

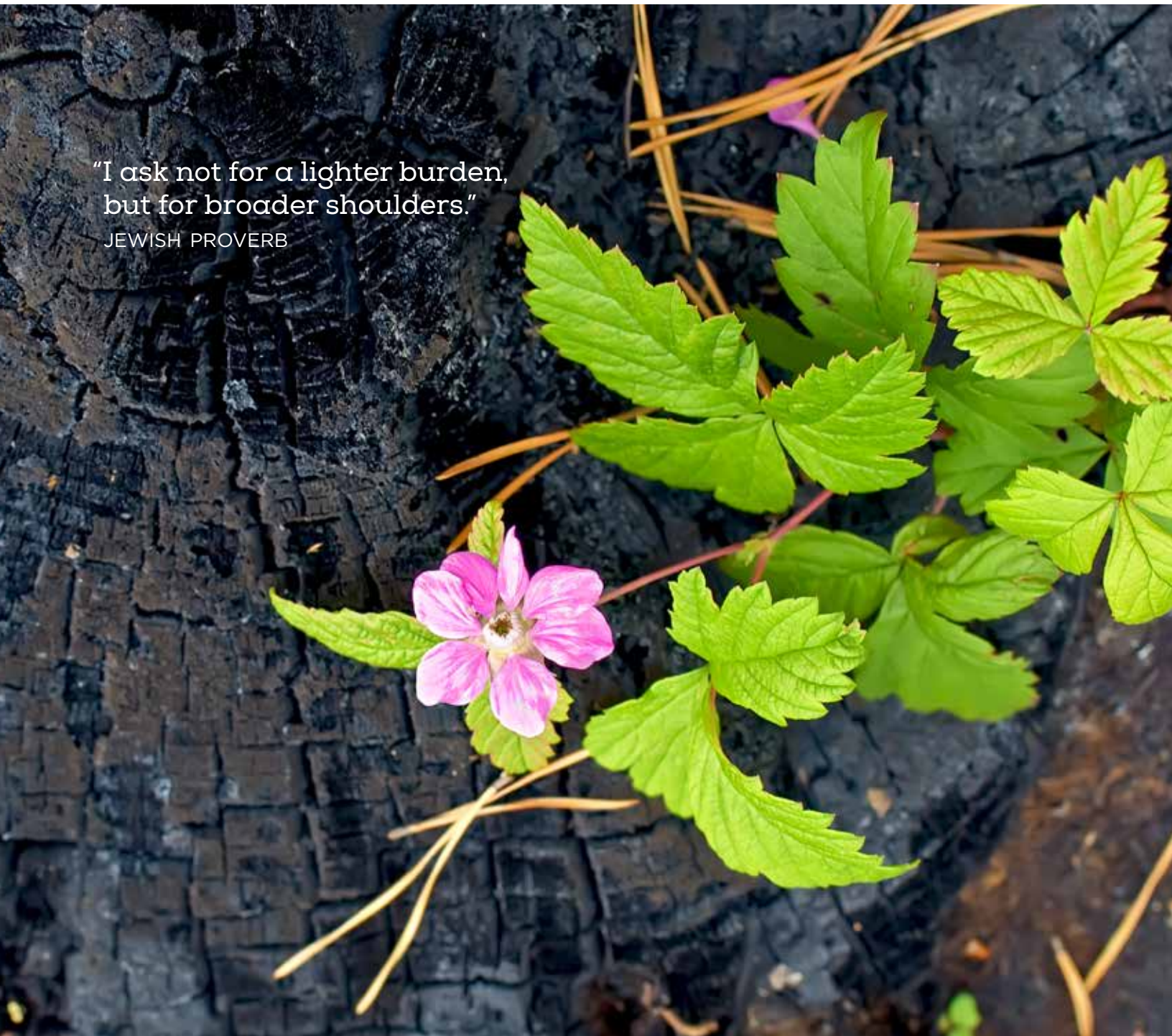
A PUBLICATION OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION

THE VOICE

YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL & GLOBAL JEWISH NEWS

"I ask not for a lighter burden,
but for broader shoulders."

JEWISH PROVERB



SPRING 2019-5779

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of the Sacramento Region

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**The Jewish
 Federation**

OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

UNITED, NOT DIVIDED



Although we might be thinking about Purim (March 20) soon, Passover, which begins April 19, will be here and we will sit down at our seder tables and retell a story we all know — the Exodus from Egypt.

We know the Israelites were not united when leaving Egypt. Some complained throughout the journey about leaving the “known,” despite how miserable their circumstances were. And yet, they ultimately united as a people. They stood before Mt. Sinai and prepared themselves to receive the Torah as one people. With this commitment, they were declared not only a nation, but a nation tasked with being a role model of unity, a light unto nations.

As I’ve become more and more involved with Federation these past few years, including my current role as President, I’ve observed that contrary to popular belief, we are not a divided community. Yes, we have geographic challenges, and we may observe our faith in different ways or not be observant at all. We don’t agree about matters involving Israel, refugees, or even who has the best bagels! But when it comes to a crisis situation, we are united in our desire to heal one another, come together in mourning, and to support the impacted community.

“This is what Federation does.”

We gather to mourn on Yom Hashoah, and we gather to celebrate on Yom Ha’atzmaut. We raise funds to support both Jews and non-Jews alike during times of disaster — more on this on pages 14 & 15. We advocate for the disadvantaged because we know all too well what happened when no one stood up for us. We feed the hungry, care for our seniors, educate our children, and provide programs for our college students.

This is what Federation does.

We provide ways for individual Jews to participate in communal responsibility and contribute to the well-being of others. Federation is the vehicle through which we can show that Jews care for one another and for the communities in which we live.

I ask each and every one of you to join me and my husband Louis by giving generously to Federation. Your gift helps build community. Your gift helps to UNIFY our region.

Chag Sameach,

Deborah Hoffman Gonzalez

President

president@jewishsac.org



Communitywide Yom HaShoah Commemoration Survival Networks



Joshua Frost

Shimon Frost survived the war because he belonged to Gordonia, a Zionist Youth organization. Throughout the war, this networked community supported each other while resisting the German forces and attempting to rescue Jews. Joshua Frost will tell his father's story of how he left the Warsaw Ghetto, traveled across borders, lived and worked in "Greater Germany," and escaped from the Gestapo. The commitment and selflessness that kept him and others alive inspired him to teach these values as a leader of Jewish education in America and finally in Israel, where he helped establish the curriculum for the Melton Center for the Jewish Diaspora.



Paul Schwarzbart

Paul Schwarzbart's family escaped from Austria to Belgium after Kristallnacht in 1938. After Nazis took his father away, his mother reluctantly agreed to let the Belgian underground send Paul to a Catholic home for boys. There, he was baptized under an assumed name. Paul was reunited with his mother after liberation, but the rest of his extended family had perished. Paul has learned that love can provide shelter, hope, and persistence in the face of terrible odds.

Holocaust survivors and descendants of survivors are invited to participate in the **candle-lighting procession**. Please meet at 6:15 pm in the B'nai Israel Courtyard.

6:30 PM
SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2019

Congregation B'nai Israel
3600 Riverside Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95818

The Communitywide Yom HaShoah Commemoration is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region and the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), a division of the Federation, with the support of the Sacramento Board of Rabbis and Central Valley Holocaust Educators' Network (CVHEN). **Sign Language Interpreters** provided by Federation's Committee on Inclusion and Disabilities. Refreshments provided by Keneset Israel Torah Center. **For more information**, contact: YomHaShoah5779@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BEING “ALL IN”



In February, I was fortunate enough to attend JFNA's (Jewish Federations of North America) Professional & Executive Institute, a three-day program filled with courses, lectures, and dialogue that addressed the most pressing needs of the Jewish community, from the continuous threat of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) and anti-Zionist movements, to development trainings with the most seasoned Federation leadership and workshops to understand and explore new empowerment programs such as Moishe House, Jewish Women's Renaissance Program, and One Table (which will be coming to Sacramento within the year), all created to engage the next generation of our Jewish community.

My wrists hurt after two days from the pages of notes I took, making sure I bring back everything I could to Sacramento. On my flight back, I was sorting through these notes and on the first page I saw “I'm all in” — this was a quote given by the CEO of the Baltimore Federation (The Associated), Mark Terrill, speaking about his 40-year career as a Federation professional. Mark spoke to the blessings of his career and being able to do what he loves. And although every day was not easy — far from it — and despite the fact that Baltimore allocated \$30 million last year — he knows that when he leaves the office every day, he has done something that will help make the world a better place.

“...I have the privilege to know that everyday our work...is making someone's life a little better...”

While my Federation career is approaching only a quarter of Mark's, I know how he feels. I *get* to do this work and I have the privilege to know that everyday our work, made possible through your gifts to the Annual Campaign, is making someone's life a little better and making our world a better place. Whether it is a single bag of food from our Kosher Food Pantry for a hungry Jewish Family Services client, or the more than \$400,000 our Federation allocated on behalf of the Jewish community for Camp Fire Relief, your support contributes to my feelings of good and accomplishment, and for that, I thank you.

While it is easier for me, as a paid professional, to be “all in,” there is nothing stopping you from feeling the same way. Last year we engaged hundreds of new individuals through our work with programs like the Jewish Film Festival and Women's Philanthropy, and we saw an 11% increase in our Annual Campaign, all signs that this community is eager to be “all in.”

Whether you simply dipped a toe in last year, or took a deep dive as one of our Major Donors, I invite you to join me again this year — you will like the way that it feels.

Respectfully,

Willie Recht

Executive Director

wrecht@jewishsac.org

SAVE THE DATE: Yom Ha'Atzmaut — Celebrating Israel!

ISRAEL THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

Photographer Paul Margolis



May 5, 2019

Featuring Food, Israeli Dancing, Children Activities

1:00-3:30pm

**The Center at Twenty-Three Hundred
2300 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento**

For more information: federation@jewishsac.org.



**The Jewish
Federation**

OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION

JCRC CHAIR'S MESSAGE

TAKING ACTION



JCRC is literally springing into action. We have increased the size of our membership nearly 50% and we now stand 20 strong. Every one of our members is a community leader in their own right — our members range in age from the teens to the 70s.

Since I joined this remarkable group in 2014, we have evolved from a discussion group to one driven by the need to take action. Our programs have been impactful. The Latino Jewish Forum was the brainchild of our former JCRC Vice-Chair, Hellan Dowden, and former State Senator, Deborah Ortiz. JCRC was the incubator for the Forum which evolved into a major advocate and provider of services to DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) recipients. Now fully developed, the forum has spun off and has its own membership and action agenda.

“...we have evolved from a discussion group to one driven by the need to take action.”

Within the last two years, Lynn Berkeley Baskin has taken on the role of chair of our Community Outreach Committee. As a member of the NAACP Executive Committee and as the founder of the groundbreaking program, Sacramento Faces Race, Lynn has been well-positioned to provide opportunities to engage JCRC in several social justice and interfaith events organized to fight discrimination against disadvantaged and immigrant communities.

When Teven Laxer joined JCRC, he was asked to become chair of one of its program committees. Teven had a better idea. He said he wanted to restart the beloved Sacramento Jewish Film Festival, which had been so ably led by Margie Park for a number of years. The result of his leadership has been a smashing success.

JCRC members have also supported the work of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee (JPAC), under the able advocacy of Cliff Berg, who also serves on the Federation Board. Each year, JCRC Vice-President Sharon Rogoff, Temple Or Rishon representative Karen Keys, and Federation's Immediate Past President Carol Loew make up a strong team on lobby day representing Jewish concerns at the State Capitol. Sign up for JPAC Advocacy Day 2019 at jpac-cal.org and join us May 5 and 6 for a very worthwhile event.

Finally I also want to thank the following Board members for their great service during 2018: Muriel Brounstein, Joan Gorfain, Meg McClaskey, Ron Meyer, Ryan Pessah, Les Spahn, Brian Uslan, Jason Weiner, and Susan Solarz.

Kind regards,

Bruce Pomer

Chair, Jewish Community Relations Council

MEET OUR 2019 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region is pleased to present our new Board of Trustees!

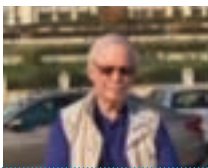
We asked, “Why do you serve?” Here’s what they said.



DEBORAH HOFFMAN GONZALEZ, President I grew up “synagogue-centric” so I know the benefits of being connected to one’s Jewish community, whether it’s a congregation, a school, a camp, or a Jewish book club! I hope I can be a matchmaker of sorts, helping individuals connect with one another and helping people find their Jewish home.



DAVID POISNER, Vice-President My first experience with a Federation/JCC was as a very young child in Kansas City. I saw first-hand how a Federation could build a true community “home.” My involvement in the Sacramento Jewish Federation hopefully will lead to other people having such important impacts on their lives.



BOB DRESSER, Vice-President I am proud of my Jewish heritage and the Jewish people. I believe it is a privilege to serve our people. I have served on both the JCRC and Federation boards and look forward to many more years of service.



FRAN BREMSON, Treasurer/Acting Secretary Federation helps Jewish organizations by collaborating and problem-solving and is the appropriate vehicle for serving the needs of unaffiliated Jews. A viable Federation is also the best way to combat anti-Semitism in the broader community by demonstrating our commitment to a democratic society.



BRUCE POMER, JCRC Chair My service as a board member is directed at enhancing the Federation brand. I hope to contribute to positioning the Federation as a true representative of the Sacramento Jewish community that aligns with and embraces the most progressive and inclusive approaches to community problem-solving.



CAROL LOEW, Immediate Past President A healthy Federation means a healthy community. It is an honor to be part of the Leadership team that welcomes and supports our entire Jewish community. My thanks to the Jewish community for helping us to have a healthy and thriving organization.



CLIFF BERG The Federation plays a critical role in ensuring that there is a Jewish Community in Sacramento providing services and opportunities for young and old to participate in and to build relationships with other communities to stand together against hate and anti-Semitism, and in support of Israel.

19

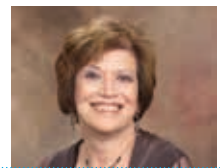
DON GILBERT I am proud of the important services and programs the Federation provides. It is important to help support and expand those services. I also want to ensure our community maintains a healthy relationship with Israel and fully appreciates both Israel's challenges and amazing accomplishments.



RUTH GOTTLIEB Having not been a part of the organized Jewish community for many years, I look forward to working with the interfaith community of Sacramento, expanding the fellowship of the Jewish Federation and the good work that we do.



LINDIE HENDERSON I grew up in a strong federated community in Cleveland so I look forward to serving on the Federation's Board. I want to increase awareness of the importance of a strong Jewish community that includes involvement and increased financial support for so many critical programs and services that Federation provides.



ROBB LAYNE One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone. Through programs like Jewish Family Services and PJ Library, Federation helps us feel that larger sense of the community. My service on the Board is to help further create community for my family and generations to come.



MARION LEFF Serving on the Federation Board is an honor. We have tremendous opportunities and needs in our region and worldwide that can best be served by one central umbrella organization. It is critical that it remains strong to carry out its mission that at the end of the day, benefits us all.



MADELINE RUBENSTEIN I believe in the work Federation does locally, domestically, and internationally. My previous experience with the Greater Miami Jewish Federation and our Sacramento Federation have added to my life. Being invited to serve on the Board makes me feel like I am "home."



DAN WEITZMAN For me, it's about service to my community and the greater region. Faith and community leadership are key to my life and through the Sacramento Jewish Federation, I can fulfill my goals and life's work. I believe in "walking the talk" and the Federation can be effective in making our community a better place.



CARON NOGEN ZAMANSKY I see the Federation dollars at work. I'm a consumer, and serving on the Board is a way for me to give back. I also hope that serving on the Board will inspire others to help build and support Jewish people and our community.



Presented by the Jewish Community Relations Council, a Division of the Jewish Federation



**3RD
ANNUAL**

SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDER

A Passover Celebration for People of All Faiths

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

6:00pm

Location TBD

Led by

Rabbis Seth Castleman & Nancy Wechsler

Love your neighbor, as they are the same as you.
Exodus 19:18



Sheila Wolfe: CID Transitions and Traditions — Parent-Professional Partnerships



Susan Abrams, Sheila Wolfe Razi Zarchy

Partnering with others for study, discussion, and activities to connect with others and to help “repair the world” are long-established Jewish values and traditions that definitely resonate with me!

Perhaps that’s why I benefitted so much as Co-Chair of the Federation’s Committee on Inclusion and Disabilities (CID), a parent-professional partnership and team effort to promote positive attitudes and support tangible activities leading to more inclusive Jewish communities throughout our region — communities where people with disabilities/special needs and their families, are welcomed and encouraged to fully participate in Jewish educational, spiritual, communal, family, social, and recreational activities.

As I transition from my CID Co-Chair professional role, I am grateful to the Federation for incorporating CID into the umbrella of Jewish Family Services several years ago. I am also so thankful for all I have learned from our past and current Parent Co-Chairs of CID, Patty Salcedo and Susan Abrams, both experienced parents of Jewish children/young adults with disabilities.

Patty and Susan, their children and families, and the many parents and professionals who have connected with CID over the years, have truly had an amazing impact on me and many others!

“...I am grateful to the Federation for incorporating CID into the umbrella of Jewish Family Services...”

Another core Jewish concept, “L’Dor V’Dor — From Generation to Generation,” also really resonates with me! With this in mind, it is with hope and appreciation that we welcome the 2019 CID Professional Co-Chair, Razi Zarchy.

Razi is among the next generation of young Jewish professionals stepping up to new leadership roles within the Federation. He brings his expertise as a Speech-Language Pathologist to the role, and deep insights into the issues of access and inclusion as the husband of his new bride, Leah, a deaf professor at CSUS.

About his new role, Razi says, “I have been involved with CID for the past few years, and I am thrilled to continue its mission forward. My primary goal will be to seek out the needs, concerns, and opinions of our community members with disabilities and their families, to make our Jewish spaces accessible and inclusive. Please let us know your thoughts.”

CID will be piloting a new project, the *CID Resource & Referral Network* this year. The CID R&R Network will be a database of individuals, family members, professionals, and organizations able to offer support to people with disabilities, and their families, throughout the Jewish community. Please consider becoming a CID Resource for our community!

Sheila Wolfe is the now former Co-Chair of CID. For more information about CID and the Resource & Referral Network, visit www.jewishsac.org/inclusionanddisabilities.

FEDERATION'S

The Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region welcomed 90 of its top donors on February 2, 2019 for an inspirational evening that celebrated SHERRY AND STEVE RAFFIN. Sherry was named Federation's Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award which honors extraordinary women who have set a high standard for philanthropy.

Photo Credit: Steve Marshall



“Giving is not about receiving; it’s about the values that Judaism teaches us. It is our duty to be kind and repair the world — tikkun olam — and to pass these ideals from generation to generation — l’dor v’dor.”

Sherry Raffin, Recipient of the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award

“It was a family tradition to be involved in Israel and national and local needs. We have a duty to support that.”

Dr. Steve Raffin, Federation Honoree along with his wife, Sherry



“This evening we get to celebrate. We can’t do what we do without people like you to celebrate the work Federation does.”

Willie Recht, Federation Executive Director



“Sherry brings a smile and joy to everything she does while Steve focuses on the details that make a difference. Every meeting is filled with heart and a commitment to a joke.” Rabbi Alan Rabishaw, Temple Or Rishon



BIG EVENT! 2.2.19

Special guest, Jeff Schoenfeld, President, UJA New York, presented a moving tribute about the need for the Federation system, its collective impact, and tangible outcomes. Joining virtually were Jerry Silverman, President & CEO of Jewish Federations of North America, and Wendy Abrams, Chair of National Women's Philanthropy.



"Our community is blessed to have my dear friends, Sherry and Steve Raffin, to lead us, inspire us, and assure us that we will have a healthy address for our Jewish community at the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region." Carol Loew, Federation Past President

"The Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award award is one of the highest tributes to women volunteer leaders across our community. It is representative of a woman of valor who honors leadership in their community. You (Sherry) are a model to your community and to all women." Jerry Silverman, President & CEO, Jewish Federations of North America



"This Big Event allows us the opportunity to honor and recognize you — our top donors and supporters — whose generous commitments year after year provide the critical services this community depends on, and makes possible the impactful programming that allows us to continue to build and strengthen the Jewish community here in the Sacramento Region." Deborah Gonzalez, Federation President



"Fulfilment in life is not about what you get, it's about what you give back." Jeff Schoenberg, President, UJA Federation New York



PROGRAM FEATURE: CAMP FIRE EMERGENCY RELIEF

PROVIDING CRITICAL SUPPORT

★ HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED

On November 8, 2018, the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history started on Camp Creek Road in Butte County.

- 86 civilians killed.
- 153,336 acres or almost 240 sq. miles engulfed in flames.
- 18,804 structures destroyed, with most of the damage occurring within the first four hours.
- \$16.5 billion in total damages; one-quarter of the damage, \$4 billion, was not insured.
- 100 percent containment reached November 25, 2018, 17 days after it began.

★ HERE'S HOW FEDERATION RESPONDED

- Camp Fire Relief Appeal began November 12, 2018.
- Financial donations and material donations were collected from across the state and the country.
- Jewish Family Services:
 - Purchased VISA Gift Cards to assist with expenses
 - Assisted a senior and a couple with temporary hotel stay expenses
 - Provided a Geriatric Care Manager to assist a senior with finding housing and transportation to doctors' appointments
 - Purchased and distributed clothing
 - Assisted a PJ Library family with grocery cards, items from the Kosher Food Pantry, and temporary housing

★ HERE ARE THE ORGANIZATIONAL ALLOCATIONS FEDERATION MADE

Dollars raised: \$412,089.37*

- \$90,000 Salvation Army
- \$90,000 Red Cross
- \$90,000 North Valley Community Foundation
- \$54,000 IsraAID
- \$36,000 Community Action Agency of Butte County
- \$15,000..... Chabad Jewish Center of Chico

**As of January 31, 2019. All funds will be distributed by May 1, 2019.
100% of all funds collected will be donated to Fire Relief.*



HERE'S WHAT THE RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS SAID

We would like to thank our friends at The Jewish Federation of Sacramento for your amazing support during the Camp Fire. Your generous gift will allow us to help so many Camp Fire survivors. The Salvation Army was on scene the day that the Camp Fire started. We are now entering into our early recovery phase with a goal of assisting families with rental assistance, household supplies, work supplies, and additional vital needs. Thank you so much for partnering with us to help our neighbors in need who lost so much.

Kim Butters *Director of Development, The Salvation Army*

We are highly appreciative to the Jewish Federation of Sacramento and to all of the donors from across the country who came together and contributed to long-term recovery efforts. This has enabled us to deploy teams of IsraAID Israeli psycho-social support experts, building capacity for the educators and caregivers for the children and families of the devastating fires in Paradise. We are very grateful to the community members enabling us to provide help.

Seth H. Davis *Executive Director, IsraAID USA*

The American Red Cross is grateful for the generous donations made to the Jewish Federation. During the ongoing response, more than 1,100 displaced people took residence in shelters — more than half of them in Red Cross shelters. The funds you provided were instrumental in helping us remove the barriers that some residents had to being able to move on to a more appropriate housing solution. That help could be the purchase of plane tickets so that a resident could get to a relative's place out of state. It could be as simple as a tank of gas or a repair to a damaged automobile, or replacement of clothing that was lost in the fires. In addition to this transition aid for shelter residents, the Red Cross has already provided substantial dollars to more than 5,000 residents who lost their homes, to help fill the gaps versus other funding that may be available to them.

Gary Strong *Chief Executive Officer, Gold Country Region of the American Red Cross*

Thank you to the Jewish Federation of Sacramento for a generous grant towards our Camp Fire Relief Fund. Chabad Jewish Center of Chico is heavily involved in many activities to help Camp Fire survivors. The funding from the Federation went specifically to providing home-cooked meals for thousands of survivors during the first few weeks after the fire. We are so appreciative for the grant that helped cover the costs involved in this important effort and that provided warmth and care to so many.

Rabbi Mendy Zwiebel *Chabad Jewish Center of Chico*





The Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region would like to thank our Life & Legacy family. Planting the seeds for future generations, the Life & Legacy Program enables us to continue our work for the community and ensures our community remains vibrant and resilient for years to come.

Anonymous (8)
 Debra and Cliff Berg
 Jessica and Joel Birch
 Alison and Phil Braverman
 Barry Broad
 Alice Cartwright
 Melissa Chapman
 Peter Colussy and Willie Recht
 Lynn and Michael Dean
 Robert Dresser
 Barbara Dubnick
 Davina Dubnick
 Anne and Hal Eisenberg
 David Felderstein and Daniel Hoody
 Sandra and Steve Felderstein
 Shira and Don Gilbert
 Deborah and Louis Gonzalez
 Gerald Digby Gordon Trust
 Allen Green
 Janie and Frank Gumpert
 Joan Gusinow and Jerry Pollack
 Pam Herman
 Lydia Ingram
 Linda and Marvin Kamras
 Lisa Kaplan
 J. Daniel Khazzoom
 Marc Koenigsberg and Robb Layne

Marion and Stan Leff
 Susanne Leitner and Rob Berrin
 Fanny and Neil Levy
 Debbie and John Lewis
 Judy Lewis
 Steve Lewis
 Martha Limberg z"l
 Carol Loew
 Jack Mador
 Margaret Kent Newton and Bill Slaton
 Lorraine and Michael Opper
 Linda and David Poisner
 Anne and Bruce Pomer
 Sharon and Michael Rogoff
 Sid Rosenberg
 Shirley and Skip Rosenbloom
 Jean Rubin
 Michael Schermer MD
 Andrea Segal
 Michael J. Singer
 Sue and Harry Sperber
 Gretchen and Alan Steinberg
 Rabbi Reuven Taff
 Wendy Wilson
 Sheila Wolfe
 Beverly z"l and Art Zimmerman
 Louise and Joel Zimmerman

Mosaic Law Congregation
welcomes you

Are you new to town or unaffiliated?

Mosaic Law Congregation, *Sacramento's only synagogue affiliated with the Conservative Movement*, features innovative and creative religious services that are firmly rooted in tradition while keeping pace with modern sensibilities.

Join our diverse community, as we celebrate and explore Jewish life together. From Shabbat, to holidays, to life cycle events, you will find programs that appeal to all ages.

Ask about our *complimentary first year membership* that includes High Holiday tickets.

Mosaic Law Congregation
mosaiclaw.org | 916 488-1122
katep@mosaiclaw.org

Home of Peace Cemetery

THE CEMETERY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THE GREATER SACRAMENTO REGION
 Established 1850

Home of Peace is our non-profit Jewish Community cemetery and mausoleum serving all Jewish people in the greater Sacramento area. Cared for perpetually with the sensitivity, sacredness, and dignity befitting consecrated ground enshrining the mortal remains of our loved ones, Home of Peace offers a variety of interment options. Individual and double gravesites are available in many different sections of the Cemetery. Sections of the Cemetery have also been set aside for people desiring strict adherence to halachic standards, for interfaith married families, and for cremains. Crypts and double crypts are available in the mausoleum.

Pre-need arrangements are encouraged to ensure that desired final wishes will be carried out, and to ease the burden on surviving family members.

For further information, or for pre-need, please contact
Lew Rosenberg, Executive Director
Ph: (916) 446-1409 E-m: homeofpeace@comcast.net

The Home of Peace Cemetery is a non-profit Jewish Community organization.



JFNA Emergency Committee: How It Helps

by Gail Norry

Whenever disaster strikes, the Jewish people are there to help. “Tikkun olam” or repairing the world, is a central tenet of our faith. Responding in times of disaster has long been one of the primary responsibilities of local Jewish Federations.

Federations, under the umbrella leadership of The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and our Emergency Committee, provide a means to respond “in a Jewish way” to emergencies or natural disasters such as Hurricanes Harvey, Katrina, and Sandy, or local emergencies that may not make the national news. You saw this in action in your own community during the Camp Fire.

JFNA’s Emergency Committee was established in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo, which devastated the Jewish community in Charleston, South Carolina at the end of the 1980s. We recognized that a collective response was needed to prepare and assist Jewish communities in the event of natural disasters. From the recent devastating California fires to the Puerto Rico hurricanes to Texas flooding, JFNA immediately reaches out to local Jewish communities when an emergency strikes to determine if national assistance is needed.

Over the years, the Emergency Committee and its Disaster Relief Fund have assisted victims of numerous hurricanes, severe floods, wildfires, tornados, and earthquake victims in almost every part of the country. With input from the local community, JFNA sometimes opens a national mailbox and provides large-scale relief; at other times, we encourage Federations to send resources, financial and otherwise, directly to a local community to support its own fundraising drive.

Though the Emergency Committee’s mission is to respond to domestic disasters, JFNA’s Israel and Overseas Office works closely with our partner agency, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, on international disaster relief efforts in places such as Nepal, the Philippines, Haiti, and Japan. JFNA also convenes the Jewish Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD), a group that coordinates disaster response among other national Jewish organizations, the religious streams, and several large Federations to ensure that the collective resources of the Jewish community are best utilized in times of emergency.

The most challenging aspect of the Emergency Committee’s mandate is providing a long-term response when necessary. Much of the funds raised go to the local Federation-supported Jewish Family Services (JFS) agencies that help people who have lost their jobs to find new ones, receive vocational training, obtain legal aid, and mitigate the devastating effects that natural disasters have on children’s education. One of the most important aspects of long-term relief is ministering to the mental health of disaster victims particularly where children are concerned — including trauma counseling, as well as maintaining their engagement in the Jewish community.

JFNA encourages volunteers to be in touch with their local Federation to ask how they can help mitigate disasters. However one chooses to become involved, the local Federation is the gateway in assisting the most vulnerable among us in their time of need.

Gail Norry is Chair of JFNA’s Emergency Committee.



1

FACT: Every Passover we open the door for Elijah, the Hebrew prophet whose unseen presence is felt helping people throughout the world.

2

FACT: We invite Elijah in to drink from his cup on our Seder table.

3

FACT: He never drinks. What's up with that?

4

FACT: The cup isn't actually for Elijah. It's for us. To remind us of all the times we've been helped by his unseen hand, and to inspire us to return the favor.

ELIJAH. TEETOTALER. *Fact or fiction?*

Please give to The Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region and extend Elijah's reach to your Jewish community at home and around the world this Passover. **Fact: Elijah would approve.**



The Jewish
Federation

OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION
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Holocaust Teaches Community as a Means to Survive

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Community. For Dr. Shimon Frost (z"l), this word could easily be synonymous with survival. A survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, Dr. Frost cheated death several times thanks to his involvement with the Gordonia Youth Movement — his community.

“People don’t survive alone,” explains his son, Joshua Frost, one of two speakers at this year’s **Communitywide Yom HaShoah Commemoration**. “Especially not in times of war and persecution. They survived because of trust and because of the help of people in their community who daily risked their lives for each other.”

The same could be said for Bay-area resident Paul Schwarzbart who also will speak at the annual commemoration. The Schwarzbart family escaped from Vienna, Austria — where they had lived since the 18th century — to Germany and then to Belgium following Kristallnacht in 1938. The only child of Sarah and Friedrich, Paul Schwarzbart became Paul Exsteen in 1943 after his mother reluctantly agreed to send him to a Catholic home for boys, where he hid for two years. He already was fatherless after Friedrich was arrested in 1940 and sent to a labor camp.

“My mother was not allowed to know, and reminded me that I had given up my Jewish identity...and that I was someone else now.”

“(A man) put me on a train and he explained to me where I was going,” Schwarzbart says as part of the oral histories housed online at the Holocaust Center of Jewish Family and Children’s Services in San Francisco. “My mother was not allowed to know, and reminded me that I had given up my Jewish identity...and that I was someone else now.”

Although not quite 10 years old, Schwarzbart was old enough to know what was happening.

“...I never saw that man again,” he continues. “I have no idea who he is. We’ve tried to find out. No trace, just an anonymous member of the Jewish underground.”

Because of this underground, this community, Schwarzbart survived and was reunited with his mother following liberation.

Born in Warsaw in 1924, Shimon and his younger sister attended a bilingual school, even though he was one of three high school students who was eligible for the rabbinical tract at an Orthodox school. Humble and a gifted writer, in addition to being highly intelligent, he studied Talmud with a tutor daily for three years, but even when he led a Jewish Day School, he would still say, “I don’t know much about Talmud.”

What he did know about was how to get by in the ghetto, initially believing that what was happening under the Nazis was merely another chapter in Jewish history.

According to Frost, his father would say, “We survived and we will survive again,” adding that the Jewish leadership — the Judenrat (a council that represented the Jewish community) — believed they would be kept alive because the Germans wanted Jews to be efficient and effective workers.

Then came 1942 and mass deportation.

“The Germans were ruthless,” Frost says. “People were initially stunned. Before the ghetto, Jews had political freedom. Now, there was no radio, and they were isolated and guarded at gunpoint. News traveled by word of mouth so there was constant misinformation.”

In his early days in the ghetto, Shimon remained with his family; however, his daily actions were with the Gordonia youth group. As things worsened, Gordonia set up a school, food kitchens, and health clinics. In 1942, they joined with the other Zionist Youth Groups to form the Jewish Fighting Organization and participated in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

“This was an age of ideology,” Frost notes. “A lot of Jewish youth were attracted to socialism, communism, and Zionism. They took these themes literally. They felt empowered. They thought their generation would lead when they grew up.”

In fact, they would be forced to lead way before they reached adulthood.

“Every generation is the last generation. There is no future link in the chain unless we build it.”

Shimon’s roadmap to survival is filled with twists and turns. He bribed his way out of the ghetto, was robbed by political bandits, helped by strangers, and walked around in broad daylight thanks to his Aryan features, all the while communicating with Gordonia leaders through secret couriers. Receiving a message from Gordonia’s leader that he was needed in the ghetto, Shimon prepared to return; however, the Germans raided his safe house. He escaped, but was shot in the leg, which ended up saving him. While he was sent to a Jewish hospital, all of the others in the safe house were sent to Auschwitz.

“Each step along the way, he survived,” explains Frost, who lives in Sacramento. “He spent his 19th birthday in a hospital. He healed in a week, but the Jewish doctor said he was too sick to travel. Then, Gordonia got him out of the hospital and got him a fake passport from Honduras thanks to the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee).”

Other stops along this miraculous roadmap include working in the Jewish health department in the ghetto, surviving different POW camps, and escaping death several more times, although as Frost says, “He didn’t cheat death, he chose life.”



Following liberation, Shimon went to France and graduated from the Sorbonne. He arrived in the United States in 1949 and made Aliyah in 1984. Schwarzbart and his mother arrived in New York after waiting three long years for a visa and having lost 66 members of their family in the Holocaust. They made their way to California where he studied and had a distinguished teaching career that spanned 45 years.

“Love” Schwarzbart says, “can provide shelter, hope, persistence in the face of terrible odds.”

Frost hopes his message of what a community means to survival — and Jewish survival, in particular — will resonate with those who hear his father’s story.

“What I want to bring to this commemoration is not only the story of events that happened, but how people reacted as individuals and as a community,” he explains. “Every generation is the last generation. There is no future link in the chain unless we build it. It’s about the lesson of trusting and making sacrifices for your community in order to create a community. It’s what is said in *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)*: ‘You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.’”

Yom HaShoah: “Survival Networks”

by Susan Solarz, Yom HaShoah Committee Member

At the annual communitywide Yom HaShoah commemoration, we remember the six million Jews and others killed during the Holocaust and honor survivors and refugees. This year’s theme, “Survival Networks,” highlights the community connections, commitment, and support that ultimately saved the lives of survivors.

Two speakers will bear witness and share their family history. Paul Schwarzbart, a Holocaust survivor, will tell us how the Belgian underground took him to an orphanage where he had to conceal his Jewish identity to survive. Paul will share his story of strength through love. Joshua Frost, son of a Holocaust survivor, will tell his father’s story, which includes escaping the Warsaw ghetto and the Gestapo, thanks to the Zionist Youth organization “Gordonia.”

Included in each year’s program is a Book of Remembrance that honors and identifies family members of Sacramento-area residents who perished in the Holocaust, as well as those who survived.

The program opens with a candle lighting procession led by survivors and descendants of survivors. Following the event, displays by 2G (Children of Holocaust Survivors) and Shalom School will be available for viewing.

We shall never forget!

Yom HaShoah is Sunday, April 28, 2019, 6:30pm, at Congregation B’nai Israel, 3600 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento. The commemoration is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region and the Jewish Community Relations Council with the support of the Sacramento Board of Rabbis and the Central Valley Holocaust Educators’ Network. Keneset Israel Torah Center will provide refreshments. Survivors and descendants of survivors may meet at 6:15pm in the courtyard to prepare for the candle lighting procession. Sign language interpreters will be provided by the Federation’s Committee on Inclusion and Disabilities.

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RABBI NANCY WECHSLER: The Aleph That Must Be Heard



Vayikra, “And he called.”

With its root, *koof, resh, aleph*, this word demands attention.

What also demands attention is how this word appears at the start of Leviticus. *Vayikra* contains a scribal anomaly rarely found in the Bible. The last letter of the word, an *aleph*, is written much smaller than normal.

One midrash about this “little *aleph*” refers us to another place in text where *Vayikra* is written with all full letters. In Isaiah 6:3, angels call to one another in G-d’s holy Temple. In this setting, “And he called” refers to two celestial beings in purposeful conversation, calling out: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of G-d’s glory.”

In *Vayikra*, the diminished *aleph* might be missed, and incorrectly read as ‘*vayikar*.’ With a root of *koof, resh, heh*, this word means to happen, hence “And it happened,” when G-d happens upon the character of Bilaam (Numbers 23:4), a professional magician who was hired by King Balak to curse the Jewish people. While G-d was present all the time, perhaps Bilaam viewed G-d as accidentally showing up periodically in his life in a passive way — “And it *happened*” — rather than the active, “And he *called*.”

“Does everyone who wants to absorb Judaism have access to our teachings?”

Parashat *Vayikra* is the first parasha of Torah traditionally studied by young children because it concerns pure gifts of sacrifice made by us to G-d. Just as a child’s soul is unblemished, so too were the pure sacrifices offered in efforts to draw our hearts close to G-d.

There may be a reason why the powerful “little *aleph*” is also the first letter of the word *ozen*, whose root letters mean “ear” or “to listen.” The little *aleph* quietly — but emphatically — raises the question, “Does everyone who wants to absorb Judaism have access to our teachings?” The “little *aleph*” alerts to the truth that Torah should be accessible to everyone who thirsts for it.

Greater awareness of the importance of inclusivity is evident and we are slowly learning what accommodations are needed to make our holy spaces a place for *all* people. Congregation Beth Shalom includes members who are deaf or hearing impaired. We now offer hearing devices at services, greet one another with Shabbat Shalom in sign language, and sign the Sh’ma. In addition to interpreters during the High Holidays, twice a month we use a captioning system where large words of the service and D’var Torah appear on a screen near the Bima. This universal approach is helpful to all of our congregants.

Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It has the numerical value of one and often represents G-d, the ultimate One. With the *aleph* present in *Vayikra*, purpose and meaning call out. With the *aleph* absent in *Vayikar*, life is accidental. Take notice of the little *aleph* that demands to be heard as well as those among us who want to hear.

Rabbi Wechsler is the rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Sacramento.



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