership," said Council CEO Elliot Forchheimer.



Michael Mittelman

Professionally, Michael is a Partner in the New York office of FGS Global, a strategic communications firm. He provides counsel to clients across many industries and helps them engage with their stakeholders during moments of crisis and profound organizational change. Prior to joining the firm in 2015, Michael worked at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York where he oversaw the Celebrate Israel Parade. He also worked with the Obama Administration and Obama for America campaign

as a national advance associate, organizing official presidential visits around the world. Michael began his professional career in publicity at Miramax Films and later worked as an attorney at Cahill Gordon & Reindel and Weil, Gotshal & Manges.

Michael has lived in Westchester for a total of 10 years and has moved around the county, living in Mamaroneck, Hastings-on-Hudson, and Hartsdale, where he currently resides. Michael and his wife, Jennifer, are the proud parents of their three children, Talia, Evan, and Ariela, who all attend the Leffell School. Michael and his family are active members of Temple Israel Center. Michael has a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School and a B.A. with Honors in Communication Studies from the University of Michigan.

The Westchester Jewish Council is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization based in White Plains, New York that is a central convening, communicating, coordinating, and connecting body for the county's Jewish community, representing over 130 Jewish organizations and serving 150,000 Jews.

Visit www.wjcouncil.org, call 914.328.7001, or email info@wjcouncil.org for more information.

JCC Mid-Westchester Gymnast of Scarsdale Wins First Place at Regional Competition



On June 2 in Westford, Massachusetts, Rachel Benson, a gymnast who trains at the JCC Mid-Westchester in Scarsdale, became the USA Gymnastics Xcel Platinum Regional Champion. She received first place on bars and floor, second place on beam, and first place all around. "She received her personal highest floor (9.825) and all around (38.05) scores to date, and produced the highest individual event score of the entire Platinum competition," reported Serina Cirillo, Gymnastics Director of the JCCMW. "The tears rolled down my face as she held her final pose with poise, confidence, and grace. That one pose embodied everything Rachel is as a person and a gymnast. It was an exclamation point at the end of a beautiful, stressful, and ever-rewarding season."

Rachel just completed her junior year at Leffell High School. She began doing gymnastics eleven years ago at the JCCMW when she was in elementary school. Her coach Serina Cirillo noted, "We knew from the moment we first saw her that she had natural talent and an ability to understand gymnastics at a young age." Cirillo immediately invited her to the JCC's pre-team, and then to their competitive team just one year later.

Rachel's mother could not be more

proud of her daughter's dedication, hard work, and resilience in the face of challenges. Messages from other parents and coaches praised Rachel's strong work ethic and passion for the sport, as well as her respect for the coaches, fellow team members, competitors, and herself.

Through the years, Rachel and her family have navigated the additional challenges that come with being observant Jews. Rachel's father acknowledged the challenges but explained that they have received a great deal of help and support. "The coaches and gyms have been very accommodating," he said. On Shabbat, Rachel couldn't carry the equipment with her to competitions, so they made arrangements to get it there before Shabbat, and we stayed in hotels nearby. Twice this year, there were competitions on Fridays. If it was close to Shabbat, they would move her along through the different disciplines so that she could complete her part before Shabbat."

Rachel is an excellent student and takes great pride in her many leadership roles and extracurricular activities. This summer Rachel will continue to follow her passion as an Assistant Gymnastics Coach at the JCCMW while she trains with their Competitive team.

'36 Summer Olympics Were More Than Just Games: New Book Sounds Real-World Alarms

Sportswriters will say that their job is often mockingly referred to as the “toy department” of news, as if fun and games are unimportant. A newly released book, *PLAYED: The Games of the 1936 Berlin Olympics*, illustrates just how significant and historic the sporting world can be.

Co-authors Richard Kaufman and Glenn Allen take readers into a time and place when the world felt like it was teetering on the brink of war, Nazi Germany was rattling its sabers, and one of the most memorable of all Olympic Games was taking place in Berlin.

PLAYED blends politics, sports, espionage, and courage, all in a real-world setting

where the most popular hero was American sprinter and long jumper Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals. That stuck a needle in Adolf Hitler's attempt to use the games to prove his theory of Aryan racial superiority.

PLAYED feels real because it is based on real events, real outcomes, and real people, including American Olympic Committee President Avery Brundage, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Charlie Chaplin, Joseph Goebbels, and Eva Braun.

The authors say the most important message of their story is that history must not repeat itself ... a poignant thought in this, the year of the 2024 Paris Olympics, where Russian and Belarusian athletes are banned



and wrote in his review, “To those of us who are history buffs, this is a must-read, especially if you are enthralled with the events leading up to the Second World War, xenophobia, lust for power and their current implications ... Although the book presents itself as ‘a novel,’ the people and events are real. This makes the dialogue (the fictional parts, I presume) come alive and seem likely to have happened.”

Richard Kaufman and Glenn Allen have been writing together for over 25 years. They have numerous projects in development, including scripted feature films, docuseries, and television series, and they have co-written and produced two award-winning independent films, all under the banner of their company, Green Bandana.

Visit www.greenbandana.org for more information.

PLAYED: The Games of the 1936 Berlin Olympics

Publisher: WordServe Publishing

ISBN-10 : 1733170758

ISBN-13 : 978-1733170758

Available from Amazon.com

from participating in team sports due to the war in Ukraine.

Dr. Thomas Law gave *PLAYED* five stars

AEPi and Mothers Against College Antisemitism Launch Partnership to Combat Campus Antisemitism

Alpha Epsilon Pi International (AEPi), the world's largest and leading Jewish college fraternity, and Mothers Against College Antisemitism (MACA) have launched an exciting new partnership to fight campus antisemitism through AEPi's Antisemitism Response Center (AEPi ARC) and to promote AEPi grants and scholarship opportunities as well as expanded resources to combat antisemitism for parents and guardians.

The AEPi ARC empowers student leaders and educators with knowledge, skills, and resources to recognize and combat antisemitism as well as provides a centralized system for reporting and tracking antisemitic incidents on college campuses. MACA will promote the AEPi ARC to its members and their students to help raise awareness of the wealth of resources available to combat antisemitism and to broaden the ARC's reach in terms of tracking real antisemitism on college campuses.



Rob Derdiger

Since its launch in September of 2023, the AEPi ARC has conducted 3,500 events with 200 campus administrator partners and 150,000 engaged students.

“Obviously, incidences of antisemitic rhetoric and activity on college campuses have skyrocketed over the last several months. But, October 7 wasn't the beginning of campus antisemitism, and the conclusion of the academic year won't be the end of it. Partnering with MACA will help us expand this critical initiative over the

coming months and will enable us to make an even larger impact on college communities,” said Rob Derdiger, AEPi's CEO.

AEPi provides scholarships and grants to its undergraduate members and high school students to help offset college costs. MACA will be helping AEPi promote these opportunities to its members to further awareness of these opportunities. Additionally, AEPi and MACA will be cross-promoting programs and information to its mem-

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AJC LFT

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AJC Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) high school students at the 2024 LFT Summit participants after advocating on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

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To learn more about LFT and Apply for the 2024-25 LFT High School Leaders Cohort, contact Jill Friedman at friedmanj@ajc.org or westchester@ajc.org

Seven Holocaust Museums in North America Issue Joint Statement Condemning Hate Crimes Against Jewish Institutions

On July 1, seven Holocaust Museums in North America issued the following statement in the wake of ongoing incidents of vandalism against both Holocaust museums and other Jewish organizations. The statement is issued by the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust (New York), The Florida Holocaust Museum, the Holocaust Center for Humanity (Seattle, Washington), Holocaust Museum LA (Los Angeles, California), the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center (Chicago, Illinois), the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center (Cincinnati, Ohio), and The Zekelman Holocaust Center (Detroit, Ohio).

“Holocaust museums are no strangers to acts of antisemitism. We teach how those acts, celebrated and reinforced at all levels of Nazi society, led to the murder of approximately six million Jews. The senseless scapegoating of Jews did not begin or end with the Holocaust. It’s been happening for thousands of years, and while the pretext may change, the antisemitic motivation is the same.

At the end of June, another example of

scapegoating was seen, this time in the form of vandalism against Seattle’s Holocaust Center for Humanity, where a photo of a child Holocaust survivor was defaced with the phrase “Genocide in Gaza.” As leaders of many of America’s Holocaust museums, we strongly condemn this crime – and we also recognize it as an opportunity to educate. Holding Jews – much less a Holocaust museum – responsible for the wartime actions of a foreign government is unacceptable and straightforwardly antisemitic.

Hate crimes against American Jews have tripled since Hamas’ unprovoked terrorist attack against Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023, with many of those crimes motivated by inaccurate allegations of genocide against Israel. Our mission to guard the memory of Holocaust survivors and victims requires clarity on what does and does not constitute genocide, especially where misconceptions lead to hateful acts of antisemitism.

Education is the only way to break this cycle. Let’s commit to working together toward a more peaceful and accepting world. Schedule a visit to your local Holocaust mu-

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Statement from UJA-Federation of New York on the Passing of Paul Kane

“We are deeply saddened by the passing of Paul Kane, a revered professional leader at UJA, whose passion for strengthening Jewish life around the world left an indelible mark on our community. In his capacity as head of fundraising for UJA, Paul helped lead the UJA team in raising over \$3 billion during his two decades of leadership and played a key role in shepherding the organization through the 2008 financial crisis, ensuring UJA’s continuous support for its network of partners during that critical time. Paul was a mentor to hundreds of fundraising professionals throughout the Jewish world, had an abiding love for Israel, and up until his death was working on a range of projects to ensure the health and safety of all Israelis. May his memory be for a blessing.”

World Jewish Congress Praises Meta Policy Decision to Prevent Antisemitic Use of the Term ‘Zionist’

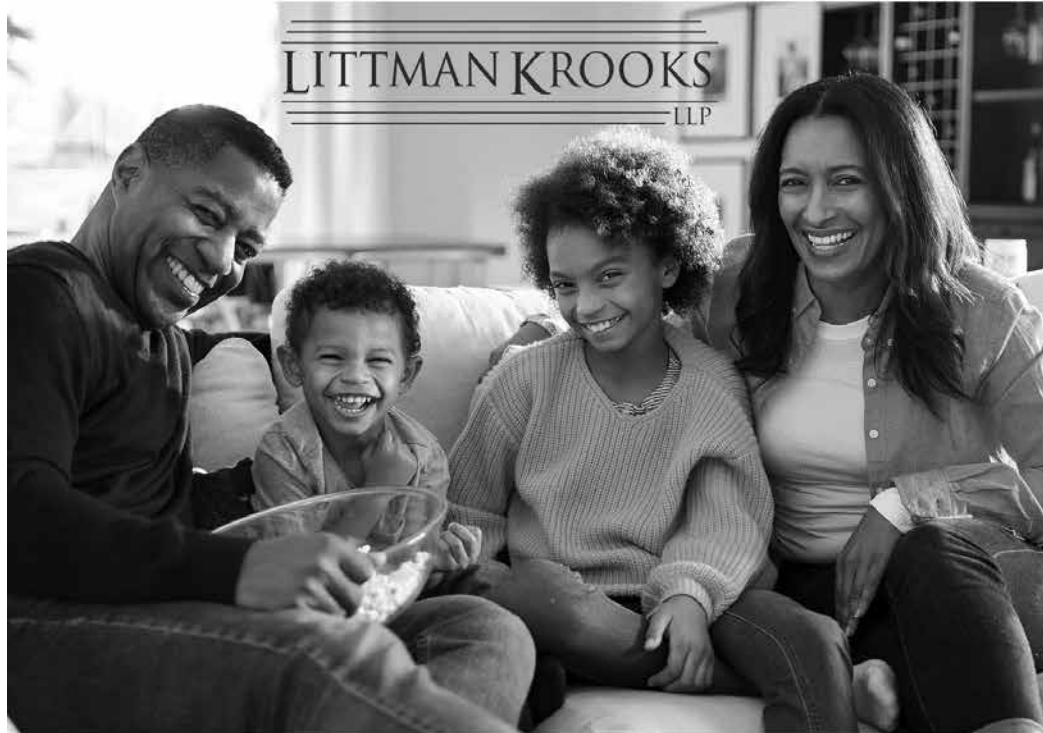
On July 9, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) commended Meta’s announcement that it will expand its policies to classify the misuse of the term ‘Zionist’ as a proxy for ‘Jews’ as antisemitic and Tier 1 hate speech. This landmark decision, following years of advocacy by the WJC, its affiliated Jewish communities, and other organizations, marks a significant step in combating the veiled antisemitism that has proliferated under the guise of political discourse and has skyrocketed since October 7.

World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder stated, “Meta’s decision is a

much-needed advancement in our ongoing fight against online antisemitism and hatred. By recognizing and addressing the misuse of the term ‘Zionist,’ Meta is taking a bold stand against those who seek to mask their hatred of Jews.”

“We appreciate that Meta has truly listened to the voices of Jewish communities that we work with. This policy change will help create a safer, more respectful online environment for everyone. I hope all other platforms will follow Meta’s leadership and take similar action,” added Lauder.

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A Delegation from Westchester Will Join Thousands of Proud American Zionists at the Global Conference for Israel



A delegation from Tri-State at Jewish National Fund-USA's 2022 Conference

A delegation from Westchester will join thousands of proud American Zionists at the Global Conference for Israel for a weekend filled with camaraderie, inspiration, and riveting speakers who exemplify Israel's positive contributions to the world.

The annual multi-day spectacular event, best known for showcasing the pride and beauty of Zionism, providing attendees with practical tools to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to antisemitism, and sharing first-hand accounts about the realities on the ground in Israel, will take place November 14-17, 2024, in Dallas, Texas.

Attendees will hear insights from key thought leaders, explore an interactive Israel expo, take part in one of the largest Shabbat dinners in the world, hear what's being done to support Jewish students on college campuses and learn about initiatives that are already rebuilding Israel's battered North and South.

"Our world changed on October 7, but if anything, the Jewish people have become more resolute as we work to lift up our sisters and brothers in Israel," said Co-President of Jewish National

Fund-USA's Westchester & Southern CT Board of Directors Brenda Benn. "It is clear that personal connections, sharing stories, and coming together are more important now than ever. If there was ever a time for supporters of Israel to gather, now is that time."

Participants at the Global Conference will also:

- Explore the future of American Jewry with Rabbi David Wolpe
- Laugh with actor, comedian, and outspoken advocate for Israel, Michael Rapaport at the Saturday night gala.
- Hear from Col. Richard Kemp about the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) high moral code of ethics.
- Find out how antisemitism is being combated on college campuses from Mothers Against College Antisemitism (MACA) founder Elizabeth Rand, Columbia Professor Shai Davidai, and current students.
- Enjoy jaw-dropping musical performances by Jewish National Fund-USA's Special in Uniform Band.
- Discover how the World Zionist Village will spark a new conversation and revolutionize Zi-

AEPi and Mothers Against College Antisemitism Launch Partnership to Combat Campus Antisemitism

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bers and parents.

"We are thrilled to join forces with the AEPi Antisemitism Response Center. Together, we will forge a path towards eradicating antisemitism and ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for Jewish students on campuses across the country. This partnership represents our unwavering dedication to supporting and protecting our future leaders," said Emma Law-Oppman, MACA's Director of Strategy and Development.

"Working with Jewish parents makes so much sense for AEPi. I'm looking forward to this partnership making real differences on college campuses," said Derdiger. "We firmly believe that AEPi is more than just a fraternity, it's a family endeavor, and partnering with MACA grows our AEPi family even more. We're thrilled to take this step

and look forward to expanding our work together toward our common goals of building a stronger campus Jewish community."

Visit www.aepi.org for more information.

Mothers Against College Antisemitism (MACA) started as a grassroots movement following the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in Israel and the subsequent rise in antisemitism on college campuses. Originally formed as a forum to express concerns and provide support to parents, MACA has grown exponentially and now has more than 60,000 members committed to providing non-partisan support and assistance to college students in order to end a culture of campus antisemitism. MACA's mission is to secure the safety of Jewish students through advocacy, education, and calls to action.

onist and Jewish educational engagement for the decades ahead.

- Enjoy an elegant Saturday evening gala.
- Meet Jewish National Fund-USA's affiliates, who will highlight the organization's philanthropic investments in Israel.
- Take part in exclusive briefings on thought-provoking topics.

"Sometimes only through adversity do we realize our true strength and resilience," added Co-President of Jewish National Fund-USA's Westchester & Southern CT Board of Directors Michael Benn. "Everywhere you look, Jewish and pro-Israel communities are using their voices to

support Israel. Together, we must continue to celebrate Eretz Yisrael and Jewish people everywhere – our collective grit, determination, and ingenuity – as we gather in Dallas for this historic event."

The 2024 conference will once again welcome thousands of pro-Israel supporters and hundreds of students at the event's high school and college summits.

Several discounted rates are available for Jewish Communal Professionals and young philanthropists ages 22-40. Visit www.jnf.org/global, email conference@jnf.org, or call 800-JNF-0099 for more information or to register.

ABA Task Force to Combat Antisemitism Broadens Scope of Work

The American Bar Association presidential Task Force to Combat Antisemitism, which was appointed by ABA President Mary Smith in April, is mobilizing the nation's lawyers and others to combat the growing trend of antisemitism in the U.S.

The task force plans to issue a report in August 2025 "describing the extent and immediacy of the issue and efforts undertaken by the profession to address and ameliorate instances of antisemitism and provide a path of redress," said Barbara Mendel Mayden, co-chair of the task force.

"Antisemitic violence and hate rise in times of social and political unrest, so it is no surprise that antisemitic episodes in America doubled between 2017 and 2022, and have quadrupled again since then," said task force co-chair Mark Schickman. "Our task force's job is to mobilize the ABA, other bars, and more than a million American lawyers to stand up to the epidemic of antisemitic hate and bias in communities throughout the country."

Toward that end, the task force has established working groups in the areas of:

- K-12 education
- civic and higher education
- facilitation of programming within the ABA, within the judiciary, and with other bar associations, nationally and internationally
- resources for law firms to raise awareness of antisemitism internally and within their communities
- monitoring and developing legislation and public policy
- outreach to other stakeholders, governmental entities, and national organizations providing expert resources and expertise

In February 2023 at the ABA Midyear Meeting, the ABA House of Delegates adopted a policy condemning antisemitism. Since the adoption of that resolution, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified that anti-

semitism in the United States has climbed to historic levels, noting that "for a group that represents only about 2.4% of the American public, [Jewish people] account for something like 60% of all religious-based hate crimes." The ABA Board of Governors voted to create the task force in February.

Earlier this year, Schickman moderated the webinar "How to be an Anti-Antisemite: Responding to the Growth of Antisemitism in 21st Century America," which provided a wealth of resources on the topic of antisemitism.

Schickman also hosted a CRSJ section Chair Chat with the University of California Berkeley School of Law Dean and Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law Erwin Chemerinsky on Antisemitism and Free Speech: Civil Rights and the Supreme Court.

The ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice established a 21-Day Practice on Combating Antisemitism, with the goal for each of us to augment our awareness, empathy, compassion, and determination to stand for religious freedom.

"America's lawyers can be a powerful counterweight to the lies and malice which fuel the current rise in antisemitism," Mayden and Schickman said. "This task force is working to support, expand, and facilitate that important role of standing firm for truth and justice."

The ABA is the largest voluntary association of lawyers in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law. View our privacy statement online. Follow the latest ABA news at www.americanbar.org/news and on X (formerly Twitter) @ABANews.

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For more information, call Mary DeYoung at 914-589-0995 or email mdeyoung.61@gmail.com.

New Book, *Ain't No Grave*, Tackles Antisemitism, Racism, Yellow Journalism, and Forbidden Love in the Deep South

With global antisemitism on the rise, *Ain't No Grave*, a new historical fiction novel by Mary Glickman, draws attention to the fact that garden variety antisemitism can be stoked by bad actors and quickly explode into violence. Sometimes, the media plays a role.

Set in 1913, her latest book – the sixth by Glickman that addresses antisemitism and racism in the Deep South – is a compelling love story centered around the trial and lynching of Leo Frank and the role played by the news media in the tragedy, as well as the events that led to the necessary creation of the Anti-Defamation League.

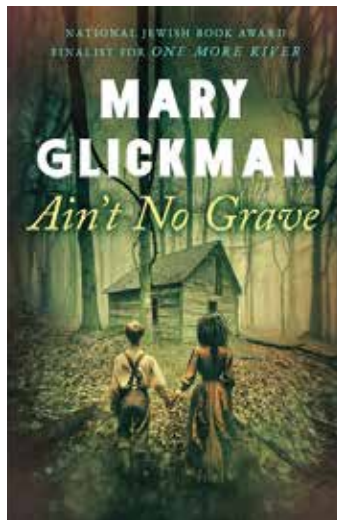
Summary – 1913. The year heart-sick Max travels to Atlanta to find Ruby, his lost love and childhood friend. And the year New York Jew, Leo Frank, is charged with the murder of a child laborer at the National Pencil Factory. Max is Jewish

and Ruby is Black. Their reunion takes place just as Frank is arrested, a racially charged event that sparks an explosion of antisemitism across the city of Atlanta.

Max lands a job as a cub working under the Atlanta Journal's star reporter, Harold Ross, who would later found the New Yorker. Ruby worked at the National Pencil Factory since she was 13. Although reunited, the lovers' road to happiness is in doubt after each becomes intimately involved in Frank's trial, one that pits Blacks and Jews against each other.

Both Max and Harold love Ruby and when she is called to testify by the prosecution, they work to protect her. She is required to protect herself. Together, the three bear witness from the murder of Mary Phagan to the trial and lynching of Leo Frank and the founding of the ADL.

Anticipated to be her most successful release



to date, *Ain't No Grave* is already getting noticed with accolades by some of the leaders in the industry.

"Mary Glickman vividly captures milestones in the Leo Frank saga through sympathetic characters as real as the events surrounding them.

She deftly intertwines Leo Frank's trial and lynching with the founding of the ADL, the re-birth of a moribund KKK, and an interracial love story. Meticulously researched, fast-paced, and thoroughly original, *Ain't No Grave* is a moving, satisfying read." - Sandra Brett, Board Member of Southeast ADL

"Right from page one, you'll want to follow Max and Ruby to the ends of the earth, come what may. This epic journey for love feels like an instant classic." - Steve Anderson, author of the Kaspar Brothers series

"The outcome of the tragic story of Leo Frank and the very real flamboyant reporter, Harold Ross, makes for a setting handled with the touching sensibilities Glickman always displays in her writings about the South she loves. Added to the passion of two young people in love amidst the turmoil of a real tragic event is the passion that Glickman brings to her writing. Love winning out over hate is a strong theme. It is what the world needs." - PatZi Gil, host of the syndicated radio show, "Joy on Paper"

"I am humbled by the response I've gotten so far to *Ain't No Grave*," Glickman said. "Its content and characters have new relevance today, regrettably, as the world seems to be falling back into a pattern of antisemitism that we all thought was behind us. I wrote this book because I want people to remember that only a loving heart can defeat hate."

Ain't No Grave is currently available on Amazon and wherever books are sold.

Birthright Israel Excel Prestigious Fellowship Selects 64 Jewish Students from 11 Countries for Summer Program in Tel Aviv

The 2024 cohort of the Birthright Israel lifelong Excel Fellowship, focused on developing leaders in business and technology, kicked off in June by welcoming to Israel 64 extraordinary college students from around the world to spend 10 weeks in Israel.

This year's cohort includes participants from 11 countries, including host Israel. Forty-four participants are from the United States, while 20 come from Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany Mexico, Panama, Spain, and Switzerland. A few of the participants are visiting Israel for the first time.

In addition to a life-changing experience and a tremendous opportunity for participants to forge business connections with investors and entrepreneurs, this year's summer program also presents a once-in-a-lifetime, empowering experience in light of the ongoing war in Israel that followed the October 7th terror attack. Excel collaborates with Kibbutz Reim to allow Excel participants to volunteer throughout the summer by helping the Kibbutz community restore its houses and gardens and prepare for their return home.

As well, a particularly unique and highly valued aspect of the summer program is the one-on-one pairing between each Excel Fellow and an Israeli peer Excel Fellow of which there are also 64, enabling a quick acclimation to the local culture and seeing the country through a more authentic lens than as typical tourists. Many peer-to-peer relationships grow into long-term friendships. Some have invested in each other's business ventures.

Since 2011, the Excel Fellowship has cultivated the next generation of Jewish business leaders. Each year the fellowship carefully selects top students from hundreds of applicants for summer internships with leading business and tech companies in Tel Aviv.

Their internships will be in such areas as environmental sustainability, software development, consulting, engineering, finance, venture capital, Cybertech, biotech business development, and startups.

The Excel Fellowship involves an internship that occurs based on the Israeli



Westchester participants, Drew Wilenzick, Alex Zelman, and Jeremy Suzman

workweek, Sunday through Thursday. Aside from this hands-on work experience and an evening series of fascinating speakers from across Israeli society, including Adi Soffer-Te'eni, VP & GM of Meta Israel; Adi Ofek, CEO of the Mercedes-Benz Tech Hub in Israel; Alex Crissis, Managing Director, General Atlantic, Israel; Dina Ben Tal Ganancia, CEO, El Al; Jonathan Penkin, CEO, Goldman Sachs Israel; and Yifat Oron, Head of Blackstone Office in TLV. The fellowship will also include a Micro Communities Meet-Up focused on discussing diversity within Israeli society.

Excel fellows also enjoy free time to explore Israel with their peers, and three-weekend trips as a group bring them throughout the country: the lower Galilee area, a winery tour, and a hike with a visit to a natural waterfall; Jerusalem, including the Western Wall and the Machne Yehuda outdoor market. Following the October 7 terror attack, this year's South trip itinerary focuses mainly on witnessing the atrocities that occurred at the Kibbutzim near Gaza.

"One of the pillars of the program this year is preparing community members for the hostile environment they might face on campuses, by giving them tools to better deal with the challenges they encounter there, along with a supportive network," said Idit Rubin, executive director of Birthright Israel Excel.

"We genuinely believe that by strengthening ties in the business world and through professional connections, we're also

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Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust Mourns the Passing of Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Esteemed Member of the Board of Trustees

Jack Kliger, CEO and President, and Bruce Ratner, Chairman of the Board, at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, issued the following statement today on the passing of Dr. Ruth Westheimer, a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees since 2004:

"The world feels a bit darker today with the loss of Ruth Westheimer. Dr. Ruth has been a cherished member of our Board of Trustees for two decades. Known worldwide, the 'Holocaust orphan', renowned sex therapist, educator, author, and cultural icon passed away peacefully at the age of 96 years old."

Dr. Westheimer's life story was a testament to resilience, courage, and the enduring human spirit. Born Karola Ruth Siegel in Frankfurt, Germany in 1928, she separated from her family and left Germany on the Kindertransport when she was only 10 years old, never again seeing her family who all lost their lives during the Holocaust. After the war, she emigrated to the United States, where she went on to become a beloved figure, known for her groundbreaking work in the field of human sexuality and her ability to connect with people across generations.

Her association with the Museum of Jewish Heritage was a source of immense pride for both Dr. Westheimer and our institution. As a Board member, she played an integral role in furthering our mission to educate, commemorate, and inspire future generations about the Holocaust and its lessons. Her commitment to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and ensuring that its history is never forgotten was unwavering.

Her warmth, wisdom, and tireless advocacy for Holocaust education resonated deeply with our staff, community, and fellow Board members. She often shared her personal story, offering invaluable insights into the indomitable human spirit and the importance of tolerance, understanding, and empathy.

In recognition of her exceptional contributions to the world at large, the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation honored Dr. Ruth Westheimer in 2016, and the Museum more recently honored Dr. Ruth at its annual Generation to Generation benefit in 2019, citing her dedication to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and ensuring that the lessons of history continue to shape a more just and compassionate future.

Dr. Westheimer's passing leaves a



Dr. Ruth Westheimer

void that cannot be filled. Her legacy as a Holocaust orphan, educator, and advocate for human connection and understanding will continue to inspire us all. The Museum of Jewish Heritage is committed to upholding her vision and furthering her mission.

We extend our deepest condolences to Dr. Westheimer's family, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time. The Museum will honor her memory through ongoing initiatives that reflect her commitment to Holocaust education and the values she held dear. Dr. Ruth Westheimer's remarkable life will forever serve as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit. May her memory be a blessing."

Dr. Ruth Westheimer's family has requested that donations be made in her memory to HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir, the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, and the YM&YWHA of Washington Heights.

About The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is New York's contribution to the global responsibility to Never Forget. Opened in 1997, the Museum is committed to the crucial mission of educating diverse visitors about Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

The Museum's current offerings include Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark, a new exhibition about the extraordinary rescue of Denmark's Jewish

population in 1943, a story of mutual aid and communal upstanding in difficult times for visitors aged 9 and up; The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do, a major exhibition offering a timely and expansive presentation of Holocaust history, on view in the main galleries; and, Survivors: Faces of Life After the Holocaust, featuring photographer Martin Schoeller's portraits of 75 Holocaust survivors in his signature style.

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special exhibition galleries, and a memorial art installation, Garden of Stones, designed by internationally acclaimed sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. The Museum also hosts the LOX at Café Bergson an OU-certified café serving Eastern European specialties.

Each year, the Museum presents over 100 public programs, connecting our community in person and virtually through lectures, book talks, concerts, and more. Visit www.mjhnyc.org/events for more information. The museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts. Visit www.mjhnyc.org for more information.

The Westchester Jewish Council

in cooperation with Westchester County Parks

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No Hate in Our States – Back to School Edition



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL, REGIONAL DIRECTOR,
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD

As students return to school this fall, we face an urgent challenge. The sharp increase in anti-Israel sentiment and antisemitism that unfolded across college campuses, in cities, and throughout public and independent schools demands our immediate attention and collective action. Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for Jewish students is not just a matter of maintaining inclusivity; it is a fundamental responsibility of our educational institutions.

As we look back on last year, we see troubling warning signs that if not addressed now by school administrators and faculty, will continue to create problematic situations for students. Across campuses, Jewish students found themselves the targets of harassment and intimidation stemming from events far beyond the schoolyard and classroom debates. While political discourse can be a healthy part of an academic experience, it crosses a line when it fosters an atmosphere of fear or hostility towards a specific group of students and faculty. The distressing rise in antisemitic incidents, including graffiti, verbal attacks, and exclusion from student groups or campus, has sounded alarms that cannot be ignored.

The first step in addressing this crisis is recognizing that antisemitism, like all forms of bigotry, has no place in our schools. This starts at the administrative level. School leaders must ensure that they have Codes of Conduct that are shared publicly and enforced. Additionally, school administrators must unequivocally condemn acts of hate and implement strict policies that address and penalize such behavior. Moreover, educational programs need to be put in place to address ignorance and misinformation about Jewish history and contemporary issues related to Israel. Educating students about the many forms of antisemitism—from stereotypes and myths to more overt aggression—is crucial in cultivating an informed and respectful student body.

AJC (American Jewish Committee) has developed resources and toolkits to help school administrators, from Translate Hate, AJC's glossary that identifies and defines

many modern antisemitic tropes, to AJC briefings for K-12 school administrators and faculty, and more.

Visit www.ajc.org/PublicSchoolAdministratorsActionPlan to share AJC's K-12 tool kit with your heads of school and ask them if they have a plan in place for the coming school year to keep Jewish students safe.

Support systems for Jewish students need to be robust and proactive. Schools should ensure that Jewish students feel that they have safe spaces to express their concerns and experiences. Counseling services and support groups are vital to providing necessary emotional and psychological support. Furthermore, alliances with other minority student organizations can foster a broader culture of mutual respect and solidarity, diluting the isolation that Jewish students might feel.

Equally important is the engagement of the entire school community in these efforts. Creating opportunities for dialogue among students from diverse backgrounds can demystify misunderstandings and dismantle prejudices. Workshops, guest lectures, and cultural events celebrating Jewish heritage can help nurture an environment of learning and empathy.

We must also empower students to stand against antisemitism. Encouraging student-led initiatives that promote inclusivity and combat bigotry can have a profound impact. When students themselves advocate for respect and understanding, the message resonates more deeply.

As we welcome students back to school, we must prioritize the safety and dignity of all students, including our Jewish youth. Their well-being is a measure of our commitment to education's highest ideals—equity, respect, and the free exchange of ideas. Let this school year be marked by our collective efforts to uphold these principles, ensuring that every student can pursue their education in a safe and nurturing environment. This is not just a policy imperative but a moral test of our resolve to stand against hatred and foster a culture of inclusivity and respect.

One more thing: it's imperative that we are providing our teens with the necessary tools to stand up proudly as Jews. For Jewish 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who want to be strong Jewish, pro-Israel advocates, AJC Westchester/Fairfield's LFT (Leaders for Tomorrow) program is taking applications now with spaces rapidly filling up. Contact Jill Friedman at westchester@ajc.org for more information.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. To get involved or request an AJC speaker: AJC@westchester.org.

Birthright Israel Mega Event Brought Together Over 2,000 Young Jews from Around the World



More than 2,000 enthusiastic participants from all Birthright Israel programs currently in Israel for the summer gathered on June 24, at Mini Israel Park for the Birthright Israel Mega Event. This highly empowering and inspiring event marks the highlight of the organization's summer trips to Israel.

This year's event took place in solidarity with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and the hostages still held in Gaza. It also highlighted the organization's efforts since October 7th in fostering unity, bridging connections between Israel and Jewish communities worldwide, and strengthening the state of Israel.

Among the performing artist on stage were Yuval Sharabi, daughter of Yossi Sharabi, who tragically died in captivity in Gaza, Eden Golan with Hurricane, Hatikva 6, and

Hagit Yaso.

Gidi Mark, CEO of Birthright Israel, started his speech by requesting a moment of silence to honor the memory of the 13 Israeli alumni who tragically lost their lives fighting to save lives at the Nova Music Festival.

"Nearly every young Jew who has visited Israel since October 7 has come with Birthright Israel," he said. "This summer, almost 15,000 young Jews will visit Israel, and we should not overlook this opportunity. Birthright Israel aims for participants to connect with Jewish peers, take pride in Judaism, deepen their understanding of Israel and themselves, and forge lasting friendships. No matter what, we will never give up on our unity and support for one another."

Photo credit: Mark Nomdar Photography.



strengthening Israel and the Jewish communities around the world. We look forward to continuing these relationships and developing them.”

After their return home, the Excel fellows enter a global network that provides resources for professional and personal development, Israel engagement, Jewish leadership, and encouraging them as philanthropists.

“We see firsthand how important it is for Israel’s young generation to maintain a strong connection to the Jewish World, especially now. It is not just about sharing the same fate; it is the strategic lifeline for all of

Seven Holocaust Museums in North America Issue ...

continued from page 3

seum today and empower your community to stand as allies in the fight against antisemitism!

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world Jewry,” said Gidi Mark, CEO of Birthright Israel.

“The Jewish people around the world boast an abundance of talent and leadership in all sectors, and by fostering cooperation between business leaders in Israel and the Diaspora, as we do at Birthright Excel, we will be able to develop innovation and growth, which will benefit Israel and the Diaspora and contribute to the feeling of resilience and pride,” he added.

Birthright Israel Excel fellows have gone on to positions at top-tier companies, such as J.P. Morgan Chase, Bain & Company, and Google. Others have developed strategic

Antisemites have long employed the term ‘Zionist’ to hide their true hateful intentions, claiming their attacks were politically motivated against an ideology rather than targeting Jewish values and beliefs. Meta’s new policy will help unmask this hatred that has targeted the global Jewish community, ensuring that such rhetoric is identified and rightly treated as antisemitism.

The amendments to Meta’s policy mean that posts with the term ‘Zionist’ will be removed when they are found to:

- Invoke harmful antisemitic stereotypes, such as Jewish control of institutions.
- Dehumanize Jewish people.
- Call for harm towards Jews.
- Deny the existence of Zionists.

The work that led to the Meta policy decision aligns with the WJC’s continuous efforts to combat online hate and discrimination. Recently, the WJC launched the Institute for Technology and Human Rights, a pioneering initiative aimed at addressing online anti-

partnerships with Israeli companies and started their own companies, often hiring other fellows.

On a local note, among the cohort in Israel this year are three participants from Westchester, Alex Zelman, Drew Wilenzick, and Jeremy Suzman.

Alex Zelman is from White Plains and is studying at Washington University in St. Louis. She is majoring in Accounting and Entrepreneurship and minoring in Business Analytics. She is currently interning at Symbol Venture Capital and is working as a Venture Capital Analyst.

Drew Wilenzick is from Briarcliff Man-

World Jewish Congress Praises Meta Policy Decision to Prevent Antisemitic Use of the Term ‘Zionist’

continued from page 3

semitism and its real-world consequences.

Yfat Barak-Cheney, WJC’s Director of Technology and Human Rights and the inaugural director of the new institute, emphasized the importance of continued collaboration with tech platforms to fight online hate. “Through our work with Jewish communities and tech platforms, WJC has made considerable progress in the global effort to keep antisemitism and hate speech from spreading on the internet. Meta’s policy change – the product of years of engagement with WJC – is a significant milestone in this ongoing effort particularly as hate speech targeting Jews has risen in the wake of the October 7 attacks.”

“The WJC looks forward to continuing its collaboration with Meta and other technology companies to develop policies that combat online hate and protect vulnerable communities. We will work together to ensure that this change is enforced on all Meta platforms,” added Barak-Cheney.

The World Jewish Congress issued a

or and is studying at Cornell University. He is majoring in Computer Sciences. He is interning at Mine and is working as a Data Science Analyst.

Finally, Jeremy Suzman is from Scarsdale and is studying at Vanderbilt University. He is majoring in American History and Spanish and minoring in Business. Currently, he is interning at Waldo Holdings and is working as an Investment Analyst.

Visit www.birthrightisraelexcel.com/meet-the-2024-excel-fellows/ for a list and bios of all of the 2024 Global Excel fellows.

Photo Credit: Or Doga, Courtesy of Birthright Israel Excel

groundbreaking report in Buenos Aires on the sidelines of the commemorative events marking 30 years since the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Center, showing how Islamist terror groups now use alternative online communication channels to amplify their deadly messages and how the expression of anti-Zionist sentiments drives anti-Jewish hatred and calls for violence.

According to the report, titled, “From Digital Hate to Real-World Bloodshed: The Interaction Between Online Extremism, Antisemitism, and Offline Violence,” traditional online platforms have become more restrictive since the October 7 attack on Israel, deplatforming or limiting access to those affiliated with such groups as Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), but terrorist organizations have found ways to spread hatred and calls for violence through other channels and civil society organizations.

Visit www.wjc.org for more information.

AJC Welcomes Supreme Court Decision Reaffirming Social Media Platforms’ Right to Exclude Antisemitic Speech

The American Jewish Committee (AJC) firmly believes that social media companies have a legal right and moral obligation to exclude hateful speech from their platforms. AJC welcomes the Supreme Court decision in the two NetChoice cases examining this right. In an essential victory not only for the freedom of speech of the platforms but also for simple decency, a clear majority of the Court specifically affirmed the right of social media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook, to exclude content that violates their community standards or guidelines, including violative antisemitic speech. AJC has and will continue to work with platforms

to this end and will redouble its efforts in light of this court decision.

The AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America 2023 Report (www.ajc.org/AntisemitismReport2023) found that American Jews experience antisemitism the most online and on social media. Sixty-two percent of American Jews surveyed reported seeing or hearing antisemitism online or on social media in the past 12 months, including 6% who said this happened once, and 56% who said it happened more than once. Among all Jewish adults who experienced antisemitic content online at least once in the past 12 months, 51% say they experienced antisemitism

on Facebook, 47% say they experienced it on X (formerly known as Twitter), 27% on Instagram, 24% on YouTube, and 18% on TikTok. Another one in ten (11%) say they experienced antisemitism via online gaming platforms.

In December, AJC filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in *Moody v. NetChoice*, a case that involves challenges to Florida and Texas statutes that limited the right of social media platforms to exclude posts that violated their rules of service. The lower federal courts are divided on the constitutionality of such statutes.

Visit www.ajc.org for more information.

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Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

The expression “don't look a gift horse in the mouth” usually means don't find fault with something that you receive as a gift or don't be ungrateful when you receive a present (even if you don't really like it).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there may be times when you don't want to accept a gift or an inheritance. Fortunately, for estate planning purposes, an individual may be able to renounce, or not accept, a gift or bequest.

Under New York law, if you are supposed to receive property under a will, trust, or even property held jointly with someone else, you may have the right to renounce all or part of such interest in that property. The renunciation must be in writing, signed, and acknowledged by a notary public. There are also some other legal requirements such as the need to file the renunciation with the

appropriate court in a timely manner. You also must state that you have not received any consideration for the renunciation from anyone who stands to benefit from your renunciation (the person who will get the property as a result of your renunciation). When you renounce the right to receive property, the property is disposed of pursuant to the terms of the will, trust, or otherwise as if you had predeceased the decedent. Once made, a renunciation is irrevocable.

Renunciation is actually based on a very simple concept: no one can force you to accept a gift or an inheritance. You can just say no! So, you might be asking yourself, why would I renounce property that I am entitled to receive? Well, there may be several reasons, including tax considerations, creditor concerns, or to carry out the testator's intentions.

Here's how it works: let's say you are listed as a beneficiary under your mother's will and your children are listed as contingent beneficiaries in the event you predecease your mother. However, you are concerned that by inheriting property from your mother you might be subjecting yourself to additional estate taxes when you pass away and want to leave the inherited property to your children. The property could potentially be subject to estate taxes twice: once when you

inherit it from your mother and once again when you leave it to your children. To avoid this result, you could renounce the property when your mother dies, and it would then pass to your children at that time. Thus, there would be only one transfer potentially subject to estate taxes instead of two. Of course, with the current federal and New York State enhanced estate tax exemption amounts, this tax benefit of renunciation will benefit only those with more significant estates. In addition, in order for the renunciation to be valid for tax purposes you must meet the appropriate requirements for a qualified disclaimer under the Internal Revenue Code. Keep in mind that one of those requirements is that you cannot direct to whom the property will go. Thus, it is critical that you understand what will happen to the property if you decide not to take it before you finalize the renunciation. Often, lawyers will draft documents specifically stating that certain property, if disclaimed, will be held in trust or pass outright to others in order to carry out the wishes of the client and to save taxes. This might be something you wish to discuss with your estate planning attorney to ensure that your documents carry out your wishes in case one of your beneficiaries renounces all or part of your bequest.

Renunciations can also be used to fix es-

tate plans that do not work due to improper beneficiary designations. Recall that your estate planning documents are just one part of your overall estate plan and that your will controls only the disposition of property in your name alone at the time of your death. Thus, property held in trust for someone else or jointly with someone else will pass directly to that person on your death, regardless of what your will says. However, with a valid renunciation, the property may be able to be passed to the person who was originally intended to receive the property, thus fulfilling the testator's wishes.

Renunciations can be a valuable estate planning tool after someone dies, if used properly, even if you look the gift horse in the mouth!

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 “Lawyer of the Year” by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the “Best Lawyers” in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is a past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914-684-2100) or by visiting the firm's website at www.littmankrooks.com.

Calendar of Events

Overflow, Afterglow: New Work in Chromatic Figuration

The Jewish Museum

1109 5th Ave at 92nd St., NYC

Through September 15

View new works by seven emerging artists who use supernatural color and uncanny luminescence to challenge the boundaries of traditional figuration. Visit www.thejewishmuseum.org/visit#hours-admission for museum hours and admission information.

48th Annual Westchester Jewish Music & Arts Festival

Kensico Dam Plaza, Valhalla

August 18, 12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The festival is part of Westchester County's ethnic music festival. With a lineup of talented performers, interesting vendors, and mouthwatering food, this festival will be an unforgettable experience. Free and open to all. Visit www.wjccouncil.org/48th-westchester-jewish-music-arts-festival/ for more information.

EVENTS AT JCCMW

999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale

Kumzitz: Songs of Israel

August 7, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Enjoy an unforgettable evening of Israeli music, laughter, and community. Bring your singing voice and meet us under the tent at the JCCMW! Drinks and desserts will be served. Admission is free with a suggested donation of \$18. Visit www.jccmw.org/event/kumzitz-songs-of-israel/ to register.

Health for Life Program (HeLP)

Six Mondays: August 5, 12, 19; September 9, 16, 23 from 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Are you 55 or older with a chronic health condition or are you caring for someone with one? If so, the Health for Life Program (HeLP) will give you sensible, enjoyable ways to enhance your quality of life and manage chronic health conditions. The program is free, but RSVP is required. Visit www.jccmw.org/event/help/.

Women's Group

August 11, 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

In this new group, you will have the opportunity to build connections, discuss challenges, share experiences, and enjoy social activities. This program is free, but RSVP is required. Visit www.jccmw.org/event/womens-group/.

WJCS Awarded \$35,000 Grant from Aging in America

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) is proud to announce it has been awarded a \$35,000 grant from Aging in America to support Geriatric Care Management. The grant will support Geriatric Care Management services to low-income, frail elderly individuals throughout Westchester County to maintain and enhance their physical and emotional quality of life.

“For many seniors, especially those who live alone, life can become progressively more challenging and isolating, compromising their ability to age well and safely in place,” said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. “Stressors, such as chronic medical conditions, the loss of a spouse, lack of connection to family or friends, financial distress, and loneliness tend to be more common as people age.”

With the help of this funding, WJCS can continue to provide comprehensive services including in-home assessments, personalized care planning, ongoing case management, guidance on senior living options, and information and referrals for older adults, as well as their family or caregivers.

Seniors living alone are at greater risk for depression, which may impact their motivation to maintain their physical and men-

tal health. They often struggle to access services due to their inability to drive on their own or have friends or family members act on their behalf. While the world around them has become more reliant on digital tools, older adults are frequently stymied by the use of technology, digital tools, and the Internet, and they need assistance to take advantage of resources in-person or virtually.

“For seniors accessing services in the community, it can be a very difficult ordeal. Geriatric case managers can play a critical role in helping seniors access the services that they require,” said William Smith, President and CEO of Aging in America.

Addressing the issues faced by the elderly is becoming increasingly important as the population of Westchester ages. People aged 65+ represented 18.4% of the County's population in 2022 compared to 14.7% in 2010. WJCS provides a wide array of senior care services, including support for families coping with the chronic illness or dementia of a loved one. To learn more about programs and services provided by WJCS, one of the largest not-for-profit human service agencies in Westchester, please go to www.wjcs.com/services/seniors.

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