

WESTCHESTER JEWISH COUNCIL'S YEAR IN REVIEW 2021-2022



Westchester Jewish Council
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OUR ORGANIZATION

Since 1975, the Council has helped to connect, convene and safeguard our Jewish community and strengthen relationships among Jewish organizations, to Israel, to our elected officials, and to other ethnic and faith based groups.

Here are some highlights of the Council's work from the past year:

COMBATING ANTISEMITISM AND HATE

The Council co-hosted a "Combating Antisemitism" session about International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) with Mark Weitzman, COO of the World Restitution Organization which guided attendees about the international definition of antisemitism adopted by the United States and over 30 other countries. In partnership with Westchester County Government and Westchester County Human Rights Commission, we held a "Gather Against Hate" event in mid-June with several hundred attendees and which included speakers from all faiths and many elected officials.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION, CONNECT-ORY AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Our weekly e-newsletter, *Community Connection*, was distributed to nearly 8,000 households across Westchester and beyond. Each issue focused 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 latest edition was digitally published in the spring of 2022 and is available on the Council website, www.wjcouncil.org. The Council's website provided a constant source of community news and resources and housed the Jewish community calendar which listed multiple events hosted by our member organizations. In addition, the Council Facebook page, Council Instagram and Council Twitter reached over 1,500 individuals.

CONNECTING TO ISRAEL

Supporting and deepening ties to Israel remains core to the mission of the Council. Our Israel Affairs Committee continued to work with the community Shlichah, discussed Israel programming including the Israel Connection Series, the Israel Roundtable and participated in the Celebrate Israel Parade. These events brought together community members who are Israel activists and those who are interested in building relationships, discussing programming and any other matters related to Israel. Shachar Liran-Hanan became the new Senior Shlichah/Emissary to Westchester in fall 2021 and we worked closely with her to engage the community in Israel programming. In late May, we hosted an event with UJA Westchester and Young Israel of Scarsdale welcoming **Ambassador Asaf Zamir**, the new Israeli consul general in New York. We were thrilled to once again join together to celebrate the **Israel Parade in New York City** in late May since it had been virtual for a couple of years due to COVID.



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. Working with our elected officials we hosted several events including a joint "Update from Albany" program with UJA in which NY State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins presented to the community, and a virtual conversation with Hon. Catherine Borgia, Chairwoman, Westchester County Board of Legislators, District 9 and Hon. Nancy Barr, Vice Chairwoman, Westchester County of Legislators, District 6. In October 2021, the Council was honored to be a part of the signing ceremony with Hon. George Latimer of the **new Anti Discriminatory Harassment Bill**. In early May, we also hosted a redistricting discussion for the community in October with Jeffrey M. Wice, an expert in the field. We also co-hosted the **Westchester Annual Jewish-American Heritage Month** with the Westchester County Board of Legislators in early May.

HON. SAMUEL G. FREDMAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (LDI)

The objective of the **Leadership Development Institute (LDI)** is to help build and sustain Jewish organizations, by fostering strong leadership growth. LDI is a program only open to WJC member organizations with no additional cost to participants. LDI participants represent the future of Jewish communal leadership in Westchester. LDI addresses practical issues facing Jewish organizations and the Jewish community at large. The Class of 2021 included 18 leaders from a variety of our member organizations including Bet Torah, FIDF, Human Rights and Holocaust Education Center and Jewish National Fund to name a few. Some topics covered included a marketing presentation by Board member Stu Seltzer and "Making the Ask" by Board member Richard Spitz. The Institute was named in memory of the Hon Samuel Fredman the 3rd president of the Westchester Jewish Council.

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 with our member organizations. We served as a key partner with AJC Westchester/ Fairfield and others for the annual **Westchester Thanksgiving Diversity Breakfast**. We facilitated the Council's Interfaith/Intergroup roundtable which included an **Afghan Refugee Resettlement Panel** with our member organization Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI) and helped to plan a **multi-faith clergy prayer service for Ukraine** held in late March which was coordinated with AJC Westchester/Fairfield and the Westchester Human Rights Commission with support from UJA. In addition, the Council in cooperation with UJA organized a group of **18 Interfaith Clergy to travel to Israel in the spring of 2022**. This spiritual journey was led by the Council in consultation with JCRC of NY and made possible by a special grant from UJA. As one clergy member stated post trip, "We have begun a journey of interweaving our faiths and our lives into a tapestry of love and commitment to finding ways forward as a combined community of faith."



ISRAEL CONNECTION

"Israel Connection," a monthly virtual series of the Westchester Jewish Council, offers presentations and discussions on diverse topics of interest regarding the culture, politics and society of Israel. Some past topics from this year have included "Where Food and You Come to Life", "Israeli Culture & Identity Reflected in Music", "Life on the Kibbutz" and "War in Ukraine - A Military Analysis." Danny Schultz, Council Board member and Chair of Israel Affairs committee, served as a moderator for all of the programs.

JEWISH LITERACY INITIATIVE

In March 2022, we hosted a kickoff event for our celebration of Jewish Literacy Initiative. We were honored to have featured guest speaker Rabbi Dr. Meir Y. Soloveichik at the initial event, "The Best Passover and Seder Stories - From the Revolution to Today". We are gearing up for the next phase of the Initiative which will focus on learning about different periods in Jewish history using three books that cover key turning points in Jewish history.

JULIAN Y. BERNSTEIN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS (DSA)

Every spring, the Westchester Jewish Council honors deserving member organizations and their leaders with the Annual Julian Y. Bernstein Distinguished Service Award (DSA). Julian Y. Bernstein was a former Westchester Jewish Council board member, who was a visionary communal leader. Julian believed that doing tzedakah was just as important as giving tzedakah. In tribute to his passion and devotion to the Jewish community, we honor those who follow in his footsteps. Member organizations are invited to nominate an honoree from within their organization whose dedication and leadership have enriched our Westchester community.

NIGHT OF JEWISH LEARNING AND CELEBRATION

This biennial program was held virtually on November 20th with 20 different local rabbis from the Westchester Board of Rabbis leading 20 different sessions. This free communal learning event provided the opportunity for all of us to learn from our local rabbis as they shared their expertise on a wide variety of topics including "My Brothers Keeper: A Deeper Exploration of Cain and Abel", "Helping Our Learners and Their Families Thrive Post Pandemic", and "A Virtual Journey Through Auschwitz-Birkenau".

ROUNDTABLES

Roundtables, where lay and professional leaders gather to build bonds and share best practices on a variety of topics and issues, remain a signature Council initiative. This year, the Council organized over 20 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.



SECURITY

The Council, as a Westchester Jewish community's first responder, facilitated 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. Our "Emergency Communication System" allowed us to instantly communicate vital information to hundreds of trained Westchester Jewish professionals and volunteer leaders from our member organizations. We continued to have a Westchester dedicated security professional, William Hayes from Community Security Initiative (CSI).

The Council's annual "High Holiday Security Briefing" was held virtually in early September. This program provides an opportunity to hear security updates from our local and state law enforcement officers and elected officials. Our guest speakers included Hon. George Latimer, District Attorney, Mimi Rocah, Chief Dan McKenna, Chief Andrew Matturro, Chief Michael Cerone, William J. Hayes and all of our partners at Community Security Initiative (CSI).

YOM HASHOAH/HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

This countywide remembrance program, presented in partnership with the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center, was held in person in April 2022 which allowed us to have our annual rescued Torah procession. With hundreds of people in attendance, it was a beautiful tribute that included a fascinating and moving personal story from Rabbinic Pastor Dr. Aliza Erber. This year commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Garden of Remembrance. This memorial site has enabled the community to have a special place in which to honor the memories of the millions of lives that were lost during the Holocaust.

WESTCHESTER LEADERSHIP RECEPTION

We held our Fifth Annual Leadership Reception in September 2021. This event provided an opportunity for Council member organization leaders and elected officials to gather with each other and share plans and ideas for the coming year. We were honored to have Rabbi Howard Goldsmith, former Chair of Westchester Board of Rabbis, Hon. George Latimer, Westchester County Executive, NY State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, NY State Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, US Congressman Jamaal Bowman and JCC President Ellen Reinheimer share greetings and to have Stu Seltzer, Council Board member, blow the shofar.



2022-2023 Board of Directors

HISTORY AND FUNDING

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 (z"l), Donald Landis (z"l), Lester J. Millman, Irwin S. Davison, Debra Abrahams Weiner, Ronald E. Burton, Paul Warhit, Lisa Roberts and currently William H. Schrag.

Funding for the Westchester Jewish Council comes from a variety of sources. Sixty percent (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. Twenty percent (20%) comes from a generous grant from UJA. Fifteen percent (15%) comes from membership dues from our 130 member/partner organizations and five percent (5%) comes from programming. We thank you for your financial support which is so important to our mission. As an IRS-recognized 501c3 organization, all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2022-23



William H. Schrag,
President



Jeff Kohn,
Vice President



Betsy Bernstein,
Vice President



David Eppinger,
Vice President



Marc Klee,
Treasurer



Harold Aspis,
Audit Chair



Michael Mittelman,
Secretary



Arlene Kleinberg,
Associate Secretary



Lisa Roberts,
At Large



Debra Abrahams
Weiner,
At Large



Bruce Wexler,
At Large



Jeremy A. Abramson	Melissa Baer	Betty Berenson	Samuel E. Berger	Steven Berkowitz	Tracey Bilski	Joyce Claar	Asaf Cohen
Hon. Jeffrey A. Cohen	Lawrence D. Engle	Karen Everett	Allison Fine	Robert Fischer	Jonathan Flaxer	Aaron Fleishaker	Lisa Ginsberg
Michele Gregson	Bonnie Hagen	Rabbi Evan Hoffman	Cantor Robin Joseph	Michael Kane	Jeffrey Kapelus	Evan Kingsley	Stuart Kolbert
Elizabeth Lampert	Betsy Miller Landis	Arnold Linhardt	Gabriel Lomas	Jessica E. Lorden	Mitchell Ostrove	Sue Pearson	Joan Paulin
Keith Reich	Dan Reingold	Martin Rogowsky	Karen Rosenfeld	Ellen Salant	Audrey Samers	Yael Schulman	Danny Schultz
Stu Seltzer	Lori Sloane	Steven Smith	Richard Spitz	Harold Treiber	Giselle Weissman	Maj. L Wickstrom	Jamie Schaefer-Wilson
Steven L. Young	Nancy Zaro	Harriett Zeller	Jack Zinn				



WESTCHESTER JEWISH COUNCIL

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Connect Here®

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

* As of July 2022

