

# 2019 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



**The Jewish Community Relations Council of Westchester since 1975**



**The Westchester Jewish Council connects, convenes and helps to safeguard Westchester's Jewish communities. We strengthen relationships among Jewish organizations and other ethnic and faith based groups, Israel, elected officials, and the community at large.**



# HERE WHEN YOU NEED US...

*The Westchester Jewish Council is a dynamic organization serving the community by serving as a community connector and convener in good times and challenging times. By providing volunteer and professional resources, we help to foster connections and communication within the Jewish community, to Israel, to our elected officials and to other faith based and ethnic groups*

*This past year has been unlike any other. Here are some of the highlights:*

## WHAT WE DO

### COVID-19 Response

When COVID-19 hit our area in early March, we hit the ground running in convening and connecting our Jewish community. We initiated daily contact with our State and County elected officials and our 130 member organizations so that we could share information as we received it. It has been a collaborative time in this community, with many interesting and creative events taking place as a result. The Council has hosted and co-hosted a wide variety of webinars ranging from community updates by elected officials to Israeli cooking demonstrations and more.



Recognizing the great impact and sadness so many in our community have experienced, in June we partnered with the Westchester Board of Rabbis, Kol Hazzanim-the Westchester Community of Cantors, UJA and Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) to bring the community together for a Community Memorial Service. This program, "Walking in the Shadow: Healing Together as a Greater Westchester Jewish Community" included prayer, song and the reading of names of those who we lost to COVID-19.



### Anti-Semitism

In Fall of 2019, The Council worked closely with the **Westchester County Executive's Office** and the **Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center** to organize an interfaith prayer vigil in the Garden of Remembrance in downtown White Plains. This was in response to acts of anti-Semitism at the Garden prior to Yom Kippur.

In January 2020, UJA, JCRC of NY and other partners sponsored a **"Solidarity March Against Anti-Semitism 2020"**. So many Westchester Jewish Council member organizations came out in strong support of the march held in NYC.

In addition, along with UJA, we held a major presentation on the rise of anti-Semitism here and abroad titled **"Anti-Semitism: What We Face and How We Fight It"** with a wide range of guest speakers.

In May, Westchester County District Attorney Anthony A. Scarpino, Jr., along with members of the Investigations Division and the Westchester Intelligence Center's office, attended our Zoom meeting to discuss their plan to investigate the anti-Semitic cases of zoom-bombing that had occurred in Westchester.



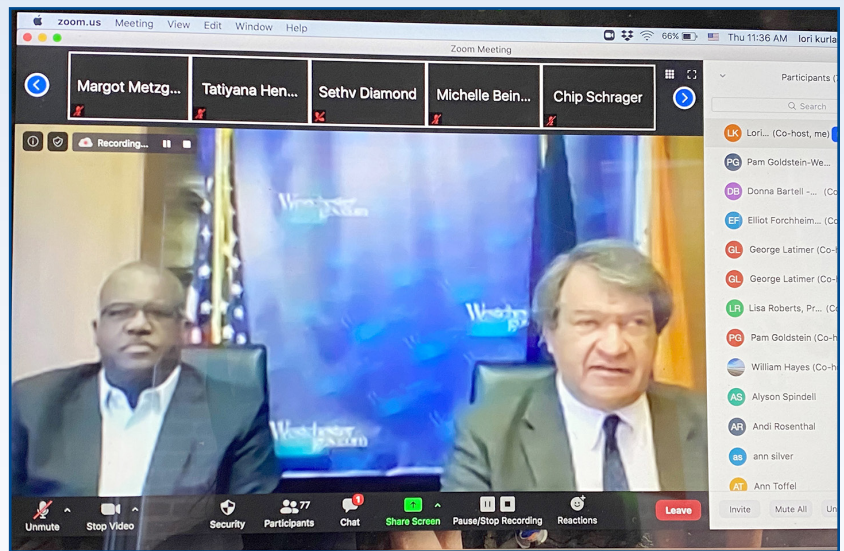
# YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW.

## **Community Connection, Connect-ory and Digital Media**

Our weekly e-newsletter, Community Connection, is distributed to over 8,000 households across greater Westchester and beyond. Each issue focuses on community events, relevant news stories and links to various resources in the community. The *Connect-ory*, the Westchester Jewish Council Membership Directory, is a comprehensive source of contact information for all synagogues and Council member organizations, business supporters and elected officials. The next edition will be published in late 2021. This information is also updated on the Council website, [www.wjcouncil.org](http://www.wjcouncil.org). The Council's website, which was redesigned this past year, provides a constant source of community news and resources and houses the Jewish community calendar which lists multiple events hosted by our member organizations. In addition, the Council Facebook page, Council Instagram and Council Twitter reach over a thousand members.

## **Government Relations**

With decades of experience, the Council is a trusted liaison to Westchester's elected and public officials resulting in the county government utilizing the Council's resources to communicate with the Jewish community. With many newly elected county officials in office this year, the Council will host several events to develop these new relationships. In February, UJA and the Council held a Government Relations Briefing with Honorable Benjamin Boykin, Chairman of the Board of Legislators. In April, we partnered with UJA to have US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand join us to discuss the CARES Act among other current hot topics. In May, the Council sponsored a series of events around the annual Jewish History and Heritage Month celebration including a community conversation with Westchester County Executive, George Latimer.



## **Interfaith and Intergroup Relations**

This initiative creates and strengthens understanding, respect and unity among different faith and ethnic communities. To foster this, the Council is involved in various programs including serving as a key partner with AJC Westchester/Fairfield and others for the annual Westchester Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast; facilitating the Interfaith/Intergroup Roundtable; and continuing to be a supportive organization for our interfaith friends and leaders in the community.

## **Roundtables**

Roundtables, where lay and professional leaders gather to build bonds and share best practices on a variety of topics and issues, remain the signature Council initiative. This year, the Council organized over 30 Roundtables including security, synagogue lay and professional leadership, clergy, marketing professionals and volunteers, Israel activists, interfaith/intergroup volunteers, Mosaic of Westchester (a group which enriches our Jewish community through LGBTQ inclusion), youth professionals and volunteers and more.

# CULTIVATING AND HONORING LEADERS

## Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Awards Ceremony

This year's ceremony was held virtually on June 4, 2020. 22 extraordinary community volunteers from various Council member organizations were honored. Council board members gave inspiring presentations about each individual. In honor of the Silver Anniversary of this ceremony, our Honorary Board Member Donald J. Fleishaker, was given special recognition for his receipt of this award in its inaugural year.

## The Hon. Samuel G. Fredman Leadership Development Institute (LDI)



This biennial program brings together emerging volunteer leaders from various member synagogues and organizations with a goal of developing future leaders. It provides access to established leaders who present on a range of topics and it creates a network of peers who can exchange ideas about common issues. This year's cohort included 23 participants who began their training in October 2019. The participants met monthly to learn about a variety of leadership

topics including: "Who are today's Jews in Westchester," "Care and nurturing of volunteers," "Leadership resources you didn't know you had" and more. The Institute was recently named in memory of the 3rd president of the Westchester Jewish Council, the late Hon. Samuel G. Fredman.

## Security

The Council, as the Westchester Jewish community's first responder, facilitates communications and the sharing of best practices of security among member organizations and government offices such as the Westchester Intelligence Center and the Department of Homeland Security. We have an "Emergency Communication System" which allows us to instantly communicate vital information to hundreds of trained Westchester Jewish professionals and volunteer leaders from our member organizations. In early 2020, the Council was honored to partner with the JCRC of NY on a new UJA funded security project (CSI-Community Security Initiative) which included the addition of a dedicated Westchester security professional, William Hayes, who is a new key resource and partner in securing Jewish Westchester.



## OFFICERS 2020-2021



Lisa  
Roberts  
**President**



Betsy  
Bernstein  
**Vice President**



Jeff  
Kohn  
**Vice President**



Jessica  
Morgenthal  
**Vice President**



Marc  
Klee  
**Treasurer**



Michael  
Karnes  
**Associate Treasurer**



Elizabeth  
Lampert  
**Secretary**



Steven L.  
Young  
**Associate Secretary**



# CONNECTING TO ISRAEL

Supporting and deepening ties to Israel remains core to the mission of the Council. Whether via workshops, community lectures or roundtables, these events bring together community members who are Israel activists and those who are interested in building relationships, discussing programming and any other matters related to Israel.

## Celebrate Israel Parade

Each year the Westchester Jewish Council coordinates with our Westchester schools, synagogues, organizations and the Celebrate Israel Day Parade planners to organize the Westchester cluster to march in the parade. This year, due to the circumstances related to COVID-19, the parade was held virtually on June 21, 2020.

## Israel Honor Night

This annual event gave attendees the opportunity to hear stories from two IDF heroes who led and survived Israel's biggest attacks. Guest speakers were Major Elior Dor "Dubcheck" and Dror Zicherman. Special guests included Congressman Eliot Engel and NY State Assemblyman David Buchwald.



## Israel Roundtables

Throughout the year, we hold roundtables with a focus on Israel. In November, we had the privilege of hearing from Daniel Flesch, Senior Advisor to former UN Ambassador Daniel Danon. Nadav Shachmon, our community Shaliach, also presented two roundtables for us, one titled "The Lasting Impact of COVID-19 on Israel" and the other "Cooking with Nadav".

## Special Programming

We had the opportunity to host several zoom sessions related to Israel, including a "Lunch-n-Learn" via zoom with Mike Wagenheim, i24 News Reporter.

## Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'Atzmaut

**We joined together virtually to honor Israeli Soldiers on Yom HaZikaron. For Israel Independence Day (Yom Ha'Atzmaut),** we partnered with our member organization **FIDF (Friends of the Israel Defense Force)** for a worldwide celebration to commemorate Israel Independence Day.

## AT LARGE EXEC. COMM. MEMBERS



Arnold  
Linhardt



William H.  
Schrag



Debra Abrahams  
Weiner

## STAFF



Elliot  
Forchheimer



Pam  
Goldstein



Donna  
Bartell



Lori  
Kurlander



Helene  
Schonbrun



Margo  
Lampert

# BUILDING COMMUNITY



## Biennial Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration

This biennial event took place at Beth El Synagogue Center on Saturday evening, November 23, 2019. It was presented by the Westchester Board of Rabbis and the Council. With 31 Rabbis and hundreds of community members in attendance, the night served as a community connector through learning and celebration.

## Introduction to Judaism Course

We were honored to partner with the Westchester Board of Rabbis in offering an eight-part weekly series led by Rabbis throughout the region.

## Open House

In September 2019, we introduced the community to our new office space which we share with UJA, The Jewish Education Project, Dorot, Hillels of Westchester and The Jewish Agency for Israel.

## Yom Ha'Shoah/Holocaust Remembrance

This countywide remembrance program, presented in partnership with the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center, was held virtually on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 with over 400 people in attendance. The program began with the reading of the names of over 30 Holocaust Rescued Torahs in our community. Holocaust survivor Peter Somogyi, Westchester County Executive George Latimer, clergy, lay leaders and community members came together for this ceremony which turned out to be beautifully touching albeit the circumstances.

## Special Programming

The Jewish Visioning Committee of the Council welcomed **Dr. Steven Windmueller**, Professor Emeritus at HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, for a presentation on the present and future status of the Jewish community. He discussed how we are experiencing significant displacement, as well as an extraordinary opportunity and moment for Jewish learning and engagement.

## Westchester Jewish Leadership Reception

We held our 3rd annual Jewish Leadership Reception in September 2019. This event provided the opportunity for Council member organization leaders and Elected Officials to mingle with each other. We were honored to have Hon. George Latimer, Westchester County Executive, Tara Rosenblum, 25 time Emmy-winning News 12 Anchor/Reporter and Hon. Israel Nitzan, Deputy Consul General, Israel Consulate NY present to the attendees.

## Our Founders and Presidents

*We mourned the loss this year of one of the Council co-founders (and past presidents), Rabbi Amiel Wohl z"l. Rabbi Wohl's impact on the Council was far reaching.*

**Funding** –Funding for the Westchester Jewish Council comes from a variety of sources. 60% of our revenue comes from donations from individuals and foundations. Most of these donations are made in support of our sole fundraising event – our gala - held each winter. 20% comes from a generous grant from UJA. 15% percent comes from membership dues from our 130 member/partner organizations. 5% comes from programming. We thank you for your financial support which is so important to our mission. As an IRS recognized 501c3 corporation, all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Our History** – The Westchester Jewish Council, founded in 1975, has prospered under the visionary leadership of our past Presidents (in order of service): Rabbi Amiel Wohl (z"l), Clarice Pressner (z"l), Hon. Samuel G. Fredman (z"l), Hon. Sam Eisenberg (z"l), Samuel Stein (z"l), Saul Singer, Donald Landis (z"l), Lester J. Millman, Irwin S. Davison, Debra Abrahams Weiner, Ronald E. Burton, Paul Warhit and currently Lisa Roberts.

# WESTCHESTER JEWISH COUNCIL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Academy for Jewish Religion  
ACHI - American Communities Helping Israel  
AIPAC - American Israel Public Affairs Committee  
AJC Westchester/Fairfield  
Ameinu, Project Rozana  
American Friends of Magen David Adom  
American Friends of Soroka Medical Center  
American Zionist Movement (AZM)  
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)  
Areyvut  
BBYO Westchester Region  
Bet Am Shalom Synagogue  
Bet Torah  
Beth El Synagogue Center  
The Blue Card  
Bronx Jewish Community Council, Inc  
Camp Zeke  
Chabad Center for Jewish Life of the Rivertowns  
Chabad of Bedford  
Chabad Lubavitch of Larchmont and Mamaroneck  
Chavurat Tikvah  
Children's Jewish Education Group  
Community Alliance for Jewish-Affiliated  
Cemeteries (CAJAC)  
CSS - Community Security Service  
Community Synagogue of Rye  
Congregation Anshe Sholom  
Congregation B'nai Yisrael  
Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester  
Congregation Kneses Tifereth Israel (KTI)  
Congregation Kol Ami  
Congregation Shir Shalom  
of Westchester and Fairfield Counties  
Congregation Sons of Israel - Briarcliff  
Congregation Sons of Israel - Yonkers  
Congregation Sulam Yaakov  
DOROT  
First Hebrew Congregation  
Fleetwood Synagogue  
Friends of Israel Scouts - Tzofim  
Friends of the Israel Defense Forces  
Greenburgh Hebrew Center  
Hadar  
Hadassah - Westchester Region  
Hazon  
Hebrew Congregation of Somers  
Hebrew Free Burial Association  
Hebrew Free Loan Society  
Hebrew Institute of White Plains  
HIAS  
Hillels of Westchester  
Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center  
ImpactIsrael  
Israel Bonds (Development Corporation for Israel)  
Israel Policy Forum  
J Street  
JCCA  
The Jewish Board  
Jewish Broadcasting Services (JBS)  
Jewish Community Center of Harrison  
Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester  
Jewish Community Council of Mt. Vernon  
Jewish Deaf (and Hard-of-Hearing) Resource Center  
The Jewish Education Project  
Jewish National Fund of Westchester & Southern CT  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
Justice Brandeis Westchester Law Society  
Keren Or, Inc.  
Keshet  
Kol Hazzanim: Westchester Community of Cantors  
Kol Rinah, The Jewish Chorale of Westchester  
Larchmont Temple  
The Leffell School  
Lincoln Park Jewish Center  
Magen David Sephardic Synagogue  
Mishkan Ha'am  
MJHS Health System  
Mount Kisco Hebrew Congregation  
Moving Traditions  
New Israel Fund  
New Jewish Home - Sarah Neuman  
New Rochelle Jewish Coalition  
New York Medical College  
Northeast Jewish Center  
Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies  
Pelham Jewish Center  
PJ Library  
Plaza Jewish Community Chapel  
Pleasantville Community Synagogue  
Rabbi Max Maccoby Foundation  
RiverSpring Health Featuring the  
Hebrew Home at Riverdale  
Rosh Pinah Chavurah of the Rivertowns  
Sanctuary  
Scarsdale Synagogue - Temples - Tremont and Emanu-El  
Shaarei Tikvah  
Shalom Hartman Institute of North America  
Shames JCC on the Hudson  
Sinai Free Synagogue  
Students & Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism (SPACA)  
Sprout Westchester  
StandWithUs  
Stein Yeshiva of Lincoln Park  
Temple Beth Abraham  
Temple Beth Am  
Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester  
Temple Beth El - Danbury  
Temple Beth Shalom - Hastings  
Temple Beth Shalom - Mahopac  
Temple Israel Center of White Plains  
Temple Israel of New Rochelle  
Temple Israel of Northern Westchester  
Temple Shaaray Tefila of Westchester  
Temple Sholom  
Touro College of Dental Medicine  
at NY Medical College  
Tzahal Shalom of Northern Westchester  
UJA-Federation of NY/Westchester  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Hebrew of New Rochelle  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism - METNY  
Westchester Board of Rabbis  
Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism  
Westchester Day School  
Westchester Hebrew High School  
Westchester Jewish Center  
Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS)  
Westchester Klezmer Program  
Westchester Reform Temple  
Westchester/Fairfield Association of Temple Educators (WATE)  
Woodlands Community Temple  
The Workers Circle  
Yorktown Jewish Center  
Young Israel of Harrison  
Young Israel of New Rochelle  
Young Israel of Scarsdale  
Young Israel of White Plains

(as of December 2020)



# 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jeremy A. Abramson



Mona Abramson



David A. Alpert



Harold Aspis



Melissa Baer



Ellen Jancko-Baken



Michelle Beinhacker



Betty Berenson



Samuel E. Berger



Joyce Claar



Steve Cony



Lawrence Engle



David Eppinger



Karen Everett



Holly Rosen Fink



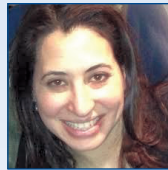
Karen Firestone



Jonathan Flaxer



Aaron Fleishaker



Michelle Gewanter



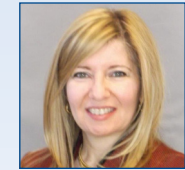
Lisa Ginsberg



Rabbi Howard Goldsmith



Michele Gregson



Bonnie Hagen



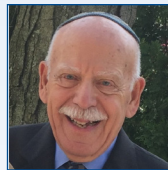
Cantor Robin Joseph



Jeffrey Kapelus



Arlene Kleinberg



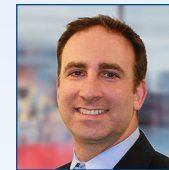
Stuart Kolbert



Betsy Landis



Marti Michael



Michael Mittelman



Mitchell Ostrove



Sue Pearson



Keith Reich



Dan Reingold



Marilyn Kneller-Rimsky



Julie Rockowitz



Hon. Martin Rogowsky



Michael Rosenblut



Karen Rosenfeld



Ellen Salant



Danny Schultz



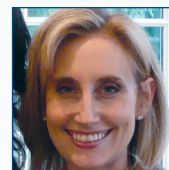
Stuart Skolnick



Jane Silverman



Lori Sloane



Jen Sokol



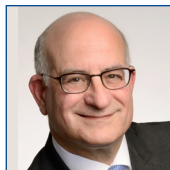
Sheila Spicehandler



Richard Spitz



Ann Tourk



Gary Trachten



Giselle Weissman



Bruce Wexler



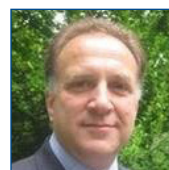
Jamie Schaefer-Wilson



Nancy Zaro



Harriett Zeller



Jack Zitomer

Westchester Jewish Council

925 Westchester Avenue Suite 200 | White Plains, NY 10604-3519

Phone 914.328.7001 | Email: [Info@wjcouncil.org](mailto:Info@wjcouncil.org) | [wjcouncil.org](http://wjcouncil.org)

