

Jewish Federations, Orthodox Union applaud fiscal year 2023 omnibus spending bill

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Congressional leaders released their 2023 federal budget compromise bill the week of December 23. In response, the Jewish Federations of North America applauded the inclusion of many of its key legislative priorities. In particular, JFNA pointed to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program or (NSGP), the Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program and the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act.

The bill includes \$305 million for the NSGP, a significant increase from the current year’s \$250 million. The program pro-

vides security funding for houses of worship and other nonprofits. As President Joe Biden noted in his speech at the recent White House Hanukkah celebration, these funds are critical to protecting Jewish and other faith institutions, especially at a time of increased levels of antisemitism.

The Orthodox Union issued a statement applauding the increase in funding for the NSGP. OU Executive Director for Public Policy Nathan Diamant praised Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) and other key leaders, saying the funds will help Jewish communities protect

their facilities and members from increasing antisemitic violence.

The Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program will receive \$8.5 million, short of the House’s \$10 million target but up from the \$6 million provided in FY 2022.

Signed into law in 2021, the package for the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act includes \$10 million for implementation, which is double last year’s provision. Elana Broitman, SVIP of Public Affairs at JFNA said, “The funds provide law enforcement with the tools to record and analyze hate crimes, for victims of hate crimes to feel safe and for community organiza-

tions to build relationships with law enforcement to combat hate effectively together.”

The JFNA also applauded key health, mental health and long-term care provisions allocated by the bill. For the first time since its introduction in 2015, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act was included in the budget, which will allow those who become disabled later in life to have access to tax-free savings plans.

However, JFNA expressed disappointment that “critical priorities,” such as the Afghan Adjustment Act, were not included in the bill.

Second-floor renovation project continues

Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab’s second-floor project is moving toward an expected completion in 2023. When finished, the revision will feature a state-of-the-art, 1,200-square-foot Dialysis Den that will allow

residents to receive the same care in our facility as they would in a dialysis center. The project is funded through foundation grants and individual donations.

We are partnering with DaVita Dialysis to develop the space,

which will accommodate up to 30 residents in need of transitional care to bridge the gap between their hospital stay and a return home.

This dialysis section is just part of the renovation, which also

includes updated flooring, paint, counter tops, doors, lighting and furniture.

The model of care and programming for the entire second floor will be tailored to the needs of patients who have been released from the hospital following a serious illness, injury, or surgery, but need more time to recover before safely returning home. Work began in June 2022.

Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab, formerly the Jewish Home of Eastern Pennsylvania, provides high-quality care, dignified and compassionate services to all residents in need of long-term care, as well as to provide enriching experiences to older adults through a broad range of housing and support services that reflect the spiritual, social and cultural values of their tradition. We are a faith-based nonprofit organization, which is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Our website is <https://jhpep.org/>.



Above, left and right: Photos of the progress being made at Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab’s second-floor project.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Albanian Jews

A new museum is being built to highlight the history of Albania’s Jewish community.

Story on page 2

ADL acquires JLens

The ADL acquires Jewish investor network JLens in its bid to combat corporate antisemitism.

Story on page 5

Jewish engagement

A new Masa report finds young adults on long-term Israel programs are more engaged with Judaism.

Story on page 9

CANDLE LIGHTING

January 6	4:30 pm
January 13	4:38 pm
January 20	4:46 pm
January 27	4:54 pm
February 3	5:03 pm

PLUS

Schedule of Services 8

New museum to provide comprehensive look at Albanian Jewish life

BY AVI KUMAR

(JNS) – Vlore, the third-largest city in Albania, was the historic home of Albania’s biggest Jewish community. The city now plans to build a Jewish museum to commemorate this history.

The Albanian Jewish Museum project is a joint venture of the Albanian-American Development Foundation and Albania’s Ministry of Culture, which are working together with the small local Jewish community.

After a long search for an architect, they narrowed the list to five companies and ultimately chose Tel Aviv-based Kimmel Eshkolot to design the museum. Kimmel Eshkolot is well-known for building the Mount Herzl Memorial on Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives and the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University. Company co-founder Eitan Kimmel told JNS, “We hope to break ground sometime next year and are very excited.”

The museum intends to provide a comprehensive look at Albanian Jewish life through the ages, as the Jewish presence in the Balkan

nation has been documented since the second century. From Greek Romaniotes to Spanish Sephardim fleeing persecution in the 15th century to Hungarian Ashkenazim who came much later, the combination of a mountainous region and proximity to Italy and Greece created a distinct Jewish culture.

By the outbreak of World War II, an estimated 1,800 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution arrived in Albania due to its liberal visa policies. Some were hoping to continue on to North and South America, British Mandatory Palestine or

other places of refuge. A few of them ended up making Albania their permanent home. An estimated 2,000 Jews were saved thanks to the efforts of local Albanian Muslims, and the country was one of the few European nations whose Jewish population had increased by the end of World War II.

Rabbi Yoel Kaplan, the local emissary for Chabad-Lubavitch, said, “Albanian Jews like to maintain their unique identity and customs after so many centuries. Albania was further isolated for 50 years under communism and, after the

1990s when communism ended, many Jews emigrated.”

He continued, “Albanians have this concept called ‘Besa’ – it is an all-encompassing term for hospitality and protecting your neighbor or guest – that we invoke every time we get together here. It was also this Besa that saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust. We pushed for this museum to happen and I’m glad it’s happening. The government has also been especially supportive towards the local Jewish community.”

Albanian Jews, he noted, have
See “Museum” on page 5

Innovation thrives on Israel’s southern border

BY JUDY LASH BALINT

(JNS) – The word “Negev” conjures up visions of miles of desert, sand dunes, barren landscapes, camels, and yes, the meme that “Israel made the desert bloom.” But traveling through the northwestern portion of that 4,650-square-mile desert today presents quite a different picture. A recent trip to the “Gaza envelope” and Eshkol region of the Negev proved that the area is not only blooming, but thriving as an incubator for some of Israel’s most cutting-edge social, educational and technical developments.

And – not a huge surprise – a hefty amount of financial support for these efforts comes from the venerable Jewish National Fund USA. The organization pitches in to partner with Israeli nonprofits and regional councils to support and create a multitude of projects that are not government initiatives.

Since the Eshkol region shares borders with both Egypt and the Gaza Strip, many of the projects are designed to support the residents of communities that have been on the frontline of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad attacks for decades.

One of the most striking and innovative initiatives is the GrooveTech Center, located just two miles from the Gaza border on a campus together with schools that educate 2,500 students. The reinforced two-story building is the largest technology center in Israel.

Inside the bright, spacious structure dedicated to space, technology and gaming are multiple spaces for kids to immerse themselves in after-school STEM learning and recreational activities. A cybertech lab, space center, planetarium, broadcast studio, robotics workshop, virtual reality arena, professional teaching kitchen and hydroponics growing area are available to children that live under constant threat of rocket and



Sunrise in Bitronot Ruchama, a nature reserve of badlands in the area of Kibbutz Ruchama in the Western Negev, in southern Israel, on April 13, 2017. (Photo by Maor Kinsbursky/Flash90)

mortar attacks from the Gaza Strip.

A big source of diversion and pride came last December when the launch of NASA’s James Webb Telescope was broadcast from GrooveTech. The NASA collaboration came about through an high-ranking Israeli-born NASA scientist who was a consultant in the creation of GrooveTech’s space center.

According to GrooveTech Center Director Maydan Peleg, the community had originally asked JNF-USA for funds to help build a jungle gym. “They said, ‘Nope, you need to dream bigger,’ and this is the result,” she adds with a smile.

“Kids who come here can forget the outside; they can feel pride and accomplishment and get absorbed in cutting-edge, exciting activities that help keep them strong,” she continued. “They can be exposed to the highest levels of tech, and they can dream to be whatever they want.”

“The place is a game changer,” Carey-Lee Tal, a South Africa-born Eshkol community activist, tells visitors. Tal explains that GrooveTech not only helps keep kids in the area, but also acts as an economic catalyst, providing jobs for local residents.

GrooveTech means that high school kids interested in any field of technology or engineering don’t need to travel to Tel Aviv or Beer-sheva for enrichment. “They can get

what they need right here,” she said.

A few miles away, less than half a mile from the border with Egypt, Yedidia Harush welcomes visitors to the fully sustainable dairy farm that belongs to the community of Halutza.

Harush, whose white shirt, black kippah and visible tzitzit ritual fringes would look more at home in a Jerusalem yeshiva than in the middle of a cowshed, is proud to show off what he calls “the Halutza happy cows.”

He relates how he and his family arrived in Halutza after they were evicted from their homes in Gush Katif in 2005, when Israel unilaterally left the Gaza Strip. Despite the pain and anger over the destruction of their communities, Harush says his family and others who went to Halutza decided to “take the positive side and contribute to the development of the Negev.”

Over the last 17 years, in cooperation with JNF-USA, Harush said roads had been paved and hundreds of greenhouses erected, and that more than 85 species of fruits and vegetables are now grown in the area. Fields of solar energy panels have also been established, he said.

But his pride and joy is the cowshed, which opened 10 months ago and is fully robotic, enabling the operation to be fully Shabbat observant.

Grazing space for dairy cows is very limited all over the country and the Negev’s sandy landscape and hot climate are not conducive to the practice, but there is plenty of land available in the Halutza area, so Harush’s cows each enjoy 22 square meters (about 236 square feet) of living space. Unlike in most dairy farms, the 450 Halutza cows eat on demand and deliver up 41 liters per day of milk – far above the 28-liter average of other Israeli cowsheds.

See “Innovation” on page 11

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania
“The Reporter” (USPS #1550) is published monthly by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510.

President: Eric Weinberg
Executive Director: Daniel Chejfec

Executive Editor: Rabbi Rachel Esserman
Layout Editor: Diana Sochor
Advertising Representative: Kathy Brown
Bookkeeper: Kathy Brown
Production Associate: Julie Weber

OPINIONS The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily the views of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

LETTERS The Reporter welcomes letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number. The editor may withhold the name upon request.

ADS The Reporter does not necessarily endorse any advertised products and services. In addition, the paper is not responsible for the *kashruth* of any advertiser’s product or establishment.

DEADLINE Regular deadline is two weeks prior to the publication date.

FEDERATION WEBSITE:
www.jewishnepa.org

HOW TO SUBMIT ARTICLES:
Mail: 601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
E-mail: jfnepareporter@jewishnepa.org
Fax: (570) 346-6147
Phone: (570) 961-2300

HOW TO REACH THE ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE:
Phone: (800) 779-7896, ext. 244
E-mail: advertising@thereporter.org

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:
Phone: (570) 961-2300

COMMUNITY NEWS

Being a Jew

Many years ago, I met Rabbi Tuvia Singer, who was at the time the executive director of Jews for Judaism and today heads Outreach Judaism. At the time I met him, he shared with me a story about this girl who decided to convert to Christianity. The parents, shocked at the choice she made, contacted him to see if he could help them. He met with the girl and asked her what is it that led her to feel that Christianity was a response to her spiritual longings. The girl responded that one particular prayer touched her so profoundly that she could not resist it. Rabbi Singer asked her, "What prayer was that?" and the girl started reciting it: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength..."



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

our ideas have been appropriated by both Christianity and Islam and often presented as their own – disconnected from the Jewish original. When a child of Israel looks at the *V'Ahavta* (the beginning of which I quoted above) as an exclusively Christian prayer, we have failed.

When we fail to respond "Happy Hanukkah" when somebody wishes us "Merry Christmas," we have failed. When we accept "Hanukkah gnomes" and "Hanukkah bushes," we have failed. When we emphasize the gift giving over the meaning of religious freedom represented by

Hanukkah, we have failed. In each one of those instances, the message we seem to be sending is that we need to accommodate our culture and beliefs so they (we) will be acceptable to the surrounding society.

As a Jew, I believe in asserting who I am – not

because I am better than others, but because, simply, it is who I am. I believe in participating in the general society, but I also believe in my right to do it as a Jew. If people cannot accept me for who I am, then so be it.

For me, being a Jew is embracing our culture, our holidays, our traditions and our values. One of the values of Judaism I cherish the most is then need to help people in need, and that makes no distinction between Jew and not Jew. And I keep using the word "Jew" rather than "Jewish," because I see myself as part of the Jewish people, an ethnic collective that contributed, proportionally, more to Human civilization than almost any other group – and I am proud of it.

And I want our children to know that when they hear the words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength..." they are hearing Jewish words that transformed the way humanity relates to the Divine. I want every Jewish child to be educated in who he (she) is, and where she (he) comes from – not in a uniform monolithic idea of what it means to be a Jew, but in all the beautiful diversity of our tradition.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

UAE Jewish community opens first kosher supermarket in Gulf

More than 100 people gathered in Dubai on Dec. 12 as the United Arab Emirates' Jewish community opened the first-ever kosher supermarket in the Gulf. The supermarket, named "Rimon," will meet growing demand for kosher products due to the significant increase in the number of Jews traveling and relocating to the UAE in the wake of the 2020 Abraham Accords. The agreements, brokered by the Trump administration, normalized relations between Israel and several Arab countries, including

the UAE. "Our wonderful community, which keeps growing and prospering here in the UAE, most gratefully continues to benefit from the extraordinary embrace we have received from the Emirates government and local authorities for over a decade now," said UAE-based Rabbi Levi Duchman.

Your ad could be here! Call Kathy Brown at 800-779-7896, ext. 244, or e-mail advertising@thereportergroup.org

DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming Reporter issues.

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, January 16	February
Monday, February 13	March
Monday, March 13	April
Monday, April 10.....	May

Every Act of Tzedakah, Makes a Difference.

Help support the 2022/2023 JFS Annual Campaign!

Donate online today at www.jfsnepa.org or call (570) 344-1186.

Immediate Opening Full Time Social Worker

Individual to provide mental health services to a diverse client population with a range of presenting problem areas. Responsibilities also include development of family life education workshops and collaboration with other community agencies. Position is responsible for intake, assessment and treatment goal planning. Must have knowledge of current DSM diagnosis classifications.

Qualifications: Master of Social Work degree. LSW required, LCSW preferred. Clinical Supervision Provided, Competitive salary and benefit package. EOE.

Email resume to info@jfsnepa.org www.jfsnepa.org

Beth Shalom Academy
1025 Vine Street, Scranton, PA 18510

BOOK YOUR VISIT TODAY!

Warm and welcoming atmosphere with individualized learning

Providing high quality Jewish and Secular education to all children regardless of background and observance!

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Small classes, PreK-8.
- Involvement in the local community.
- Financial assistance available.

CONTACT US:
info@bethshalomacademy.com

To learn more, visit us at www.bethshalomacademy.com.

Jewish online resources

BY REPORTER STAFF

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Jewish Grandparent Network will hold the virtual program “How to Talk with your Preteen and Teen Grandchildren about Antisemitism” on Tuesday, January 10, at 7 pm, with Mark Oppenheimer, host of the podcast *Unorthodox*, former *New York Times* columnist, and author of “Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Neighborhood.” The program will also be recorded and can be sent to those who can’t attend at that time. For more information or to register, visit <https://jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org/event/how-to-talk-to-your-preteen-and-teen-grandchildren-about-antisemitism/>.

◆ The CCAR Press will hold a virtual book launch “Longing: Poems of a Life” by Merle Feld on Wednesday, January 18, at 7:30 pm. Feld will share her poetry in conversation with Rabbi Hara Person, chief executive of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. For more information or to register, visit https://ccar.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kR5YVL-NQ-Gfqih-pJkgWxw.

◆ The Jewish Art Collective will hold two virtual Studio Israel events: Gil Yefman in conversation with Shayna Weiss on Thursday, February 9, at noon (<https://jartsboston.secure.force.com/ticket/#/instances/a0F8Z00000iK9YfUAK>); and Zoya Cherkassky in conversation with Gannit Ankori, Henry and Lois Foster director and chief curator of the Rose Art Museum, on Thursday, March 30, at noon (<https://jartsboston.secure.force.com/ticket/#/instances/a0F8Z00000iKArPUAW>).

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold two virtual events in January: “Good Goy, Bad Goy: The Portrayal of Gentiles in Sketches from the London Yiddish Press” on Tuesday, January 24, at 1 pm (<https://yivo.org/Good-Goy-Bad-Goy>); and “700 Years of Vilnius, A City of Translation” on Wednesday, January 25, at 7 pm (<https://yivo.org/Vilnius700>).

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the hybrid program “Zisl Slepovitch Ensemble/ Sasha Lurje: Cry, My Heart, Cry! Songs from Testimonies” on Sunday January 8, from 3-4:30 pm. The songs in the program will “provide a series of insights into the Holocaust survivors’ experiences both during World War II and in the

pre- and inter-war years as they were growing up in Eastern, Southern and Central Europe.” For more information or to register, visit <https://mjhnyc.org/events/zisl-slepovitch-ensemble-sasha-lurje-cry-my-heart-cry-songs-from-testimonies-in-the-fortunoff-video-archive-at-yale-university/>.

◆ Qesher will hold the following virtual tours in January: “Jewish Bulgaria: A Virtual Sephardic Journey” on Sunday, January 8, at 3 pm; “Jewish Lisbon and Portugal: a community reconnecting with its past” on Thursday, January 12, at 3 pm; and “Jews of Argentina: ‘They sowed seeds and harvested doctors’” on Thursday, January 19, at 3 pm. All tours are around 90 minutes. For information on these tours and others, or to register, visit www.qesher.com/upcoming-events/.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center has published its 2022 Pakn Treger Digital Translation Issue, “Cribside and Other Stories,” which features 14 newly translated poems, short stories and memoirs, all highlighting the complexities of women’s experiences. The free digital edition is available at yiddishbookcenter.org. It can also be purchased as an e-book.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual program “Tour Global Jewish Life: Hasidic Brooklyn” on Tuesday, January 10, from 3-4 pm. The cost to attend is \$21. The program will look at Hasidic Brooklyn with former Satmar community member, Frieda Vizel.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute has announced its next Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series: Joy Ladin, author of “Shekhinah Speaks,” on Wednesday, January 25, from 7-8 pm; Pnina Lahav, author of “The Only Woman in the Room: Golda Meir and Her Path to Power,” on Wednesday, February 15, from 7-8 pm; Paula Birnbaum, “Sculpting a Life: Chana Orloff between Paris and Tel Aviv,” on Wednesday, March 15, from 7-8 pm; and Elizabeth Graver, “Kantika,” on Wednesday, May 3, from 7-8 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html>.

◆ Sefaria has added four texts of Chabad Chasidut – Tanya, Torah Ohr, Likkutei Torah and Derekh Mitzvotekha – to its website, sefaria.org/texts/Chasidut/Chabad. There is no charge to access these or other texts. The texts include footnotes and reference links.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual program “Peter Bergson’s Fight to Save the Jews From Nazi Germany” on Wednesday, January 25, from 3-3:45 pm. Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins, winner of the National Jewish Book Award, will discuss his book “Peter Bergson – The Jewish Lobbyist Who Advocated To Save Jews During the Holocaust.” For more information or to register, visit

<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/peter-bergsons-fight-to-save-the-jews-from-nazi-germany>.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute has announced upcoming programs in its Seminar Series: “Lady Killers: Jewish Female Assassins in late 19th Century Russia” with Rachel Barenbaum, writer and HBI scholar-in-residence, on Monday, January 23, from noon-1 pm; “An Oral History of the Women of Enkash – The Zar and the Mergem Gojo (Blood Hut) as Spaces for Resistance” with Shula Mola, HBI scholar in residence, on Monday, February 27, from noon-1 pm; “Peak TV’s Unapologetic Jewish Woman: Exploring Jewish Female Representation in Contemporary Television Comedy” with Samantha Pickette, University of Texas at Austin, on Monday, March 13, from noon-1 pm; and “Preaching the Promised Land: Mary Antin’s American Religions” with Rachel B. Gross, San Francisco State University, HBI scholar-in-residence, on Tuesday, March 28, from noon-1 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html>.

◆ Maven will hold the eight-part virtual class “History of Ancient Israel” on Tuesdays, starting Tuesdays, January 10, and ending February 28, from 3-4:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$280. Mark Goodman will explore the origins of the ancient Israelites through archaeological evidence and biblical references. For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/history-of-ancient-israel>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual event “Funny Girls – A New Talk on Zoom About the Funny Jewish Women of Film” on Monday, January 30, from 7-8:30 pm. Film historians Irv Slifkin and Laurence Lerman, the founders of FilmShul, will discuss “the history and role of Jews involved in the field of entertainment – since much of the industry’s success can be attributed to their association with it since its earliest days.” For more information or to register, visit www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/funny-girls-film-shul.

◆ The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy will hold the virtual class “Jewish Pride: A Jewish Revolution” with Ben M. Freeman on four Sundays, January 8-29, at 11 am. The course “will offer an understanding of historical and contemporary Jew-hatred as well as its impact on Jews, while focusing on inspiring and empowering Jews to see their Jewishness as a source of pride and not shame.” The cost to attend is \$100. For more information or to register, visit <https://isgapdrc.org/courses/jewish-pride-a-jewish-revolution/>.

Your ad could be here! Call Kathy Brown at 800-779-7896, ext. 244,

The Reporter

or e-mail advertising@
thereportergroup.org

 **KOSHER MEALS ON WHEELS**

Home delivered meals when you need them the most!

Learn more by calling (570) 344-1186

Meals prepared at the Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab, A Jewish Senior Life Community under kosher dietary guidelines.

Are you on the Jewish Federation’s email list?

We send updated announcements and special event details weekly to those who wish to receive them.

Send Dassy Ganz an email if you would like to join the list.

Dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org



ADL acquires Jewish investor network JLens in bid to combat corporate antisemitism

BY MIKE WAGENHEIM

(JNS) – The Anti-Defamation League announced recently that it has acquired Jewish investor network JLens, in a bid to become more prominent in corporate advocacy. The ADL, whose stated mission to fight antisemitism has often been carried out through political lobbying, media campaigns and partnership building, said it feels it needs to enter a new front, with a seat in corporate boardrooms.

“You think about the ADL lobbying Congress or making a pilgrimage to this town or to that

Museum. . . .Continued from page 2 warm historical ties with the Jewish community in Corfu, a Greek island that was once a major center for Jewish life with many *yeshivot*.

The Jewish population of Vlore totaled approximately 2,600 in the 1500s, when the city was a trade hub due to its coastline and proximity to Italy. Today, the figure has dwindled to 50-100 Albanian-born Jews, most of whom live in the country’s capital and largest city, Tiranë. There are also around 200 foreign Jews in the Balkan nation.

The museum will be built as an addition on top of an existing building, as the architect is tasked with innovatively designing a modern “extension” of an old structure. “We will mix both the old and new,” Kimmel said. “We have to double the size of the existing building to create this museum complex while respecting the existing monument.”

Many buildings in the Vlore area once belonged to Jewish families, dating back to the 16th century, when many Jews were involved in the city’s vibrant trade culture. Near the museum, there are remains of an old synagogue that burned down in the 1920s.

“There will be two stone-clad pavilions at the entrance that almost merge into each other. Ninety-eight percent will be composed of local Albanian stone and 2 percent Jerusalem stone,” Kimmel said. There will also be a trilingual plaque in Albanian, English and Hebrew that reads, “Whoever saves one life, saves the world entire” – a paraphrase of a passage from the Talmud.

“We will present a unique story of Albanians and Jews,” AADF said in a statement provided to JNS. “While the Holocaust chapter is of the utmost importance and perhaps the most exceptional part of this history, the Albanian Jewish Museum will place this chapter within the entire history of Albanian Jews – understood as that of Jews in the historic territory of Albania as well as the Diaspora.”

AADF also cited the fact that there are three other museums in the vicinity as another reason for having chosen the site.

Sokol Pirra, who was born in Vlore, but now lives in Tiranë, said, “My ancestors thrived here for generations. But now, we struggle to keep Jewish life going, as many Jews have migrated to Israel or other places. This museum is a great addition to honor our long presence in Albania. Vlore has beautiful seaside scenery. And the Jewish museum will be a great addition to both the cityscape and the Albanian Jewish community.”

city council. But I think we’re living in a world where so much of our lives is mediated by brands, where there’s a high degree of cynicism about elected officials and political parties and the news media,” Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the ADL, told JNS. “And so influencers – often in the form of brands – are the way people identify and interpret the world.”

JLens, which advises Jewish donors and organizations on values-based investment opportunities, has been at the forefront of exposing BDS practices within the burgeoning ESG (environmental, social and governance) investment movement, whose aim is to advise on and promote socially-conscious corporate investment. JLens manages a \$200 million fund, with investments in some of the largest companies in America, providing them a say in their shareholder meetings.

JLens initially brought to public attention alleged anti-Israel bias within the investment ratings system at Sustainalytics, a subsidiary of investment firm Morningstar, which is now under investigation by at least 19 states for potential violations of anti-Israel boycott laws and other practices.

“It’s a great opportunity for JLens to scale our work and our impact and take it to the next level,” Julie Hammerman, JLens CEO and founder, told JNS. “We’ve worked with the ADL for many years and we collaborate on a lot of issues around the corporate space. It’ll help both of our efforts in this area. JLens will get the scale, the resources and the reputation of the ADL, and they will get all the expertise that JLens brings from the investor space and the corporate advocacy arena.”

Hammerman will now be able to bring on two additional members to a small staff, including hiring a day-to-day director.

While the ADL has been involved in pushing corporations like Unilever, Facebook and others to clamp down on antisemitic activity within their respective purviews, the acquisition of JLens will provide the organization with a seat inside valuable corporate boardrooms, with more direct influence on policy.

The recent decisions by a number of companies to separate themselves from entertainer Ye (formerly Kanye West) following his repeated antisemitic comments brought to the forefront See “ADL” on page 8

P A C E Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment

**Your gift to the Annual Campaign
DOES A WORLD OF GOOD.**

*Endowing your gift allows you to be there for the
Jewish community of NEPA forever.*

A Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment (PACE) is a permanent fund that endows your Jewish community Annual Campaign gift as a lasting legacy. A PACE fund will continue to make an annual gift in perpetuity on your behalf.

To determine the amount you need to endow your entire campaign gift, multiply your current annual gift by 20.

You can fund your PACE by adding the JEWISH FEDERATION OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA to your will, or by making the Federation a beneficiary of your IRA. All contributions to establish a PACE are tax deductible.

Let your name be remembered as a blessing.

Endowments can be created through a variety of vehicles, some of which do not necessitate funding during your lifetime yet still provide your estate with considerable tax benefits.

They also enable you to perpetuate your commitment to the Annual Campaign in a way that best achieves your own personal financial and estate planning goals.

Examples Of Ways To Fund Your Pace Gift Are:

- * outright contribution of cash, appreciated securities
- * capital gain property such as real estate
- * charitable remainder trust
- * gift of life insurance
- * charitable lead trust
- * gift of IRA or pension plan assets
- * grant from your foundation
- * reserved life estate in your residence
- * bequest

Using appreciated property, such as securities or real estate, affords you the opportunity to eliminate the income tax on the long-term capital gain, will in some instances generate a full income tax charitable deduction and will remove those assets from your estate for estate tax purposes.

For more information contact Daniel Chejfec at
Daniel.Chejfec@jewishnepa.org or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.)

In 2022, some 70,000 people from 95 countries make *aliyah*

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Some 70,000 people from 95 different countries immigrated to Israel in 2022 with the assistance of the Jewish Agency for Israel, in cooperation with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration. It was the most *olim* in 23 years and a dramatic increase from 2021, when about 28,600 immigrants arrived in the country.

Jewish Agency data for the period between January 1 and December 1, 2022, shows that 37,364 *olim* arrived from Russia; 14,680 from Ukraine; 3,500 from North America, with assistance from Nefesh B’Nefesh; 2,049 from France; 1,993 from Belarus; 1,498 from Ethiopia as part of Operation Tzur Israel; 985 from Argentina; 526 from Great Britain; 426 from South Africa; and 356 from Brazil. Final totals for 2022 will be available after the year concludes.

Approximately 27 percent (about 19,000) of this year’s *olim* are young people between the ages of 18 and 35, who will boost Israeli society



New immigrants to Israel danced the hora in Jerusalem. (Photo by Zug Productions for the Jewish Agency)

and the economy, including professionals in fields where there is a labor shortage in Israel such as medicine, engineering and education. Around 24 percent (16,500) of the *olim* are ages 0-17; 22 percent are between 36 and 50 years old; 14 percent are aged 51-64; and 13 percent are 65 and over.

“It was a dramatic year that emphasized the value of mutual responsibility among the

Jewish people and during which the Jewish Agency helped strengthen the resilience of Jewish communities, empowered weaker populations in Israel, brought tens of thousands of *olim*, saved lives from all over Ukraine and brought them to a safe harbor in Israel,” said Jewish Agency Chairman Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog.

“*Aliyah* is of existential importance to the state of Israel, both at the practical and moral level. It expresses the nature of Israel as the state of the entire Jewish people and the strategic partnership between Israel and world Jewry. The tens of

thousands of *olim* who came to Israel this year will help build the resilience of Israeli society and will be a major growth engine for the Israeli economy,” he added.

The Jewish Agency’s operation to rescue Ukrainian Jews following Russia’s invasion in February was called unprecedented in its scope. The organization opened centers to receive the

See “*Aliyah*” on page 11

Gold coins dating to Muslim conquest of Jerusalem found in northern Israel

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – A hidden cache of 44 gold coins dating from the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem was recently found during an archaeological excavation at the site of the ancient city of Baniyas, the Israel Antiquities Authority revealed recently.



The cache of 1,400-year-old gold coins found concealed in a wall at the Baniyas archeological site. (Photo by Israel Antiquities Authority)

Several of the coins were dated to the reigns of Emperor Phocas (602-610) and Emperor Heraclius (610-641), the latter of which overlapped with the Muslim conquest of Byzantine Palestine in 635.

“The coin hoard, weighing about 170 grams ... reflects a specific moment in time, when we can imagine the owner concealing his fortune in the threat of war, hoping to return one day to retrieve his property. In retrospect, we know that he was less fortunate,” said Yoav Lerer, who directed the excavation on behalf of the IAA.

Baniyas, which is located within the Hermon River nature reserve, was first established by

Canaanites and reached its peak in the Early Roman period, when Herod the Great and his son Philip II entirely rebuilt the city and named it Caesarea Philippi, in honor of Roman Emperor Augustus.

Eli Escusido, director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, said of the discovery: “The coin hoard is an extremely significant archaeological find as it dates to an important transitional period in the history of the city of Baniyas and the entire region of the Levant. The Israel Antiquities Authority, together with the National Parks Authority, will work together to exhibit the treasure to the public.”

Researchers use geomagnetic data to support biblical accounts

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – An Israeli scientific breakthrough has enabled researchers to verify biblical accounts of wars between ancient Jewish kingdoms and their enemies, according to a statement released by Tel Aviv University.

The scientists examined archaeological findings containing magnetic minerals which, when heated or burned, record the local magnetic field. These magnetic records can thus be used to date the fires, matching them to reported military campaigns, in a manner reminiscent of radiocarbon dating.

Using such records, a joint study by TAU and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, employing some 20 researchers from a variety of countries and disciplines, was able to accurately date destruction layers at 17 archeological sites throughout Israel, according to the statement. The researchers were able to reconstruct the direction and intensity of the Earth’s magnetic field in burnt remnants at various battle sites, enabling them to match the dates of the fires to biblical accounts of battles between Israel and



A researchers took measurements at an archaeological site in Israel. (Photo by Tel Aviv University)

Judah, the two ancient Hebrew kingdoms that formed after the division of the united Israelite monarchy, and armies from ancient Egypt, Aram, Assyria and Babylon.

“Findings indicate, for example, that the army of Hazeel, King of Aram-Damascus, was responsible for the destruction of several cities – Tel Rehov, Tel Zayit, and Horvat Tevet,” according

See “Data” on page 10

Professional, confidential counseling and older adult services for families, couples and individuals.

- Our social workers are licensed in the State of Pennsylvania.
 - JFS is accredited by the Council on Accreditation.
 - Most insurances accepted.
- Sliding fee scale also offered based on family size and income

615 Jefferson Ave Suite 204, Scranton, PA
(570) 344-1186 www.jfsnepa.org

First-of-its-kind program graduates kosher ritual slaughterers in Ethiopia

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Twelve Ethiopian Jews in the city of Gondar graduated the week of November 25 from a first-of-its-kind course to train them as *shochtim*, or ritual slaughterers.

The program was part of a joint initiative between local community Rabbi Menachem Waldman and Rabbi Eliahu Birnbaum, director of both the Straus-Amiel Rabbinical Emissary Program of Ohr Torah Stone and the Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jewry, to provide continued support to Jews in Ethiopia.

There are about 10,000 Jews in Gondar and an additional 2,000 in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Until now, there was no *halachic* ritual slaughter operation in the country, forcing observant members of the community to largely refrain from eating poultry or red meat.

The course began online two-and-a-half months ago, with the students learning relevant texts. The specially manufactured knives and sharpening stones



Graduates of the first-ever initiative to train local *shochtim*, or ritual slaughterers, to produce kosher meat for the Jewish community in Ethiopia. ((Photo by Ohr Torah Stone)

were shipped to Ethiopia from Israel, and in early November Rabbi Netanel Ansani, an experienced ritual slaughterer, arrived in the country to begin the practical training.

“The group studied from early

morning into the evening hours,” said Ansani. “It was very important that each student train extensively in the hands-on methods so that they would have as much experience and confidence in the process as possible and that they

could demonstrate their commitment to continuing to learn and gain more experience.”

The week of November 25, Birnbaum and Rabbi Dr. Ari Greenspan, a *shochet*, educator and dentist, traveled to Ethiopia to oversee the examination process. In the presence of their families and fellow community members, the men all received certifications allowing them to act as *halachically*-approved ritual slaughterers.

“This is truly a historic moment that will significantly benefit the local communities in Gondar and Addis Ababa,” Birnbaum said. “Establishing a *shechita* infrastructure within the Ethiopian community is something we believe is extremely important, both from a food supply standpoint and no less so from the perspective of strengthening their Jewish identities and connection to our heritage....With God’s help we will be blessed to see the remaining members of the community come home very soon to join us in Israel.”

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania



Friends of *The Reporter* make big news!

The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign which seeks to raise \$5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

The newspaper is delivered monthly to each and every identifiable Jewish home in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Reporter is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, *The Reporter* is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of \$23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist it in raising \$5,000 as part of its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,
Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director
Jewish Federation of NE Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510

I will support continuation of our expanded Federation Reporter by contributing:

..... \$36\$54 \$100 other amt. \$ _____

Name(s) (as you wish to appear on our list of “Friends”)

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Check here if you prefer your name not to be published

Please write and send tax deductible checks to:
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Ave. Scranton, PA 18510



• *Regular Schedule of Services* •

ABINGTON TORAH CENTER

Rabbi Dovid Saks
 President: Richard Rutta
 Jewish Heritage Connection
 601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
 570-346-1321 • website: www.jewishheritageconnection.org
 Sunday morning minyan 8:15 am at Elan Gardens,
 465 Vernard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA

BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION

Rabbi Alex Hecht
 1025 Vine St., Scranton, PA 18510 (corner of Vine & Clay Ave.)
 570-346-0502 • fax: 570-346-8800
 Weekday - *Shacharit*: Sun. 8am; Mon., Thurs. & Rosh Chodesh
 6:30 am; Tue., Wed. & Fri. 6:45 am; Sat. & holidays 8:45 am.
Mincha during the week is approx. 10 minutes before sunset,
 following by *Maariv*.

**CHABAD OF THE ABINGTONS/
 JEWISH DISCOVERY CENTER**

Rabbi Benny Rapoport
 216 Miller, Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411
 570-587-3300 • JewishNEPA.com/minyan
 Weekly service for Shabbat and all Jewish holidays
Kabbalat Shabbat at sundown (summer at 7 pm)
 Saturday mornings: 9:30 am, *Kiddush* 11:30 am
 Call for more information.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF THE POCONOS

Rabbi Mendel Bendet
 570-420-8655 • website: www.chabadpoconos.com
 Please contact us for schedules and locations.

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi Elliott Kleinman
 President: Liza Roos Lucy
 Contact person: Cheryl Badner, Congregation Administrator
 615 Court St., Honesdale, PA 18431
 570-253-2222 • fax: 570-226-1105

CONGREGATION B'NAI HARIM

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi Peg Kershenbaum
 President: Lisa Spector
 P.O. Box 757, Sullivan Rd., Pocono Pines, PA 18350 (located
 at Rt. 940 and Pocono Crest Road at Sullivan Trail)
 570-646-0100 • website: www.bnaiharimpoconos.org
 Shabbat morning services 10 am-noon; every other Saturday,
 Potluck Shabbat Dinner with blessings and program of varying
 topics, one Friday every month - call for schedule.

JEWISH FELLOWSHIP OF HEMLOCK FARMS

Rav Shoshana Mitrani Knapp, ravshoshi@gmail.com
 President: Gail Bergoffen Neldon
 540 Forest Dr., 1516 Hemlock Farms, Lords Valley, PA 18428
 570-775-7497 • e-mail: jfhf1516@gmail.com
 Friday evening Shabbat service 8 pm
 Saturday morning Shabbat service 9:30 am

MACHZIKEH HADAS SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Mordechai Fine
 President: Moshe Fink
 600 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
 570-342-6271

OHEV ZEDEK CONGREGATION

Rabbi Mordechai Fine
 1432 Mulberry St., Scranton, PA 18510

TEMPLE HESED

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz
 Co-Presidents: Esther Adelman, Cheryl Friedman & Steve Seitchik
 1 Knox St., Scranton, PA 18505 (Off Lake Scranton Rd.)
 570-344-7201 • website: www.TempleHesed.org
 E-mail: templehesed@comcast.net
 First Friday Shabbat 6pm, other Fridays 7 pm; Chanting
 Circle Saturdays at 11:30 am

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF DUNMORE

Contact person: Jay Schectman, 570-954-9354
 515 East Drinker St., Dunmore, PA 18512
 Saturday morning Shabbat 7:30 am, also services for *Yizkor*

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF THE POCONOS

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi/Cantor Johanan Bickhardt • President: Debbie Smith
 711 Wallace St., Stroudsburg, PA 18360
 (one block off Rt. 191 (5th Street) at Avenue A)
 570-421-8781 • website: www.templepoconos.org
 E-mail: tipoc@ptd.net
 Friday evening Shabbat 6 pm; Saturday morning Shabbat 10:30 am

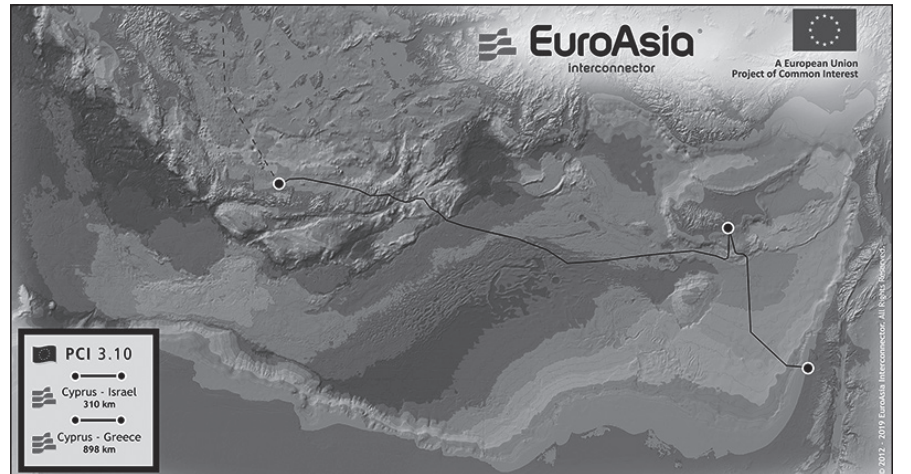
TEMPLE ISRAEL OF SCRANTON

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi Miriam Spitzer
 Cantor: Vladimir Aronzon
 President: David Hollander, Hollanderx@aol.com
 918 East Gibson St., Scranton, PA 18510 (located at the
 corner of Gibson & Monroe Sts.)
 570-342-0350 • e-mail: office@templeisraelscranton.org
 Mon. & Thurs. 7:15 am; Tues., Wed. & Fri. 7:25 am; Rosh
 Chodesh & *Chagim* weekdays, 7 am; Shabbat morning
 service 9:30 am

Construction to start on “electricity highway” connecting Israel, Cyprus and Greece

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS

(JNS) – It will be the world’s longest and deepest underwater power cable, crossing the Mediterranean seabed bridging Asia and Europe. The EuroAsia Interconnector, nicknamed the “energy highway,” will connect the national electricity grids of Israel, Cyprus and Greece.



Over a decade in the planning, construction on the mammoth, 2.5 billion euros (\$2.63 billion) first phase will now get underway, Israeli and Cypriot officials said recently, with 50 percent of the total cost secured.

Map of EuroAsia Interconnector (Photo by Sara Yard via Wikimedia Commons)

The first stage, which has received a 657 million euros (\$736 million) European Union grant, will run 558 miles (898 km.) and link the electricity grids of Greece and Cyprus via the Greek island of Crete. The second stage will be 190 miles (310 km.) long and connect Kofinou in Cyprus and Hadera in Israel. The project is slated to be completed within five years.

(1,208-km.) 2,000-megawatt undersea cable will have the capacity to power three million households.

It will put an end to Cyprus’s status as the only non-interconnected European Union member state and provide Israel with a reliable way to export natural gas in the form of electricity.

“This is a tangible result of the strength of our trilateral relations and opens up opportunities for the entire region,” Cypriot Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry Natasa Pilides said in a telephone interview with JNS from Nicosia.

The cable will reach depths of up to 3,000 meters (more than 9,800 feet), equal to eight times the height of the Empire State Building and nine times the Eiffel Tower. The 751-mile

“Our objective is not just to interconnect Cyprus with the EU market, but is one of geo-political importance connecting the Eastern Mediterranean to the electricity market in Europe,” she said.

The landmark project comes as the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia are fueling a global energy crisis that has hit the E.U. hard, spotlighting European energy dependence.

“In these turbulent times when energy security and affordability are no longer a given, this project can be a way out which combines all our three objectives: energy security, energy affordability and green transition,” Pilides said.

Indeed, the initiative has been declared a Project of Common Interest by the E.U., as part of its drive to attain diversity and security of supply in electric power.

The project also comes amid burgeoning relations between Israel and both Cyprus and Greece over the last decade and a half in a variety of fields including tourism, medicine, cyber security and military cooperation in the face of a volatile and intermittently-menacing regional leader, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, although relations between Jerusalem and Ankara have improved of late.

The EuroAsia Interconnector project is expected to be a boon for investment in reliable clean energy for the three countries. “Connecting Israel with the European electric grid will strengthen our trilateral relations with Greece and Cyprus as well as [additional] E.U. countries while ensuring regional stability and energy security,” Israel’s Ministry of Energy said in a statement.

See “Electricity” on page 11

ADLContinued from page 5

the importance of this idea. While Adidas announced an anti-hate partnership with the ADL recently, had there been a functioning corporate relationship between the two before the West controversy, the ADL and JLens might have been able to affect quicker change in the apparel giant, which dragged its feet in dissolving its lucrative branding partnership with West.

Greenblatt said his position allows him to reach out to any CEO, but those fighting antisemitism and anti-Israel activity need a “ground game that will not just get us in the door, but have a seat at the table.”

Meanwhile, Hammerman said JLens will continue to keep a watchful eye on the ESG movement, which hardened anti-Israel activists have long endeavored to exploit to bring an anti-Israel agenda into the shareholder advocacy space.

“It’s a space where the Jewish community should be long term,” said Hammerman. “Israel is one of the issue areas in the [ESG] field, and that’s even more reason that the Jewish community should be there.”



Support JFS of Northeastern Pennsylvania
DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

Schedule a free pick up today. Plus, you may receive a tax deduction!

877-JFS-4CAR

New Masa report: young adults on long-term Israel programs more engaged with Judaism

BY KYLIE ORA LOBELL

(JNS) – When Jennifer Handel was growing up, she didn’t engage in any Jewish formative activities. But once she participated in Masa ETF, a long-term young professionals program in Israel, everything changed.

“Without my Masa program, I would not have the life I have today at all,” Handel said.

After her trip, Handel ended up serving as a Hillel professional for 10 years at two different colleges, and is now director of Israel engagement at the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta.

“[Through Masa], I changed my career, became more involved with my Judaism and have accepted that my role in the Jewish community is perfect exactly as it is without needing to fit a mold or stereotype,” she said.

Handel is far from the only young Jewish person who has taken part in a long-term program in Israel and come out of it more interested in Judaism than ever. According to a new study from Masa Israel Journey, young adults who spend at least four months in Israel participating in a long-term program are more likely to be engaged with their Judaism. These programs, which are designed for young adults of all Jewish affiliations, are fostering Jewish continuity and the next generation of proud Jews – even among those who weren’t engaged in Jewish life at all prior to their participation, just like Handel.

Impact:NPO, a consultancy that measures

the influence of nonprofit programs, surveyed 2,433 young Jewish adults from the U.S. in 2021. Nearly 500 respondents had participated in Masa Israel Journey, a joint initiative of the Government of Israel and The Jewish Agency for Israel that offers a variety of long-term and immersive programs in Israel.

According to the survey, 92 percent of long-term Masa alumni with children will raise their children Jewish, and eight-in-10 long-term Masa alumni agreed strongly with the statement, “Being Jewish is an important part of my life.”

When reflecting on the report, Eric S. Goldstein, CEO of UJA-Federation of New York, said, “Masa’s report underscores the tremendous impact of immersive Israel trips for young Jewish adults, especially for those who’ve had less exposure to early-life Jewish experiences. Every year, thousands of Masa alumni return home inspired to lead proud Jewish lives, immensely benefiting their local communities and far beyond.”

The Masastudy results come at a time when Jewish young adults feel less connected to their Judaism than prior generations. A 2020 Pew Research Center study revealed that 41 percent of Jews ages 18-29 are not affiliated with any particular branch of Judaism and do not identify with Judaism as a religion.

Young Jews are not as connected to the Jewish state as older Jews, either. Most young Jews between the ages of 25 and 40 either disengage with Israel completely because they disagree with its policies or

they are afraid of being ostracized for supporting it.

But when young Jews participate in long-term programs, they are over twice as likely to feel strongly connected to the Israeli people, and nearly three times as likely to strongly agree that Israel influences their identity compared to individuals who have never been there.

Masa participant Patka Zaslawska arrived in Israel right before Rosh Hashanah last year to take part in the Dance Journey Program and Destination Israel program. Looking back at her experience, she said she “discovered my Israeli side, met amazing friends, learned how to drive in Tel Aviv, organized five dance and movement festivals in Poland, and learned to appreciate myself more.”

Only 12 months later, she has fallen in love with her Jewish roots and the country of Israel, just like Handel did. Zaslawska is now preparing to go forward with a huge life change: she’s making *aliyah*. “I just started a new job in a medical startup, rented my first apartment in Israel, and in a few days, I will receive my new Israeli passport,” she said. “I am sure we have all heard the saying, ‘New year, new me,’ and I couldn’t agree more.”

Read the full study from Masa Israel Journey at www.masaisrael.org/israel-immersion/.

Kylie Ora Lobell is a freelance writer in Los Angeles. She has written for New York Magazine, The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, The Jewish Journal, Aish, Tablet, Chabad.org, The Forward and JTA.

GIFTING STOCK FORM

Gifting stock to a charitable 501(c)(3) organization is a great way to make a donation.

By gifting stock in which you have a large capital gain, you not only receive the benefit of making a sizable donation, but you also save the capital gains tax.

Example:
Gift: \$2,000
(Stock: ABC @ \$20 per share - Gift: 100 shares)

If you were to sell “Stock ABC” that you originally purchased at \$10.00 a share, you would have a \$1,000 capital gain and you would be required to pay at least \$150.00 in federal taxes, etc.

But by gifting the stock, you save the entire \$150.00 and you’ve found a way to help the Federation accomplish its mission:

“... .. to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.”

Your gift will not only assist our local and regional organizations and agencies, but you will have the satisfaction of helping those in need.

You will be able to look back and say: “I’m just doing what my People have always done for each other.”



For further information on gifting stocks in payment of your pledge to our Annual UJA Campaign, please contact the Federation at 570-961-2300 (ext. 3) for details.

Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

Study: Extensive use of smartphones by parents could hamper toddler development

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS)—A new study from Tel Aviv University found that interaction between mothers and toddlers is reduced by a factor of four when the mothers use their smartphones, which might damage the toddler’s development and have even greater and far-reaching consequences.

The results of the new study, which was led by Dr. Katy Borodkin of the Department of Communication Disorders at the Stanley Steyer School of Health Professions, Sackler Faculty of Medicine of Tel Aviv University, were published in the top-tier Journal of Child Development.

The experiment involved dozens of mothers of toddlers (aged 2 to 3 years).

The mothers were ostensibly invited to participate in a study examining the link between the mother’s and the child’s interests, and so they were asked to perform three tasks: Browse a designated Facebook page, and “like” videos and articles that interest them; read printed magazines and mark articles that interest them; and finally, play with the child while the smartphone and magazines were outside the room (uninterrupted free play).

“Our goal was to simulate situations in real life where the mother has to take care of her child, while at the same time devoting some of her attention to her smartphone,” explains Borodkin. “The mothers were unaware of the purpose of the experiment, so they behaved naturally by splitting their interest between the toddlers, and the smartphone and magazines. We videotaped all the interactions between the mothers and the toddlers, and later scanned the recordings frame by frame in an attempt to quantify the mother-child interaction.”

Researchers from Tel Aviv University have defined three components of mother-child interaction. The maternal linguistic input was examined first, which is the linguistic content that the mother conveys to the child.

According to previous research, this is an important predictor of a child’s language development. It has been found in the past that reduced linguistic input leads to reduced vocabulary in a child, even as an adult. Next, conversational turns were examined – for example, how interactive the discourse was. This is a predictor of language and social development, as the child learns that he or she has something to contrib-

ute to the interaction as well as the basic social norms of social interactions.

Finally, maternal responsiveness was examined, such as to what extent the mother responds to child bids. This is a measure of the immediacy of the response and its contingency on the child bid’s content. For example, when the child says “look, a truck,” there is no comparison between a response such as “yes, that’s great” and a response such as “correct, this is a red truck, like the one we saw yesterday.” This measure is the basis for almost every aspect of child development: linguistic, social, emotional and cognitive.

“We found that the three components of mother-child interaction were reduced by a factor of two to four relative to uninterrupted free play, both when the mother was reading printed magazines and browsing on her smartphone,” says Borodkin. “In other words, the mothers talked up to four times less with their children while they were on their phone.

“Moreover, they exchanged fewer conversational turns with the toddler, provided less immediate and content-tailored responses, and more often ignored explicit child bids,” she continues. “Even when they were able to respond while browsing Facebook, the quality of the response was reduced – the mothers kept their responsiveness to a bare minimum to avoid a complete breakdown in communication with the toddler.”

Equally interesting is the fact that no difference was found between browsing a smartphone and reading magazines. “We did not find that one media distracted more than the other,” says Borodkin. “However, it is clear that we use smartphones much more than any other media, so they pose a significant developmental threat. It should be noted that we currently have no research evidence suggesting an actual effect on child development related to the parental use of smartphones, as this is a relatively new phenomenon. However, our findings indicate an adverse impact on the foundation of child development. The consequences of inadequate mother-child interaction can be far-reaching.”

To conclude, Borodkin adds: “In our current research, we focused on the mothers, but we believe that our findings characterize communication interferences between fathers and their toddlers as well, since the smartphone-usage patterns are similar between men and women, thus allowing us to estimate with high probability that the research findings are applicable to fathers and to mothers.”



Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

For more information or to discuss these planned giving options, please contact Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of NEPA, 570-961-2300 (x1) or daniel.chejfec@jewishnepa.org.

If Your Goal is to:	Then You Can:	Your Benefits May Include:
Make a quick & easy gift	Simply write a check now	An income tax deduction and immediate charitable impact
Avoid tax on capital gains	Contribute long-term appreciated stock or other securities	A charitable deduction plus no capital gains tax
Defer a gift until after your lifetime	Put a bequest in your will (gifts of cash, specific property, or a share or the residue of your estate)	Exemption from federal estate tax on donations
Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free	Create a charitable gift annuity	Current & future savings on income taxes, plus fixed, stable payments
Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of a home or other real estate	Donate the real estate or sell it to a charity at a bargain price	An income tax reduction plus reduction or elimination of capital gains tax
Avoid the two-fold taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans	Name a charity as the beneficiary of the remainder of the retirement assets after your lifetime	Tax relief to your family on inherited assets
Give your personal residence or farm, but retain life use	Create a charitable gift of future interest, called a retained life estate	Tax advantages plus use of the property
Make a large gift with little cost to you	Contribute a life insurance policy you no longer need or purchase a new one & designate a charity as the owner	Current & possible future income tax deductions
Receive secure, fixed income for life while avoiding market risks	Purchase a charitable gift annuity or create a charitable remainder annuity trust	Tax advantages & possible increased rate of return
Give income from an asset for a period of years but retain the asset for yourself or your heirs	Create a charitable lead trust	Federal estate tax savings on asset & income tax deductions for deductions for donated income
Create a hedge against inflation over the long term	Create a charitable remainder unitrust	Variable payments for life plus tax advantages
Make a revocable gift during your lifetime	Name a charity as the beneficiary of assets in a living trust	Full control of the trust terms during your lifetime

Data Continued from page 6 to the statement. Hazael’s campaign also resulted in the destruction of the Philistine city of Gath, an event recorded in the Bible.

“At the same time, the study refutes the prevailing theory that Hazael was the conqueror who destroyed Tel Beth-Shean. Other geomagnetic findings reveal that the cities in the Negev were destroyed by the Edomites, who took advantage of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians,” the researchers said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israel's Elbit Systems signs \$410 million Romanian drone contract

The Romanian Ministry of National Defense will receive up to seven Watchkeeper X tactical unmanned aircraft systems (or UAS) from the Israeli defense electronics company Elbit Systems. Elbit Systems announced Dec. 21 that it had been awarded a contract with a potential value of \$410 million to supply Romania with up to seven Watchkeeper X tactical unmanned aircraft systems. The framework contract is valid for five years. "This contract demonstrates the sustained demand for Elbit Systems' UAS. We look forward to further strengthening Elbit Systems' relationship with the Romanian Government," Elbit President and CEO Bezalel Machlis said in a statement. He added that as part of the contract, Elbit Systems plans to establish infrastructure and cooperate with subsidiaries in Romania.

Circassian community in Israel recognized by U.N. as "tourism village"

Israel's Tourism Ministry announced on Dec. 20 that the Circassian community of Kfar Kama has been included on the UN World Tourism Organization's exclusive Best Tourism Villages 2022 list. It marks the first time that an Israeli locale has been so recognized by the UNWTO. A total of 136 requests from 57 countries were submitted for the title. The initiative is meant to promote and enhance the role of tourism in safeguarding villages (up to 15,000 residents), along with their landscapes, natural and cultural diversity, knowledge systems, and local values and activities. Kfar Kama, in the Lower Galilee, was founded over 150 years ago by Muslim Circassians originating from the Caucasus. The village, which is one of two Circassian villages in Israel (the other is Rehaniya), features unique architecture and a museum of Circassian culture. Its tourist infrastructure was recently renovated with the assistance of the government. Representatives from Kfar Kama and the Tourism Ministry have been invited to a UNWTO ceremony to mark the accomplishment on February 27-28. Additionally, UNWTO will work with Kibbutz Neot Semadar, located in

the southern Arava desert, under the U.N. organization's Upgrade Program.

"Iron Fist": Israeli active protection system passes live-fire test

The Iron Fist active protection system, made by Haifa-based defense company Elbit Systems, has successfully completed a series of interception tests as part of its development process and installation on board Israel Defense Forces armored personnel carriers and D9 armored bulldozers. Joint tests conducted by the Israeli Defense Ministry, the IDF and Elbit Systems Land Division saw the Iron Fist intercept anti-tank threats in various challenging scenarios, the ministry said in a statement.

Aliyah Continued from page 6

wave of Jewish refugees and provide them with warm beds, meals, medical care and activities for children. A total of 290,000 meals were distributed in these centers and thousands of the refugees, including hundreds of seniors and Holocaust survivors, were brought to Israel on rescue flights. Emergency grants were also transferred to strengthen Jewish communities within Ukraine, and 354 tons of personal equipment was collected in Israel and distributed to refugees in Ukraine.

young *olim* will live in the same apartment building and receive community support services. The Jewish Agency will also open a first-of-its-kind center for lone soldiers (those without family members living in Israel who can help them) in Tel Aviv as part of the Wings program.

In light of the surge in arrivals, the Jewish Agency is preparing to operate a new model of "open absorption centers" where

The program, a joint initiative of the Jewish Agency, the Meraage Foundation, the Spirit of Israel social action platform and Keren Hayesod, provided a supportive framework for 2,200 lone soldiers this year – from those preparing for military service to those who have been discharged and are establishing their lives as civilians.

Innovation Continued from page 2

"It's an economic anchor for the communities," Harush explained. "JNF-USA's contribution is not purely philanthropic. Twenty-eight percent of the income from the milk is reinvested in Negev projects."

crushed and liquidated. Thirty-five tons of leaves make seven liters of highly purified recombinant collagen, he explained. This material is then turned into a hydrogel for 3D bioprinting of tissues and organs, including lungs and kidneys. There's far less chance of rejection or infection from this form of collagen than from that extracted from animals or human cadavers, said Harush.

Before letting visitors leave the area, Harush insists on showing us another pioneering agritech initiative not far from the dairy farm. Opening the canvas door to a space that contains row upon row of thriving, seven-foot-tall greenery, Harush explained why his community is growing modified tobacco.

With a scarcity of organ donors around the world, the process that's started from plants grown in the sands of a startup community in the Negev has the potential to save many lives.

The leaves are picked and sent to a processing facility in Yesud HaMa'ala in the Hula Valley in northern Israel, where they're

It's the 2022 version of "making the desert bloom."

Electricity Continued from page 8

The statement added that Israeli, Cypriot and Greek technical teams were currently working to further the project.

high-level meetings not only on the bilateral and trilateral level, but on the presidential level, and I am confident that incoming Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu will continue with his great willingness to support this project," Pilides said.

In the interview, the Cypriot minister said that they will "very soon" be applying for additional funding for the Cyprus-Israel section, which she hopes can progress "in parallel or very shortly after" work on the Cyprus-Crete part whose construction is getting underway in the next couple of months. They are also looking to attract financing from investment funds and private investments.

"There is a common interest between the E.U. and Israel here to have energy security and affordability," she added.

She noted that the Cyprus-Israel line is technically much simpler than the Cyprus-Crete segment, being both shorter as well as in shallower waters. "We are having

The creation of the electric cable link appears to have superseded a potential project for a gas pipeline between the three countries to Europe via Greece. The viability of that proposal – the Eastern Mediterranean pipeline or simply EastMed – as well as the quantity of the gas that could be transported is under review, officials said.

We have a place set just for you...and your ad!



To place your ad, please contact **Kathy Brown** at **1-800-779-7896, ext. 244,** or **advertising@thereporter.org**

The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

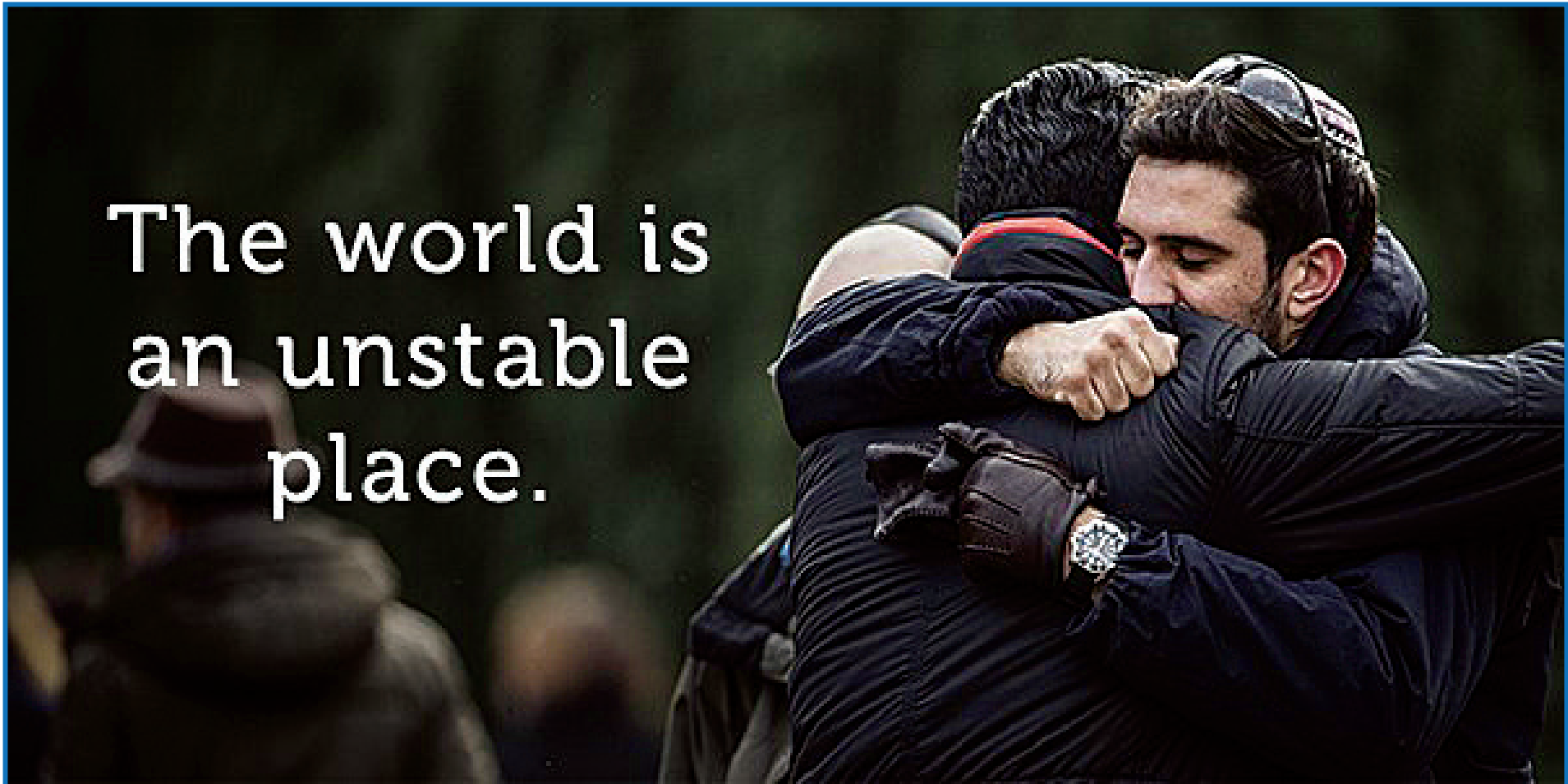
To get Federation updates via email, register on our website **www.jewishnepa.org**



Jewish Federation
Of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Pledge or Donate online at **www.jewishnepa.org/donate**

➔ Check out the Federation's new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook



The world is an unstable place.

We bring security.

Throughout Europe, violent attacks target Jewish people and Jewish institutions. Security is posted at synagogues. At Jewish day schools, five-year-olds file past armed guards to get to the playground. Jewish students arriving at college encounter toxic anti-Israel slogans.

Your UJA gift will help restore a sense of security. With your help, we can share expertise and funding to keep children safe at schools, and stand up against hatred so that Jews everywhere can walk without fear - into a synagogue or simply down the street.

That's why there's UJA and the Federation. And that's why we need you.

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry, and revitalize and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

____ I'm enclosing a gift of \$ _____ I'll pledge \$ _____ *

* ____ One-time * ____ Quarterly installments (1/4 of total) * ____ Monthly installments (1/12 of total)

**2023 UJA Campaign
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510
Telephone: 570-961-2300 (ext. 3)**

Payment options

____ Please bill me at the above address.

____ Enclosed is my check payable to "UJA/Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania".

____ On-line banking (designate your payments through your bank auto-draft account to "UJA/Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania").

____ My company (_____) has a matching gift program.
I'll obtain the form and forward it.

Authorized signature

Date

**CANTOR VLADIMIR ARONZON AND MILA ARONZON, CO-CHAIRS OF OUR 2023 UJA CAMPAIGN.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**