



## FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

Learn about an upcoming Mitzvah Morning spotlighting Our Woven Community, an organization that helps refugee women become empowered through a business model that weaves together culture and entrepreneurship. Page 2

As the National Council of Jewish Women's "Repro Shabbat" approaches, Rabbi Schultz encourages congregants — regardless of their personal stance — to focus on the human side of these issues as we engage in the often-challenging dialogue surrounding reproductive freedom and justice. Page 3

Join in the Purim family fun at B'nai! Pages 3-4

Rabbi Marion shares a moving account of her experience as a participant in the recent Jewish Federation Civil Rights Mission trip and exhorts us to continue the fight to better our world. Page 5

Alexa Cohen suggests ways to incorporate books, music, crafts, *tikkun olam*, planting, and holiday foods into our Tu B'Shevat celebrations with children. Page 6

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## PURIM AT B'NAI ISRAEL

**Monday, March 6 at 5:00 p.m.**

Join us in our B'nai Israel *casita* as we celebrate Purim with Mirabel and the whole Madrigal Family from the hit Disney movie *Encanto*! Our B'nai Israel social hall will be transformed into a Colombian paradise with pizza, crafts, and games for the whole family. *If you plan to join us for pizza dinner, please be sure to RSVP*

to Ilene Feuerberg at ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org no later than Friday, March 3. Then, from 6:00–6:45 p.m., we will join our B'nai Israel Purim Players for our "We Don't Talk About Haman" Purim service and *schpiel*! It will be an event you won't want to miss! A Zoom (webinar) link for the *schpiel* will be provided for those who wish to watch online. See flyer on page 4.

## FROM THE FRONTLINES OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE: A SHABBAT EVENING WITH DR. JANET LEFKOWITZ, DO, FACOG

**Friday, February 17**

**6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.: Kabbalat Shabbat service, with remarks from Dr. Lefkowitz**

**7:00–8:00 p.m.: Congregational Shabbat dinner**

**8:00–9:00 p.m.: Post dinner discussion and Q&A with Dr. Lefkowitz**



On February 17, our congregation will join with synagogues and Jewish communities across the country to participate in the Nation Council of Jewish Women's "Repro Shabbat." This annual, nationwide Shabbat always occurs when we read *Parshat Mishpatim*, which contains the biblical verses that serve as the basis for Judaism's supportive and permissive stance on abortion and reproductive freedom. During our Shabbat service and during the dinner and discussion that will follow, Dr. Lefkowitz will share stories and perspectives from her work as a reproductive healthcare provider. Shabbat dinner is \$25 per person; please RSVP to Susie Hallman, shallman@cbibpt.org.

Dr. Janet Lefkowitz (she/her/hers) is an OB/GYN serving as an assistant

professor, clinical educator, and physician at Brown University's Warren Alpert School of Medicine and Women and Infants Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island. Prior to returning to the Northeast, she lived in Atlanta, Georgia, where she was chief medical officer and medical director for Planned Parenthood Southeast, serving clinics in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Since returning to the Northeast three years ago, Dr. Lefkowitz served as medical director of Reproductive Health Services in Alabama for Planned Parenthood Southeast, and, until recently, continued to travel south to provide and support access to comprehensive reproductive health care and women's health care in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida.

Since the Dobbs decision, she provides abortion care in Connecticut and Rhode Island. She is a certified *mohelet*, providing religious circumcisions for Jewish baby boys, which keeps her connected with the Jewish community. Dr. Lefkowitz also enjoys working with medical students and residents, especially in the areas of family planning and values clarification surrounding abortion care. She strives to promote access to essential health care for those who seek care.

## SINCERE SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families of:

**Myrna Kingsly**, mother of Kenneth (Katherine) Kingsly.

**Anita Manasevit Pearlman**, sister of Elaine Friedman.

**Belle Radam**, mother of Janice (Marc) Katz.

## AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

**Wednesday, February 1,**

**1:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.**

PLEASE call the Red Cross now at 1-800- 733-2767 or 1-800-RedCross or visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) to schedule an appointment to donate. Your life-saving donation is needed urgently.



## BULLETIN BOARD – MITZVAH MORNINGS

### February 12, 2023

For our February Mitzvah Morning, we will be partnering with Our Woven Community.

On February 12, at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel to attend a learning session about OWC, after which we will help the OWC members set up tables to sell their artwork and clothing items to our fellow congregants. Mitzvah Morning volunteers will also have the opportunity to purchase some of these items in support of OWC.

Our Woven Community provides locally resettled refugee women the opportunity to become self-sufficient leaders empowered with entrepreneurial skills for economic opportunity. The women learn sewing techniques to create beautiful handbags, scarves, and other items. OWC uses local donated materials, combined with fabrics from African countries, to symbolize the weaving of cultures. Their products are sold at farmers markets, craft shows, and other venues. All proceeds go towards the program and supporting the artists.

To get an idea of the products OWC creates and sells, visit <https://burroughscenter.org/shop-1/>.

We hope you can join us in supporting this very important organization,

while also finding some fashionable accessories for you, your friends, and family.

Please send any questions to Nina Silberman ([ninahv@aol.com](mailto:ninahv@aol.com)) or Mitch Weinstein ([mitchellew@yahoo.com](mailto:mitchellew@yahoo.com)).

### March 5, 2023

For our March Mitzvah Morning event, our volunteers will be partnering with Dignity Grows, a division of the Jewish Federation of Hartford, which focuses on providing personal care and hygiene products to those in need.

On March 5, at 10:00 a.m., we will meet at B'nai Israel and will be packing individual care kits filled with products for the Dignity Grows recipients. Volunteers do not need to bring products, but rather should bring \$10 for every bag they would like to pack. Our goal is to provide as many bags as possible.

In addition to packing bags, our volunteers will learn more about the Dignity Grows program and will have the opportunity to ask questions and hear about future volunteer opportunities.

This event is appropriate for all ages and all volunteers are welcome to attend, whether they are bringing a cash donation or not.

This is a great opportunity to come together as a community and help those in need while bonding with fellow congregants. What could be better than that!

For more information, please reach out to Nina Silberman ([ninahv@aol.com](mailto:ninahv@aol.com)) or Mitch Weinstein ([mitchellew@yahoo.com](mailto:mitchellew@yahoo.com)).

More about Dignity Grows:

Dignity Grows empowers our neighbors in need by providing menstrual and hygiene supplies for everybody who needs them. We remove obstacles to better self-esteem and health by providing personal hygiene essentials each month.

Dignity Grows mobilizes volunteers to organize, assemble, and distribute free, reusable zipper-top totes filled with a month's supply of soap, shampoo, deodorant, and a toothbrush and toothpaste, along with menstrual products or shaving cream and razor kits. Federal grant programs don't cover these items, and people often don't think to donate them to food pantries.

Dignity Grows was started in 2019 in Greater Hartford, and it's now a national initiative chaired by its founder, Jessica Zachs. Over 40,000 Dignity Grows Totes have been distributed across our region so far!



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK/RABBI EVAN SCHULTZ

## FEBRUARY: FOCUSING ON REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

On February 17, our congregation will join with synagogues and Jewish communities across the country to participate in the Nation Council of Jewish Women's "Repro Shabbat." Repro Shabbat is an important opportunity to focus our communal attention on the issues of Reproductive Freedom and Reproductive Justice. This annual, nationwide Shabbat always occurs when we read *Parshat Mishpatim*, because it contains the verses that serve as the basis for Judaism's supportive and permissive stance on abortion and reproductive freedom. You can read some of those texts compiled by Rabbi Danya Rutenberg by visiting [www.sefaria.org](http://www.sefaria.org) and searching "The Torah of Reproductive Justice."

Our guest speaker at Shabbat services and after Shabbat dinner on February 17 will be Dr. Janet Lefkowitz. Dr. Lefkowitz is an obstetrician and gynecologist, as well as a *mohélet*. She currently lives in the Northeast, having returned from Atlanta, Georgia, where she was in private practice and worked to promote access to reproductive health care. Dr. Lefkowitz now works as an assistant professor and clinical educator at Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School. She continues to work to improve access to reproductive health care. Dr. Lefkowitz will offer her perspectives from the field

and share some of the personal stories of those seeking access to reproductive health care in the South.

I know conversations around abortion and reproductive care can be challenging and uncomfortable for some of us. As I shared in my Kol Nidrei sermon this year, we will focus on the human side of these important issues and create space to engage in conversation. As I wrote back in September, "In a world of lines, we can craft a spherical Jewish and spiritual home, one in which nobody ever feels too distant from the center, and one in which we ensure that we remain connected, inclusive, supportive, caring; that we truly hear and listen to one another, celebrate our diversity, and, like the blasts of the shofar, we are present to one another and to the circular rhythms of Jewish time and life.

And, too, within that circle, we cannot be afraid from time to time to discuss the relevant issues of our day. When we name something as political, we lay down lines. I don't want to be political, and I don't want our synagogue or our bimah to be political. But, I do rather envision our synagogue as a space where all of us can engage in and discuss human issues from a Jewish perspective. Climate change is also a human issue.

And racism is a human issue. Abortion is a human issue.

To craft that circle is to create a space to engage in sometimes challenging and messy conversations around these issues from both a Jewish and personal lens — all of us, with all our different perspectives and ideas. And that makes nobody more uncomfortable than me, Mr. Harmony, but I know it's okay for us to disagree and for us to deeply engage with these issues — because that's what Jews have been doing for centuries, all with the hope and possibility of our bringing about a different kind of world, a more just world. One of circles, not lines. Just like the world that God originally intended.

I look forward to joining together for learning and conversation on Repro Shabbat on February 17. To learn more about Repro Shabbat, you can visit the National Council of Jewish Women website, <https://www.ncjw.org/events/repro-shabbat-2023-5783/>. And, to get involved with our B'nai Israel Reproductive Justice team, please email our Reproductive Justice Committee co-chairs, Beth Posner at [baposner@gmail.com](mailto:baposner@gmail.com) and Barbara Edinberg at [bedinberg@gmail.com](mailto:bedinberg@gmail.com).

## REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Last spring, before the fall of Roe, Rabbi Marion formed the Reproductive Justice Committee. This active group brainstormed and collaborated on ways to advocate for access to reproductive healthcare. Various ideas came out of the committee and were implemented. Most notably, last year members submitted public testimony to advocate for legislation to expand abortion access. Our voices added to others and the Connecticut state legislature passed two bills expanding access to reproductive

care. Now, there are legal protections for persons receiving and providing reproductive healthcare services in Connecticut, and more types of providers like nurse practitioners and physician assistants can provide surgical abortions. In addition, last summer, as part of Congregation B'nai Israel's social justice film series, we showed a documentary on the abortion issue and had a wonderful Zoom discussion with both of the film's directors.

Our work continues! Barbara Edinberg and Beth Posner have agreed to co-chair our B'nai Israel Reproductive Justice Committee. The committee is planning to meet in February. Once we have a date, we will let everyone know via Hashavua. If you would like to become involved, please reach out to Barbara ([bedinberg@gmail.com](mailto:bedinberg@gmail.com)) and Beth at ([baposner@gmail.com](mailto:baposner@gmail.com)).



*Open to all ages!*

Congregation B'nai Israel  
Presents:

# We Don't Talk About Haman

An  
Encanto  
Purim

Monday, March 6

5:00-6:00pm: Pizza Dinner, Games and Crafts

6:00-6:45pm: "We Don't Talk About  
Haman" Purim Schpiel







## FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY/RABBI SARAH R. MARION CIVIL RIGHTS MISSION REFLECTIONS

*From January 8-10, I joined with Rabbi Schultz and nine B'nai Israel congregants on the Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County's Civil Rights Mission. Our stops in Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham allowed us to see, witness, experience, and pay tribute to key moments from the Civil Rights Movement. Below are some reflections from the experience:*

Whoever crosses the infamous Edmund Pettus "Bloody Sunday" Bridge from Selma towards Montgomery might notice a playground on the banks of the Alabama River, sitting almost due left of the entry point to the bridge. The playground's bright green and red plastic slides, and its purple and yellow overhead canopies, stand in stark contrast to the bridge's tarnished metal scaffolding and the weathered concrete slabs that hold together each section of the bridge's side railing.

Of all that I saw, heard, witnessed, and experienced during my brief time in Alabama for an incredible civil rights mission with the Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County, the one thing that stands out to me the most was the devastatingly formative role of *children* during the Civil Rights Movement. They did not teach me this in public school (in fact, there is A LOT that they did not teach me in public school — but that is another sermon, for another day...) On the footsteps of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Lynda Blackmon Lowery told us that she was *thirteen* the first time she was arrested for protesting segregation — along with scores of other black children her age, and younger. This was not happenstance, this was not children looking for excitement, but, rather, this was purposeful, and this was deliberate. Because if black parents protested and were arrested, then black parents could not work — thereby only perpetuating the dehumanizing and debilitating cycle of oppression. And this was purposeful,



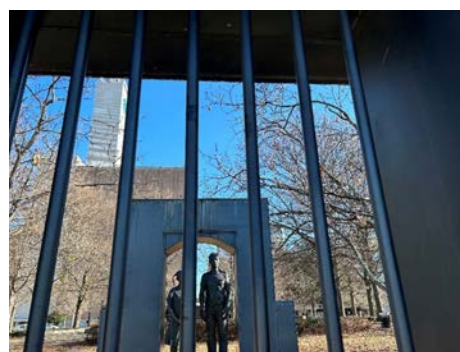
*The Mission participants with Bishop Calvin Wallace Woods*



*The playground across from the bridge*



*Our group crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge*



*Monuments for the children at Kelly Ingram Park*



and this was deliberate, in order to win over the hearts and minds of white parents reading the newspaper from afar. And so when Lynda Blackmon Lowery went to prison for the first time — crammed into a tiny, two-person jail cell with dozens of other children, it was her friend Ruby Brooks, *still a child herself*, who wiped Lynda's tears that night and rocked her to sleep. And when Lynda Blackmon Lowery was beaten on Bloody Sunday at the age of 15 years old — needing 34

stitches as a result — she got right back up and continued with the movement, because for Lynda and for all of the black children of her generation, there was simply no other choice.

There are children who grow up on playgrounds, and there are children who grow up in prisons.

In Birmingham, on May 2, 1963, more

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## ALEXA COHEN/DIRECTOR OF THE EDUCATION CENTER CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF THE TREES



### The Holiday Known as the Birthday of the Trees — Tu B'Shevat

According to Jewish tradition, all trees have the same birthday, Tu B'Shevat, which, in 2023, falls on February 6. There are so many ways we can celebrate this holiday with children.

1. **Read books about trees** — pick up your favorite book about nature, trees, or caring for the environment. Some of our preschool favorites are *Netta and Her Plant*, which tells the story of Netta and the plant she received as a gift and how they grow together. Sometimes growing up can be scary, but Netta and her plant experience how wonderful it is to grow together. In *Dear Tree*, a little boy shares his hopes and wishes for trees, especially for the special tree that he plays under each day. For the Kehilah-aged group, we recommend *Just a Dream*, Walter has a dream (or maybe a nightmare) that everyone stopped caring for our planet, and *Solomon and the Trees* tells the story of young King Solomon and his love for the forest animal friends. When he grows up and becomes king, he forgets how important it is to take care of the earth.

2. **Listen to Tu B'Shevat inspired music** — “Mundo Verde/Green World” by Mister G. and “Garden Song” and “Connected” by Melita and Isaac are some great tunes.

3. **Make a Handprint Tree** — Cut some leaves out of construction paper and work together to build your family tree. Be sure to share stories with your children. Who are your oldest relatives? Your newest? The most colorful personalities? Do you have relatives in Israel or elsewhere outside of North America?

4. **Enjoy Some Tu B'Shevat Food** — Although there's still snow on the ground in some parts of the United States, this holiday marks the start of spring in Israel. One way that some people celebrate is by eating foods from the “Seven Species” that were grown in ancient Israel. The Seven Species are wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. Try some of these yummy breakfast recipes:

**Orange Date Muffins** via All Recipes: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/21439/orange-date-muffins/>.

**Granola and Pomegranate Bowl** via Love and Lemons: <https://www.loveandlemons.com/granola-pomegranate-breakfast-bowl/>

**Sweet Grape “Salad”** via Food.com: <https://www.food.com/recipe/summer-sweet-grape-salad-25066>.

For dinner, some whole wheat pasta or bread is an easy way to sneak in wheat. Barley soups or beef and barley stew in a slow cooker is another easy, quick way to make a hearty meal that rounds out your day of tasting the Seven Species. You can also try swapping in barley for macaroni in a mac and cheese recipe. For more ideas check out:

**Roast Chicken with Caramelized Lemons, Cherry Tomatoes, and Olives** via Weelicious: <https://weelicious.com/roast-chicken-with-caramelized-lemons-cherry-tomatoes-and-olives/>.

**12 Dishes to Make with Grapes** via California Grown: <https://californiagrown.org/blog/12-delicious-grape-recipes/>

You can also serve **Honey Chicken Drumsticks** over barley or whole-wheat pasta: <https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/august-2016/cooking-with-pj-library-recipes-high-holidays>.

*Continued on page 15*



## SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

In person on Fridays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. where indicated.  
All services at this time can also be viewed on Zoom. The link is sent out in our weekly email.

### Friday, February 3

5:00 p.m. Shabbat Play & Pray  
6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Beshalach, Exodus 13:17-17:16  
Haftarah – Judges 4:4-5:31  
Shabbat Shira with Choir

### Saturday, February 4

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

### Friday, February 10

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Yitro, Exodus 18:1-20:23  
Haftarah – Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6

### Saturday, February 11

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

### Friday, February 17

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1-24:18  
Haftarah – 2 Kings 11:17-12:17  
7:00 p.m. Repro Shabbat w/ special guest speaker Dr. Janet Lefkowitz

### Saturday, February 18

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom

9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

### Friday, February 24

6:00 p.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
Torah Portion – Terumah, Exodus 25:1-27:19  
Haftarah – 1 Kings 5:26-6:13

### Saturday, February 25

8:00 a.m. Shabbat Service – in person and on Zoom  
9:00 a.m. Brotherhood Breakfast – in person  
9:30 a.m. Torah Study – in person and on Zoom

## TILE, SHUFFLE, AND SOCIALIZE AT ROSH CHODESH GAME NIGHT!

### Monday, February 27, 7:00–9:30 p.m.

Game night is back! In honor of the new Hebrew month of Adar — the month when we celebrate Purim and are commanded to be joyful — join with women across the B'nai Israel community for an evening



of mah jong, canasta, and socializing. It's a night for everyone, whether you know how to play the games or not. There will be tables for players with experience and tables for those who want to learn how to play...and if you just want to come and socialize, that's okay too! Snacks and beverages will be provided. Those who remember game nights from the past know what a phenomenal success they

were and what a good time was had by all! We are looking forward to resurrecting this beloved B'nai Israel tradition and welcoming new players into the mix! Be on the lookout for upcoming Hashavua emails for information about how to sign up. For questions, please contact Event Co-Chairs Amy Moorin at amoorin@optonline.net or Carol Lubin at cclubz@gmail.com.

## WINE TASTING WITH RICH WALDEN

### February 5, 4:00 p.m. at B'nai Israel

Join us at B'nai Israel on February 5 for an in-person wine tasting for Tu B'Shevat to celebrate the fruit of the trees! The holiday celebrates a new year for planting, and grapes are one of the celebrated fruits, so we will have some wine, nuts and fruits (and maybe a little cheese).

Since this is one of the four "new year" celebrations in the Hebrew calendar, we would like to focus on your favorite sparkling wine. We will have some bottles to share but bring your own favorite and we can talk about the grapes used and how these wines are made and are different from Bordeaux or other styles of still wine.

Attendance will be limited, so please reach out to Rich Walden at [rwalden@cbibpt.org](mailto:rwalden@cbibpt.org) to reserve a spot!



# FEBRUARY DONATIONS

(We greatly appreciate all donations to our special purpose funds.)

## **Rabbi Schultz Discretionary Fund**

**Ari David**, in memory of my mother, Raye David.

**Donald & Wendy Hyman**, in honor of the marriage of Sylvia and Alan Neigher's daughter Leslie to Greg Kaplan; in honor of the marriage of Mark and Anne Kirsch's daughter Alison to Zachary Siegel.

**Stacy & Rob Giglietti**, in memorial of Michael Giglietti.

**Andrea, Danielle & Nancy Kern**, in memory of husband & father, Irving J. Kern.

**Brenda & Justin Kreuzer**, in loving memory of our fathers, Matthew Furman & Barton Kreuzer, and in appreciation to Rabbi Schultz.

**Elaine & Marty Schwartz**, in appreciation to Jill and Steve Elbaum, for your friendship and thoughtfulness.

**Claire Shumofsky**, with grateful appreciation to Rabbi Schultz, for loving support and welcoming our family back during the time of Allan's funeral.

**The Temple Brotherhood**, a donation for repairing one of our Torahs.

**Fredric & Ronni Zinn**, in memory of David Zinn.

## **Rabbi Marion Discretionary Fund**

**Donald & Wendy Hyman**, in memory of Allan Shumofsky, husband of Claire Shumofsky; in honor of the engagement of Sarah Kadden, daughter of Jack Kadden, to Josh Sabel.

**Mark & Linda Kaplan**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion.

**Brenda & Justin Kreuzer**, in loving memory of our mothers, Juliet Furman & Virginia Kreuzer, and in appreciation to Rabbi Marion.

**Beth Lazar**, in loving memory of my great Aunt, Esther Epstein; in loving memory of my mother, Shirley Greenberg Lazar; in loving memory of my aunt, Janet Greenberg.

**Claire Shumofsky**, with grateful appreciation to Rabbi Marion, for loving support and welcoming our family back during the time of Allan's funeral.

**Eileen & Howard Tolk**, in loving

memory of father Maurice Velenchik.

**Frederic West**, in appreciation to Rabbi Marion.

## **Rabbi James Prosnit Legacy Fund**

**Nancy Kern**, in loving memory of Irving Kern, husband of Andrea Kern, father of Nancy Kern.

**Elaine & Marty Schwartz**, in appreciation to Wendy & Don Hyman, for your friendship and thoughtfulness.

## **Rabbi James Prosnit Discretionary Fund**

**Anne & Mark Kirsch**, with heartfelt appreciation of Rabbi Prosnit for officiating at the wedding of Alison Kirsch to Zachary Siegel.

**Elaine & Marty Schwartz**, in appreciation to Suzanne Phillip & Steven Soberman, for your friendship and thoughtfulness.

**Claire Shumofsky**, with grateful appreciation to Rabbi Prosnit, for loving support and welcoming our family back during the time of Allan's funeral.

## **Cantor Rubel Discretionary Fund**

**Susan Rona Kasson**, in memory of Jane Joan Rona and with thanks for all your help with her unveiling.

## **Music Fund**

**Debra & Daniel Viens**, in memory of Helen Kaufman, grandmother of Kristen Carley.

## **Enhancement Fund**

**Marion Ashkins**, in memory of Anita Perlman, beloved sister of Elaine Friedman.

**Charles & Carol Hemenway**, a donation.

**Mark & Liz Nigrosh**, in honor of the marriage of Anne & Mark Kirsch's daughter Alison to Zachary Siegel.

**Dr. Kenneth & Nina Rabine**, in appreciation to Marilyn and Hank Banach.

**Gabriel Scherzer & Nevet Basker**, in memory of Allan Shumofsky and in honor of Julie and David Chivo.

**Eileen & Howard Tolk**, in loving

memory of mother Tess Velenchik.

**Fredric & Ronni Zinn**, a donation.

## **Sylvia Prosnit Adult Education Fund**

**Beth Lazar**, in loving memory of my uncle, Robert Lazar, husband of Sophia Lazar and father of Gesiele & Matt.

## **Bonim Preschool Scholarship Fund**

**Serena & Arnold Sher**, in memory of Victoria Blank, mother of Jackie Bakhsh.

**Debra & Daniel Viens**, in memory of Ruth Bortner, grandmother of Jessica Goldberg.

## **Rabbi Martin Library Fund**

**Gloria Katz**, in celebration of Dale & Jerome Demner's Anniversary.

## **CONECT thru Social Action**

**Jeffrey Schwartz**, in appreciation to everyone who worked for social justice in 2022.

## **Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund**

**Nancy Kern**, in loving memory of Irving Kern, husband of Andrea Kern, father of Nancy Kern.

**Elaine & Marty Schwartz**, in appreciation to Serena & Arnie Sher, for your treasured friendship and thoughtfulness over the years.

## **Yakhani Caring Fund**

**Ruth & Eric Gross**, in memory of Myrna Kingsly, mother of Dr. Ken Kingsly

## HIGH HOLY DAY APPEAL DONATIONS

### **Pillar of Congregation**

Andrea Kern  
Claire Shumofsky

### **President's Circle**

Hunter Norton  
Amy & Glenn Rich



than one thousand children skipped school to gather in the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church before marching downtown to protest segregation. Six hundred of those children were jailed that day, and then a day later, when the “Children’s Crusade” continued, hundreds more were attacked by police dogs and doused with firehoses. In Kelly Ingram Park across from the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Church, monuments pay tribute to the thousands of black children who gave up their childhoods — and their lives — in the struggle for Civil Rights, including the four who were murdered inside the church when a bomb planted by the Ku Klux Klan exploded beneath them.

Children belong on playgrounds.

And although that bridge is now rusted

over and those monuments bear dates that are decades old, the playground to prison pipeline remains. The Equal Justice Initiative reports that a black child is still five times as likely as a white child to be incarcerated.

But despite it all, Lynda Blackmon Lowery hasn’t given up hope. And neither has Bishop Calvin Wallace Woods — an integral leader in the Birmingham Civil Rights movement, who met our group in Kelly Ingram Park with more spunk, soul, song, and strength than I can put into words. Lynda Lowery and Bishop Woods, and so many others, have had every reason to throw up their hands and give in to hopelessness and despair. But despite it all, they haven’t given up. And because *they* haven’t given up —

*we* have no excuse to give up, either. If each and every one of us could bottle up just a small ounce of their hope, their strength, their resilience, and their faith, then perhaps we might come just a tiny bit closer to a world in which our prisons are empty and our playgrounds, at long last, are full.



*Our B’nai Israel group in front of the Edmund Pettus Bridge*



*Our group meeting with Lynda Blackmon Lowery*



*Bishop Calvin Wallace Woods, Sr. speaking to our group (photo credit: Carin Savel)*

## CHESED COMMITTEE

The Chesed Committee would like to make all members feel a part of our community. If you would be willing to make a few calls every month to our elderly and ill congregants, please contact

Jim Grutzmacher at [jamesgrutz@gmail.com](mailto:jamesgrutz@gmail.com). Thank you.

## B'NAI ISRAEL GREEN TEAM (BGT) FEBRUARY 2023



### From Food Waste to Compost

By Laura Stern

Inspired by my friends on the B'nai Israel Green Team, I started looking into composting options this fall. My timing was serendipitous as Fairfield was starting a new food waste collection initiative at the same time. (It's free, as long as you are a Fairfield resident and have a town beach sticker.) We got our starter kit from the

town, which included a large collection bin, a smaller countertop collection bin, and a roll of BPI-certified compostable bags.

We have been collecting all of our food waste (table scraps, produce peels and stems, tea bags, eggshells, etc.) and taking it to the transfer station to be collected and composted. Once it became part of our normal routine to collect the waste, rather than throw it in the garbage disposal or the trash, it honestly has been so easy.

A few tips:

- I keep my scraps in the freezer and make the trip to the dump every few weeks.
- Team up with a friend or neighbor to gather your food waste and take turns depositing it at the transfer station.
- If you don't live in Fairfield and want your food waste to be diverted

from the trash, you can sign up with a curbside food waste collection company or set up a composting bin in your own backyard. Gather some friends and make it a group activity!

- For those who are not Fairfield residents, perhaps you can get in touch with your local representatives to suggest adding a food waste collection program.

The Sustainable Fairfield Task Force estimates that about 20% of our garbage is from food. I am thrilled that I can contribute to the production of rich, nutrient-dense compost for future crops.

For more information, you can visit: <https://www.fairfieldct.org/solidwastenews/?FeedID=5330>.

## SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH CARE REFORM THROUGH CONECT AND THE B'NAI ISRAEL MENTAL HEALTH SMALL GROUP

By Beth Lazar

February 16, 2023 is the first anniversary of B'nai Israel's Mental Health Small Group.

As a person with mental illness, I have been confronted by police during two separate psychotic incidents in my life. In addition, my parents brought me to a hospital emergency room many times, and we waited all day to be seen, only to be sent home without any treatment after I answered "no" to the question "Do you plan to harm or kill yourself or others?"

"Why do the police come to take me away when I am in crisis?" I asked my dad back in the 1980s. "Hmm. I suppose it's because the firemen and sanitation workers are too busy. Besides, where would they take you — to the fire station or the city dump?" I think my dad said this to make me laugh, but this is no laughing matter.

Luckily enough, people are starting to ask the same question I asked in my youth,

and change is slowly happening in how society responds to people in mental health crisis.

CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New CT), a collective of religious congregations in Southern CT of which B'nai Israel is a member, is advocating for the establishment of crisis stabilization centers and for respite centers as alternatives to incarceration or emergency rooms for people in mental health crisis.

On October 23, 2022, prior to the November election, CONECT held a candidates assembly right here at B'nai Israel and invited the gubernatorial candidates to listen to the community's issues and concerns. CONECT member Lonnie Spaulding told the assembly how he had a traumatic childhood that contributed to his getting involved with criminal activity and being incarcerated. Being in prison added to his trauma. Now free from prison, Lonnie attends a peer respite center to which he credits with

letting him "take off my mask of 'Mr. Tough Guy' and deal with the trauma" in his life. He says that the peer respite center keeps him sane and from returning to a life of crime and incarceration.

Reena Aurora, leader of the Health Care/Mental Health Team of CONECT, talked about the "Third Place," crisis stabilization centers run by psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers as an alternative response to people in a mental health crisis. Some states have a network of Third Place crisis centers, but CT is not one of them.

Then a leader of CONECT asked the candidates for governor: "If elected, will you work with CONECT and other mental health advocates to lead the state in investigating the best mix of these two models — peer-run respite centers and crisis stabilization centers — for our state? Will you prioritize funding to get pilots open and operating in our communities during the first two years of your term?"

*Continued on next page*





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The Bulletin of Congregation B'nai Israel is published every month except July.

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Congregation B'nai Israel, founded in 1858, seeks to be a vibrant Reform synagogue dedicated to the perpetuation of Jewish life and values within the framework of contemporary American Judaism. We are a gateway to Judaism for all. The Congregation B'nai Israel Bulletin publishes monthly 11 times a year (except July). To submit an article, announcement or ad to the Bulletin, please contact Co-Editors, Amy Pressman at [apressman@cbibpt.org](mailto:apressman@cbibpt.org) or Lauren Tropp at [ltropp@cbibpt.org](mailto:ltropp@cbibpt.org). Submissions are due by the first day of the month preceding the publication month. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for length or style.

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 at (203) 336-1858.

As of April 1, there will be a price increase. We are raising plot and care fees which will keep our pricing in line with other cemeteries in the area.

## MENTAL HEALTH FROM P. 10

Ned Lamont answered, "Yes," on camera in front of over 300 people in person and over 100 people on Zoom. Lamont was re-elected. Let's make sure Governor Lamont keeps his pre-election promise!

You can do something concrete to advance mental health care reform by supporting CONECT. Your participation in their advocacy and/or your financial contribution via the optional check off with your annual B'nai Israel membership dues is important.

The B'nai Israel Mental Health Small Group is both a support and an advocacy group for people with mental health issues and their allies who care about ending stigma and building a better mental healthcare system. We meet once a month via Zoom. For more information contact: Beth Lazar, chair, 203-336-9781

Please support both CONECT and the B'nai Israel Mental Health Small Group.

## B'NAI ISRAEL TAKES NEW YORK CITY!

**"I'll Have What She's Having:  
 The Jewish Deli" at the New York  
 Historical Society  
 Sunday, April 2, 2023**

Bus leaves B'nai Israel at 9:15 a.m.;  
 returns approximately 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a one-hour private guided group tour of "I'll Have What She's Having: The Jewish Deli" at the New York Historical Society. The tour will take place from 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m., followed by lunch on your own on the Upper West Side. Bus will leave Upper West Side at approximately 2:30 p.m. and return to B'nai Israel at 4:00 p.m. Cost of trip is \$70 per person – includes cost of bus and admission to museum. Limited to 40 participants. Please RSVP to Susie Hallman, [shallman@cbibpt.org](mailto:shallman@cbibpt.org).

## SENIORS LUNCHES

Join with our B'nai Israel Seniors community for a monthly lunch series to schmooze with one another and discuss interesting and important topics of the day. Please bring your own lunch. Coffee and tea will be served. Meet in the Natt Family Library.

**February 21 at noon**—Jake Joseph from the ADL will speak about antisemitism and the local work of the ADL in Connecticut.



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## TIKKUN OLAM REPORT

### What's Cooking at B'nai Israel?

Congregants and Kehilah students have been busy addressing food insecurity by providing meals for both St. John's Church in Bridgeport and Operation Hope in Fairfield. On the second Tuesday of each month, a small group meets in the B'nai Israel kitchen to cook chicken for one hundred people, which is then

delivered and served as part of St. John's Community Supper in Bridgeport.

Every other month, congregants cook ziti and vegetables at home and then deliver the food to Operation Hope to provide dinner for fifty. In addition, our Kehilah students have practiced *tikkun olam* by baking cookies and muffins to include with meals for both programs.

Volunteers are welcome for either program. For those who would like to contribute but would prefer to stay out of the kitchen, purchase of dessert or salad is always an option and much appreciated. If interested, please contact Deborah Goodman at [Deborah.goodman7@gmail.com](mailto:Deborah.goodman7@gmail.com) or at (203) 521-9689.



Deborah Goodman delivering food to St. John's



Dyann Ross delivering ziti to Operation Hope.



Pans of chicken at St. John's.



Kehilah students baking dessert

## BIRTHDAY OF TREES ..... FROM P. 6

**5. Make a donation** — find a charitable organization that plants or cares for trees. Encourage your kids to dip into their piggy banks or wallets to make the donation more meaningful.

**6. Plant something** — It is likely to be still wintry and cold here in Connecticut this Tu B'Shevat. Don't worry, there are lots of great indoor activities that can help you start a garden. All over America, Jewish kids plant parsley seeds on Tu B'Shevat. To germinate parsley

seeds and use the plant two holidays later as the *karpas* on a Passover seder plate connects our earliest spring holiday to our main spring holiday, and it lets kids get their fingers dirty fostering green life from dormant seeds. Tu B'Shevat is the official start of the agricultural year, when tree sap (and all life force by extension) begins to rise after winter rest.

Or, you can start a garden using food waste. Get a jump on summertime planting by turning your leftover salad into a starter garden! You'll be celebrating Tu B'Shevat, saving the earth, and honoring the Jewish value of *bal taschit*, (do not destroy), all at once.





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## BIFTY FEBRUARY 2023

BIFTY is B'nai Israel's high school youth group. We meet weekly on Thursdays from 7:00–8:30 p.m. in the BIFTY Lounge, upstairs in the back of the education wing. For more information, follow us on Instagram @cbi.bifty or reach out to advisor Marisa at [munderberger@gmail.com](mailto:munderberger@gmail.com). We are

looking forward to seeing you at our February events!

February 9 — BIFTY will be ice skating at the Inn at Longshore ice rink from 7:15–8:15 p.m. Please bring \$20 to participate. We will meet at the rink.  
February 23 — Happy Birthday,

BIFTY! Come and celebrate like you're at a birthday party!

Please note there is no BIFTY on Thursday, February 16.