With Your Support, JDC Helps Tens of Thousands During Pandemic

By Elisheva Massel, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Global Resource Development, JDC

Among those most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, seniors worldwide face grueling challenges. In addition to fears about their health, many suffer debilitating loneliness brought on by shutdowns and quarantine.

One of those seniors is Sofia M, an 84-year-old former preschool teacher living in Chisinau, Moldova. Sofia lives alone on a small monthly pension after a life marked by war and strife. She also endures debilitating leg pain and uses a walker as a result of two falls confining her to her home in 2014.

Thankfully, Sofia is one of 80,000 + poor, elderly Jews who receive life-saving aid from the Jewish Council of North Central Florida’s overseas partner, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the global Jewish humanitarian organization. With that support, which includes homecare and rehab services, Sofia’s situation has been improving.

On the eve of Chanukah in 2019, she experienced a miracle and was able to go up and down the stairs of her apartment building for the first time in five years. And though she must stay at home now because of the pandemic, she says the visits she gets from her homecare worker and the aid she gets from JDC are “the light in my window.”

The same services benefiting Sofia today were improving lives before the pandemic and are central to JDC’s work in the former Soviet Union. They have been critical, as well, to its pandemic response and increasing needs among the elderly.

With the support of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida, JDC has operated uninterrupted during COVID-19 and continued its provision of food, medicine, and homecare to the tens of thousands of Jews in its care.

The organization achieved this by ensuring its staff and network of Hesed social welfare centers were equipped with safety gear, trained in best practices, and secured essential worker permits. Additionally, JDC’s work was buoyed by legions of local Jewish volunteers and Jewish teens the organization has trained to care for their communities in crisis.

Those volunteers work with JDC on hotlines it deployed to reach homebound elderly and have fielded more than 130,000 calls in 45 locations to date. Additionally, JDC is innovating its eldercare through a new pilot program putting digital technology in the hands of hundreds of elderly in Ukraine and Moldova. They receive smartphones with software specially designed for them to connect with Hesed social service centers, their online social programming, and their friends and other community members.

Across the region’s 11 times zones, in thousands of locations, the Jewish Council of North Central Florida’s partnership with JDC saves and sustains Jewish lives every day. With needs only increasing in the face of economic tumult, social isolation, and ever-changing public health measures, this partnership will continue to put into action the timeless value that all Jews are responsible for one another.

In 2018, the Jewish Council pledged to allocate $140,000 to the Joint Distribution Committee from the Annual Campaign over a 4 year period. As of January 2021, we have donated $105,000 which has been matched at 50% for a total of $157,500. By the end of 2021, we will have completed our pledge, and with the matching monies, will have raised $210,000 for the JDC!
Together we can do extraordinary things!

JCNCF’s Annual Campaign goal (2020/2021) is $200,000 and we have raised nearly $130,000. That is 65% of our goal. Thank you to everyone who made that possible. Visit www.jcnf.org to make your secure donation online now, or contact us at 352.371.3846 or office@jcnf.org.

The Jewish Council of North Central Florida operates entirely on the contributions of generous community members like YOU! With that in mind, the JCNCF events that you see listed in this newsletter each month are made possible by those donations. Please consider making a gift to the Annual Campaign or to any of our special funds. Your donation supports Jewish causes locally and globally and means so much to so many.

Name ____________________________ Email ____________________________ Phone ____________________________
Street ____________________________ City ____________________________ State ________ Zip ____________________________

Signature ____________________________ Pledged $ ____________________________ Enclosed $ ____________________________

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Submissions Policy

News and announcements of events that are of interest and open to the entire Jewish community will be included as space allows. The times and places of regular and special Jewish religious events, as well as Jewish organizational events, will be placed in the Chronicle’s monthly community calendar.

Please submit original material of 500 words or less, not published or to be published elsewhere, along with photos of interest to the community. Submissions may be e-mailed in Word document format to chronicle@jcnf.org; or dropped off at the Jewish Council of North Central Florida office. Please submit photos in high resolution with a caption identifying the subject and all people depicted. JCNCF reserves the right to edit all submissions. The Chronicle does not publish letters to the editor.

The Chronicle and the Jewish Council do not endorse the goods and services advertised in these pages, and make no representation as to the kashrut of the food, products, and services in such advertising.

If you have any questions, email chronicle@jcnf.org or call 352.371.3846.

All submissions are due on or before the 10th of the month prior to publication.

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PJ Library December & January Activities

In December, PJ Library families learned about Chanukah through a program collaboration with Tinkergarten. On Sunday, December 6, PJ Library teamed up with Amy Carson, PJ Library parent and Tinkergarten leader, for a Zoom workshop on making Chanukah lanterns from recycled materials, like mason jars and tissue paper. On Sunday, December 13, the 4th night of Chanukah, families took their creations to Westside Park for a Lantern Walk just as it was getting dark. The group gathered on the playground (socially distant, of course) to “light” their battery powered “candles” and to say the Chanukah blessings. Amy talked about the importance of light at this time of year and its connection to Chanukah. Then it was time for a short loop around the park and the tea lights helped show off the beautiful lanterns that everyone made! Families enjoyed getting to see each other!

Join us for Tu B’shevat at The Family Garden on Sunday, January 24 at 1 pm!

Celebrate Tu B’shevat by Strawberry Picking with us Sunday, Jan. 24th, 1 p.m.

The Family Garden
1655 SE 23rd Place
Gainesville, FL 32641

To RSVP, email family@jcnrf.org
Welcome to Gainesville, Dr. Roy Holler

The Jewish Council is pleased to welcome new Israel Studies professor, Dr. Roy Holler!

I dedicated my entire academic career to study “passing,” to explore the ways we hide and change our identities. But only recently came to terms with my own personal passing story. I was born and raised in Israel, where, some of you might have guessed, the name Roy is not exactly a popular choice for newborn baby boys. My real name is actually taken from the Bible, and is pronounced Ro-EE, meaning in Hebrew, “my shepherd.” It was Americanized, mostly due to its impossible phonetics and lack of streamlined spelling and morphed into “Roy” when I got my first passport in preparation for a Bar-Mitzvah trip to Disney World. I lost my birth name on that trip and fell deeply in love with the US. I vividly remember arriving in Newark on a cold winter day, getting hit with the sweetly sickening smell of the New York subway and being blinded by the lights of the Big Apple. Then, a road trip to the Sunshine State, and when I returned home to the Middle East, I made a vow: I’ll be back. And I did! In fact, this year marks the 15th anniversary of my new life in the U.S. (as a Roy, not Ro-ee). It’s also a fitting closure, returning to Florida, the place where my American metamorphosis began, and joining UF’s Center for Jewish Studies. Of course, I have not given up my previous identity completely. After all, I am an Assistant Professor of Israel Studies, focusing on Israeli and Hebrew literature. The Hebrew language has no alternative, and as much as I managed to cover the infamous Israeli accent with generic American English, I still think, and mostly dream, in Hebrew.

Hebrew, or Ivrit, was also the language in which I began writing creatively. Before coming to America, I served as a reporter in the Israel Defense Forces Radio (GALATZ). I wrote and produced stories, shows and programming about Israeli arts and culture. At the age of 18, I had the opportunity to interview some of Israel’s greatest artists, writers, filmmakers and musicians. Touring the land from north to south, I discovered the fascinating tapestry of Israeli culture, a unique mishmash of local and foreign, religious and secular, of East and West, working together and against each other, all at the same time.

I continued writing for various Israeli media channels, and after moving to New York, I even had a weekly personal column in Yediot Ahronot where I shared my experience as an immigrant in the big city. In New York, I attended the City University, and in the hallways of Hunter College, I was introduced to the poetry of Langston Hughes, the literature of the Harlem Renaissance and then every African American novel I could get my hands on.

As a Ph.D. student in the Comparative Literature Department at Indiana University, Bloomington, I wanted to combine my passion for Israeli and African American literatures into a single comparative research project. For this line of work, I was also awarded the 2020 Baron New Voices in Jewish Studies Prize, by Columbia University and Fordham University. I think that a Black-Jewish dialogue is crucial. Our culture has so much to offer, and we have so much to learn from the experiences of other minorities. I partnered with UF’s African American Studies program and taught a course about African American and Hebrew literatures in the fall. In the coming spring, I plan to teach a course about Holocaust memory in Israel, and a course about the conflict on stage and screen.

It has been such a challenging year, but my family and I already feel at home. My youngest son, Tor, is having a blast at B’nai Israel Day School. My wife, Shlomit, is a Doctor of Physical Therapy, and she just started treating patients in Gainesville and Ocala. My daughter Naomi is in the 3rd grade and is happily attending Parker elementary. We all look forward to getting to know the greater Gainesville Jewish community!
Earning A Degree Interest Free
JELF Helps More Students Than Ever Before!

In 2020, JELF (Jewish Educational Loan Fund) provided 394 interest-free loans to Jewish college, graduate, and vocational students. This jump in loans came from an increase of 66% more applications over the previous year.

JELF serves students in the five-state region of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia (excluding metro DC) as they pursue their higher education. The total student need for all the students in the JELF region was $2,352,906. Through student repayments, increased fundraising, and the generosity of the Marcus Foundation, JELF was able to allocate $1,553,739 in interest-free, last dollar loans to these students.

JELF’s mission is to help reduce a student’s financial burden so that they can pursue their higher education full time. JELF’s interest-free loans of last resort help students pay for crucial living and medical expenses, books, supplies, transportation, and many other costs. By borrowing through JELF, this year’s 394 student loan recipients are estimated to save nearly $1 million in interest payments over the life of their loans.

Since JELF first started providing interest-free loans in 1961, the organization has loaned $16 million to 2,400+ Jewish students. JELF is proud to consistently maintain a 99% student repayment rate, even during this difficult year. “What I love about JELF is that your contribution continuously pays it forward,” says JELF’s Board President, Jane Aronoff. “Dollars used for one student when paid back, are used for the next. Every dollar lives on and on…”

ABOUT JELF @JELFLoans: JELF (Jewish Educational Loan Fund) provides interest-free loans for Jewish students in need to meet their post-high school educational goals. Undergraduate, graduate, and vocational school students are eligible to apply. The application is open from March 1 - April 30 for the full academic year and September 1-30 for spring and/or summer semester(s) only. Sign up at jelf.org/app to get a reminder or visit JELF.org/donate to learn more or make a contribution.
The Jewish people are known for their proclivity to wander — sometimes voluntarily and other times, forcibly.

Ruth, the biblical namesake of the Beit Ruth Village in Israel, fled her home in Canaan because of famine. Even when she had the opportunity to return, she chose not to; instead, she stayed to care for her daughter-in-law, Naomi. The path she chose — to help just one person in need — led her to becoming the unlikely great-grandmother of Israel’s King David whose defeat over Goliath is a lesson in how underdogs can overcome any odds. By today’s standards, we might say Ruth’s influence went viral and ultimately impacted the course of Jewish history.

So what do the wanderings of Ruth from the bible have to do with Beit Ruth, a grateful beneficiary of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida?

Well, since the outbreak of COVID-19, we, at Beit Ruth, have also found ourselves wandering, albeit virtually. Our Advocacy & Outreach Initiative — traditionally, in-person lectures, seminars, conference appearances, coalition building, and the like — has transitioned to virtual opportunities where we continue to share our knowledge and expertise about violence against young women and girls, steps toward prevention and earlier intervention, and our successful model of treating at-risk and vulnerable girls, ages 13-18, who have been physically, emotionally, and sexually abused. Now, we are doing it on a global level with international communities.

To commemorate the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in November, Beit Ruth girls engaged in several activities, including creating a card of affirmations, for example, “Do not try to be who you are not” and a poster that reads, “Strong Woman.”

Mor Ben Simchon Lipin lectures about Beit Ruth’s model to students from the University of Zurich.
for Global Change

Here are just a few recent accomplishments during COVID, when cases of domestic/family violence have risen significantly around the world, including 40% in Israel:

- Partnered with Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MASHAV Agency for International Development Cooperation that provides international trainings for
  - “Girls & Women At Risk of Violence: The Global Challenge and Israel’s Experience”
    - Presented one week before the United National International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, more than 450 leaders from around the world – Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Taiwan, Myanmar, Switzerland, Brazil, India, Nepal, Guam, Haiti, Israel, the U.S., and elsewhere – joined us and learned about the prevalence of violence against girls and young women and why this is an ongoing crisis around the world.
  - “How to Protect Women From Domestic Violence During the Coronavirus Crisis” Beit Ruth presented our expertise to educate women leaders in primarily developing countries (Africa, Asia, and Latin America), about how to address violence during the pandemic, sharing practical ways for women and families to stay safe.
- Advocated successfully for a first-of-its-kind Knesset Subcommittee for Girls & Women At-Risk (part of the Committee on Advancing Women) that focuses on gender-specific needs of at-risk girls and the responsibility to proactively address them through equitable policy changes that reflect an understanding of the economic, social, and moral impact of leaving these girls behind.
- Grew our outreach nearly 800% since 2017 to more than 7,200 stakeholders who touch the lives of at-risk and vulnerable girls. By working and partnering with educators, doctors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, lawyers, policymakers, advocates, and others, we become more successful in addressing and helping to break the cycle of abuse.

At Beit Ruth, we strive to be leaders in raising awareness about the issues of gender-based violence in Israel, and to bring our on-the-ground expertise from the Village to global communities. We know that real social change happens when we work with and through other organizations and change-makers to create more impact than we could ever achieve alone.

Perhaps, most importantly, we know that if we don’t address the needs of young women and girls at-risk now, the likelihood of them experiencing violence as women is more likely. That is why Beit Ruth aims to shape policy and needed resources; work with other non-profits; mobilize citizens, influencers, and policy-makers; and help to change the world around us. In doing so, we are proud to follow in the selfless footsteps of our namesake, Ruth, whose story of resilience, courage, and audaciousness continues to inspire all of us.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**For a Beit Ruth Zoom Fundraiser**

Sunday, February 21 at 11 am

**From At-Risk-Youth to Front-line-Worker**

For more information, please contact the JCNCF office at 352.371.3846 or office@jcncf.org.
Rest in Power, David Chalmers

By Dawn Burgess-Krop, Past President, JCNCF

David Chalmers was, in the words of civil rights hero Congressman John Lewis, making “good trouble” before there was a name for it. David was a complicated man. He was gentle and kind, witty, brilliant, and stubbornly passionate about the causes he believed in. He deeply loved his wife and life companion, Jean, his children, Henry and Kim, and grandchildren, David and Sarina.

David was an Emeritus Professor of American History at the University of Florida, and an author of five books. His book, “Hooded Americanism: A History of the Ku Klux Klan,” is considered one of his most important works and remains in print. David attended Ku Klux Klan meetings as part of his research and was an activist in the Civil Rights movement, spending a week in jail during his efforts to desegregate cities in Florida. David joined his students in protesting the Vietnam War and later fought for the Equal Rights Amendment and advocated for the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Advocating for marginalized and under-served people was David’s passion. He was often joined in these endeavors by his wife, Jean, who was a fierce champion for civil rights and advancing women’s rights. Jean was instrumental in founding the Millhopper Cooperative Nursery School where Jewish and African American women came together to create the only integrated nursery school at the time. The Chalmers worked tirelessly to advance the integration of many facilities and institutions in Alachua County in the 60s and early 70s.

David’s love for teaching and mentorship was recognized through awards by faculty and students. He was a Fulbright Scholar or Exchange Professor at universities throughout the world. David challenged all of us to be better people, to be fair and inclusive, and to confront our prejudices. You could not know David Chalmers without aspiring to be the best person you could be – because of who he was every day. The eternal fight to seek justice is an integral component of Judaism. David Chalmers never relented in that cause. May his memory be a blessing for us all.
Transitions: Community Life Events

Do you have a life cycle event you would like to share with our JCNCF community? Please submit items to chronicle@jcncf.org. Submissions may be edited as space allows. Pictures are welcome and encouraged! Transitions may include birth, engagement and wedding announcements, bar and bat mitzvah, graduations, promotions and honors, and memorials.

In Memoriam: Our community mourns the passing of these beloved friends and family members:

Albert Amar,
Husband of Sue, z’l,
Father of Eva, Ruth, Jackie, Bob & Shana.

Charles “Chuck” Cohen,
Husband of Karen Jacobson Cohen,
Brother of Marcia & Hank Storch.

Robert (Bob) Goldstein
Stepfather of Kayla Sosnow

Jack Rosenzweig,
Husband of Helene,
Father of Mark, Melanie and Pamela.

Ellen Goldhurst Zeldin,
Wife of Bernie Zeldin.

May their loved ones find solace in their memory.

Mazel tov to Alyssa Krop-Brandfon, and Josh Brandfon on the birth of their daughter Ziva Hannah, pictured here with big brother, Asher. Grandparents Dawn Burgess Krop and Harry Krop are overjoyed to welcome their new granddaughter.

Mazel Tov to Marcia and Hank Storch family on the birth of Micah Ezra Morrisroe born to Alexis and Bartley Morrisroe on December 24.

Congratulations to Ben Joseph and Cara Chayet, who were married on October 24, 2020. Ben is the son of Rabbi Michael and Debbie Joseph of Gainesville; Cara is the daughter of Dr. Brad and Wendy Chayet of Fort Lauderdale. The couple resides in New York City.

Mazel Tov to Lauren Cohen on the publication of her book of poetry Let The Rain Fall. Her book will be released in January on Amazon. All proceeds will go to the Equal Justice Initiative.
Gainesville Congregations & Organizations

B’nai Israel Community Day School (DS)
www.bnaiisraelcds.org
352.376.1508, ext 101

Center for Jewish Studies
at the University of Florida (CJS)
Dr. Norman J.W. Goda, Director
Sandra James, Office Assistant
web.jst.ufl.edu
PO Box 118020, Gainesville, FL 32611
352.392.9247

Congregation B’nai Israel (CBI)
Rabbi David Kaiman
Jenifer Petrescu, Executive Director
Cassidy Oody, Programming Coordinator
www.bnaigainesville.com
3830 NW 16th Blvd, Gainesville, FL 32605
352.376.1508

Gainesville Chapter of Hadassah (HAD)
Meredith Bacharach, President
mwbacharach@gmail.com
352.256.7631.0

Hillel at UF (HLL)
Rabbi Jonah Zinn
www.ufhillel.org
2020 W University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32603
352.372.2900

Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA)
www.interfaith-encounter.org

Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica (LIB)
at the University of Florida
Dr. Rebecca Jefferson, Director
cms.uflib.ufl.edu/Judaica/Index.aspx
George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
352.273.2865

Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ)
Rick Gold
goldrickus@gmail.com
571.337.8018

The Tabacinic Lubavitch-Chabad Jewish (LCJC)
Student & Community Center
Rabbi Berl & Chanie Goldman, Directors
Rabbi Aharon Chaim & Pessie Notik, Co-Directors
www.jewishgator.com
2021 NW 5th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32603
352.336.5877

Temple Shir Shalom (TSS)
Rabbi Michael Joseph
Ross Van Boven, Director of Religious School
Ann Eisenstadt, Office Manager
www.shirshalom.net
3855 NW 8th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32605
352.371.6399

Gainesville Congregations & Organizations
Beverly Hills Chapter of Hadassah (BHCH)
Miriam Fagan
352.746.0005

Chabad House of Ocala & The Villages (CHOV)
Rabbi Yossi & Chanie Hecht, Directors
www.ourchabad.org
13030 CR 103, Oxford, FL 34484
352.330.4466

Congregation Beth Israel (CBI-O)
Elaine Morrison, President
www.bethisraelocala.org
4511 SW 48th St. Ocala, FL 34474
352.236.0701

Congregation Beth Sholom (CBS)
Cantor Alisa Forman, Spiritual Leader
www.bethsholomcitrus.org
102 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills, FL 34464
352.746.5303

First Congregation Sons of Israel (FCSI)
Rabbi Joel Fox
www.firstcongregationsonsofisrael.com
161 Cordova Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Ocala Chapter of Hadassah (OHAD)
Judi Siegal, President
morrobay03@embarqmail.com
352.237.8277

Temple B’nai Darom (TBD)
Rabbi Harold Jaye
www.facebook.com/TempleBnaiDarom
7465 SW 38th Street in Ocala, FL 34474
352.624.0380

Temple Beth Shalom (TBS)
Rabbi Ze’ev Harari
www.jewishocala.com
1109 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34470
352.629.5837

Temple Shalom of Central Florida (TSCF)
Rabbi Zev Sonnenstein
www.templeshalomcentralfl.org
13563 County Road 101, Oxford, FL 34484
352.748.1800

Helping Hands Clinic Dinner
Monday, March 22

The Jewish Council has committed to support the Helping Hands Clinic by providing one meal each quarter. Due to the ongoing public health situation JCNCF is partnering with local food businesses to provide nutritious meals for our friends at Helping Hands Clinic. If you would like to help, please contact JCNCF at 352.371.3846, office@jcncf.org or visit https://www.jcncf.org/donate.html

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Save These Dates

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