

Picking apples at
Linvilla Orchards with
"Hebrew School
On The Move"



SOCIETY HILL
SYNAGOGUE

KESHER

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From the President's Desk

REFLECTIONS FROM A STRATEGIC PLANNING FOCUS GROUP

by Lisa Eizen

In November, I had the opportunity to participate in one of Society Hill Synagogue's recent **focus groups** — conversations designed to help guide our **strategic planning**. From the moment we began, the room felt warm, open, and genuinely hopeful. One theme surfaced almost immediately: how happy people are to be part of this synagogue. That sense of **belonging** shaped the entire discussion.

The group included a range of ages, which made the conversation especially meaningful. Hearing perspectives from different generations, and from both newer members and those with decades of history here, added richness and depth to what we shared.

As participants, we were invited to speak honestly about our experiences — what we treasure about the synagogue, what improvements we would like to see, and any concerns we felt were important to raise. It was heartening to hear how thoughtfully everyone approached the conversation. People expressed enthusiasm for **strengthening relationships,**

supporting new members, and **continuing to build a culture based in joy and connection.**

At the same time, participants didn't shy away from naming challenges and areas where we can grow. Concerns about space and access were raised, particularly in the Social Hall and Sanctuary, where crowdedness can affect the experience of services and community events, especially for those with limited mobility. For me, these reflections underscored one of our core values: I never want us to be in a position where anyone is turned away from praying, learning, or celebrating in our synagogue. **Ensuring that our physical spaces support full inclusion is essential to who we are.**

Another important theme was the recognition that our continued growth, while exciting, may put additional strain on our staff. It was a reminder that the **strength of our programs and the warmth of our culture** depend on caring for the people whose work helps create those experiences. These reflections weren't framed as complaints, but as hopes — clear, constructive ideas that will

help us evolve in healthy and intentional ways. Encouragingly, many of the ideas and concerns raised in the room are already on the radar of the Board of Directors and the Strategic Planning Committee.

Of course, this is simply my experience of one focus group. Other groups may have had different conversations, different concerns, or different emphases — and together, these varied perspectives will help create a fuller, more nuanced understanding of our congregation's needs and aspirations.

By the time this article is published, the full series of focus groups will have been completed, and the Strategic Planning Committee will be hard at work synthesizing what was learned. As the next phase begins, it is likely that subcommittees or task forces will be formed — and synagogue members will be invited to join these groups and help shape the future of our community.

The focus group left me feeling grateful and energized. It reminded me that **we are a community that listens deeply, values each voice, and takes seriously the work of planning intentionally for our next chapter.** With honesty, joy, and shared purpose guiding us, I'm confident that our synagogue's future will be vibrant and deeply connected.



From the Rabbi's Desk

IN A CHALLENGING WORLD, JEWISH COMMUNITY ENDURES

by Rabbi Nathan Kamesar

We believe that when people engage with Jewish community — immersing themselves in an ongoing way with the teachings, the rhythms, and the connections that are fostered in Jewish communal life — **that engagement results in a profound experience of nourishment, strength, and inspiration.**

At the same time, we recognize that **being Jewish today is not easy** (if it ever has been). Some of the sources of this difficulty are connected to being Jewish, some are simply from being a human being in today's world — a dizzying news media environment that inundates us with news of calamities around the world and here at home; a rapid pace of technological change that upends many employment industries; expectations in the workplace that demand we be available all the time, anywhere; political strife; widening gaps in inequality — I could go on.

And of course, this is to say nothing of general rhythms of individual lives: sickness and death, depression and anxiety, loneliness and dejection.

On top of these difficulties of being human right now are specific challenges to being Jewish. For starters, Jews represent only 2.4% of the US population, a figure that rises to only 4.4% when you're talking about a city like Philadelphia. Even in Philadelphia, the fourth largest city in the United States by Jewish population, only 4.4% of the city is Jewish. Being that distinct of a minority inherently means the environment around you has significant difficulties empathizing with the Jewish part of your identity. It means one has to go out and seek connections to Jewish community; those connections aren't going to be front and center wherever you go in society. Add to that our society's general trend over the last three decades — in which there has been a dramatic decrease in affiliation with religious communities across the board — as well as the worst surge of antisemitism in many decades, and we return to the difficult conclusion: **it's not easy being human, and it's not easy being Jewish in today's world.**

And yet.

And yet in spite of, and perhaps in part because of, these difficulties, the Society Hill Synagogue community, which has been investing a significant amount of energy, creativity, and resources in strengthening the experience of Jewish community here, is **bursting with life.** I've written many times in these pages about the growth of this community over the last few years — from 250 households in 2015, to 306 households in 2023, to **415 today; and over 100 new member households in just the past two years.**

But these top line numbers are, in many respects, less relevant than what the experience of this growth represents when **we show up to a service, class, or program at Society Hill Synagogue.** Whereas, prior to the pandemic, we might have had 25 people gathering together at the end of a regular Shabbat morning service, today we regularly have **about 130 people.** Whereas prior to the pandemic, a typical Friday night service would struggle to reach the ten people needed for a *minyan*, and our once per month TGIShabbat service would reach around 70 people, today it is

rare that we have fewer than 40 on a Friday night, and many Friday nights during the year serve **well over 100 people**.

All of this is to say that when someone comes to Society Hill Synagogue in search of Jewish connection, Jewish learning, or Jewish spirituality, they encounter **a community, and a building, overflowing with life, giving them reassurance that being Jewish doesn't have to be so lonely; that there are real communal resources available to each of us.**

When we show up to Society Hill Synagogue, we can expect a **warm welcome and a recognition that we may each be in very different places when it comes to our learning journey in relationship to Judaism.** When someone shows up to a class or a service, there are multiple access points, including gentle articulations of why we are chanting a particular prayer at a particular time, and English transliterations so those who don't read Hebrew can follow along.

When we show up to Society Hill Synagogue, we can often expect a **meal**, which is less important for the food itself — though that certainly shouldn't be taken for granted in an era where SNAP benefits are in jeopardy — and more important because sitting around a table over food can bring us together, providing chances to make and deepen connections in all stages of life.



Synagogue members work together across generations to build our Sukkah in the Courtyard; LilyFish Gomberg.

When we show up to Society Hill Synagogue, we witness **generations building bridges to one another**, whether it is Hebrew School students and community elders participating in our Shabbat morning Torah discussion, or kids, parents, and grandparents breaking bread together in our Social Hall.

When we show up to Society Hill Synagogue, we experience **communities in which we can talk about shared experiences:** our Rosh Hodesh group for women, our Men's Club, Triple Chai for folks ages 54 and beyond, the Young Friends for those in their 20s and 30s, our Young Families group, our Israel Connections Subcommittee, for people yearning to foster a deeper connection with Israel, and our Israel Dialogue and Engagement Subcommittee, for those looking to talk through the challenging questions that having a nation-state in the modern world presents.

When we show up to Society Hill Synagogue, we encounter myriad ways to **live out our Jewish values in the world:** supporting the libraries at Taggart Elementary school and Vare-Washington Elementary School, volunteering with Esperanza Immigration Legal Services to prepare immigrants for their U.S. citizenship tests, working with POWER Interfaith on policy-oriented engagement with housing, education, and climate justice, a clothing drive for Vare-Washington Elementary School families, volunteering through our partnership with Old Pine Community Center to provide food to more than 150 families in our neighborhood; and now, thanks to an expanded Hesed (formerly God's Unfinished Business) Committee and over 50 new volunteers, we have a dynamic effort **reaching out to members all across our congregation to see how we can support individuals and families experiencing need, pain, or transition.**

So many of these efforts, when rolled out, seem to be met with waves of enthusiasm and energy in response.

Something about the moment we are in, and something about what the Society Hill Synagogue community is offering to the broader community, is resonating.

So the question becomes: **what should we do next?**

Our **Strategic Planning process** is taking in this information and more — through surveys, focus groups, and research of our external environment — to ask how we sustain this important work and how we respond to the growing demand for the need that Society Hill Synagogue seems to be meeting, of supporting people in their Jewish journeys:

- **As our Hebrew School classrooms fill up, what do we do?** What happens when people seek to enroll in our Hebrew School beyond our current space capacity? How do we meet this need, if we can?
- **How do we ensure our spaces are accessible** and

supportive to all who wish to be in our Jewish community?

- How do we ensure that our members and the growing number of people seeking the nourishment, comfort, and strength to be found in Jewish community at Society Hill Synagogue can continue to be served by one another and by the volunteers, staff, and clergy that undergird this effort? **In what ways do we need to invest in our human capacity for service?**
- How do we ensure that we are doing so in a **financially sustainable way**, such that the inevitable ups and downs of Jewish communal life (and all communal life) can be withstood?

Synagogue leadership is working hard to generate answers to these questions, and more, within constraints of available space, resources, and time. **We welcome your continued input and contributions to these conversations.**

What we know is that in today's world — a world in which there is real, profound pain, as there always has been — it takes working from a base of support to navigate the world, and to contribute to its repair. **We pray that Society Hill Synagogue continues to be a base of support — a base of nourishment, strength, and inspiration — to so many.**

Thank you.

Overcoming the Asymmetry of the Sensational: A Better Future for Israelis and Palestinians



Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat with **Rabbi Michael Cohen** on February 20-21



Rabbi Michael Margaretten Cohen is the Director of Community Relations for the **Friends of Arava Institute**. He has been a part of the Arava Institute since its doors opened in 1996, dividing his time between Vermont and the Kibbutz Ketura campus of the Institute. He is a faculty member of Bennington College, teaching conflict resolution, the Bible, and the environment.

Rabbi Cohen has been a Policy Advisor to the Office of the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, U.S. Department of State, and a Speechwriting Advisor to the Office of the White House Speechwriters. He has served on the Advisory Board of the Middle East Peace Partnership (MEPPA) of USAID. Rabbi Cohen is also rabbi emeritus of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont, and a columnist for *The Jerusalem Post*. He is the author of *Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul*, and a recipient of the Eliav Sartawi Award for Middle East Journalism from the Search for Common Ground.



RSVP: www.societyhillsynagogue.org/Michael-Cohen-Shabbat



From the Hazzan's Desk

THE MAKING OF TGISHABBAT

by Hazzan Jessi Roemer



Many of our regular TGISHabbat musicians performed at Rabbi Nathan Kamesar's Installation Ceremony. Left to right: Daniel Johnson, Loren Gildar, Eve Friedman, and Larry Goldfinger; Debbie Zak Cohen.

With autumn behind us and winter ahead, I want to pause and offer gratitude for the richness of our ongoing musical life at Society Hill Synagogue. Our weekly **Friday night TGISHabbat musical service** is now such an integral part of our weekly rhythm — it's hard to believe it wasn't always this way!

A bit of history:

TGISHabbat ("Thank God It's Shabbat!") Friday night services at Society Hill Synagogue were innovated in 2010 by then-president **Walter Ferst, David Ladov**, and then-Rabbi (now Rabbi Emeritus) **Avi Winokur**. They enjoined the **Board of Directors** and **Cantor Bob Freedman** to create a music-infused service once a month on Friday night, followed by dinner. Cantor Bob worked with congregant **Jud Aaron** and his jazz ensemble, including former member **Josh Nadel**, and later with **Joe and David Oxman**, to create musical arrangements to accompany the *davening* (prayer). It was during this period that Cantor Bob composed his beautiful and beloved original setting for *Hashkivenu*, which we still sing every Friday! **Bonnie Slobodien** contributed regularly

by bringing talented young classical musicians for guest appearances at TGISHabbat.

TGISHabbat happened once a month at Society Hill Synagogue for several years until **2021**, when, with new spiritual and musical leadership and a growing synagogue, the Board agreed to support a **weekly musical Friday evening service, pre-service "Shabbat Schmooze" with wine and cheese, and dinner**. This is the Society Hill Synagogue TGISHabbat experience we have come to know and love today!

To support this now-weekly musical *davening*, we assembled a core of professional musicians who are not only **stellar performers**, trained in an array of styles, but are also skilled in the unique art of **supporting prayer with music**.

I want to emphasize that the two aforementioned skills are not synonymous, and our TGISHabbat musicians excel in both! Every week they combine their talents to create the sound that our community now associates with the joyful welcoming of Shabbat.

These musicians are: **Jessie Reagen, Dr. Eve Friedman, Loren Gildar, Dr. Larry Goldfinger, and Daniel Johnson**. Read their full bios at: societyhillsynagogue.org/TGISHabbat-Musicians

I also want to shout out **Rabbi Nathan Kamesar**, who is not only a wonderful co-leader in these musical services (and holds them down on his own once a month!), but was instrumental in making the move to weekly TGISHabbat.

Thanks to the support and creativity of so much of our community over time, you now experience an iteration of this superb ensemble every Friday night on the Bimah! Because of folks like you who sponsor our Shabbat dinners, we are able to share a meal together every week after services — so **please consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring a Friday night Oneg dinner or Saturday Kiddush lunch** in honor of a *simḥah* (happy occasion) or in memory of a loved one.

Concert Series:

We also have a wonderful concert series this year, which began on **October 29** with a trio from the **Israel Symphony Orchestra, Rishon LeZion** (pictured on page 13).

Mark your calendars for our **Sunday, March 22, 3:00 pm** concert and lecture with **Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell**, acclaimed bass soloist and multidisciplinary artist working in Yiddish language and culture. His 2018 EP, *Convergence*, explored the sounds and themes of 100 years of African American and Ashkenazi Jewish music. On March 22 at Society Hill Synagogue, Anthony will perform pieces from this project and engage with us in a discussion about *The Possibilities of Black Music in Jewish Spaces*. Don't miss it!

Wishing you health, joy, and lots of nourishing music as we move through the winter months!



THE POSSIBILITIES OF BLACK MUSIC IN JEWISH SPACES

Sunday, March 22
3:00 pm

SOCIETY HILL SYNAGOGUE

FEATURING:
Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell

Playschool Registration is Open!

Society Hill Synagogue Playschool is a warm and inclusive early childcare center for children ages 18 months-5 years old that embraces diversity in religion, ethnicity, race, and family structure. Our philosophy is child-centered and play-based. We believe that children learn through play in a safe and nurturing environment. We respect children as individuals and respond to their needs with compassion and dedication.

Apply today: societyhillsynagogue.org/playschool/enroll

Learn more: societyhillsynagogue.org/playschool

Schedule a tour: megan@societyhillsynagogue.org





Society Hill Synagogue Playschool

PLAYSCHOOL REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

by Megan Nachod



Autumn at Playschool brought apple crafts, silly Shabbatot, Halloween costumes, and even a visit from a fire truck. Now, we're getting ready for winter, and especially for Hanukkah! Our community-wide Hanukkah Happening is on **Sunday, December 14, from 10:00 am-12:00 pm**. We're looking forward to this celebration that unites the Playschool with the wider Society Hill Synagogue community!

In **January**, we return from winter break and settle back into the routine. We'll punctuate our return to school with a Crazy Sock Day! Hopefully we will get some snow (but not too much) to play in. Watching a toddler play in snow is one of the most joyful experiences, and it's always a highlight of my winter!

One of the odder features of **February** is the celebration of **Tu BiShvat**, the Jewish New Year of the Trees, which falls on **February 1** this year. By the time we get to February, it's often hard to believe that we will ever be warm again, but Tu BiShvat reminds us that spring will return. In fact, the almond trees in Israel will have likely broken out in beautiful pink buds!

We will have a Tu BiShvat Seder at Playschool, tasting fruits that come from trees and possibly ranking them as well. It is always interesting to see what the children will try and what they won't. Anyone who has seen a child play with their food will recognize how popular canned black olives are once the children learn to pop them on their fingers!

Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is open now, and Playschool Summer Camp 2026 registration will open in February. Our summer camp runs for 11 weeks, beginning on June 1, and tremendous flexibility is built into the summer program so that families are able to schedule a program that meets their specific summer needs. Our summer includes water play, lots of outdoor time, and great activities.

Please email me at megan@societyhillsynagogue.org or call me at 215-922-6590 x4 if you have questions about the school year or about summer camp. I would be happy to answer any questions about our program, give you a tour of our school, or tell you more about our wonderful teaching team.



Playschool students look inside the Torah close to Simhat Torah; LilyFish Gomberg.



Playschool students and teachers dressed up for a Halloween-themed Shabbat in October; LilyFish Gomberg.



A Playschool student gets to use a fire hose during our visit from a fire truck; Karen Hafter.



Ann Spak Thal Hebrew School

COZY AND JOYFUL: HEBREW SCHOOL IN THE WINTER

by Karen Hafter

The seasons keep turning, the temperatures keep dropping, and — wouldn't you know it — we've left fall behind and made it to winter. The last three months have been a complete and utter joy. From September to November, we celebrated **5** B'nei Mitzvah services, ran **4** family services for the High Holidays, had **3** TGIShabbat services that Hebrew School students helped lead, organized **2** *On the Move* trips (apple picking at Linvilla Orchards and food packing with the Jewish Relief Agency), and made **1** brand new family *Mahzor* to serve our congregation! Something about the season just gives me the urge to count down and sing!

No matter how you look at it, the Ann Spak Thal Hebrew School has been busy, and I wouldn't have it any other way.



Hebrew School families gather to pick apples at our first Hebrew School *On the Move* event in September; LilyFish Gomberg.



Hebrew School students constructing candy sukkot; LilyFish Gomberg.

As soon as we return from Thanksgiving, we pick right back up with B'nei Mitzvah — starting with **Ezra Edelman** (December 6) and **Eli Howe** (December 13). **Hava and Ezra Goldfinger** (January 24), **Yaeli Zhang** (January 31), **Toby Hart** (February 7), and **Talia Vance** (February 28) will round out the winter season and provide some much needed warmth during the chilliest days of the year. We hope that you will come join us at their services, as each celebration is a unique opportunity to watch our students become Jewish adults.

I want to highlight three other events to brighten up our winter:

- **Hanukkah Happening** on **December 14** (see page 11)
- **Volunteering** on MLK Jr. Day in January with Hebrew School *On the Move*
- **Phield House** in February for Hebrew School *On the Move*

Kitot Vav and Zayin families have Learning Sessions on **December 2** and **January 27** from 5:30 to 6:45 pm. These sessions, led by Rabbi Kamesar and Hazzan Jessi, are opportunities for families to learn more about their children's Jewish journeys and each other's as they prepare to usher their kids from childhood to adulthood. Childcare will be provided for students and their siblings.

Please note that Hebrew School will not meet:

- **December 23 - January 3** for winter break. Classes will resume on January 6.
- **January 17** for Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend.
- **February 14** for President's Day weekend.

The Hebrew School teachers and I wish you a Hanukkah filled with light, love, and latkes, and a happy secular new year!



Hebrew School students on a walking tour of Jewish Philadelphia led by congregant David Weinfeld; Karen Hafter.

Hanukkah Happening 5786

Sunday, December 14
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Get ready for the Festival of Lights at our annual Hanukkah Happening!

Bring your family and friends to celebrate together as we enjoy delicious gluten-free latkes from our Latke Brigade and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts), play dreidel games, and get creative with Hanukkah art projects. Come dressed to impress (or amuse!) for our annual "Boldly Hanukkah Sweater" contest, presented by our **Coolanu: Culture & Community Committee**, with great prizes!



Are you curious about our Latke Brigade? Think your latkes are *sizzling*? If you'd like to learn more about this special group of guys who fry and possibly join them, please email Len Weinberg.



Register Today:
societyhillssynagogue.org/hanukkah

With activities for all ages, this festive gathering is the perfect way to share in the joy and warmth of Hanukkah with our community. We can't wait to celebrate together!

DECEMBER 2025 • JANUARY 2026 • FEBRUARY 2026 • • • KISLEV • TEVET • SHVAT • ADAR 5786

Coolanu: Culture and Community

CELEBRATING SEASONS OF JOY

by Lesli Reich and Elliot Landes

What a sensational slew of Sukkot celebrations we had! During **Sukkah Building and Decorating** and our signature **Salsa 'n' Sips in the Sukkah** event, our sukkah truly lived up to its name: a shelter of peace, warmth, and community.

At this year's **Hanukkah Happening on Sunday, December 14**, we are thrilled to host our 3rd annual "**Boldly Hanukkah Sweater**" contest. Whether your look is delightfully tacky, wildly sparkly, humorously themed, or impressively handmade, this competition has



Congregants standing in our newly built and decorated sukkah at our **Sukkah Building and Decorating** in October; LilyFish Gomberg.

become a beloved community tradition — and we can't wait to see this year's creativity shine.

We're excited for **Ice Skating, S'mores, and Cocoa in South Philly!** We'll meet for a public skate session at Rizzo Rink (Front St. and Washington Ave.) and then walk a few blocks to the home of **Morgan and Elliot Landes** for s'mores and hot cocoa. All ages and all skating ability levels welcome! **Time and date are still to be determined based on rink availability**, so keep an eye on the eNews.

Before you know it, it'll be hamantaschen season! Mark your calendars for Monday, March 2, for our 4th annual **Hamantaschen Bake-Off**. Bring your best dough, most creative fillings, and your willingness to be a taste-tester. We'll need both bakers and judges — email us if you're interested.



Congregants enjoy Mexican food in our courtyard at **Salsa 'n' Sips in the Sukkah** in October; LilyFish Gomberg.

On **May 3**, **Itzhak Perlman** brings his foot-stomping, heartbeat raising klezmer music to the Kimmel with *In the Fiddler's House*, featuring the legendary violinist and members of the **Klezmatics** and the **Klezmer Conservatory Band**.

We're excited to attend and can secure a group discount with a minimum of 10 tickets. Before we commit to buy discounted tickets (priced at \$57, \$93, and \$165, based on location) we are gauging congregants' interest. Please fill out the form in the eNews so that we don't miss out on discounted tickets!

Ideas? Questions? Reach out to us any time at coolanu@societyhillsynagogue.org.

SAVE THE DATE: PURIM AT SOCIETY HILL SYNAGOGUE

March 1: Purim Carnival

Get excited, get costumed, and claim your spot at our award-winning Purim Carnival! One of our most popular family events, the carnival features so many game booths, a fantastic prize station, and hamantaschen, fresh fruit, pretzels, and beverages.

March 2:

Purim Dinner, Hamantaschen Bake-Off, Scotch Tasting & Rock Purimspiel

Celebrate Purim with dinner, Coolanu's annual Hamantaschen Bake-Off (2025 winners pictured right), and a Scotch tasting. Stay for the Rock Purimspiel, written by Hazzan Jessi and performed by an intergenerational cast!



March 3:

"Traditional" Megillah Reading

Join us for a festive midday Megillah reading for adults, with lunch, costumes, graggers, and plenty of spirited storytelling.

Israel Connections Subcommittee

STRENGTHENING OUR BONDS WITH THE ISRAELI PEOPLE, ONE STEP AT A TIME

by David Levine

Our community recently gathered for an evening of dance, song, and shared spirit — followed by efforts that continue to strengthen our bonds with the people of Israel.

In November, congregants filled the Social Hall with energy and joy as **Tanya Buchman** — mother of our own **Rachel Howe** — led us through traditional Israeli folk dances. We circled up to *Nigun Atik*, the classic Rivka Sturman choreography that evokes return and continuity; moved with the flowing steps of *Od Lo Ahavti Dai*, set to Naomi Shemer's beloved song and choreographed by Yankele Levy; lifted the room with the joyous *Hora Nirkoda*, a 1958 circle favorite by Yoav Ashriel rooted

in the hora tradition; and closed with the rhythmic charm of *Mokher Prahim*, the Dudu Swisa-popularized circle that blends Yemenite motifs with Israeli folk spirit. Forty congregants and guests, spanning three generations, came, and their smiles said it all — dance connected us to heritage and to one another.

Beyond this special evening, members of the Israel Connections Subcommittee continue to engage hands-on with the Israeli people. Mike and Val Yasner, Holden and Felise Nagelberg, and Rob Einhorn recently returned from volunteer work with organizations across Israel, modeling our congregation's commitment to

service and partnership.

Looking ahead, we're planning new opportunities to learn and connect, including a Lunch 'n' Learn on Israeli graffiti — an art form where Hebrew and Arabic often share the same walls, offering powerful expressions of identity, dialogue, and shared space — alongside an Israeli film and book group, and exploring a special collaboration with American Friends of Magen David Adom. If you'd like to get involved, please email **David Levine** at israel@societyhillssynagogue.org.

Together, we celebrate, learn, and strengthen our ties — with one another, and with the people of Israel.

AUTUMN ISRAEL PROGRAMS AT OUR CONGREGATION



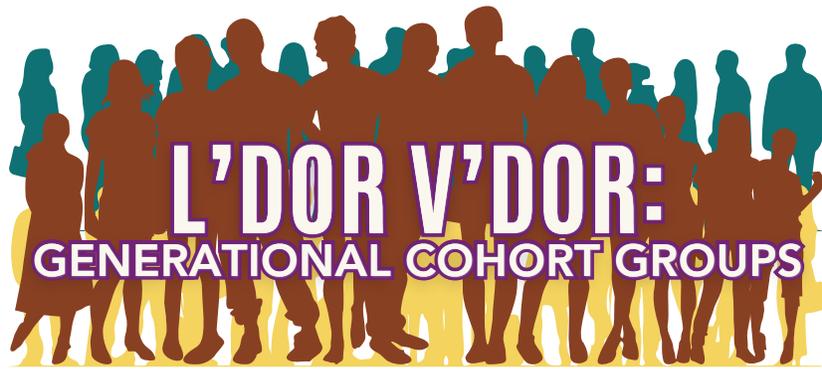
Robi Damelin (standing) and Mohamed Abu Jafar (sitting) at the Israel Committee panel discussion with the Parents Circle - Families Forum in October; LilyFish Gomberg.



Three members of the Israel Symphony Orchestra, Rishon LeZion — Yana Mering, Doron Alperin, and Eyal Heiman — on our Bimah following their concert in October; Sahar Oz.



Israeli Dancing in the Social Hall led by instructor Tanya Buchman, presented by the Israel Connections Subcommittee in November; LilyFish Gomberg.



YOUNG FAMILIES GROUP

By Micah and Joanna Hart

What an incredible start to the new year it's been! Our Young Families Shabbat gatherings have been filled with joy, music, and community — a truly wonderful way to come together in celebration and prayer for peace, love, and healing. We've loved seeing so many familiar faces (and meeting new ones, too!) as friends joined in song and spirit to welcome 5786, Shabbat, and other Jewish holidays we have encountered. We've had amazing turnout — **over 200 people at each of our High Holiday family services** (co-led by Micah and our Director of Youth and Family Education, Karen Hafter), and nearly **100 or more** at each of our Friday night gatherings, with wonderful crowds on Saturdays!

As we head into the winter months, we hope you'll keep the warmth going by joining us for upcoming Shabbat celebrations on Fridays and Saturdays. **There's nothing better than welcoming Shabbat together, with laughter, song, and community!** If you have any song or prayer suggestions, or would like to share feedback, please reach out to us anytime at youngfamilies@societyhillssynagogue.org.

Fridays:

- Friday, December 5 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, January 16 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, February 20 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, March 20 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, April 24 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, May 15 @ 5:45 pm
- Friday, June 5 @ 5:45 pm



Saturdays:

- Saturday, January 10 @ 11:15 am
- Saturday, April 11 @ 11:15 am
- Saturday, May 30 @ 11:15 am

You can RSVP for our upcoming Shabbat gatherings via the quick and easy form on our webpage: societyhillssynagogue.org/young-families-group

YOUNG FRIENDS (20- AND 30-SOMETHINGS)

By Alexis Rosen and Louis Polcin



We want to thank everyone who helped make the autumn season so warm and full of connection. From our **Sukkot Happy Hour with Tribe 12** to November's **Young Friends*Giving Back Potluck Dinner** to catching up with familiar faces and welcoming new ones at our **Young Friends Tables at Shabbat Meals**, your presence has made each gathering meaningful. And we're excited for a wonderful winter!

On **December 21 at 1:00 pm**, **Go doNUTS for Hanukkah** with us at **Federal Donuts** at 1909 Sansom Street! It's the perfect chance to take a break from the holiday hustle and enjoy a treat with friends. Savor delicious donuts, hot coffee, and friendly conversation. *Pay your own way.*

On **January 9**, we return to the shul for a **Young Friends Table at TGIShabbat**. We'll start with wine and cheese at 5:30 pm, share a TGIShabbat service at 6:00 pm, and sit down for a festive Oneg dinner at 7:15 pm. A joyful, music-filled evening awaits. *Free to attend.*

Our winter **Brews & Schmooze** will be at **Yards Brewing Co.** (500 Spring Garden Street) on **January 22 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm**. Unwind midweek in this easygoing space for conversation and community. *Pay your own way.*

On **February 7**, we'll gather at the synagogue for Shabbat morning services and a **Young Friends Table at Kiddush lunch**. Services begin at 9:45 am,

followed by a delicious Kiddush lunch. Expect a friendly, relaxed morning with plenty of time to talk, reflect, and enjoy community. *Free to attend.*

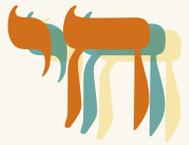
Later that month, on **February 18**, we'll meet up at **Queen & Rook Board Game Cafe** (123 South Street), starting at **6:30 pm**. Come play, laugh, and make new connections. *There is a \$7.00 entry fee per person for up to 2.5 hours of games; food and drinks, pay your own way.*

We're excited for a warm and joyful winter together!

Visit our webpage for full details and registration links for these events and more: societyhillssynagogue.org/young-friends



Photos from our Sukkot Happy Hour with Tribe12 this past October; LilyFish Gomberg.



TRIPLE CHAI (AGES 54+)

By Robin Cohen and Natalie Landro

Triple Chai continues to bring our 54+ community together through art, travel, and shared celebration.

This fall, we enjoyed lunch and ***The Real Thing by Tom Stoppard at the Lantern Theater***, gathered for the High Holidays at our synagogue, and hosted an informational meeting for our upcoming trip, ***Hidden Gems of Italy: A Jewish Heritage Journey***, set for **April 12-24, 2026**. Building on the success of last year's Morocco trip, the Italy tour will explore centuries of Jewish life and culture in Northern Italy.

This winter brings more opportunities to learn and celebrate together.

The synagogue's annual intergenerational **Hanukkah Happening is on Sunday**,

December 14, from 10:00 am to noon; see page 11 for more.

In 2026, synagogue member **Jerry Silverman** will guide us as we delve into ***The Math of Jewish Mystery*** on **Sunday, January 11, at 11:00 am**. Over brunch, Jerry will explore the surprising connections between Judaism and mathematics — including the number Pi, tzitzit, and even Haman! Blending humor, insight, and audience participation, this 75-minute program will reveal the hidden numerical patterns that shape Jewish prayer, holidays, and tradition to this day.

On **Sunday, February 1, at 11:00 am**, we present ***The Jewish Cemeteries of Poland: Restoring Dignity, Preserving Heritage*** with guest speaker **Edward Janes**, a board member of Friends of Jewish Heritage in

Poland. Over brunch, Edward will share stories of the organization's ongoing efforts to preserve Jewish cemeteries throughout Poland — honoring ancestral memory, engaging local communities, and safeguarding the legacy of a once-thriving Jewish world.

In March, we'll move from spiritual strength to physical strength with ***Stand Up to Falls: Balance and Strength Class*** presented by **Triad Wellness**. The program begins with brunch at **11:00 am on Sunday, March 15**, followed by a guided class at **noon**. This accessible workshop will focus on balance, coordination, and flexibility to help participants stay active and confident. Movements can be modified for all fitness levels, and participants are encouraged to come as they are.

Visit our webpage for full details on these and other events: societyhillssynagogue.org/triple-chai



DECEMBER 2025 • JANUARY 2026 • FEBRUARY 2026 • • • KISLEV • TEVET • SHVAT • ADAR 5786

RABBI NATHAN KAMESAR AND CAROLINE KAMESAR TO BE HONORED BY TRIBE 12

Society Hill Synagogue is delighted to share that **Rabbi Nathan Kamesar and Caroline Kamesar** will be among this year's honorees at the **Tribe 12 Hanukkah Celebration**, taking place on **Monday, December 15, at 6:00 pm** at the **Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History** in Philadelphia.

Each year, Tribe 12 gathers community members for an evening of light, connection, and celebration, honoring individuals who exemplify the organization's mission of building bridges and strengthening Jewish life.

Caroline and Rabbi Kamesar are being recognized for their shared dedication to strengthening Jewish life in Philadelphia — from their leadership here at **Society Hill Synagogue** to their broader involvement in Jewish communal life. Caroline serves as **Executive Director of the Lasko Family Foundation**, where she brings together her background in Jewish nonprofit leadership and social work to support innovative and compassionate community initiatives. The Kamesars' commitment to building relationships, fostering



inclusivity, and modeling compassionate leadership continues to enrich our congregation and the wider Jewish community in Philadelphia.

The evening will also honor **Jason Holtzman**, Chief of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia, and **Miriam Steinberg-Egeth**, longtime Tribe 12 coach and Jewish community leader.

We hope many members of our Society Hill Synagogue community will join in celebrating this well-deserved honor and showing support for Tribe 12, whose programs help connect and empower Jewish adults in their 20s and 30s to build meaningful Jewish lives.

Guests will enjoy a festive night of latkes, drinks, and music.

Learn more, get tickets, and become a sponsor at tribe12.org/hanukkah2025, or email LilyFish Gomberg, lilyfish@societyhillsynagogue.org.

Tribe 12's Fourth Annual Hanukkah Celebration

honoring Jason Holtzman,
Caroline Kamesar, Rabbi Nathan Kamesar,
and Miriam Steinberg-Egeth

Monday, December 15
6:00 PM

The Weitzman
101 S Independence Mall E
Philadelphia, PA 19106



MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



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

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



MINDY AND BILL HAUPTMAN

We chose Society Hill Synagogue because we love its eclectic nature, the warmth and intelligence of its clergy, and the wonderful music. The mix of innovation and tradition fits so well with how we practice our Judaism. We love coming to shul because of the friends we've made, and we continue to meet wonderful new people at every event we attend. We always feel at home here.

ED HOLLIN

After I moved to Society Hill from the suburbs, I was looking for a conveniently located synagogue that would help me find a Jewish community connection. I was impressed by the Conservative liturgy, combined with an approach that welcomes diverse viewpoints and a comfortable atmosphere. I found the services I attended to be warm, inspiring, and filled with enthusiasm.



ISAAC HOHNS

I love that everyone is so welcoming and inclusive at Society Hill Synagogue. It forms a sense of friendship and community that I am proud to be a part of.

Isaac's Bar Mitzvah was on September 13.

LYN KIRSHENBAUM

I chose Society Hill Synagogue because of the friendliness of the congregants and Rabbi Winokur's warmth and sermons. I always felt welcomed, right from the beginning. Twice when I had surgery, the community stepped up in extraordinary ways. They cared for my children, brought meals for my family, and visited me in the hospital. I had never experienced this kind of support in any other city or with any other organization, and it showed me what it means to be in a true community.





MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



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MICHAEL HAFTER

I cannot describe how excited I am by the recent growth in the congregation. So many children! All the young people bring a new energy and vibe that I really enjoy. The fact that my daughter, Karen, is in the middle of it as the Director of Youth and Family Education just amps me up all the more.



ZEV PIPANO

I love the positivity at Society Hill Synagogue, and how helpful and supportive everyone has been as I prepare for my Bar Mitzvah this coming Saturday.

Zev's Bar Mitzvah was on November 1.

OWEN FOX

My family started coming to Society Hill Synagogue because it's right down the street — just a block away! Now I come because my friends are here, and it feels like a real community. Hebrew School is my favorite program — I get to see my friends, and I learn a lot.

Owen's Bar Mitzvah was on November 8.



SETH LAVER

We were initially attracted to Society Hill Synagogue due to location and convenience, but we were immediately drawn to its warmth. We were welcomed by friends, neighbors, and clergy in a relaxed and meaningful setting. We also especially love the natural light in our beautiful Sanctuary!



PLAYSCHOOL FAMILY FEATURES



As we begin Playschool enrollment season, we've been highlighting some of the fabulous families who make our community so vibrant. Here are the families who have been featured this past quarter.

You can learn more about them on our social media or at societyhillssynagogue.org/playschool/family-features

THE GENECOV FAMILY

We love to see how clearly loved and cared for our son is. He is excited to go to school every day, and he always leaves with the biggest smile on his face. Sometimes he doesn't want to leave! He loves wearing kippot, singing Shabbat Shalom, and making his friends laugh. It's a perfect environment for him to play and learn.

— Max Genecov (Zev's Dad)



THE RUBIN FAMILY

We chose Playschool because we wanted our daughter to be a part of a warm, nurturing community. Andie loves playing with her friends and zooming around the social hall on the toddler bike!

— Lizzie Rubin (Andie's Mom)

THE REGNI FAMILY

We love seeing how happy Stella is walking in and out of school each day. Everyone who works at Playschool greets her by name and has a smile on their face every day! Stella especially looks forward to the Shabbat songs every Friday, and all the different art projects they create. Her teachers are very communicative and have always made her feel welcome, from the very first day.

— Rachel Regni (Stella's Mom)



THE CLAMAGE ARNOLD FAMILY

We love the warm relationships Levon has built with the entire staff — not just his classroom teachers, but every adult in the building knows him by name and has a special bond with him. He's always talking about Miss Megan and Mister Ken-YaYa! Levon is high energy, and Playschool gives him room to be himself. The teachers truly meet each child where they are and celebrate who they are.

— Emalie Clamage (Levon's Mom)

Rosh Hodesh Group

A FULL YEAR OF ROSH HODESH

by Rachel Howe

With our first full year of Rosh Hodesh gatherings behind us, this intergenerational group of women has really hit its stride.

About 30 of us gather monthly to discuss important issues about women and Judaism. Recent topics have included *tehines* (mostly Yiddish personal prayers, often written by and for women), preparing spiritually for Yom Kippur, and *niddah* (Jewish purity laws around menstruation and intimacy).

Each month, a volunteer leads us in learning and conversation on

a topic of their choosing, and we discuss how these sometimes esoteric traditions can relate to our lives as modern Jewish women. These discussions go deep, and people often share their histories, their feelings, and their hopes. Personally, these intimate moments have made me feel incredibly close to my fellow participants, even when we disagree.

We're excited for our upcoming topics around Hannukah, including a potluck party. We are also making connections to partner with the Young Friends

group and the BBYO youth group on new topics.

Rosh Hodesh, which celebrates the new moon and the Hebrew calendar month it ushers in, has historically had special significance for women. Our gatherings are open to all women — cisgender and transgender — as well as to non-binary and gender-expansive individuals who wish to be part of a space centering women's voices and experiences. All gatherings last an hour, rotating between Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings. **Check out societyhillssynagogue.org/rosh-hodesh-gatherings to see all upcoming dates and times, peruse past agendas, or RSVP for our next meeting.**

Men's Club

ADDING TO OUR COMMUNITY

by Bob Kaufman

The Men's Club organizes activities to bring men together for discussion and fellowship. Whether you've been active in the past or are brand new, we welcome your voice and presence. **We meet at the synagogue on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm, and we would love to see you there!**

Currently, our leadership consists of **Harry Oxman** (Chair) and **Bob Kaufman** (Secretary/Treasurer); let us know if you'd like to help out.

Our Autumn Meetings:

- In **September**, David Mink gave an engaging presentation about his family's history in the Philadelphia restaurant scene and how it illustrates Jewish immigration history.
- In **October**, we had a lively and wide-ranging discussion of potential future activities. We began a ritual for closing our meetings by sharing shots of whiskey and updating each other on our personal health and wellbeing.

- In **November**, we discussed the book, *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*, by David Brooks.

Upcoming dates:

- **December 18** (rescheduled to the third Thursday of the month due to the holidays)
- **January 22**
- **February 26**

These meetings' agendas are still being planned. We would love to have your input!

If you have any questions or ideas, or you want more information, email **Harry Oxman** and **Bob Kaufman** at mensclub@societyhillssynagogue.org.

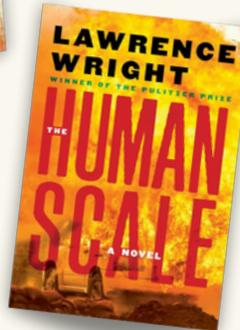
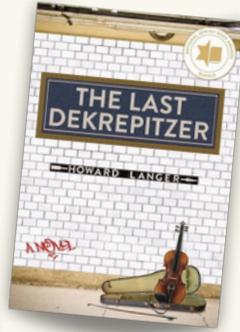
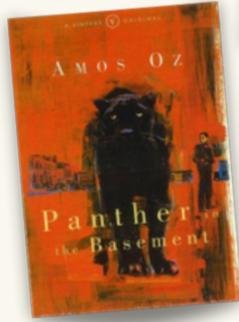
Book Club

BOOK CLUB WINTER PICKS

by Judith Axler

The Society Hill Synagogue Book Club will be in full swing over the cold winter months. We meet on the **second Friday of each month at 10:30 am**. Come join us for tea, cookies, and interesting discussions about books with Jewish themes from around the globe.

On **December 12**, we'll meet to discuss ***The Panther in the Basement*** by renowned Israeli author **Amos Oz**. The year is 1947: the last days of the British mandate in Palestine. Twelve-year-old Proffy dreams of dying heroically in battle, fighting for the creation of a Jewish state. But things get complicated.



January 9 will find us discussing ***The Last Dekrepitzer*** by **Howard Langer**. This novel imagines what would happen if the last remaining survivor of a Hasidic sect found his way to the pre-Civil Rights American South and took on a new identity as a blues musician. We are thrilled that **Howard Langer**, the author of our January book, will be joining us for this discussion!

And on **February 13**, we'll discuss ***The Human Scale***, by **Lawrence Wright**. In this sweeping, timely thriller, a Palestinian American FBI agent teams up with a hardline Israeli cop to solve the murder of the Israeli police chief in Gaza.

Take the Next Step in Your Planning

SUSTAIN JEWISH LIFE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

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

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

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



The Inclusion Corner
OHEL PATU'AH – THE OPEN TENT
 by the Inclusion Committee

JDAIM
FEBRUARY
 Jewish Disability Awareness,
 Acceptance & Inclusion Month



The new secular year is upon us, and we are in the midst of planning programs and events to learn together, explore opportunities, and engage in actions that enhance the breadth and depth of inclusion experienced at Society Hill Synagogue.

Our committee members continue to be available for consultation on individual needs, and we look forward to opportunities to serve as a resource and to participate in the Strategic Planning process that our synagogue is undertaking. We welcome suggestions of issues to address.

A Jewish Learning Venture opportunity:
 We are proud to announce Society Hill Synagogue's participation in a yearlong program with the **Jewish Disability Inclusion Consortium of Greater Philadelphia**. Our congregation is interested in expanding the support we are able to offer to individuals with disabilities. With this goal in mind, participating in the consortium will enable us to:

- learn from and connect with local direct-service providers and national organizations focused on disability access work, and
- consult with an advisory council of local professional experts to assess unique needs and identify specific communal projects.

In Other News:

We are pleased to share that since learning about Temple University's **TechOWL** during our Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) 2025 event, Society Hill Synagogue members have utilized TechOWL's services to donate and receive needed adaptive equipment. Contact TechOWL at techowlpa.org or 800-204-7428.

Subcommittee Chairpeople:

- Interfaith Inclusion:**
Gail Massey
- Inclusion of People of Color:**
Jared Susco
- LGBTQIA+ Inclusion:**
Marty Rosenberg
- Disability Inclusion:**
Amy Goldman

Save the Dates:

Society Hill Synagogue will celebrate February as JDAIM with a program from our Disability Inclusion Subcommittee on **February 13** following the TGIShabbat service. Stay tuned for details.

The Subcommittee for the Inclusion of People of Color will host a Lunch 'n' Learn following Shabbat services on **March 7** with a screening of **Rabbi Sandra Lawson's** sermon, titled **Reflections on Authentic Identities**. Rabbi Sandra Lawson is queer, Black, and a Jew by choice, and also an expert in the work of inclusion, and we will discuss together how we can apply her lessons in our community.



Rabbi Sandra Lawson giving her sermon, Reflections on Authentic Identities, as available on Youtube. We will discuss this sermon on March 7.

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

Social Action Committee

REPAIRING OUR WORLD THROUGH ACTION



by Steve Morley

Society Hill Synagogue continues our efforts to repair the world — or, to paraphrase Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, we “pray with our feet,” as well as with our hands, voices, phones, and computers.

Immigration and Citizenship

Immigration continues to dominate the news, from ICE raids to changes that make the citizenship exam more challenging. On **Friday, January 9, and Saturday, January 10**, Society Hill Synagogue will host a special Shabbat dedicated to exploring these issues — an opportunity to learn and to find outlets for meaningful action.

We’ll bring together several immigration-focused nonprofits to share stories of their clients’ struggles and to highlight the concrete ways our community can help. One of these groups, **Esperanza**, is currently seeking volunteers to help prepare clients for the citizenship test. You can make a difference by helping immigrants to become citizens! Contact **Steve Morley** to get involved at socialaction@societyhillsynagogue.org.



Education and Literacy

Our 20-year partnership with **Vare-Washington Elementary School** continues to thrive, with the library program now primarily maintained by parents at the school. Society Hill Synagogue’s early commitment helped launch this library, proving that small steps taken by many volunteers over time can make a profound difference in students’ lives.



Building on that success, we have also partnered with **Taggart Elementary School** (at 4th and Porter Streets) to help develop their new library program. Hats off to **Flora Wolf** for leading this effort! We need additional volunteers to help expand access so that more classrooms can visit regularly. If you’re interested, please email **Flora** at varewashington@societyhillsynagogue.org.

In addition, **BookSmiles** — a nonprofit committed to getting books into the hands of children across the Delaware Valley — is seeking volunteers to help sort

books at their Pennsauken facility (just a quick hop over the bridge!). You can learn more at booksmiles.org.

Winter Clothing Drive

This fall, Society Hill Synagogue once again supported students at **Vare-Washington Elementary School** through our annual **Winter Clothing and Gift Card Drive**. Congregants contributed new and gently used winter

outerwear for children, along with funds to provide families with gift cards for essential needs. Thank you to **Joan Roller** for organizing this endeavor, and to everyone helping to keep our neighbors warm this winter.

Continuing Our Commitment to Justice

Elsewhere in this issue, you’ll find updates on our **Food Insecurity Initiative** (page 25) and the education justice work of **POWER Interfaith** (page 26).

Together, we continue to repair our world through action.

Email Social Action Committee Chair, Steve Morley, with questions: socialaction@societyhillsynagogue.org

Food Insecurity Initiative

HELPING TO FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY

by Bob Kaufman and Laurie Krivo

Society Hill Synagogue members continue to help feed our neighbors. Your enthusiasm for this work — in collaboration with Old Pine Community Center — allows us to provide:

- **100 bags of groceries** with fresh and non-perishable food each week to households in the Courtyard Apartments, along with sandwiches that we prepare, and
- **40-50 bags of groceries** for Vare-Washington Elementary School families once a month.

To ensure the continued flow of this food, especially fresh food, to our neighbors, please consider donating to our Food Insecurity Fund by visiting societyhillssynagogue.org/donate and typing “Food Insecurity Fund” in the notes.

This work in South Philly is not enough. The recent SNAP (Food Stamps) crisis highlights how many families in Philadelphia and across the country are hungry or close to having very limited access to food. Many organizations in Philadelphia can use your help.

Consider learning about and volunteering with one or more of these nonprofits:

- **Old Pine Community Center** — ongoing food collection; look for items requested each month in the Society Hill Synagogue eNews and on the OPCC webpage.
- **Philabundance** — distributes food to many partners throughout Philadelphia.
- **Jewish Relief Agency** — offers opportunities to donate, pack, and deliver food.

- **Mitzvah Food Program** — offers a range of services for which you can volunteer or make donations.
- **Share Food Program** — volunteer or donate food.
- **Queen Village Neighbors Association** — do you reside in Queen Village? Watch for announcements in the QVNA newsletter about urgent needs, e.g., collections of fresh food for SNAP families in the Courtyard community.
- **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** — interested in food policy actions? This Jewish organization is dedicated to this work.

If you have questions, please reach out to **Bob Kaufman** and **Laurie Krivo** at [foodinsecurity@societyhillssynagogue.org](https://societyhillssynagogue.org).



EDUCATION JUSTICE FOR ALL OF PA'S CHILDREN

by Wendy Greenspan, Steve Greenspan, and Nancy Wygant, on behalf of the POWER Interfaith Education Justice Team

POWER Interfaith has been working diligently for over 10 years to ensure **adequate and equitable education funding without racial bias** for Pennsylvania's public school children.

We considered it a win when the Commonwealth Court ruled in February 2023 that Pennsylvania's system of funding public schools was unconstitutional and must be reformed. It was determined that an additional \$5 billion was needed in the budget to meet adequacy.

Status of Budget:

For the 2024-2025 school year, \$500 million in additional funds were added to the budget with the expectation that each year for the next nine years, the Pennsylvania budget would be incrementally increased until the \$5 billion adequacy target was met, finally eliminating the state's racial and class funding bias. Governor Shapiro proposed a budget for the 2025-2026 school year that would make the second installment toward adequacy. With bipartisan support, the House passed a compromise budget cutting over \$1 billion from the proposed budget, which would cause modest cuts across the



board. On October 21, the Senate gutted that bill and replaced it with a budget that would cut an additional \$2.5 billion, totally wiping out any increase in education funding. This received only Republican support. At the time of this writing, there was still a state budget impasse, and schools needed to borrow money to make ends meet, incurring millions of dollars in wasted fees.

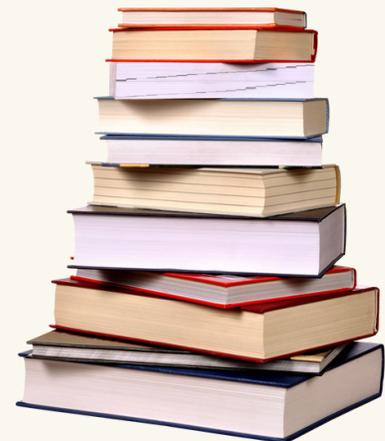
POWER's Actions:

This past spring, the POWER State Education Justice Team held town halls pulling together over 700 people in Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks, and Chester Counties, the Lehigh Valley, Lancaster, and Pottstown to meet with state legislators to tell them we need adequate and equitable funding. Throughout the summer, people from these town halls and POWER congregations called their legislators every Friday with a message to fund our public schools. The Education Justice Team conducted a phone bank in September to encourage constituents of Senator Scott

Martin of Lancaster, Majority Appropriations Committee Chair, to attend an action at his office to urge him to end the budget standoff and approve a moral budget. POWER continues to encourage its congregations to conduct one-on-one meetings to connect people and organize them toward advocating for their self-interests. Moving forward, you will be seeing actions from POWER Interfaith that target the way revenue is raised to pay for vital state services.

How to Help:

Contact Wendy, Steve, and Nancy, Society Hill Synagogue's representatives to POWER Interfaith, to get more involved at power@societyhillsynagogue.org, and they will connect you with **Beth Logue** and **John Barnett** from the POWER Interfaith State Education Justice Team.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Welcome New Members:

Andi Lee
Rachel Lee-Nigsch and her children, Levi and Kinsey
Niva Agmon
Dan and Heather Sobol and their daughter, Addison
Julie Cohen and Andrew Carroll and their daughter, Ruby
Jane and Ron Kotler
Sally and Adam Stiefel and their sons, Zachary and Oliver
Deborah Seligsohn
John and Lauren Sacks and their son, Sam
Mark and Terri Steinberg
Naomi Greenberg and Alex Leed and their sons, Theo and Miles
Tal and Tara Singer and their children, Tali, Ori, and Shiri
Marjorie Cobin
Sandy and Joseph Berger
Neila Douglas
Alex Levy and Nathan Bennett
Annie Zhu
Charles Danan and Taylor Boelkes and their son, George
Diane Graff
Dylan Carson
Bernie Gelman and Anne Elkins
Daniel and Carol Fisher
Jane Joseph
Matthew Lee and Tzvia Pinkhasov



Mazal Tov to:

Yann Lebar and Emma Korein-Lebar on their wedding
Laurie Krivo and Bob Kaufman on the birth of their grandson, Ezra Shai Krivo-Geselowitz
Mindy and Bill Hauptman on the birth of their first grandchild, Sadie Isabelle Hauptman
Matt Cohen and Erika Pleskunas on their wedding
Robin and Ron Feinberg on the birth of their granddaughter, Nora Eloise Feinberg
Holden and Felise Nagelberg on the wedding of their daughter, Marin Nagelberg, and Noah Goldstein
Neil Cohen and Debbie Weissbach on the birth of their first grandchild, Gabriel Rustin Cohen-Alexander
Hannah Rosenberg and Bryce Loebel and their daughter, Sivan, on the birth of their son and brother, Ronen Maurice Rosenberg Loebel
Colin Kelso and Rivka Yankelewitz on their wedding



Condolences to:

Brad and Carly Gellman and their sons, Ezra and Hayden, and their entire family on the passing of Brad's father, Irwin ("Irv") Gellman

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December Birthdays

Tobin Ratliff
 Noah Schindler
 Anne Weiss
 David Allon
 Sarah Buse-Morley
 Julia Elbaum
 Robert Greenstein
 Olly Marchant
 Holly Gorsen
 Terri Steinberg
 Fern Tablin
 Matthew Weaver
 Stephanie Weiss
 Joel Chernock
 Ezra Edelman
 Evelyn Eisenstadt
 Susan Rodgin
 Myron Bloom
 Christopher D'Amore
 Ariana Eizen
 Ben Honig
 Louis Schwartz
 Myra Silverstein
 Elaine Ezrapour
 Laura Gessman
 Joanna Hart
 Wendy Greenspan
 Blair Goldstein
 Audrey Lowe
 Julia Riskowitz
 Leah Popowich
 Isabella Segalovich
 Michael Yasner
 Max Ladenson
 Phoebe Ladenson
 Richard Mintz
 Robin Schatz
 Zachary Winkler
 Aviva Zimmerman
 Steven Eizen
 Ami Fisher

Judy Lalli
 Barry Slosberg
 Ned Wolf Weiss
 Oren Pipano
 Samantha Nadel
 Aaron Wolson
 Margot Oxman
 Barbara Spector
 Steve Gendler
 Josh Goldwert
 Geoff Kelly
 Thomas Kline
 Richard Gelman
 Cindy Hoffman
 Jodi Kefer
 Lily Seldin
 Addison Sobol
 Nancy Weinfeld
 Carol Brugger
 Michael Eckstein
 Alexander Ehrlich
 Clara Landes
 David Paskin
 Stanley Woloff
 David Lerner
 Ira Silverstein
 Alyssa Vaysman
 Mira Belinkie
 Rebecca Buse-Morley
 Mimi Hunter
 Miles Leed
 Todd Schoenhaus
 Paul Steinhardt
 Carl Kaplan
 Barbara Miller
 Jamie Cooperstein
 Jaime Fox
 Lindsay Saligman
 Eli Slepian
 Marilyn Appel
 Pamela Gershowitz
 Stanton Salkin
 Talia Bruton

Emily Zimmerman
 Zelda Belinkie
 Hazzan Jessi Roemer
 Rhonda Bello
 Leanne Bendetti

January Birthdays

Phyllis Denbo
 Dan Feinberg
 Sage Seltzer
 Jake Litwack
 Emalie Clamage
 Walter Ferst
 Michael Hafter
 Peter Piven
 Nathan Farbman
 Joan Greenstein
 James Rosenstein
 Justin Herrmann
 Alex Howe
 Sylva Baker
 Ed Hollin
 Sam Mink
 Mari Rubin
 Josh Wolson
 Stephanie Ben-Salem
 Nella Bloom
 Zackary Enish
 Karen Kaufman
 Shiri Singer
 Sophia Grode
 Jennifer Schwartz
 Max Goldberg
 Ezra Goldfinger
 Hava Goldfinger
 Rami Jaffe
 Sheri Gifford
 Judy Green
 Neal Sprafkin
 Shecharya Flatte
 Leslie Hafter
 Jared Eizen

MORE BIRTHDAYS

Emma Korein-Lebar
Hannah Zimmerman
Sam Feinberg
Yaeli Zhang
Elias Zaring
Jesse Abrams-Morley
Deborah Freedberg
Nadia Laver
Tyler McKinley
Merle Salkin
Opal Weinfeld
Charlie Foxx
Debbie Weissbach
Julian Barg
Jakob Peskin
Nancy Morgenstern
Anna Rosenzweig
Libby Lieberman
Chaya Ackelsberg
Willa Grosberg
Mark Dichter
Simon Weaver
Talia Mono
Jerry Silverman
Steve Morley
Ezra Susco-Stearns
Holman Massey
Diane Harrison
Allison Herrmann
Jonathan Grode

Elizabeth Sall
Anna Bruton
Michele Margolis
Xander Segal

February Birthdays

Pam Levine
Judy Rohtbart
Evan Chrismer
Nancy Goldenberg
Toby Hart
Mindy Hauptman
Ric Hayman
Carl Dranoff
Louis Marion
Sue Snedden
Yul Summers
Ira Rubinfeld
Stacey Cohen
Marc Goldenberg
Stephen Kastenberg
Marian Morano
Claire Dubin
Linda Joy Goldner
Debbie Jaffe
Aaron Davidson
Randi Glatzer
Donna Tartasky
Leah Shipper

Amelia Riskowitz
Andrew Carroll
Len Weinberg
Gail Massey
Charlotte Peskin
Harriet Davidson
Alexandra Polakoff
Milo Saltzman
Ilyse Kramer
Alice Levy
Henry Slutsky
Adam Ziegfeld
Elayne Bloom
Hannah Gross
Andrea Shipper
Alex Tablin-Wolf
Susan Kitei
Laurie Krivo
Nancy Lubars
Josh Sztul
Judi Deglin
Sebastian Gelman
Jenny Saltzman
Wilma Bass
Beth Seltzer
Danielle Gershowitz
Richard Katz
Alex Levy
Talia Vance
Elizabeth Fletman



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

December Anniversaries

Jerry Kranzel and Rian Berger
Dan Bogen and Erica Ginsburg
Josh Cooper and Jamie Cooperstein
Michal and Daniel Strunk
Sandy and Joseph Berger
Alex and Stefanie Seldin
Len Weinberg and Fran Gallun
Alan and Deborah Casnoff
Bill and Mindy Hauptman
Jonathan Weiss and Abigail Wolf
Mike Roe and Joy Lander Roe
Julie Cohen and Andrew Carroll
Nella Bloom and Andrew Seaberg
Sara Leshen-Gross and Dan Gross
John and Lauren Sacks



January Anniversaries

Emma and Thom Halpern
Daniel and Carol Fisher
Dan and Barbara Rottenberg
Carter and Lesli Reich
Jacob and Jaclyn Polakoff
Marc and Staci Schwartz
Richard and Roberta Katz
Barry and Joann Slosberg
Joel and Dana Rosner
Zac and Maddie Winkler
Billy and Kellen Boardman

February Anniversaries

Bill Goldberg and Tracey Weiss
David and Linda Paskin
Paula and Larry Ninerell
Stuart and Judi Deglin
Danielle Gershowitz and Darryl Hazelwood
Ron and Jane Kotler
Ben and Stacey Cohen
Andrew Hohns and Leah Popowich



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

General Fund

In Appreciation of

Open House Shabbat

Christine Pickup

High Holiday Services

Barbara & Richard Hirsh

Harvey & Babette Snyder

Alvin Gilens

Pamela Zimmerman

Sandy Foxx-Jones

Disability Inclusion Consortium

Karl Janowitz and Amy Goldman

Clergy, Staff, and Community during Bar Mitzvah of Evan Chrismer

The Chrismer Family

Society Hill Synagogue

Zev Einhorn

In Honor of

Birth of Steve & Wendy Greenspan's Granddaughter

Randi Kamine & Hop Sears

Birth of Ron & Robin Feinberg's Granddaughter

Nancy Pressman

Bar Mitzvah of Isaac Hohns

Mitchell Bach & Elayne Bloom

Deena Gerson

The Chrismer Family

Bar Mitzvah of Zev Pipano

The Pipano Family

Birth of Steve & Lisa Eizen's Grandson

Barbara Miller

Birth of Bob Kaufman & Laurie Krivo's Grandson

Francine Cohen

5786 Kallat Bereshit Susan Berman

Susan Beckerman

Mike Roe and His Dedication to Hebrew School

The Chrismer Family

Bat Mitzvah of Randi Kamine

The Chrismer Family

Birth of Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach's Grandson

Bob Blacksberg & Terry Novick

Len Weinberg & Fran Gallun

Eve Friedman

Natalie Landro

Jeffrey & Carol Leventhal

Mark Steinberger & Ann Lebowitz

Carole Rochester

Rosh Hodesh Women's Group

Rachel Oram

In Memory of

Aaron Woloff, Son of Stanley & Judith Woloff

Phil Falkowitz

Mitchell Bach & Elayne Bloom

Marilyn Deutsch

Barbara & Edgar Einhorn

The Chrismer Family

Evelyn Ruth Sachs

Stephen Davidson, Father of Michael Davidson

Mark Steinberger & Ann Lebowitz

Harry & Eleanor Oxman

Dennis & Ilene Brave

Monica & Barry Shapiro

Sabrina McCarthy

Linda & Marty Millison

Edward Tannebaum

The Chrismer Family

Phyllis Miller

Elaine Cohen, Mother of Beth Cohen

Terry Graboyes

Howard Sedran, Husband of Martha Levine

Marilyn Deutsch

Betta Kolansky

Peter Roemer, Father of Hazzan Jessi Roemer

The Chrismer Family

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Lillian Barr, Mother of Judy Wertheim

Judy Wertheim

Gerta Wertheim, Mother-in-Law of Judy Wertheim

Judy Wertheim

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Yahrzeit Remembrance of
Ilse Roller, Mother of Jerry Roller
Jerry & Joan Roller

Helene Rieder, Mother of Joan Roller
Jerry & Joan Roller

Charles Amster, Brother of Sid Amster
Sid Amster

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
In Honor of

Birth of Steve & Lisa Eizen's Grandson
Bob Kaufman & Laurie Krivo
Stanley & Judith Woloff

Rabbi Kamesar's Officiating of our Wedding
David Pressel & Jill Feldman

Rabbi Kamesar's Beautiful and Meaningful
Holiday Services
Barbara Miller

Rabbi Kamesar's Pastoral Care
Frank & Joan Goodman

5786 Kallat Bereshit Susan Berman
Barbara Spector

Fifth Wedding Anniversary of Reuben Treatman &
Sharon Fass
Ruth Isaac & Jack Treatman

Aliyah on Shabbat
Joseph Freedman

Rabbi Kamesar's Officiating the Wedding
Ceremony of Colin Kelso and Rivka Yankelewitz
Beth Cohen

In Memory of
Peter Roemer, Father of Hazzan Jessi Roemer
Stanley & Judith Woloff

Yahrzeit Remembrance of
Riva & Martin Auerbach, Parents of Jonathan
Auerbach
Jonathan Auerbach

Ruth Stark, Grandmother of Jonathan Auerbach
Jonathan Auerbach

Henrietta Levine, Mother-in-Law of Iris Levine
Iris Levine

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

Edward Blender, Brother of Burton Blender
Burton Blender & Libby Harwitz Blender

Ethel Blender, Mother of Burton Blender
Burton Blender & Libby Harwitz Blender

Esther Kaplan, Mother of Carl Kaplan
Carl Kaplan

Samuel D. Sablove, Father of Pelley Brown
Stephen & Pelley Brown

Rose Schultz, Grandmother of Pelley Brown
Stephen & Pelley Brown

Col. Milton Rosen, Father of Pelley Brown
Stephen & Pelley Brown

Hazzan's Discretionary Fund
In Appreciation of

Hazzan Jessi's Class on Shabbat Liturgy
Joseph Freedman

In Honor of
Aldo Friedman's Performance during the Kol
Nidrei Service
Rhona Friedman

Hazzan Jessi's Beautiful and Meaningful Holiday
Services
Barbara Miller

In Memory of
Peter Roemer, Father of Hazzan Jessi Roemer
Ruth Isaac & Jack Treatman

Yahrzeit Remembrance of
Samuel Nathaniel Michaels
Beverly Michaels

Education Scholarships and Programs
In Memory of

Stephen Davidson, Husband of Harriet Davidson
Dept. of Civil, Construction, and Environmental
Engineering at the University of Delaware

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Social Action Fund

Vare-Washington School Winter Coat Drive

Mark Dembert & Mary Fish

Judy Lalli

David Weinfeld & Marjorie Patterson

Mark Steinberger & Ann Lebowitz

Debra Stewart

Barbara Spector

Harry & Eleanor Oxman

Phyllis Denbo

Carter & Lesli Reich

Ric & Carmen Hayman

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

S. Harvey Janowitz, Father of Karl Janowitz

Karl Janowitz & Amy Goldman

Food Insecurity Fund

In Honor of

Birth of Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach's

Grandson

Carter & Lesli Reich

The Dedication of the Food Insecurity Committee

Stew & Susan Fisher

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Al & Joan Fries, Parents of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Sylvia Wartell, Grandmother of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Janie Fries, Grandmother of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Herman Jacob Fries, Grandfather of Lesli Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Anita Reich, Mother of Carter Reich

Carter & Lesli Reich

Oneg and Kiddush Fund

In Honor of

Torah Honors at Shabbat Services

Joseph Freedman

Aliyah on Sukkot

Joseph Freedman

Carrying the Torah on Rosh Hashanah

Joseph Freedman

Aliyah on Shabbat

Joseph Freedman

Holden & Felise Nagelberg on the wedding of their daughter, Marin Nagelberg, and Noah Goldstein

David & Pam Levine

Bringing a Friend to Open House Shabbat

Marilyn Deutsch

Birth of Steve & Wendy Greenspan's Granddaughter

Ric & Carmen Hayman

David & Pam Levine

5786 Kallat Bereshit Susan Berman

Ric & Carmen Hayman

5786 Hatan Torah Michael Hafter

Ric & Carmen Hayman

Birth of Bill & Mindy Hauptman's Granddaughter

David & Pam Levine

Birth of Ron & Robin Feinberg's Granddaughter

David & Pam Levine

Birth of Bob Kaufman & Laurie Krivo's Grandson

David & Pam Levine

Birth of Neil Cohen & Debbie Weissbach's Grandson

David & Pam Levine

Barbara Spector

Ric & Carmen Hayman

In Memory of

Aaron Woloff, Son of Stanley & Judith Woloff

Ruth Isaac & Jack Treatman

Howard Sedran, Husband of Martha Levine

Ruth Isaac & Jack Treatman

Yahrzeit Remembrance of

Morton Levine, Father of David Levine

David & Pam Levine

H. David Kaplan, Uncle of Pam Levine

David & Pam Levine

OUR COMMUNITY IN PHOTOS



WINTER 2025-2026 CALENDAR

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

WINTER CALENDAR KEY:

-  = Book Club
-  = B'nei Mitzvah
-  = Rosh Hodesh
-  = Men's Club
-  = Building Closed
-  = Young Families
-  = Other Synagogue Events

Synagogue Events:

- Dec. 6** — Bar Mitzvah of Ezra Edelman
- Dec. 13** — Bar Mitzvah of Eli Howe
- Dec. 14** — Hanukkah Happening
- Dec. 21** — Young Friends (20s-30s): Go doNUTS for Hanukkah!
- Dec. 24-25** — Building Closed
- Dec. 26** — No TGIShabbat; Zoom Candle Lighting
- Dec. 27** — Shabbat Service is Zoom-Only
- Dec. 31-Jan. 1** — Building Closed
- Jan 9-10** — Shabbat Learning: Immigration Panel
- Jan 11** — Triple Chai (54+): *The Math of Jewish Mystery* with Jerry Silverman
- Jan. 22** — Young Friends: Brews & Schmooze
- Jan. 24** — B'nei Mitzvah of Hava and Ezra Goldfinger
- Jan. 30** — TGIShabbat featuring Kitah Zayin
- Jan. 31** — Bat Mitzvah of Yaeli Zhang
- Feb. 1** — Triple Chai (54+): *The Jewish Cemeteries of Poland: Restoring Dignity, Preserving Heritage* with Edward Janes
- Feb. 7** — Bar Mitzvah of Toby Hart
- Feb. 13** — JDAIM Dinner 'n' Discussion
- Feb. 18** — Young Friends: Board Game Night
- Feb. 20-21** — Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat with Rabbi Michael Cohen
- Feb. 28** — Bat Mitzvah of Talia Vance
- Mar. 1** — Purim Carnival
- Mar. 2** — Purim Dinner, Hamantaschen Bake-off, Scotch Tasting, and Rock Purimspiel
- Mar. 3** — "Traditional" Megillah Reading

This calendar is subject to change.

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

**SOCIETY HILL
SYNAGOGUE**

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Philadelphia, PA 19106

215.922.6590

www.societyhillsynagogue.org

Lisa Eizen, President

Rabbi Nathan Kamesar

Rabbi Avi Winokur, Rabbi Emeritus

Hazzan Jessi Roemer

Sahar Oz, Executive Director

LilyFish Gomberg, Communications Manager



Mail To: