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21 KISLEV, 5786

DECEMBER 11, 2025

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Chabad to Illuminate Chanukah with Ice Menorah, Fire Show & Gelt Drop Extravaganza



Children watching the carving of an Ice sculpture menorah at a Chabad Chanukah event.

Chabad of Tennessee is preparing to light up Chanukah this year with one of its most exciting celebrations yet – featuring a Giant Ice Menorah, Fire Show, and an all-new Fire Truck Ladder Gelt Drop. The community is invited to join this annual outdoor celebration on

Sunday, December 14 at 4 p.m. at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life, 2570 Kirby Parkway.

“This year we are adding thrilling new elements to our Giant Outdoor Menorah Lighting,” said Rabbi Levi Klein, regional director of Chabad. “Members

of the National Ice Carvers Association will carve a giant Menorah from ice – a fascinating process to watch – and then we will kindle the Giant Ice Menorah.”

Attendees will have the rare opportunity to watch professional ice carvers sculpt the majestic Menorah using power tools and chainsaws, and at 4:45 p.m. the Rabbi will ascend a ladder to ignite the Menorah lights in a dramatic and uplifting ceremony.

A brand-new highlight for families and children this year will be the Fire Truck Ladder Gelt Drop, showering chocolate Chanukah gelt from high above – a magical moment sure to delight young participants.

The celebration will also feature a thrilling Fire Show by Michael Fahr of Fire Tribe and Fire Fun Entertainment. Guests will enjoy lively music, Chanukah songs, Chanukah donut decorating, hot apple cider and hot Chanukah latkes, along with dreidels and Chanukah gelt and treats for all.

Certified Ice Carver Vern Barker, president of the National Ice Carvers Association, expressed his enthusiasm: “We are looking forward to being part

of this special occasion.”

Chanukah is a holiday of light, hope and Jewish pride, marked each night by the kindling of the Menorah. “It is a holiday replete with traditions and with displays of Jewish pride and unity,” said Rabbi Klein.

As part of its holiday outreach, Chabad will once again visit the sick in local hospitals and bring Chanukah warmth to those in prisons throughout the Mid-South region. In addition, large Menorahs arranged by Chabad will be displayed at the Memphis International Airport and at key sites across the Memphis area, joining hundreds of Chabad centers worldwide in presenting massive public Menorah displays.

“In a world of spiritual darkness, aimlessness and confusion,” said Rabbi Klein, “there emerges the bold declaration: ‘Let there be light!’ And behold – for eight special nights around the world – there is light.”

For more information about Chanukah events or questions about the holiday, please visit JewishMemphis.com or call **901-754-0404**. All are warmly invited to participate. **HW**

Federation’s Student to Student Initiative Off and Running, Showing Significant Impact



Rachel Sanderson explains the shofar during her Student to Student presentation.

As part of its expanded Community Relations strategy to address rising antisemitism, Memphis Jewish Federation recently launched its Student to Student initiative, which educates high school students across the greater Memphis area about Jews, Judaism, and Israel. Setting a strong foundation for the year ahead, diverse and passionate Jewish teens recently led two dynamic and meaningful presentations at Christian Brothers High School (CBHS) and White Station High School (WSHS).

Meredith Epstein, Ilan Lennon, and Abby Portnoy recently visited Mr. Dustin Perry’s Religion & Contemporary Issues class at CBHS, and Debi Cohen, Samuel First, Mia Katz, Mag-

gie Olswanger, Rachel Sanderson, Jack Shanker, and Dotan Weiss presented to two of Mr. Kyle Tingley’s Facing History and Ourselves classes at WSHS.

Through lively, interactive discussions, the teens introduced 90 high school seniors to their lived experiences regarding Jewish faith and culture, Jewish history, and Israel. They shared their diverse family traditions, Shabbat and holiday observances, and b’nai mitzvah preparations. They offered deeply personal reflections, including experiences as descendants of Holocaust survivors or encounters with antisemitism.

While explaining Kashrut and how to identify kosher packaged foods, the presenters drew the various kosher super-



Federation’s Student to Student Initiative presentation at Christian Brothers High School.

visory symbols and answered numerous questions about food. Hebrew instruction also took place, with the teens writing on the board “Shalom,” “Sababa,” and several of their names in Hebrew.

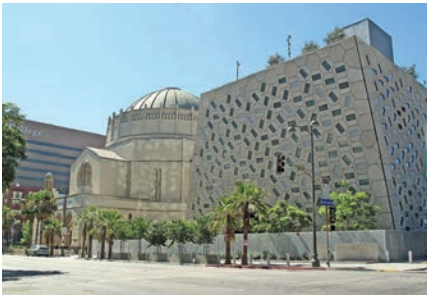
The presentations sparked meaningful discussion and curiosity about Jewish faith and practice. At Christian Brothers, students were surprised to learn that Jews comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population and showed strong interest in Jewish history, in shared prayers in the Catholic and Jewish traditions, including Psalm 23, and in the meaning of visible symbols such as the Star of David, tzitzit, and kippot. At White Station, students were especially engaged by and sensitive toward the presenters’

experiences navigating Jewish identity in predominantly non-Jewish settings, as well as their daily practices and lifecycle events, including weddings and shiva.

The impact of the program to date is profound with 96% of students rating the presentation as highly engaging and informative. The vast majority said they knew very little about Judaism prior to the presentation. One participant reflected, “I learned that Jews mostly have the same upbringing as anyone else, so it doesn’t make sense why they are targeted so much.” And, in a validation of the peer-to-peer model, another student ex-

(See Student Page 2)

Protesters ‘Targeted Jewish Community’ at Los Angeles Synagogue, Rabbi Says



The Wilshire Boulevard Temple’s Glazer Family Campus in Los Angeles, Calif., June 26, 2022. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

By Aaron Bandler

(JNS) – Things “turned unlawful,” and two people were arrested – one for battery and the other for vandalism – after a group protested outside and within Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles last Wednesday, Jeff Lee, a spokesman for the Los Angeles Police Department, told JNS.

Private citizens held the suspects, who were then transported to the police department and booked, Lee said.

Rabbi Joel Nickerson, senior rabbi of the Reform congregation, told JNS that “these individuals targeted the Jewish community and chose to disrupt a community event on synagogue property that was focused on advancing public safety in Koreatown.”

The temple, the oldest synagogue in Los Angeles, is located in the city’s Koreatown neighborhood. Video footage that circulated on social media appeared to show protesters shouting, including cursing, at people entering the syna-

gogue and at people who were already inside during the event. Some footage showed a broken vase with an Israeli flag on the ground.

The footage also appeared to capture someone yelling “get out of our synagogue” at the protesters, and “there’s a nursery downstairs.” Someone responded, “and there are children in Palestine,” per the footage.

Anti-Israel protesters, who gathered outside the synagogue, yelled “baby killers,” “Zionist pigs” and “Zionist scum,” according to videos on social media.

Aram Goldberg, senior vice president of public relations and media strategy at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, stated that the Federation was part of the event, which focused on “bridge building, learning and dialogue” between Jews, Israelis and Asian and Pacific Islander communities.

“An antisemitic protest occurred that disrupted this peaceful gathering,” Goldberg stated. “Several arrests were made following the incident.” He added that the Federation is “outraged” and decried “this antisemitic behavior in the strongest of terms.”

Karen Bass, the mayor of Los Angeles, stated that she heard “reports” of protesters at the synagogue “calling attendees antisemitic names and damaging property inside the temple.”

“This behavior is abhorrent and has no place in Los Angeles,” she stated. She added that “additional LAPD officers have been deployed to patrol near areas of worship.” **HW**

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Student...

(Continued From Page 1)

pressed appreciation for “learning about a new culture from the perspectives of people my age.”

Students highlighted learning details like “Hebrew books are read right to left” and “Jewish people have prayer books and light candles on Friday evening.” Perhaps most meaningfully, one student shared: “Not only did I learn new things, but I also learned that what I thought I knew about Jews was wrong. I’m glad that I had the opportunity to learn about Judaism and Jewish people.”

The program is also deeply impacting

the presenters themselves, all of whom expressed enthusiasm about returning to the classroom for additional presentations. Ilan reflected, “Representing Judaism as a student has always felt like a responsibility, but sharing it with others – showing them who we are as a people – opened my eyes to the positive change I can create in the world.” Rachel and Debi appreciated the students’ “respectful and insightful questions” and the welcoming atmosphere. Jack added that the dialogue “gave me insight into how they think about their own religion, too.”

THE Hebrew Watchman

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12/11/2025



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Dec. 12, 2025 / 22 Kislev, 5786.....4:30 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. Dec. 13, 2025 / 23 Kislev, 5786 5:30 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Vayeishev

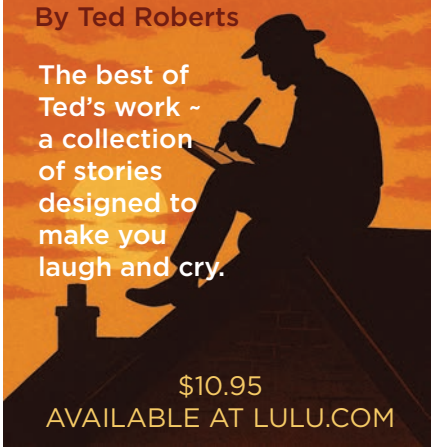
Student to Student is a nationally recognized program under the auspices of Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) that fosters understanding and confronts antisemitism through peer-to-peer connection. It currently operates in 40 cities across the U.S.

If you would like to connect a local school with a Student to Student presentation, please contact Memphis Jewish Federation’s Community Relations Manager, Sara First at sfirst@jcmmemphis.org or 901-767-7100. **HW**

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The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m., and speakers and entertainment start at noon.

Thursday, December 11
12 - 2 p.m.
Special Event: Art Class with Amillia
Invited by popular demand! Join licensed art instructor Amilia for a fun and simple seasonal craft session. Participants will create greeting cards using Sharpies, oil pastels, and watercolor paints. No experience is necessary just bring your creativity and enjoy learning a new skill! Reservations are required. Call the MJCC Front Desk at 901-761-0810.

Monday, December 15
Guest Speaker: Sherry Harbur
Topic: How to Declutter Without Feeling Overwhelmed
Seniors looking to clear out years of collected “tchotchkes” will find Sherry Harbur’s talk both practical and inspiring. She will share strategies to make downsizing less stressful and more manageable. There is no charge for the talk – enjoy a delicious lunch and gain valuable tips afterward.

Wednesday, December 17
Monthly Senior Luncheon Featuring Candice Mache
This month’s luncheon entertainment showcases the talented Candice Mache, accompanied by her pianist. Steeped in classic blues and jazz, Candice brings the sultriness of Peggy Lee and the soulful depth of Nina Simone. Whether in an intimate nightclub or leading a New Orleans swing crowd, her dynamic approach to American classics captivates



Candice Mache

listeners. Candice has performed for the Senior Adult Club several times and is repeatedly requested for return engagements. She appears through Creative Aging, which helps the MJCC offer exceptional entertainment to our community.
This month, we’re gathering in honor of Otto Malone, who recently passed away at the remarkable age of 101. Otto was a bright, joyful presence at our events – always showing up in themed outfits, always ready to make someone smile. He will be deeply missed.
Cost: Only \$5 for lunch and entertainment.
This luncheon is generously sponsored by Silverts Adaptive Clothing and Footwear. Their representative, Cindy Longmire, will be there to share information for anyone interested.
As always, lunch is kosher and prepared by the Memphis Jewish Home. Call the front desk at 901-761-0810 to reserve your seat.

Monday, December 22
Team Trivial Pursuit
One of our most popular programs returns! Seniors are divided into two teams to answer trivia questions from the classic game Trivial Pursuit. Teams debate, reminisce, and challenge their memories – resulting in a lot of fun, friendly competition, and laughter. Lunch is included.

Wednesday, December 24
Speaker: Steve Baer
Topic: Advantage Plans vs. Supplements? Plus Changes in Medicare for 2026
Insurance professional Steve Baer, who has over 18 years of experience, will clarify the often-confusing differences between Medicare Supplements and Medicare Advantage Plans. He will also review important updates coming in 2026. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about your healthcare options.

Join Us for Daily Kosher Lunches
The Senior Adult Club invites all seniors to enjoy a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the Memphis Jewish Home, Monday through Friday, for only \$2. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m.
To reserve:
•Call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220
•Email stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org
•Or contact the MJCC Front Desk at 901-761-0810
Steve Kaplan is available Monday–Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. **HW**

Gaza Militia Leader Yasser Abu Shabab Killed



Yasser Abu Shabab, head of the eastern Rafah city-based Popular Forces. Credit: Popular Forces/ Facebook.
By Hodaya Busheri and Lidor Sultan

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – Yasser Abu Shabab, the leader of the Popular Forces militia who openly challenged Hamas in recent months, was killed in the Gaza Strip last Thursday.
After being evacuated to Soroka Medical Center in Beersheva, he was pronounced dead.
Abu Shabab, who commanded a force of several hundred armed men, accused Hamas of looting aid supplies and fostering chaos and corruption. Hamas accused him of treason and of serving as an Israeli proxy, attacked his men and released footage showing gunmen being killed.
Palestinian sources reported in late May that a new armed force was taking control of food trucks in Rafah in southern Gaza. The militia was led by Abu Shabab, who previously served time in a Hamas prison.
According to Hamas-linked circles, he was able to break out following an Israeli airstrike during the war and subsequently took command of a group estimated at 100 to 300 armed men.
The Abu Shabab clan belongs to the large Tarabin tribe, one of the most powerful in the Gaza Strip. Members of the tribe cooperated with the Islamic State terrorist organization during the past decade as part of the smuggling trade between Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, in which Hamas also played a major role. The clan itself does not hold ideological affiliation with the Islamic State. **HW**

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Your Health

I Have a Cough That Won't Go Away? What is Wrong with Me?

By Cindy Katz, DNP

When a Cough Won't Go Away
In our clinic, we often see patients who come in saying, "I've had this cough for weeks, and it just won't go away." A lingering cough can interrupt sleep, make it hard to talk, and leave you feeling worn out.

So, what's really going on when a cough doesn't quit, and when is it time to get it checked out?

Common Causes of a Lingering Cough

1. Postnasal Drip
After a cold or during allergy season, mucus can continue to drip down the back of your throat, creating that constant "tickle" that triggers a cough. It's often worse at night or in the early morning.

2. Asthma or Reactive Airway Disease

Some people have a form of asthma where cough is the only symptom. It may flare up with exercise, exposure to cold air, or irritants like smoke or strong fragrances.

3. Acid Reflux (GERD)
Stomach acid that travels back up into the throat can irritate the airway and cause chronic coughing, especially when lying down after meals.

4. Post-Infectious Cough
After a viral infection – like a cold, the flu, or even COVID-19 – inflammation in the airways can linger, keeping your cough reflex active for weeks after you've otherwise recovered.

5. Medications
Certain blood pressure medications (especially ACE inhibitors) can trigger a dry, persistent cough. If you've recently started a new medication, let your healthcare provider know so they can review it with you.

6. Environmental Irritants
Exposure to smoke, dust, perfumes, or pollution can keep your airways irritated and delay healing.

When to Schedule a Visit
While most lingering coughs resolve on their own, it's important to schedule an appointment if your cough lasts longer than three weeks or if you notice:

- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Coughing up blood or thick green/yellow mucus
- Chest pain or tightness
- Fever that won't go away
- Unexplained weight loss or fatigue

These could be signs of asthma, infection, chronic bronchitis, or another condition that needs evaluation and treatment.

Simple Ways to Soothe Your Cough at Home

- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking fluids helps thin mucus and keeps your throat moist.
- **Add humidity:** A cool-mist humidifier can ease irritation in dry environments.
- **Avoid smoke and irritants:** Try to steer clear of secondhand smoke, dust, and harsh cleaning products.
- **Soothe your throat:** Warm tea with honey, throat lozenges, or saltwater gargles can calm irritation.
- **Sleep with your head elevated:** Especially helpful if reflux or postnasal drip are contributing factors.

The Takeaway
A cough that lingers doesn't always mean something serious, but it's your body's way of signaling that something needs attention. If your cough hasn't improved or is affecting your daily life, it's worth getting checked out. **HW**



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AI Facial Recognition Helps Identify Nazi Gunman in Holocaust Execution Photo



Photograph known as “The Last Jew in Vinnitsa,” depicting a mass execution in the city of Berdichev, Ukraine, on July 28, 1941. Credit: Creative Commons Zero

(JNS) – A decades-old mystery surrounding the 1941 photograph long known as “The Last Jew in Vinnitsa” – showing a kneeling Jewish man moments before his execution by a German soldier – has been solved with the help of AI.

The photo first surfaced during the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, when survivor Al Moss submitted it to demonstrate the cruelty of Nazi mass shootings. For years, the identities of both the shooter and the victim remained unknown.

According to new research by Jurgen Matthaues, former head of research at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the gunman has now been identified as Jakobus Onnen, a 34-year-old former teacher from northern Germany.

Matthaues published his preliminary findings last year, and a living relative of Onnen later provided family photos, which were then matched with 99% confidence using an AI facial recognition tool.

Matthaues’s findings, published in September 2025 in the German-language publication The Journal of Historical Studies, concluded that the photograph was taken during an Einsatzgruppe massacre in the Ukrainian city of Berdichev on July 28, 1941.

Onnen was an SS member who participated in mass executions under the Einsatzgruppe C as it followed the Wehrmacht into Soviet territory. He was killed in 1943.

The victim in the image remains unidentified. [HW](#)

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Islamic Jihad Claims it Found Hostage Remains; Hamas Says Body to Be Handed to Red Cross


(JNS) – The Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist group claimed it “found” the body of a hostage in Gaza last Wednesday as Hamas said it was preparing to transfer the remains to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

“We found the body of one of the enemy’s captives during search and excavation operations this morning in the northern Gaza Strip,” PIJ’s “military” wing, Saraya al-Quds, said in an Arabic statement.

“Work is underway to complete certain procedures that precede the process of handing over the body, in accordance with established protocols,” the Iranian-backed terrorist organization added.

Jerusalem has yet to weigh in on the reported discovery of the hostage body. The bodies of two captives remain in Gaza: Israel Police counter-terror officer Master Sgt. Ran Gvili and Thai citizen Sudthisak Rinthalak. **HW**





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When Things Seem Out of Control, Control Things You Can

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors
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During times of heightened stress, such as when there’s extreme market volatility, a person can quickly become overwhelmed and struggle to do things that might be considered simple or obvious. It can be helpful to focus on the things you can control, identify actions that you can take, and complete those action steps.

Here are four action items for you to consider:

1. Review your investment plan
- Before you start making changes to your investment portfolio, consider your goals. Are you saving for retirement? Do you need to build a college fund for your children? Did a recent event create a need to adjust your plan?
- If your goals have changed or if you haven’t updated your plan in a while, review and, if necessary, update your investment strategy to support reaching your goals.

2. Understand your risk tolerance
- Risk is a key principle in investing. Some investments are riskier than others, but every financial decision involves risk. Since risk is inescapable, the key is to understand your risk tolerance and manage how much you are taking, which should be based on your long-term financial goals. If your tolerance for risk has changed, review your strategy and make sure you are still comfortable with the amount of risk you’re taking.
3. Stick to your plan
- When the market gets volatile, investors often react emotionally and may want to pull out of the market to try to avoid loss. However, remember that moving or selling investments during a market decline will likely lock in losses; staying invested may allow you to benefit if the market comes back. Before reacting, take time to step back and try to

- respond using logic rather than emotion.
4. Organize and update important documents
- Are your important documents up-to-date and accessible to those who may need them?
- Create a reference list of your documents and consider making a digital version for easy storage and accessibility. Also ensure that your beneficiary designations for investment accounts, life insurance, and other accounts are up-to-date to reflect any new circumstances such as marriage, birth, death, or divorce. Beneficiary designations typically supersede your will or trust, so you’ll want to confirm that they are current and accurate.
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This Mixed Jewish-Arab School in Ramle Seeks to Model a Blueprint for Israel's Future



The Yigal Alon school in Ramle, one of just a few mixed Arab-Jewish schools in Israel, offers a rare and tangible model for how to bolster coexistence in Israel. Credit: Courtesy of Amal

By Elana Sztokman

November 6, 2025 (JTA) – RAMLE, Israel – In the heart of the central Israeli city of Ramle, where Jews and Arabs live side by side, the Yigal Alon Multidisciplinary High School is trying to spearhead a quiet revolution.

The student body reflects the full tapestry of Israeli society, with students who are Jewish, Muslim, and Christian, religious and secular, native-born and immigrant. The school has a particularly large Ethiopian-Israeli population, and students with special needs. In Israel, such diversity is often treated as a problem to be managed. At Yigal Alon, it is treated as an opportunity, one that was especially important during Israel's two-year war.

When 32-year-old alumnus Moshael Shlomo, a commander in the IDF's Yamam counterterrorism unit, was killed on October 7, 2023, his death reverberated through the school community. Shlomo, who grew up in a socio-economically disadvantaged home in Ramle, attended Yigal Alon from 2006 to 2009, and was known for his charisma, athleticism and drive to help others. He served as a paratrooper, then rose to become an IDF team commander and demolitions expert in Yamam.

After Shlomo's death in combat with Hamas attackers near Kibbutz Be'eri, Yigal Alon students worked with school staff and Shlomo's family to begin transforming a neglected plot on the school campus into a lawn – the first stage of a memorial project that eventually will include a sports field, outdoor seating and garden of peace. The project seeks to honor Shlomo's memory by creating a space that reflects his passion for athletics and community, and the area will serve as an after-school haven for teenagers who by and large can't afford the kind of extra-curricular activities their peers do. Administrators hope teens using it will build stronger peer relationships and practice the values Shlomo embodied, including generosity and service to community and country.

"It isn't just about Shlomo's athleticism," said sports teacher Dotan Rotshtein, who is spearheading the project. "It's about his character of determination and kindness. This project will educate students in his spirit."

The project at Yigal Alon is one example of the many ways Israelis are memorializing those killed during the war, trying to make something positive out of the pain, hardship and loss they endured during the longest conflict in Israel's history. Rather than serving as a flashpoint, Shlomo's death became a unifying experience for Yigal Alon, bringing Arab and Jewish students together in determination to build some-

thing positive.

The school, one of 50 in the Amal educational network, offers a rare and tangible model for how to bolster Arab-Jewish coexistence and build a society rooted in shared humanity, administrators said.

"This school is a home not just for students, but for families," said principal Barak Friedman, himself a school alumnus and Ramle native. "Everyone belongs. Everyone matters."

In Israel, only eight out of 250 municipalities are considered mixed Jewish-Arab. Almost all public schools are segregated along ethnic and religious lines. Yigal Alon is one of Israel's very few mixed Arab-Jewish public schools.

"Once people saw this as a liability," Friedman said. "I see it as a wonderful opportunity."

Staff at the school try to weave the values of shared humanity into academic life. During the war, students met weekly in conversation circles where Jewish and Arab classmates spoke openly about how the conflict was affecting their families. They worked together on projects like murals and performances to express their emotions.

Older students tutor younger ones, often across language and cultural lines, and 11th graders complete community service work in both Jewish and Arab institutions. The school also has a large group of Shinshinim – Israeli volunteers from pre-military academies who work alongside teachers to help give students one-on-one attention and assist those with learning disabilities.

Jewish and Arab students and teachers work side by side.

"Students aren't interested in the ethnic background or origin stories of fellow students; what matters to them is their relationships with each other," Friedman said. "At a time of growing extremism in Israeli society, the connections between these youths [are] quite unique and inspiring."

These connections flourished even during the war.

Within the Amal network – whose diverse portfolio of schools ranges from vocational schools that serve traditionally marginalized Israeli populations including immigrants, Arabs, and haredim to science & technology schools in Israel's biggest cities – 45 alumni were killed in the war, many of them siblings or cousins of current students. Schools were struck by missiles, relocated due to being in conflict zones or absorbed evacuees. Some students had relatives taken hostage to Gaza, and many had parents or siblings in combat. Everyone was affected.

"The loss is not only in the fallen,"



"At a time of growing extremism in Israeli society, the connections between these youths is quite unique and inspiring," said Barak Friedman, principal of the Yigal Alon school in Ramle, Israel. Credit: Courtesy of Amal

said Asher Ben Shoshan, Amal's head of human resources. "Many of our students and staff were living with traumas."

Amal's schools responded by expanding trauma-related programming, offering counseling, and creating spaces for students to process emotions through dialogue and creativity.

"We're not just teaching algebra or English," Ben Shoshan said. "We're helping young people hold their lives together. That is the mission now."

Traditionally a network of vocational schools, Amal has focused in recent years on turning its schools into centers of science and technology while also trying to heal Israel's societal rifts and strengthen democratic values among its more than 3,000 teachers and 26,000 students.

"We believe that education is not just about knowledge but about citizenship," said Tamar Peled Amir, Amal's deputy director general for education, technology and R&D. "Our classrooms are where the future of Israel is being written – not just with math equations or essays, but with empathy, resilience and an unwavering commitment to building a shared society."

Karen Tal, Amal's director general, said focusing on Israeli society is part of the schools' educational responsibility.

"We don't have the luxury of detachment," Tal said. "Our responsibility is not only academic. It is human. Shared society is not a slogan. It is the essence of democracy. When students learn to listen to one another, to respect differences and to see the humanity in the other, they are learning what it means to live in a democratic society. That is the Israel we are working to build, one classroom at a time."

Arab students in Rotshtein's after-school fitness club now wear team

shirts bearing Shlomo's name. "They want to feel part of this country, part of his legacy," Rotshtein said.

"The space we decided to build in Moshael's honor reflects who he was: generous, kind, committed to others," Rotshtein said. "It is also a project that brings people together, Jews and Arabs, in a spirit of unity."

Friedman, the principal, said, "Whether you are Jewish or Arab, religious or secular, we teach our students to take responsibility for themselves, for each other and for society. Because only that kind of responsibility will allow Israel to heal."

It's an ethos Friedman himself embodies: As part of his military reserve duty, he's a "notifier" – part of the three-person crew that visits parents' homes when a soldier is killed to inform them of the terrible news. The experience has shaped his worldview, and the school's focus on service to community.

Much of the implementation for school-specific initiatives like the Shlomo memorial project relies on community partnerships and philanthropy.

"We are reaching out to the global Jewish community and to friends of Israeli democracy everywhere," said Yael Nathanel, Amal's resource development director. "Projects like this do not just build walls and gardens. They build empathy, resilience and vision. But we need help to ensure that this becomes a reality."

This story was sponsored by and produced in collaboration with Amal Educational Network, an Israeli public high school network specializing in science and technology that prepares students of all social groups for the changing needs of democratic Israeli society. This article was produced by JTA's native content team. [HW](#)

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Democrats on Senate Panel Call for Ingrassia to Be Fired from Trump Admin Post

(JNS) – The Democrats on the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee are demanding that Paul Ingrassia, who has admitted to having “a Nazi streak,” be removed from a top post in the Trump administration.

Ingrassia was named deputy general counsel of the General Services Administration after he withdrew his nomination to the Office of Special Counsel in the face of bipartisan Senate opposition following a series of texts, in which he said, “I do have a Nazi streak in me from time to time, I will admit it.”

In the text messages, he also said that Martin Luther King Jr. Day should be “tossed into the seventh circle of hell” and that people should “never trust a Chinaman or Indian.”

In a letter to Michael Rigas, acting GSA administrator, and Dan Scavino, director of the Office of Presidential Personnel, six of the seven Democratic committee members said that Ingrassia had no business serving in the Trump administration.

“Let us be clear. Mr. Ingrassia’s continued employment in the U.S. government is unacceptable,” the lawmakers wrote. “His appointment betrays the trust of every American, including those whom Mr. Ingrassia has so brazenly disparaged.”

“We demand the immediate removal of Paul Ingrassia from the General Services Administration and from consideration for any other position in this administration,” they added. (JNS sought comment from the GSA.)

The letter was signed by six of the seven committee Democrats. The seventh, Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) told JNS that his office was unaware of the letter but holds the position of his colleagues.

“I do not support Mr. Ingrassia and believe he is unfit to serve in an office of public trust,” Fetterman told JNS.


Lawmakers said that there were hundreds of statements from Ingrassia “directing hatred and discrimination towards women and black, Asian, Muslim, Jewish and Indian Americans, among others.”

The senators also said Ingrassia reportedly intervened in an investigation of alleged sex trafficker Andrew Tate. Tate has used “unabashedly antisemitic rhetoric, perpetuating Holocaust revisionism, spreading conspiracy theories about Israel, praising Hamas, performing Nazi salutes and encouraging people to embrace and openly engage in racism,” according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Ingrassia also appeared at a rally with Holocaust denier and white supremacist Nick Fuentes, whose appearance with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson has set off concerns among Republicans about right-wing antisemitism. He also once described the Hamas attack against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, as a “psyop,” short for psychological operation.

“Mr. Ingrassia has shown that he will use his power to advance interests of alleged sex traffickers and antisemites,” the senators wrote. “He cannot be trusted to hold any government position.” HW

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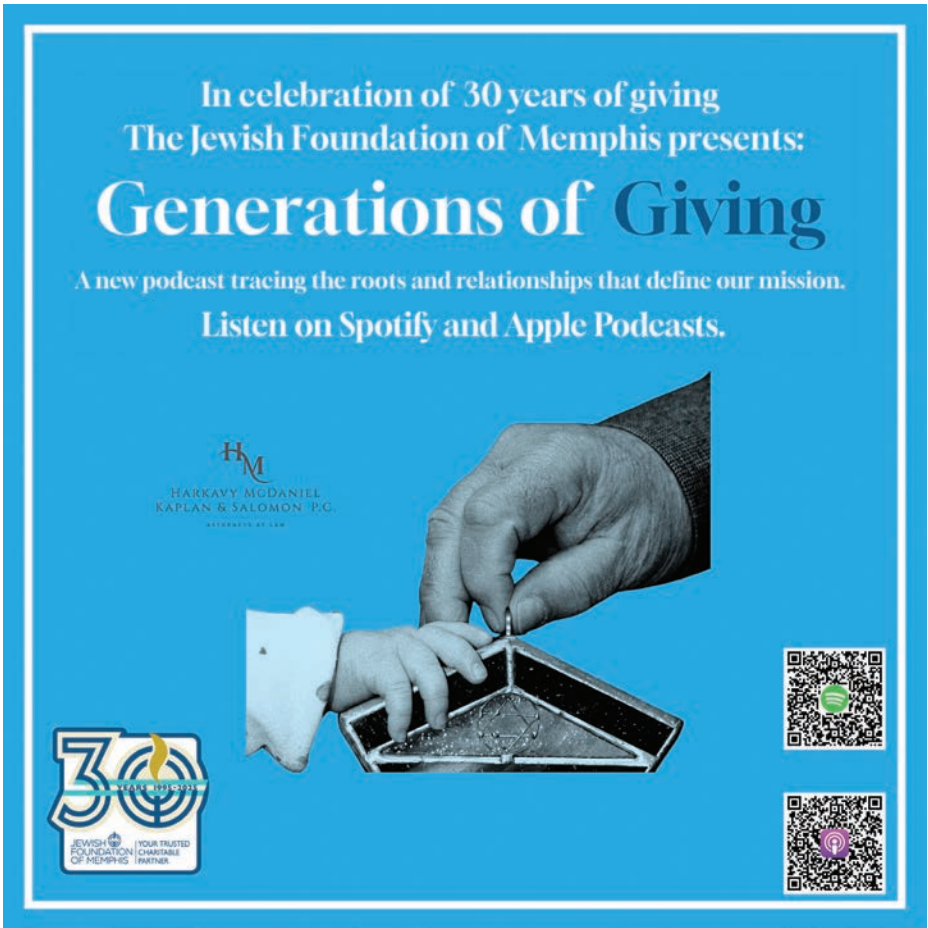
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Lee Harkavy has spent many years giving back to the Memphis Jewish community – something he learned at a young age from watching his parents step into major leadership roles. Lee and his wife, Laura, manage their philanthropy through the Laura and Lee Harkavy Philanthropic Fund, which operates as a Donor Advised Fund. He is a partner in the Memphis office of the law firm Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs, LLP, where he concentrates in general corporate, mergers and acquisitions, capital markets, and real estate transactions. He holds a J.D. from Vanderbilt University and a B.B.A., summa cum laude, in Finance and Accounting from the University of Michigan. Listen to an interview with Lee on the Foundation’s new podcast, “Generations of Giving,” available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.



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October 2019: In celebration of 25 years of philanthropic impact, Jewish Foundation leaders held a special anniversary event featuring well-known author Rabbi Daniel Cohen on “Leading a Life of Legacy.” Pictured are longtime leaders and past chairs of the Foundation: Anthony Morrison, Sandy Blockman and Charles Jalenak. Under their leadership, the Foundation has grown to more than \$200 million in invested assets.

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