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It's hard to believe that July is already upon us. How is that possible? It seems as if it was just yesterday when I was excited about winter ending and spring beginning. Yet, somehow the seasons have changed and summer is here again.

In late May, the Jewish Federation of Tulsa held our annual meeting to celebrate the past year. Be sure to check out the wonderful piece written by our board President Dr. Myron Katz and our Executive Director Drew Diamond in this issue that recaps all your federation has accomplished.

The community garden is at its peak during the summer months. The produce that is provided to the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma makes a real difference in the lives of those Tulsans who are food-insecure and struggle with hunger. Fresh produce can be out of reach for so many in our community, and our garden can help fill in that gap. Who doesn’t love biting into a fresh, juicy tomato?

It’s the time of year when the Jewish Federation of Tulsa’s campus seems so vibrant. From the Editor

As part of a $3 million annual effort by the Jewish Federations of North America’s Secure Community Network has assembled a group of renowned national security experts to develop the first-ever safety guide for Jewish college students amid rising concern for Jewish security on campus. The safety guide will be distributed through Hillel to tens of thousands of students for the upcoming academic year.

—

As a part of a $3 million annual effort by the Jewish Federations of North America designed to foster diverse expression in Israel, thousands of Israelis attended all-night study sessions, lectures and meals at dozens of multidenominational organizations supported by the Federation-funded Jewish Agency for Israel.

—

The Jewish Federations of North America reports that the Social Venture Fund (SVF), which brings together five Federations and several prominent Jewish foundations, recently held its spring strategy meeting. Over the past seven years the SVF has invested more than $6.2 million to support 35 programs and initiatives that promote equality and shared society in Israel in the areas of education and economic development.

—

The Jewish Federations of North America’s General Assembly (GA) is the premier annual North American Jewish communal event, attracting Federation volunteer leaders and professionals, the leadership of our partner organizations and a range of national Jewish organizations. The GA inspires and engages current and emerging Jewish leaders, tackles the most critical issues of the day and showcases the best of the Federation movement and will be held Nov. 8-10 in Washington, D.C. Philanthropic visionary Dan Pallotta is among the featured speakers. For more information about the GA, visit www.generalassembly.org.

—

AIPAC NEWS HUB recently interviewed Dr. Joshua Walker, Vice President of Global Programs at APCO worldwide, about Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s visit to the United States, which was among one of the most highly anticipated events given that 2015 is the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. The single most important issue to Abe is finalizing negotiations over the U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade zone that his administration has enthusiastically joined and with whom an agreement seems to be within reach. Walker reported that there is virtually no anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism in Japan, but a deep-seated level of respect for the Jewish people that links the narrative of an ancient people to a land that has been able to resiliently innovate. Partly because of its geographic distance and unique historical experience, Japan now rarely takes sides in international disputes, and therefore much of the history of anti-Semitism that came from Europe during World War II has never found fertile ground there.

—Compiled by Brian E. Broncos

The Camp Shalom—Mizel Connection

by LILLIAN HELLMAN, DIRECTOR MIZEL JDCS

HE EXCITEMENT of the Camp Shalom experience continues long after summer is over for the children who go on to attend Mizel Jewish Community Day School. Sharing the Federation’s wonderful facility allows for year-round continuity for the children who are enrolled in both programs. Our halls continue to ring with laughter and singing all year long, and the love of Israel and Shabbat, which is taught at camp, is reinforced and embraced at Mizel.

Camp arts and crafts evolve into fine arts at Mizel, song sessions transform into music appreciation and choral performances, camp skits progress into theatrical productions, and Hebrew greetings and blessings advance to conversation, fluent reading, and a spiritual vehicle to prayer. Leadership skills and strong character education, advanced math and science, computer, robotics, high-tech activities and educational field trips, round out the academic program, challenging our students to reach beyond their age level. Children of various faiths and backgrounds attend Mizel, creating a very diverse experience for our families.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2015-2016 school year, and we encourage you to visit our website at: www.mizel-school.org, to see all that Mizel has to offer. Keep that camp (spirit) going by enrolling your child in Mizel JDCS today!
A Jewish proverb reminds us “Do not be wise in words—be wise in deeds.” The Jewish Federation of Tulsa has been wise in deeds this past year. The Federation continues to be a cornerstone for Jewish culture and life in Tulsa. We remain true to our mission to advance and promote Jewish life through philanthropic, social and community programs.

1. Significant facility improvements were undertaken.

2. Tulsa’s first ever Jewish Film Festival was launched and planning for the second annual is underway.

3. Saturday Night Socials—these events with food, drinks and babysitting, successfully organized by the new Food Services Committee. Catered by The Fig, each event has sold out.

4. Food by The Fig Bakery & Catering has been featured at...the Community Relations Committee (CRC) has been revi

5. The Jewish United Fund Campaign continues, raising more than $47,000 for the Jewish Federation of Tulsa...The Frank Lecture attracts more than 1,300 attendees.

6. The Community Relations Committee (CRC) has been revi-

7. Hebrew Lewin has been welcomed to our staff as Director of Development and...without our Board of Directors, committees, volunteers, dedicated staff and enhanced by our partnerships with Temple Israel...the second annual Golf Tournament is set for Aug. 10, 2015 at Meadowbrook Country Club.

8. Increased use of social media and the weekly e-blast is helping to attract young Jews to Tulsa, by connecting with regional Hillels and offering a stipend to students from outside Tulsa who take a summer internship, hopefully leading to future employment in Tulsa.

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18. Trivia Night continues to be a successful annual fundraiser, bringing in $7,000 this year to benefit the Dave Sylvan Camp Scholarship Fund and Mizel JCDS.

19. Camp Shalom is consistently rated as a top summer camp in Tulsa, with registration at capacity every year.

20. The Frank Lecture attracts more than 150 people annually to enjoy a scholarly discussion following a presentation from a carefully selected academic speaker.

21. Lori Frank, the CSJCC is now home to the only regulation auditorium in Tulsa. The Sherwin Miller Museum has more than doubled and gallery space expanded under executive leadership provided by the Federation. This results in a sound financial operation and ongoing partnership between the two institutions.

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24. A highlight was the Idan Raichel concert with more than 250 attendees.

25. Additional crisis aid fundraising includes Stop the Sirens (Israel), and the Earthquake Relief Fund (Nepal).

26. Federation is a strong supporter of Mizel JCDS through financial subvention, no-cost space and maintenance, and use of a special section of the community garden as an educational tool.

27. JFT Board Members are increasingly engaged—from brainstorming suggestions, expressing views in meetings, and stepping up to implement them and provide more value to our members. In addition, the Federation bylaws are in the process of being revised.

28. BHYO members enjoy events on campus, many participating in the JFT ’B’nai Tzedeek program, encouraging the next generation of Jewish philanthropy.

29. The number of visitors to The Sherwin Miller Museum has more than doubled and gallery space expanded under executive leadership provided by the Federation. This results in a sound financial operation and ongoing partnership between the two institutions.

Your contribution to the annual Tulsa Jewish United Fund Campaign continues to make possible all of these programs and events. With a vision for the future, we are also launching a new program to promote Planned Giving and leaving a Jewish Legacy.

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Man with Local Ties Killed in Pakistan

Dr. Warren Weinstein, brother of the late Alvin Weinstein, and brother-in-law of Marcia Weinstein of Tulsa, died this spring in a compound in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region following over three years of captivity by Al Qaeda.

Warren Weinstein was born on July 3, 1941 in Brooklyn, New York. He was a graduate of Brooklyn College, Yeshiva University and got his PhD from Columbia University in New York in International Law. After time as a professor in upstate New York, his next job took Dr. Weinstein and his family to West Africa where he worked in the Peace Corps. Upon returning to the United States, he moved his family to Rockville, Maryland where he worked for the World Bank in Washington DC. He went to work in Lahore, Pakistan for a private company, J.E. Austin from 2004 to 2011.

Approaching retirement and a return to the United States, Weinstein was kidnapped on the night of August 13, 2011. Warren was on the Mi Sheberiach list at Temple Israel from that August until Friday April 24, 2015, at which time the Mourners Kaddish was recited for him.

Warren Weinstein is survived by his wife Elaine, daughters, Jennifer and Alisa, as well as two grandchildren. He also is survived by his sister Dr. Claire Ellen Weinstein, a professor at the University of Texas and two nieces, Leona Weinstein and Paula Patte.
70% of millennials (ages 20-34) identify as “atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular.”

This spring, the Pew Research Center released its most recent findings from a groundbreaking study on the state of religious affiliation in America today. The most significant finding indicates that the percentage of those who claim no religious affiliation has grown significantly. Up from 16% in 2007, today nearly 23% of American adults claim no religious affiliation. The study also finds that 70% of millennials (ages 20-34) identify as “atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular,” thus coining a new term of religious “nones” (“A Closer Look at America’s Rapidly Growing Religious ‘Nones’,” Pew Research Center, May 13, 2015).

It would appear that “old time religion” is not working for many Americans, especially younger adults. What does this mean for the Jewish community in America? While the Pew study suggests that the Jewish population in the United States will hold steady in the coming decades, we cannot become complacent about these larger religious trends that comprise the fabric of American culture. We could receive this data with a sense of pessimism, that the future of Jewish institutional life faces its demise. Alternatively, we could see these trends as an opportunity for renewal, fresh ideas, and creative religious practice.

Many Jewish foundations and organizations see this moment in time as ripe opportunity for cultivating exciting, meaningful avenues of Jewish expression that invites different kinds of engagement. For example, Tulsa’s very own Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation supports creative, Jewish grassroots initiatives around the United States and the world. Around ten years ago, before we stepped foot in Tulsa, we had received a congregational grant supporting innovative Shabbat worship and programming through STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal), funded by the Schusterman Foundation.

Their ROI Community invests in young Jewish leadership and provides micro-grants to support innovative ways of engaging Jews in Jewish life. Rather than a top-down approach to Jewish expression, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation seeks to cultivate Jewish expression by the next generation of Jewish leaders for tomorrow’s Judaism. The ideas sparked through the ROI Community have great potential to transform and invigorate Jewish commitment. The Reform Movement has been especially conscientious about change, reflecting on trends toward increased participation, study, spirituality, deeper connections and relationships, and affirming the value of equality for all. Scholars such as Professors Isa Aron, Steven M. Cohen, and Lawrence Hoffman of the Reform Movement’s Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, along with Professor Ari Y. Kelman recently published the book, Sacred Strategies: Transforming Synagogues from Functional to Visionary. Their research represents best practices of congregations in the United States that have gone through years of reflection, leadership development, and congregational learning. These synagogues exemplify institutions that continually seek to engage Jews in the fundamental aspects of Jewish expression, prayer, study, and acts of justice, while doing so in new ways, opening themselves to new ideas and participants.

These are especially relevant lessons for us as we begin to look ahead to the next 100 years of Jewish life in Tulsa. Religions persist, grow wise, and touch peoples’ lives by staying true to their core ideas while continually reforming and renewing the ways in which we connect to these ideas. Judaism offers a deep, rich path to creating a meaningful life and bringing goodness to our world when each generation applies it in a way that makes the tradition fresh and relevant. May this affirmation give us hope as we continue to shape our religious practice in America.
Living With the Tension Between Real and Ideal
by Rabbi Charles P. Sherman

The moral challenges inherent in the exercise of power are considerable and complex.

The destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, the depredations of the Crusades, the formal approval of the “Final Solution” and the start of mass deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto—all now associated with Tisha B’Av—had a noteworthy element in common: Jewish powerlessness. Last summer’s war with Hamas had a very different outcome for an obvious reason: Israel is more powerful than its adversaries and is determined to remain so as the only assurance of its survival.

The moral challenges inherent in the exercise of power are considerable and complex.

Tisha B’Av Service, Readings and Film • Sat., July 25 • 8:30 p.m. • Congregation B’nai Emunah

There is an old (classic) story about a tourists who visited Jerusalem’s Biblical Zoo and saw that each enclosure featured a sign containing a pertinent biblical quotation. One quoted Isaiah: “In that day the wolf and the lamb will be together.” Across the moat separating the animals from visitors, he saw that a wolf and a lamb were lying peaceably together, side-by-side. Aroused, the tourist sought the zookeeper and asked how that was possible. The zookeeper replied, “Every day we put in a new lamb.”

This apocryphal tale captures the polarity with which Israelis, and all of us who love and care about Israel, must contend. Idealism and realism, optimism and pessimism, hope and despair co-exist in an awkward—and sometimes awful—tension. Some historians have been daunted by the yawning chasm between the messy brokenness of reality and the repaired, perfected world to which our tradition aspires and toward which it commands us to strive.

So taught my colleague and friend, the President of our congregation, Rabbi Richard Block, almost a year ago. I am moved by Rabbi Block’s lesson and its application to Tisha B’Av, which some Jews will observe toward the end of this month of July. This is basic Judaism, friends. That is and that which might be stand juxtaposed in both of our scriptures and liturgy. The Sh'ma proclaims “Adonai Echad”—“The Eternal is One.” Yet we conclude the Aleinu we assert, “Yayenu hava yichlu Adonai Echad”—“On that day”—that far off, imagined, longing for a day of universal peace, justice, and harmony—“The Eternal shall be One.”

We affirm that God is both One and not yet-One. The ideal and the real, mutually contradictory states of being, co-exist within us, and we within them, which brings us to Tisha B’Av.

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Sleet was freezing on our windshield as we left Tulsa headed for Florida and spring break. Ours was not to be the quintessential Where the Boys Are spring break, but a lark to photograph synagogues in the state with the third largest Jewish population. Since Florida is a must for any serious synagogue aficionado, the timing certainly seemed right. Synagogue photography instead of beach, beer and bikini partying. What a difference a few years make. Ours was to be a daunting task. There are about 640,000 Jewish residents in Florida. And, more to the point, there are 226 synagogues (not to mention 13 free-standing mikvaot). Before departure we had pre-selected 21 synagogues for the photo project with a nod to diversity of location, age of building and architectural style. The synagogues of Florida range from early Spanish style and tropical-Floridian to the most excruciatingly modern you can imagine.

Counter-intuitively, there seems to be no correlation between architectural style and whether the congregation is Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Orthodox does not necessarily equate to a traditional or classical building design and Reform does not imply modernity of architecture. From our observation, the orthodoxy or modernity of the Judaism practiced by a congregation bears no relation to the aesthetics of its synagogue.

A good example is an architecturally very modern synagogue in North Miami Beach which is home to a seriously Orthodox congregation. It’s so Orthodox that I don’t think they believed in air-conditioning, at least not on that hot Sunday morning. Entering the rabbi’s office, I was greeted by a jovial, bushy bearded fellow who would have easily passed as Santa Claus if he’d been at the mall wearing a red outfit. Although he was wearing a heavy black suit and beaver hat, he did not seem the least bit phased by the heat, while I was boiling in just a light T-shirt and jeans. The good rebbi showed me around the building, and as he pointed to the women’s balcony, he said, “You realize that women are natural born exhibitionists and men are naturally voyeurs, so we must put the women out of sight if the men are to focus on prayer.”

While I had long understood the basic intent behind separation of men from women in Orthodox shuls, the voyeur and exhibitionist explanation by this guy who looked like Santa in Hassidic garb, was surprising.

One of the synagogues we selected for photographic preservation is Temple Israel of Greater Miami. This double-whammy combines a majestic early Florida style (quasi Moorish Neo-Gothic) building with a truly remarkable and startling new chapel, which alone is the subject of a book, Chapel of Light. My first request for photo permission was sent to the Temple’s executive director who simply replied, “We aren’t interested.” Normally I don’t jump the chain of command, but this building was so compelling and important that I just had to get permission. Launching a “full court press” upon the rabbi, with some of my very best verbiage, I was eventually granted photo permission. It was worth it.

The dynamic young rabbi escorted us on a tour through the graceful arches of the original 1928 building and the amazing and enthralling 1990s chapel. As we ambled and ogled the dual architectural delights, the rabbi told us of some of the challenges facing the congregation. First, there is the outdated, somewhat sketchy location of the original 1928 building and the amazing and enthralling 1990s chapel. This double-whammy combines a majestic early Florida style (quasi Moorish Neo-Gothic) building with a truly remarkable and startling new chapel, which alone is the subject of a book, Chapel of Light. My first request for photo permission was sent to the Temple’s executive director who simply replied, “We aren’t interested.” Normally I don’t jump the chain of command, but this building was so compelling and important that I just had to get permission. Launching a “full court press” upon the rabbi, with some of my very best verbiage, I was eventually granted photo permission. It was worth it.

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Meet the Trainers at the J

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We asked our trainers five questions to help you get to know them better. To schedule a personal-training session, call 918.495.1111.

STEPHANIE BLACKWELL
When did you first discover a passion for fitness?
I played sports all through my youth and grew up in a very active family.

Describe your favorite workout.
I don’t have a favorite workout. I like variety! I definitely prefer challenging and intense workouts. Adding the TRX has been great for all who have participated in the classes.

What’s your number one healthy diet/exercise tip?
“Diet” has such a negative feeling … I prefer to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Avoid processed/packaged foods and keep moving!

HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE SOMEONE TO STAY MOTIVATED?
By stressing all the positives of healthy living … not focusing on “aesthetics,” but on the medical benefits (lowers blood pressure, improves heart and lung function, prevents osteoporosis, etc.).

CRAIG DESCOTEAUX
When did you first discover a passion for fitness?
During my internship at NSU, I worked for a fitness group company and taught a variety of athletes at various ages and levels—kids to teens, to adults, and semi-pro athletes. We taught everything from running to lifting weights. After the internship, I knew that fitness brought out the best coach in me.

Describe your favorite workout.
I love any type of high intensity workouts that ask for a variety of challenges: running, lifting, and body weight workouts. Every day needs to be different to keep me motivated.

What do you like most about working with ramp up members?
Watching them progress and become more confident. They actually grow and take on more challenges, whether physical or mental. And they take that new element and pass it forward to family and friends.

What’s your number one healthy diet/exercise tip?
If you can catch, hunt, snare, grow, or harvest it, eat it. Avoid processed foods as much as possible.

HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE SOMEONE TO STAY MOTIVATED?
Get a workout buddy. Never do it alone. Join a group; introduce yourself to a fitness professional, jump into a class. We were all beginners when we started. Smile big and take a chance.

JACKIE FISHELL
When did you first discover a passion for fitness?
When I was five. My father was a pro football player before I was born. Both of my parents went to the gym when I was young.

Describe your favorite workout.
Cardio & free weights (separate & combined).

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING WITH MEMBERS?
Showing them how to take charge of their own fitness with confidence.

What’s your number one healthy diet/exercise tip?
Confusion training … mixing it up.

How would you encourage someone to stay motivated?
Write down a doable fitness schedule with a plan & stick to it. Also, find someone to work out with if possible.

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Butterflies
Honoring Donors to the Tulsa Jewish Retirement & Health Center
Thoughts About the Israel Connection

by SHIRI ACHIASAF WEST

Lately I have been confessing in various occasions: true, I have an agenda. Funny thing is that it’s not even hidden, first because whoever has known me for five minutes can probably testify that I am open with my thoughts. Second, because I am actually hired to do what I am doing which is encourage Israel engagement and connections between Israel and Tulsa.

Having been here for nearly two years, I feel much more educated about Tulsans and their relations to Israel. In the beginning, or even if I take it back to my first Shlichut to Toronto in 2000-2001, I assumed or shall I say, took for granted, that loving, supporting, and caring for Israel is a given, especially by every Jew on earth. As I grow older (and therefore wiser), I was able to observe reality not just from my perspective. I have become less naïve. I have also learned that the Israel of the generation who was born 80 years ago, is often viewed quite differently in the eyes of the younger generations. The reason mainly being that the older folks know what a world without Israel was, and so the newer generations tend to take it as a given: Israel is there. Once you are born into something, you may think that it was always there. Similarly, my kids have no way of understanding having one channel on the television, or no cellphones, and precisely the same way I didn't understand how the ice truck brought ice to my parents' houses in Tel Aviv when they were kids before there was a refrigerator.

I do believe that every Jewish person should go to Israel at least once in their life. I can talk about the "product" from dawn till dusk, people can read hundreds of books and articles and attend Festival Israel each year, but until you see it, experience it with all your senses, I don't think that you will truly grasp the meaning of it. We need to learn our history by foot, we need to connect to the people – one on one. We need to hear the stories directly from those who helped create the State of Israel. We need to talk to our soldiers who are simply there to protect us, to ensure we will have our land not only granted, that loving, supporting, and caring for Israel is a given, especially by every Jew on earth. As I grew older (and therefore wiser), I was able to observe reality not just from my perspective. I have become less naïve. I have also learned that the Israel of the generation who was born 80 years ago, is often viewed quite differently in the eyes of the younger generations. The reason mainly being that the older folks know what a world without Israel was, and so the newer generations tend to take it as a given: Israel is there. Once you are born into something, you may think that it was always there. Similarly, my kids have no way of understanding having one channel on the television, or no cellphones, and precisely the same way I didn't understand how the ice truck brought ice to my parents' houses in Tel Aviv when they were kids before there was a refrigerator.

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Every time we have a mission to Israel, each time we get the Israeli counselors to come and spend the summer here in Tulsa with their hosting families while working in Camp Shalom (this year’s summer shlimn is Or Avraham, Shir Halevi), it is all part of getting closer to Israel. If you can’t make it to Israel, we will bring Israel as close as possible to you, but one needs to keep in mind that nothing compares to the feeling of landing in Ben Gurion Airport for the first time. I am so excited to be here to protect us, to ensure we will have our land not only today but tomorrow and the day after.

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A Canine Mitzvah Tale

EDITOR’S NOTE:

Who says happy endings are only for fairy tales! (Or “tails”, as the case may be). When the following story about second chances was brought to our attention, we just had to share the difference that Jewish Federation of Tulsa executive board member Lori Frank made in a woman’s life.

Dear Lori,

You’re probably wondering why you are receiving this letter right now. I am writing to you because I want to thank you. I want to thank you for saving a life and giving me a chance to be the happiest person. One year ago on April 11, 2014, you rescued a dog in the parking lot of Montana Mike’s Steakhouse in Miami, OK. It was a little terrier, 30-lb. mix, and you took her to the Grove Small Animal Hospital. This is what it says in her records. A few months after that, a person from a rescue group brought the scruffy girl to Dallas, because they thought that she would have a good chance of finding a new home. That was June 5, 2014. Two days later, I happened to go to that shelter, because I had seen a picture of this funny-looking dog on their website. I am not lying when I say that it was love at first sight. I took her home with me the same day. Her name is Luna, and she is the biggest joy of my life. Because of her, my whole life has changed in a positive way.

She is the happiest dog I have ever seen —full of energy, incredibly smart and with the biggest heart.

A few weeks after I adopted her, I signed up for dog training with a local trainer, and she did great. What I did not know at that point was that she was also a great match-maker. Because of Luna, I fell in love with the dog trainer, and we have been inseparable ever since. So Luna not only got a new mom but also a dad, Art, and four brothers and sisters in Art’s dogs. We cannot imagine any day without Luna.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for rescuing Luna last year. Maybe it did not seem like a big deal, but it definitely is a big deal for me. You saved Luna’s life and made us the happiest people in the world. We will be forever grateful.

Warm regards from Dallas,

Annie
Created in 1989 for the Modern Orthodox community’s students, the Ma’ale school is unique in its connection between the film world and the Jewish world of culture and tradition. This connection allows many conflicts to arrive which come into its films in an interesting artistic, humorous, and creative way. Among the shorts we will view are: The Rabbi’s Daughters, The Invitation, and more!

Cost is free to JCC Members.
Non-Members: Adults $5 / Students $3

Please RSVP to Felisha at 918.495.1000 or njroscote@jewishtulsa.org by July 7.
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