Jewish Review

Adar/Nisan 5786
March 2026

OKJFF

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Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

Friday, March 6 . . . . . 6:06 pm
Friday, March 13 . . . . 7:12 pm
Friday, March 20 . . . . 7:18 pm
Friday, March 27 . . . . 7:24 pm

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Front Cover

12th Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival
March 22-29, 2026

JEWISH TULSA

Federation · Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center · Foundation · The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art

JEWISH TULSA

MISSION:

The mission of Jewish Tulsa is to preserve and enhance Jewish life and well-being in Eastern Oklahoma, Israel, and the entire world. The mission is being addressed by pursuing charitable, humanitarian, cultural, educational, health, and social service needs of the Jewish community, as well as engaging in community relations and outreach, and providing a variety of services to the broader Tulsa community. Jewish Tulsa comprises four entities: The Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, and The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. Mizel Jewish Community Day School is located on the campus and supported in part by Jewish Tulsa.

VALUES:

Kehila – Community
Fostering a connected and collaborative Jewish community, characterized by respect, empathy, and understanding.

Tzedek – Justice
Continuously improving the quality of life of all Tulsans, as well as our partners in Israel and abroad, through philanthropic giving of our resources and time

L'Dor V'Dor – From Generation to Generation
Sustaining the culture, traditions, and collective memory of the Jewish people, through innovative intergenerational programming that is meaningful, educational, and fun.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER *by Joe Roberts*

What I Saw in Israel, and What It Taught Me About Jewish Tulsa

There are moments in this work when I have to stop and take a breath because I am overwhelmed by gratitude.

That is how I feel right now about our community.

I am so moved by Jewish Tulsa. Moved by the dedication I see every day. Moved by the way people show up for one another. Moved by the way memory is carried here. Moved by the depth of care and the passion for Jewish peoplehood that runs through this community.

There is something special happening here.

We live in a time when the dominant story about Jewish communal life is often a discouraging one. We hear that young Jews are disconnected. That they do not join institutions. That they are drifting from Jewish life. That Israel is becoming too complicated, too contested, too distant for the next generation to care deeply about.

I understand why people say these things. But I also want to say, clearly and from personal experience, that this is not the whole story.

I was just in Israel with a group of our young leaders, and I came home deeply encouraged.

These young people were amazing. They brought seriousness, heart, curiosity, and conviction to the experience. They asked thoughtful questions. They engaged deeply. They carried themselves with real care for one another and with a genuine sense of responsibility to the Jewish people. In a time when so much is said about what younger generations supposedly are not, I found myself focused on what they so clearly are.

You will read a piece later in this issue from one of those young leaders, and I am so glad you will. I think you will see what I saw. Not distance from Israel, but connection. Not indifference to Jewish peoplehood, but commitment. Not a shallow attachment to shared identity, but a real and growing rootedness.

And I will say this plainly. In many cases, they were more knowledgeable and more grounded than many people give them credit for. More thoughtful than the caricature. More connected than the headlines would suggest. More committed to Jewish life and to the Jewish people than our communal anxiety sometimes allows us to see.

That matters.

It matters because communities can become trapped by their own pessimism. If we repeat often enough that the next generation is lost, we may begin to relate to them as if they are. We may lower our expectations. We may stop inviting them into serious Jewish life. We may offer them less, precisely when they are hungry for more.

That would be a mistake.

What I saw in Israel was a reminder that our young people do not need us to panic about them. They need us to believe in them. They need us to teach seriously, lead honestly, and create communities worthy of their commitment. They need institutions that are confident enough to speak in clear moral language, warm enough to welcome them fully, and ambitious enough to ask something meaningful of them.

And I believe Jewish Tulsa is doing that.

I see it in our young leaders. I see it in our families. I see it in the way this community responds in moments of joy and in moments of pain. I see it in the volunteers who give their time, in the donors who invest in our future, in the staff and lay leaders who pour themselves into this work, and in the simple everyday acts of kindness that sustain Jewish life.

I see a community that remembers where we come from and takes seriously the responsibility of where we are going.

I see a community that cares deeply about Israel and Israelis, not in the abstract, but in the language of relationship, solidarity, and shared destiny.

I see a community that understands that Jewish peoplehood is a lived obligation. It is the work of showing up.

That is why I am hopeful. Ten times out of ten, I'm betting on these people to shape our future.

Not naively hopeful. Not because we do not face real challenges. We do. But hopeful because I have seen, up close, the character of this community and the strength of the people who are carrying it forward.

Our future is bright, not by accident, but because of who you are.

Thank you for caring. Thank you for remembering. Thank you for building. Thank you for believing.

It is one of the great privileges of my life to do this work with you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women's Philanthropy: Lion of Judah and Pomegranate Society Luncheon Wednesday, March 4 | 12 pm | Private Residence

Join us for a lovely, home-hosted luncheon with our Lion of Judah and Pomegranate Society women, along with those considering joining this meaningful circle of leadership and generosity. Come enjoy a meal, great conversation, and time together as we hear from an engaging speaker about the rise in antisemitism and what we can do as women and community members to empower and protect our community. We will also talk through the antisemitism legislation passed last year and what it means for us locally. It will be a chance to learn, connect, and support one another, because when women show up, our whole community is stronger.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/womens-phil-March2026

Confronting Antisemitism: Building Bridges Through Constructive Conversations | Thursday, March 5 | 7 pm | Jewish Tulsa

In response to the alarming rise in antisemitism, many Jews are seeking tools to navigate difficult encounters, respond with confidence, and engage others in meaningful dialogue. This program explores how antisemitism shows up in contemporary society and offers practical strategies for addressing it in everyday life. Participants will gain insight, build confidence, and learn how to step outside their comfort zones to foster understanding and build alliances through constructive dialogue.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/building-bridges

Hamantaschen Baking Contest | Friday, March 6 | 8 am-12 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Ready, set, BAKE! It's time to dust off your treasured family hamantaschen recipe and compete for the ultimate Purim bragging rights! Bring your most mouthwatering, flavor-packed hamantashen for a chance to claim the crown this Purim. Think yours has what it takes? Drop off your finest creations between 8:00 am–12:00 pm on Friday, March 6. The winner will be proudly announced on social media.

Mahjong Lesson | Sunday, March 8 | 12:30 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Inviting novice beginners for our next round of Mahjong lessons with Mahj918. This four-hour session is a deep dive into all things Mahjong, and includes the 2025 card*, a handy booklet, and snacks throughout the afternoon. After this session, you will be invited to play with intermediate players, which can help sharpen your skills as you continue to play. This is a partnership between JFT and CSJCC. Mahj918 is a Tulsa-based group offering Mahjong instruction, open play, and special events. They aim to make the game approachable and fun for everyone! Cost is $72/per person

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/mahj918

* The 2026 National Mahjong League Card will be released in April.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

UPCOMING EVENTS

Israel at a Crossroads: An Insider's Look at the 2026 Elections | Monday, March 9 | 6:30 pm | Jewish Tulsa

After years of external conflict and internal debate, Israel is approaching a pivotal turning point. Join us for an evening with Elson Fellow Avi Gamulka as he breaks down the storylines, tensions, and stakes of the upcoming November '26 election. With a career spanning the Prime Minister's Office and the World Zionist Organization, Avi offers a rare "behind-the-curtain" perspective on what these dramatic results could mean for the future of the Jewish state.

About the Elson Israel Fellowship: A program of Jewish Tulsa, the Elson Fellowship brings Israel's most innovative scholars and visionaries to our community to strengthen Jewish unity and position Tulsa as a global leader in the conversation.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/crossroads2026

YJP Torah on Tap | Tuesday, March 10 | 6:30 pm | Nothings Left Brewing

Elson Israel Fellow Avi Gamulka presents *Bava Batra's Acid Trip: Down the Rabbit Hole with Rava bar bar Hanna*. What happens when the Talmud stops arguing about property law… and starts telling sea-monster stories? In one of the strangest stretches of the Gemara, Raba bar bar Hana takes us on a series of bizarre travelogues that feel less like rabbinic discourse and more like a fever dream at sea. It's the Talmud at its most surreal—playful, unsettling, and packed with meaning just below the surface. And just when things get weird… We'll connect these mind-bending journeys to the spiritual energy of the season—the liminal, upside-down days between Purim and Pesach.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/torah-on-tap-Mar2026

Lunch Bunch: Jerusalem 2050: Challenges and Opportunities Wednesday, March 11 | 12 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Jerusalem is often called the "Center of the World," but where will that center hold in 25 years? Join Elson Israel Fellow, Avi Gamulka, for a deep dive into the state of Jerusalem today and a candid look at the reasons for both grave concern and radical optimism. Can the "City of Peace" finally live up to its name by 2050?

Optional lunch: $13

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/lb-mar26-elson

JMoms: Esther Vibes Only | Thursday, March 12 | 6 pm | Private Residence

Purim may be over, but Queen Esther's energy lives on. Join your mom friends for a Purim-inspired hamantaschen baking demonstration. This cozy evening will blend tradition with connection to our ancestors and each other. Each mom will create her own holiday-themed sweet treats to take home. JMoms is for moms with children 18 and under, raising them Jewishly.

$10 per person

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/jmoms-mar2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

Israel in Focus | Sunday, March 15 | 12:30 pm | RSVP for location

Reverend Johnnie Moore, a pro-Israel Christian, is coming to Tulsa to discuss Evangelical–Jewish relations and collaboration on Israel, and share his personal story and background of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. He frames the conversation around the compelling question, "Why would a pastor want to work with Israel to feed Palestinians in Gaza?" Expect an impactful discussion on shared values, bridge-building, and the role of faith communities in crisis response.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/moore

Chai Society Shabbat 600 | Friday, March 20 | 5:30 pm | Dallas, Texas

Join our Chai Society young adults for a Shabbat experience like no other. We're heading to Dallas for *Shabbat 600*, an inspiring weekend bringing together 600+ young Jewish adults for connection, celebration, and meaningful Jewish community. Chai Society members are young adult donors who make a minimum annual gift to Jewish Tulsa's annual campaign. This will be a weekend of Jewish experience, connection with other young adult philanthropists, and thoughtful conversations about what our community is facing and how we show up for one another. Transportation and housing are not included. Shabbat dinner experience, optional services, and a complimentary pass to the local JCC are included. Have questions? Email: isilberg@jewishtulsa.org

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/Shabbat600

YJP Happy Hour | Tuesday, March 24, 6 pm | Jewish Tulsa

All Young Jewish Professionals are invited to kick off the Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival with a pre-film schmooze! Join us before the screening of the laugh-out-loud comedy *The Floaters* for drinks at the bar and tasty appetizers, generously provided by Moise House. Then get ready for a major nostalgia hit. The Floaters channels all the magic of Jewish summer camp—the friendships, the cliques, the geeks, the cool kids, and all the perfectly awkward moments in between. It's funny, heartfelt, and a charming throwback to a formative (and unforgettable) time in our lives. Come sip, schmooze, and relive camp—no bunk assignments required! $18 film + one drink

Note: The film is open to everyone!

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/yjp-OKJFF26

Lunch Bunch OKJFF | Wednesday, March 25 | 12 pm | Jewish Tulsa

This month's Lunch Bunch brings us to the Circle Cinema for the Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival's presentation of One Big Happy Family, starring the late-great Tony-winning actress **Linda Lavin** in her final role. The film also features Tulsa's own actor/comedian, **Josh Fadem**, who will introduce the movie.

Lunch includes Andolini's pizza (no meat), salad, and a drink.
Lunch at 12 pm; Film at 1 pm

$25 lunch + movie

$13 lunch only (for All Festival Pass holders)

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/lb-March2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sisterhood Night at OKJFF | Wednesday, March 25 | 5:30 pm |

Sisterhood Night returns with a powerful film about a tour de force mother and her boundless determination to help her physically challenged son lead a normal life. The mother, a Moroccan Sephardic Jew, now living in France, challenges the status quo with her against-all-odds devotion. To pair with the film, dinner will be catered by Notes of Marrakesh, a woman-owned restaurant and Tulsa's premier destination for authentic Moroccan cuisine.

$36 dinner + movie; $24 dinner only (for All Festival Pass holders)

Note: The film is open to everyone!

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/sisterhood-OKJFF26

For a complete list of OKJFF Programming visit: JewishTulsa.org/OKJFF

Charoset Cooking Class | Monday, March 30 | 6 pm | Jewish Tulsa

We all know and love the sweet, crunchy mixture of fruit, nuts, wine, and spices of classic Charoset. Did you know that the charoset described above is only customary in Ashkenazi families? Iraqis use dates, Persians use bananas and pears, Indians use mangos, some have a paste-like consistency, while others have larger chunks of fruits and nuts. The differences go on and on, yet no matter where you are in the world, as Jews, we have charoset at our Seder table. Join Joe Roberts on a trip around the world as we make charoset recipes from different Jewish traditions. This program is open to all community members—all ages—no cooking experience necessary! $10 commitment fee

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/charoset

Birkat Hailanot Dinner

Thursday, April 16 | 5 pm and 7:30 pm | FarmBar

As the trees begin to blossom and Tulsa turns into its rightfully named "Green Country," let us express gratitude for creation, the cycle of renewal, and the beautiful trees that give us oxygen and fruit!

Birkat Ha'Ilanot (Blessing of the Blossoming Trees) is a special Jewish blessing recited once a year in the spring. It is typically said during the month of Nisan (this year from March 19-April 20).

In partnership with FarmBar, enjoy a multi-course tasting dinner using ingredients from their farm—including the fresh ingredients from seeds planted earlier this year specifically for our dinner.

$54/person; Optional wine pairing $35/person

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/FarmBar

JEWISH FILM: A VITAL MEDIUM FOR STORYTELLING AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

by Sandy Sloan, Editor Tulsa Jewish Review

The Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival (OKJFF) invites the community to experience the power of storytelling through a dynamic selection of diverse and compelling films from around the world. Each screening offers more than entertainment—the films provide an opportunity to explore Jewish history, culture, and identity while deepening understanding of the challenges Jews face today. Through documentaries, dramas, and personal narratives, the festival helps educate audiences about the realities of antisemitism and other forms of hate, fostering awareness and meaningful dialogue. At the same time, the films celebrate creativity, resilience, faith, humor, and the richness of Jewish life in all its forms. By bringing people together to learn, reflect, and connect, the festival aims to entertain, educate, and enrich our community in lasting and meaningful ways.

Please join us for the 12th OKJFF, Sunday, March 22 – Sunday, March 29, at the Circle Cinema. Here's a rundown of this year's films.

The Cure for Hate | Sunday, March 22, 3 pm

Includes post-film discussion with filmmaker Peter Hutchinson and Tony McAleer

This powerful film follows Tony McAleer—a former neo-Nazi leader turned anti-hate activist—as he journeys to Auschwitz in the spirit of teshuvah, or repentance. Through this raw and emotional pilgrimage, McAleer explores the rise of fascism, the lure of extremist ideology, and the power of transforming hate and bigotry into one of hope and meaning.

OKJFF is thrilled to have both award-winning filmmaker Peter Hutchinson and Tony McAleer in Tulsa to open the Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival. Peter Hutchinson is an award-winning filmmaker, NYT bestselling author, educator, and activist. His films include Requiem for the American Dream: Featuring Noam Chomsky.

Tony McAleer founded Life After Hate in 2011, an organization that supports people leaving hate groups. Tony is a sought-after expert on violent extremism and has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN, the BBC, CBS News, NPR, and the TED Talk Series.

The Floaters | Tuesday, March 24, 7 pm

Official Selection, San Francisco Jewish Film Festival

An irreverent, heartfelt comedy about friendship, creativity, and the chaos of summer camp, *The Floaters* reunites audiences with the all-star talents of screen legend Steve Guttenberg and comedy icon Seth Green, along with Jewish actresses Jackie Tohn (Nobody Wants This) and Sarah Podemski (Reservation Dogs). Amid faulty septic systems, bunkmates with less-than-pleasant habits, and the occasional lice check, Nomi and her misfit campers, labeled *The Floaters*, discover that summer camp can be more than a way to pass the season. It can be a place of creativity, growth, and lasting connection. A laugh-out-loud, multi-generational comedy that celebrates the joy, absurdity, and heart of summer camp life.

One Big Happy Family | Wednesday, March 25, 1 pm

On her 40th birthday, Rachel's DNA test unexpectedly reveals that she's only half-Jewish and her beloved father isn't her biological parent, Rachel's life is thrown into disarray. Suddenly, she's on a wild ride of family chaos, discovering new siblings of all backgrounds, and embarking on a journey with her mother to find her "real" father. Their adventure leads them to a shady private investigator, a bumbling gynecologist, and a tattooed ex-con half-brother. Through it all, Rachel uncovers a deeper understanding of who she truly is—a devoted mother, a passionate (if currently unemployed) actress, and, most importantly, her mother's daughter. This joyous comedy stars the legendary Linda Lavin, a two-time Golden Globe winner, Tony Award winner, Emmy Award nominee, and Theater Hall of Fame inductee in her last role.

Once Upon My Mother | Wednesday, March 25, 7 pm

Based on the bestselling autobiography by Roland Perez, this exuberant and heartrending film pays tribute to a love like no other—a mother's love for her child. In 1963, Roland is born to Esther, her sixth child in their close-knit Jewish immigrant family living in the Parisian suburbs. When Roland is born with a club foot, she vows to ensure her son lives not just a normal life, but a fabulous one. She enlists the help of a determined specialist and the pop songs of Sylvie Vartan (who makes a cameo in the film) to help Roland defy all expectations and learn to walk. A beautiful film that emits both laughter and tears!

Midas Man | Thursday, March 26, 7 pm

On November 9, 1961, a man named Brian descended the stairs to a cellar in Liverpool and changed the world forever. *Midas Man* tells the story of the Fifth Beatle, Brian Epstein, a Jewish, gay man navigating the conservative landscape of mid-century Britain, and his struggle to find his place in the world. The film delves into his unwavering belief in the Beatles' star power and significance, his innovative approach to artist management, and his personal search for connection and belonging while facing societal and familial pressures due to his identity. *Midas Man* brings to life an extraordinary period of cultural change and adds depth to an untold story of one of the world's most significant outsiders. A sharp supporting cast—including Emily Watson, Eddie Izzard, and Jay Leno—helps bring the swinging '60s to life with style and wit.

The Ring | Sunday, March 29, 3 pm

International Emmy Award Winner

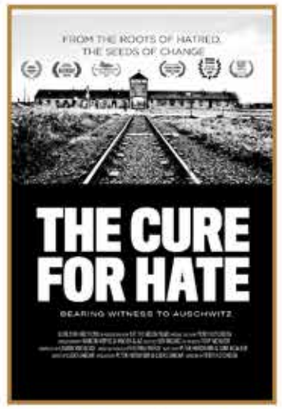
Spanning generations and continents, *The Ring* begins in 1944 Budapest, where a young mother bribes a fascist soldier with a gold ring to save herself and her infant son. Decades later, her son, now a devoutly religious man, embarks on a journey back to Hungary as his mother's health declines—determined to find the ring that once saved her life. Joining him, reluctantly, is his estranged daughter, whose closeness to her grandmother compels her to help, even as her father's inability to accept her identity threatens to tear them apart. What unfolds is a poignant intergenerational quest—part mystery, part road movie, and part emotional reckoning—as father and daughter confront their past, their differences, and the lingering shadows of history. *The Ring* is based on Israeli actor/director/screenwriter Adir Miller's Holocaust survival story.

12th Edition

OKJFF

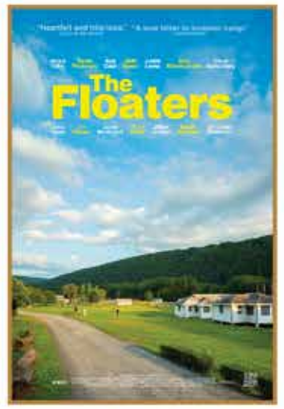
Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival

March 22–29, 2026 • 6 Films | 5 Days



Sunday, March 22, 3 PM

The Cure for Hate



Tuesday, March 24, 7 PM

The Floaters

Wednesday, March 25, 1 PM

One Big Happy Family

Wednesday, March 25, 7 PM

Once Upon My Mother

Thursday, March 26, 7 PM

Midas Man

Sunday, March 29, 3 PM

The Ring

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Tickets:

CircleCinema.org | $12 each film | All Festival Pass $60

More info and view trailers at:
JewishTulsa.org/OKJFF

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fitness Challenge: Mindful Movement March

This March, we're moving with purpose and reflecting with intention. Mindful Movement March is all about pairing *any kind of movement* with a moment of mindfulness. Each day, move your body in whatever way feels good to you—walk, stretch, lift, dance, take a class—then take a few minutes to reflect on how that movement made you feel and write down something you're grateful for. We'll provide journals to help you stay consistent and intentional all month long. No pressure. No rules. Just movement, mindset, and meaningful moments—one day at a time. Move your body. Shift your mindset. March forward!

Intro to Pickleball – 3 lessons: Mon. March 2, Wed. March 4, Fri. March 6 | 1 pm | Squash Court

Want to learn how to play the fastest-growing sport in America? Join us for a fun and social Pickleball Series. Sign up early, space is limited for this small group lesson. Learn basic strokes, serving, rules, and etiquette. This series is for people who have never played the game and want to learn the basics or just need a refresher. Paddle and balls are provided. Mon/Wed lesson is 1-2 pm; Friday's lesson is 1-3 pm and includes open play the last hour.
$30 for the series.

RSVP at: csjcc.org/beg-pb-Mar2026

Can't make the March class? Check back soon for April dates.

Fitness Orientation: Wednesday, March 4 | 10:15 am | Fitness Center

Join the CSJCC Fitness staff for a hands-on workshop designed to help you feel confident in the fitness center and build a workout routine that works for you. Many people feel intimidated by exercise equipment and machines; this program will take the guesswork out of getting started. You'll learn how to properly use the facility, understand the purpose of different machines, and identify which options best fit your goals and abilities. Our staff will guide you in creating a personalized plan to help reduce pain, build strength, and improve mobility. We'll begin with an overview of how we can create a basic plan for you and then move into the fitness center for practical, step-by-step instruction. **No advance sign up. Meet at the Fitness Center.**

Wellness Series: Food Myths with Sarah-Anne Schumann | Friday, March 6 | 10:15 am | Dan Room

What should I be eating for a healthier brain and body? Am I getting enough protein? Should I limit carbs? What about fats? Are seed oils evil? Should I eat organic? Is coffee good or bad for me? What about red wine? Which supplements should I take? Should I fast intermittently? So many questions! Learn about the latest evidence to clear up confusing nutrition questions and leave with personalized goals to help you make healthier food choices.

RSVP at: csjcc.org/Wellness-March26

(Continued)

NEW CLASSES ALL LEVELS!

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER FITNESS

Barre — Tuesday/Thursday 12 pm ▸ This low-impact, full-body workout blends elements of ballet, strength training, and flexibility.

Chair Yoga — Monday/Wednesday 12 pm ▸ This form of yoga is a gentle, accessible practice that supports mobility, flexibility, and mindful breathing.

Gentle Yoga — Tuesday 4:15 pm ▸ Expect intentional movement, steady breathing, and poses designed to help you move with more ease and confidence.

Restorative Yoga — Wednesday 4:15 pm ▸ Reset the nervous system by holding gentle poses for extended periods of time, allowing the body to fully relax and the mind to soften.

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tdedek: Day of Service | Monday, March 9 | 10:30 am | Meals on Wheels

Join us for a meaningful volunteer morning helping prepare important mailings. We'll be stuffing and sealing envelopes in a relaxed and seated volunteer opportunity. Please arrive a few minutes early so we can start on time at 10:30 am. We will volunteer until 12:30 pm. Only 12 spots available — please sign up in advance.

RSVP: cjscc.org/tzedek-March26

Social: Mad Hatter Tea Party | Friday, March 13 | 10:15 am | Dan Roon

Join us for a morning of charm and cheer at the 4th Annual CSJCC Mad Hatter Tea Party! Throw on your favorite hat and join us for finger sandwiches, warm conversation, and fellowship! This beloved tradition is filled with laughter, connection, and plenty of fun you won't want to miss. Prize awarded for best hat! Please RSVP so we know how much food to prep.

RSVP at: csjcc.org/tea-party-March26

Ballet, Tap, and Jazz For Kids | 8-weeks: Tuesdays, March 24 – May 12 | 5:45-6:30 pm | JCC Studio

JCC Family Programs

Designed for children ages 2.5–6, our Ballet, Tap, and Jazz classes inspire confidence, positivity, and joy. The curriculum, presented by Tippi Toes®, teaches dance in a fun, encouraging, and engaging environment where children build new skills while having fun. These non-competitive classes help young dancers grow from beginners into confident, skilled students. Each session features an exciting mix of all three dance styles set to high-energy music, and students will learn choreography for multiple routines throughout the program! Search for classes at "Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center" using the link below.

RSVP: csjcc.org/tippi-toes-spring26
(JCC Members use promo code: JCC2026)

~ EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS ~

19th Annual Purim Mask Invitational

Awards Reception: **Thursday, March 12, 6 pm**

On View March 12 —April

Featuring wearable art from Tulsa area students competing in elementary, middle school, and high school categories. The annual competition promotes understanding of Jewish life and culture through educating students about the Jewish holiday of Purim.

60 YEARS 1966-2026 The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art

Growing up Jewish by Artist Jaqueline Kott Wolle
On View through May 15

Painted in a fresh palette of color, *Growing Up Jewish – Art & Storytelling* traces the story of one North American Jewish family through five generations from 1925 to the present. Kott-Wolle's Jewish identity was informed by the experiences of her parents and grandparents, who arrived in Canada in 1949 after the Holocaust. As a member of the Second Generation, the artist reflects on how her forebears faced the enormous task of starting over upon surviving one of modern history's darkest chapters. Drawing upon decades of family photos for inspiration, the exhibit includes this colorful cast of characters as they rebuild their lives and flourish in North America's vibrant Jewish communities, navigating a painful past, contending with tradition, and summoning optimism for the future. Paired with the artist's own narration, Kott-Wolle asks, "What does it mean to be Jewish for past, present, and future generations in North America?"

SHALOM TULSA - AND BYE, Y'ALL

by Shahaf Feinkuchen

It is hard to believe that two and a half years have passed since Hadas and I arrived in Tulsa in September 2023. It feels as though we have lived several lifetimes here. Soon, at the end of April, we will return home to Israel. We are so excited to reunite with our families and friends—now as a family of three, with little Idan, who joined us last year—and to begin building our life together back home.

As my time here nears its end, I find myself looking back on how I have changed, what I have learned, and what we have accomplished together during my time as your Community Shaliach.

These years were, of course, profoundly shaped by the October 7th attacks, the multi-front war that followed, and the ongoing struggle to bring our hostages home. Soon after the attack, we organized the 'Solidarity in Song' community vigil. I had to hit the ground running, quickly learning to work alongside the Federation staff, congregational leadership, interfaith leaders, and local media. That event showed me the incredible power and commitment to Israel that exists within the Tulsa Jewish community.

In the two years since, my colleagues and I have tried to walk a fine line: reacting to the constant news cycle while simultaneously sharing a positive, nuanced, and authentic narrative of Israeli society. My goal was always to strengthen the human connection between our two homes.

I found myself doing things I never imagined when I first signed up for *Shlichut*. I interviewed with local media, spoke to non-Jewish audiences in churches and on college campuses, briefed law enforcement leaders, and even started a podcast about modern Zionism. All of this was done to foster a truthful understanding of Israel and to fight antisemitism. I was consistently moved by the deep support and affection for Israel I found here in Tulsa and across Oklahoma.

Beyond reacting to the news, it was vital to be proactive about Israel literacy. I loved meeting our teens at Midrasha to teach Zionism and Krav Maga, and visiting Mizel JCDS and our Sunday Schools to create joyful Israeli experiences for our children. At Camp Shalom, we expanded our Israel education, bringing back the Summer Shlichim and the Israeli Scouts Friendship Caravan to engage hundreds of campers with the spirit of Israel.

One project I am especially proud of is the Elson Israel Fellowship. Thanks to the generosity of the late Bill Elson (z"l), we now bring four Israeli thought leaders to Tulsa each year to develop projects focused on Zionism and Jewish unity. We are currently finishing a wonderful first cohort and selecting the next. I am excited to see how this program flourishes in the years to come.

As Israel shifts into a season of rebuilding, we must keep the memory of October 7th strong while looking toward the future. I encourage you to ask: *How can we "do" more Jewish and more Israel?* The best way to support, feel, and understand Israel is to visit. I know it can feel challenging, but the reward is great. Jewish Tulsa is committed to offering travel opportunities, and I encourage you to take them. I would love to be the one to meet you there and show you around!

As we move back, we are taking a piece of Tulsa with us in our luggage. I don't just mean souvenirs, but the memories and friendships that have shaped us. I am honored to have been your Tulsa Shaliach, and I will carry your stories and your spirit back to Israeli society.

The Federation leadership and the Jewish Agency are already working to select the next Shaliach. I am almost envious of them, knowing they will be welcomed with the same open arms you extended to us.

I would love to say goodbye in person. Please find me on campus or at our upcoming "Israeli Yoms" events: the **Yom HaAtzmaut Brunch (Sunday, April 19th) and the Yom HaZikaron Memorial (Monday, April 20th).** You can find more details soon at JewishTulsa.org.

Thank you for everything.

— Shahaf, Hadas, and Idan ■

JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA'S 2026 YOM HASHOAH

The Jewish Federation of Tulsa's 2026 Yom HaShoah commemoration will take place on April 14 at 7 PM at Congregation B'nai Emunah. Our speaker, Dr. Rebekah Erbelding will be focusing on the topic of American's and the Holocaust. Sofia Thornblad, Chief Curator and director of Collections and Holocaust Education at the Sherwin Miller museum of Jewish Art asked her some questions.

I have heard your path to Holocaust scholarship is interesting. How did you get started?

I grew up in the fairly rural community of Churchville, south of Rochester, NY. I always joke that the name of the town gives you an idea of how many Jewish people I knew growing up. I was a bookish kid, and I think I read the *Diary of Anne Frank* on my own, but my first real exposure to learning about the Holocaust came when I was 12 and my Girl Scout troop took our cookie trip to Washington, DC. The Museum had opened the year before, and there was enough publicity about it that we all wanted to go. I credit my intrepid troop leaders for shepherding 20 preteens to the Museum. I wanted to read everything, I didn't want to leave. I went home, checked out every book from the library, and started tailoring all my essays and projects to topics that allowed me to learn more. I went to college in Virginia, and got a part-time internship with the Museum the summer after my junior year. I never left. I got the offer of a full-time internship, finished my coursework early, and started at the Museum in the January of what would have been my last semester. I've now been with the Museum for more than 23 years.

When it comes to the greater topic of Americans and the Holocaust, what is something most people do not know that you think is important to talk about?

I think there's a lot of focus on President Roosevelt and on the State Department, and less of an understanding about what average Americans actually knew about the persecution and murder of European Jews as it was happening, and what they did about it. When you take a more holistic look at the country in the 1930s and 1940s, you see a whole range of responses. Certainly there were many people who didn't think the persecution of Jews was "our" problem, but you also see Americans acting as sponsors for Jewish refugees, and organizations working together to try to get as many people out of Europe as possible and help them find homes and jobs in the United States. The story just gets a little more complicated, but also more recognizable. The people back then made decisions like we do, based on the information they had at the time, and their own values, prejudices, and fears.

You were an advisor and on screen expert for the U.S. and the Holocaust Series by Florentine films. Can you tell me a bit about what that was like?

I'm really proud of that film, which was at least partially inspired by the USHMM's Americans and the Holocaust exhibition. The filmmakers are so smart and such lovely people, and their researchers are top-notch. They found images and footage I had never seen before. It was an honor and privilege to work with them so closely on that film.

Dr. Rebekah Erbelding

"You" are the main character in the play *Here There are Blueberries* by Moises Kaufman and Amanda Gronich. What is it like to be represented in this way, alongside and as part of such a moving story about the Holocaust? Has this production changed the way you view your job at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum?

Yes, I have a pretty diverse and interesting resume! In 2007, as part of my work at the Museum, I received a photo album that turned out to be the last known photos of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp and killing center prior to its liberation. More surprisingly, the album doesn't depict any prisoners--it was created by Karl Hoecker, the adjutant (basically, administrative assistant) to the last commandant of Auschwitz, and depicts parties, official tours, playing with his dog, and an SS resort near the camp. Moises Kaufman, the playwright, saw an article about the album and reached out to him. The Tectonic Theater Project, which he founded, is well-known for documentary theater--their most famous play is *The Laramie Project*. After years of interviews, he and his coauthor Amanda Gronich finished the play in 2022, and it's been touring ever since. It was even a finalist for the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for drama. I'll go see the London opening in a few

(Continued)

(Continued from 17)

weeks. My character is the audience surrogate, explaining how the album came to the Museum, how we figured out names and places, what happened after the public saw the photos, and the questions the album raises about human behavior and the justifications we make for our own actions. The audience joins in the detective story, and by the end, I think a lot of people ask themselves the crucial question: what would I have done? The play will be licensed soon and available to be staged all across the country, so that is both a little exciting and daunting for me! But I'm proud to be associated with the play and hope that it encourages people to have these crucial conversations, and to think about who we want to be in the world.

Dr. Rebecca Erbelding is a historian of American responses to the Holocaust and the author of Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe, published by Doubleday in 2018, which won the National Jewish Book Award for Writing Based on Archival Material. She served as a historical advisor and an on-camera expert in Florentine Films' The U.S. and the Holocaust, directed by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, and Sarah Botstein. She is currently working on a new book, Shelter on the Lake: 982 Holocaust Refugees and an American Small Town, which will be published by Simon and Schuster in 2026. Dr. Erbelding is an educator, curator, and archivist at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She frequently presents on the War Refugee Board; US immigration policy during the 1930s; and the "Hoecker album," a photograph album owned by Karl Hoecker, the final adjutant to the commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Her work on the Hoecker album has been adapted into a theatrical production, Here There are Blueberries, written by Moisés Kaufman and Amanda Gronich, which was a finalist for the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and debuted off-Broadway in 2024. She holds a PhD in American History from George Mason University . ■

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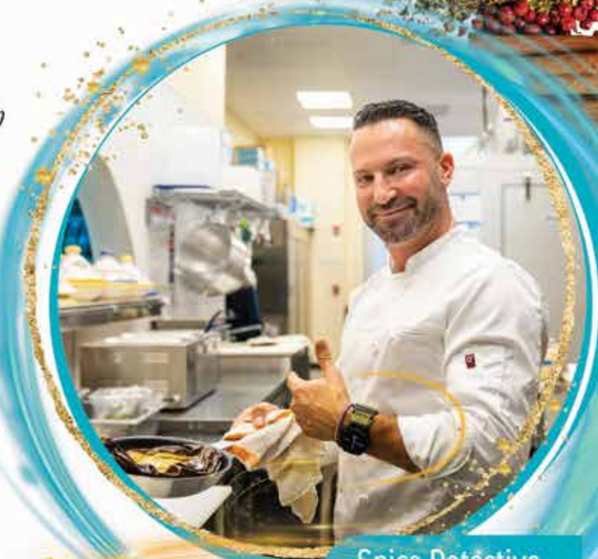

MORE THAN A MARATHON

by Rosalie Silberg, Dead Sea Marathon Team Captain

As I return home from a remarkable and unforgettable trip to Israel, I find myself filled with gratitude. For the journey, for the people who made it possible, and for the deeper connections it created. Thanks to the Jewish Tulsa (the Jewish Federation of Tulsa) and our partnership with the Tamar Region, I had the opportunity to accomplish something I had long dreamed of—running my first marathon—at the Dead Sea Marathon, the second largest race in Israel and held at the lowest point on earth.

Running a marathon has always been a personal goal of mine. I promised myself that if I was going to do it, it would be somewhere extraordinary. Somewhere with breathtaking views and more importantly, somewhere that held meaning in my heart. The Dead Sea, with its desert beauty and spiritual resonance, felt like the perfect place. The idea seemed ambitious, even far-fetched, until one simple conversation set everything in motion.

One day, while talking with Joe Roberts (Executive Director at Jewish Tulsa), he casually mentioned the idea of organizing a group from our community to travel to Israel and run the Dead Sea Marathon. What began as a passing comment quickly turned into a shared vision. I, alongside six other members of our Tulsa community, which included Evan Anderson, Rabbi Dan Kaiman, Jacob Parra, Ethan Purther, Jillian Roberts, and Joe Roberts, committed to the challenge. Training for a marathon requires discipline and determination, but knowing that we would be running together in Israel added an entirely new layer of purpose and excitement.

This journey was about much more than logging miles. It was a testament to what can happen when community, partnership, and shared dreams intersect. Through the dedication of community leaders such as Itzik Levin and his vision for creating a relationship between the Federation of Tulsa and the Tamar Region, what might have remained a dream became a reality. Our partners in the Tamar Region welcomed us with open arms. They hosted us, introduced us to the region's history and landscape, and made us feel not like visitors, but like family.

Running along The Dead Sea was unlike anything I have ever experienced. The desert stretched endlessly around us, the still waters reflecting the early morning light. There is something powerful about running 26.2 miles in a place so ancient and so spiritually significant. With every step, I felt connected not only to the land but also to the generations who have walked it before us. The physical challenge was real. There were moments of fatigue and doubt, but the

Rosalie Silberg and Jillian Roberts

setting and the support of my fellow runners carried me forward.

Crossing the finish line was emotional in ways I did not expect. Yes, there was pride in completing my first marathon. Yes, there was relief that months of training had paid off. But more than that, there was gratitude. Gratitude for the Federation that invests in meaningful partnerships. Gratitude for the Tamar Region, whose hospitality turned a race into an immersive and unforgettable experience. And gratitude for a community that shows up. For one another,

". . . I carry with me the lessons of the marathon: perseverance, gratitude, and the power of community. The miles were challenging, but they were made lighter by running alongside friends and by knowing we were supported both at home and abroad."

for Israel, and for shared opportunities like this one.

This trip reminded me that our connection to Israel is not abstract. It is personal. It is built through relationships, shared experiences, and moments that leave a lasting imprint. Running the Dead Sea Marathon was a physical accomplishment, but it was also a powerful expression of Jewish peoplehood and community partnership. We were

(L to Rt) Back row: Joe Roberts, Jacob Parra, Ethan Purther; Middle row: Rotem Ohayon Haykin (Tamar Regional Council), Rosalie Silberg, Jillian Roberts, Rabbi Dan Kaiman; Front row: Evan Anderson

not just participants in a race; we were ambassadors of Tulsa, strengthening ties with our partners and deepening our own connection to the land.

I often think about how easily this opportunity could have passed by. If not for that casual conversation, if not for the vision and effort of those who nurture our partnership with the Tamar Region, this dream might have remained just that. A dream. Instead, it became one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

As I settle back into everyday routines, I carry with me the lessons of the marathon: perseverance, gratitude, and the power of community. The miles were challenging, but they were made lighter by running alongside friends and by knowing we were supported both at home and abroad. I will cherish this experience for the rest of my life. Not only because I can say I ran a marathon, but because of where I ran it and who made it possible.

For that, I am profoundly thankful. ■

ALICE BLUE:
A CAREER ROOTED IN JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

by Dr. Jennifer L. Airey

I asked Laura Bellis, Executive Director of the Take Control Initiative, to describe what it's like to work with Alice Blue. She responded, "Alice is the most warmly irreverent person I'll ever have the privilege to call a colleague and a friend. She never shies away from saying hard truths (with linguistic flair the FCC regulates). She's equally inspiring, hilarious, and macabre." In three sentences, Laura has encapsulated much of Blue's essence. Her love for her community, her dedication to service, and her clear-eyed ability to sum up and cut through problems are coupled with a brilliant and incisive sense of humor. These qualities have made her a beloved fixture in Tulsa's public service sector and Jewish community more broadly.

Blue grew up in Chicago. The daughter of Holocaust survivors who met and married in Bergen Belsen, she once wrote that her parents' "survival was a piece of rare good fortune" amidst the destruction of the Polish Jewish community. Raised in a Yiddish-speaking household, she was keenly aware of her parents' story, and of the blessings associated with their survival and emigration to the United States. From their example, she developed a deep sense of empathy and commitment to social justice, "not bitterness, but the strength to repair and improve." She also developed the profound "moral imperative to mobilize; to make sure that we contest every form of injustice, and see to the security of every human being." That imperative drove her to pursue a career in public service and ultimately led her to Yeshiva University in New York, where she earned her master's degree in social work.

"Summer in New York was pure fun," Blue comments. Her master's thesis examined the genetic and generational factors underlying alcoholism, cutting-edge research at the time. In New York, she also met her future husband, Mark Fitzerman. "I couldn't type," she recalled, so he "courted me by editing and typing my thesis. It was so Mark. I had no idea that he was really a very good editor, and he was an incredibly fast typist." Fitzerman assumed his first pulpit in Kansas City, and Alice joined him a year later; the pair married in 1981. Two children followed: Micah in 1982, and Nina in 1987.

Although Blue grew up in a Jewish neighborhood, she didn't come from an especially religious home. As such, she didn't immediately "know what a rabbi's wife was." In fact, she says humorously, "some would argue that I never quite learned what it was." So when the pair arrived in Tulsa in 1985, she charted her own course. Her decision not to change her name – a decision she says the couple "spent five minutes talking about" – was initially controversial. According to Fitzerman, "Alice had been on a study tour of Nicaragua, and some were convinced that she was a communist sympathizer. Not only that, but she had her own last name and our children's last names were a hyphenated hybrid." But the Tulsa community overwhelmingly embraced her: "I was lucky when I came to Tulsa that people were pretty welcoming and expectations of the rabbi's wife didn't exist, or at least I didn't think they existed. People were very lovely." While the couple initially planned for Tulsa to be the penultimate stop in their careers, Blue quickly fell in love with the city. It's the "mystery of Tulsa," she says. People "end up loving the lifestyle. The people are incredible, and the Jewish community is incredible." The city soon became their permanent home.

Blue initially took a job at the Jewish Community Center, supervising a variety of programs, before moving to the Community Service Council of Tulsa (CSC). Although she had trained as a therapist, she was much more interested in community work. "My social work was always about community, and finding ways to move the community, so CSC was perfect for me. I could do prevention of all kinds." In particular, she focused on schooling services, and eventually became a senior planner, bringing the community together with schools to find innovative methods of preventing drug abuse. At CSC, she sought and obtained multiple grants from the federal government to underwrite school programming on drug abuse prevention and supervised a Robert Wood Johnson grant – one of very few ever received in the city of Tulsa – before going to work with the Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program. From 2011-2016, she ran a highly successful program at Union High School, helping kids succeed by giving them access to "sexuality educators, mental health educators, and people who were involved in work force efforts. We made sure kids had jobs where they were making money, opened bank accounts for them, and gave the opportunities to play sports."

Blue temporarily retired for the first time in 2016, taking six months off from work to spend time with her newborn granddaughter. But

Alice Blue with her grandchildren

eventually she went back to work, ultimately becoming the Clinical Director of the Take Control Initiative. The program's goal is to provide access to birth control to people who can't afford it. It was an "exciting place to work," Blue remembers, "especially during Covid. How do you service needs that suddenly became greater? How do you take a bad situation and make it right?" For years now, Take Control has disseminated emergency contraception – "just in case" packets – not just to clinics, but to churches, synagogues, beauty parlors, stores, and bars, and Blue is extremely proud of the way the organization has thought outside the box. "We did a bang-up job of bringing service to the community," she says. Her colleagues at Take Control are particularly complimentary of her ingenuity, especially following the end of Roe. "Her tenacious commitment to realizing reproductive justice drove our whole team to carry on in so many difficult moments," Laura Bellis says.

Over the course of her career, Blue has been involved with a number of other important progressive initiatives. In the early 2000s, she worked closely with future mayor G.T. Bynum to change the city charter and allow city workers to be openly gay. She served for years on the board of Iron Gate Tulsa: "there wasn't a finer organization," she says. "The people who worked at Iron Gate were the best. They didn't have clients; they had guests. They were open every single day of the year because people don't take off their hunger." She was an organizer of the Million Mom March in Tulsa, calling for stricter gun control. And she was a member of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa's Community Relations Council "during a time when we worked closely with the Black community and the Hispanic community

"... what I really want to do is grow a staff and make sure people reach an incredible level of competence. That's what I was taught by having good mentors and that's what I tried to imbue."

and the Muslim community." Perhaps her most meaningful volunteer work, however, has been with Tulsa's Council for Holocaust Education. "My most profound work has always been with the Holocaust council," she says. This work is especially important as "we are losing survivors; we are the last people to know what it was like to grow up with them. Kids especially now need to hear what it was like to grow up having a grandparent that was a survivor. That proximity is something that nobody else has and we can get them into the schools to talk about it, the closeness they had to something that wasn't ancient history but part of their lives."

Reflecting back on her career, Blue credits the many fantastic bosses and mentors she worked with for helping to develop her leadership style. "Good supervision and good management" are undervalued, she says, but "what I really want to do is grow a staff and make sure people reach an incredible level of competence. That's what I was taught by having good mentors and that's what I tried to imbue." She also speaks with great pleasure of the work-life balance she was able to achieve. "Mark's work was evening work and every-day work and weekend work, so I realized to have any kind of stability, I had to be able to balance work and family, and I never felt cheated on either side. I was home every day pretty much for dinner and bedtime. I had quality work and time to be with my kids."

As Blue steps into her second retirement, she remains dedicated to service and to the Tulsa community, and she fully plans to stay involved. "I want to do meaningful work that is episodic – project work, stuff that is exciting and still engaging the community," she says. Tulsa has been so fortunate to benefit from her passion, her kindness, her intelligence, and her wit, and we wish her all the best with this new phase of her life. In the words of Laura Bellis, "She's iconic." ■

MORE THAN A SCHOOL: FINDING JOY, TRUST, AND COMMUNITY AT MIZEL

by Shelley Diamond, Upper Elementary Teacher

Working at Mizel Jewish Community Day School has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my career. I have wanted to work at Mizel for a long time, so when the position became available, I stepped out of an administrative role at a major school district to join Mizel and go back to doing what I love, teaching. The students here learn, but there is also a sense of community, warmth, and shared purpose that is impossible to ignore. It was clear from the beginning that this was a chance to be part of a school that is full of joy every single day.

Mizel really feels like a family. The teachers support one another in meaningful and practical ways, whether it is sharing materials, brainstorming how to reach a specific student, or simply checking in on each other. There is an atmosphere of trust and respect amongst the staff that makes collaboration feel natural. You always know that you are not alone in the work you are doing, and that sense of being "in it together" makes a huge difference in how each day feels. Everyone who works here knows just how special it is to be at Mizel.

One of the things I appreciate most about Mizel is the freedom teachers have to, well, teach. The director, Amanda Anderson, has respect for each educator's professional judgement, creativity, and experience. That trust means a lot. It allows us to tailor lessons, bring in exciting projects, and respond to individual needs without feeling constrained by rigid expectations. We work hard to make sure the kids learn and have fun doing it. The result is a school full of innovation and joy. When you walk through the halls, you can feel that energy. Students are engaged, happy, and excited to learn. Teachers are laughing and sharing cute stories in the hallway. The building feels alive with the sound of joy.

Students prepare special gifts for their families for Hanukkah

The support from families and the broader Mizel community deepens that sense of connection. Parents value what we do and partner with us in their children's education. They show up, they cheer us on, and they remind us that what happens in the classroom matters far beyond the walls of the school. At Mizel, we have a shared commitment to nurturing not only minds but hearts, and this is what makes Mizel so unique.

Morah Shelley Diamond

Because of this approach, children at Mizel do not just learn, they enjoy learning. They like being at school, and you can feel that the moment you walk through the halls. The small class sizes help us truly know each child, which makes it easier to nurture their curiosity and confidence, and to tailor learning to meet their needs. When I come to Mizel each morning, I am grateful that I made the choice to be here. It is a rare gift to work in a place that feels so much like a family and a community.

4th & 5th grade students make a meaningful connection when they discover a map of Israel at the Discovery Lab

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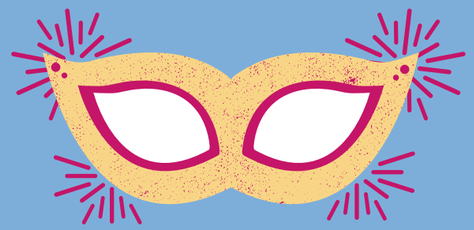

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THE HISTORY OF B'NAI B'RITH ©

by Phil Goldfarb

B'nai B'rith, founded on October 13, 1843, in a small café on New York's Lower East Side, began as a fraternal society created by 12 German Jewish immigrants led by Henry Jones. Their goal was simple yet bold: to support Jewish immigrants in adapting to American life while preserving mutual responsibility. Meetings were held in German, and the organization's first president, Isaac Dittenhoefer, helped establish its earliest humanitarian project—an insurance fund for widows and orphans of deceased members. This blend of mutual aid, cultural connection, and civic engagement would define B'nai B'rith for generations.

By the 1850s, B'nai B'rith had expanded beyond fraternal functions as in 1851, it petitioned U.S. leaders, including Secretary of State Daniel Webster and Senator Henry Clay, to protest discriminatory laws against Jews in Switzerland—its first major act of international advocacy. A year later, it opened the Maimonides Library, the first Jewish public library in the United States.

While approximately 7,000 Jewish soldiers fought for the North and 3,000 Jewish soldiers fought for the South during the Civil War, B'nai B'rith lodges equipped these volunteer soldiers, and in 1862, Missouri members successfully appealed to President Abraham Lincoln to rescind General Ulysses S. Grant's infamous General Order No. 11, which expelled Jews from Grant's military district. The organization also launched its first international relief effort in 1865, aiding cholera victims in Palestine.

The late 19th century saw B'nai B'rith expand its humanitarian reach. Lodges raised funds for flood victims in Baltimore, supported Jewish communities in North Africa and the Middle East, and intervened diplomatically when Jews in Bessarabia and Romania faced expulsion or persecution. By the 1870s and 1880s, B'nai B'rith had established lodges in Toronto, Montreal, Berlin, Cairo, and Jerusalem—the latter becoming the first public Hebrew speaking organization in the region.

As Jewish immigration surged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, B'nai B'rith created Americanization programs, trade schools, and social services to help newcomers integrate. It also responded to national crises, raising funds after the Great Chicago Fire (1871), yellow fever epidemics, and natural disasters in Galveston (1900) and San Francisco (1906).

In 1899, the organization founded the National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives in Denver, which became a leading respiratory hospital in America. B'nai B'rith also commissioned the iconic "Religious Liberty" statue for the 1876 Centennial Exposition, symbolizing the organization's commitment to American democratic ideals.

The early 20th century marked a transformative era. In response to the antisemitic hysteria surrounding the 1913 trial of Leo Frank in Atlanta, B'nai B'rith created the Anti Defamation League (ADL), which would later become an independent organization dedicated to combating antisemitism and bigotry.

B'nai B'rith also founded two of the most influential Jewish educational institutions of the modern era:

- **Hillel (1923):** Adopted from Rabbi Benjamin Frankel's campus initiative at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Hillel grew into a global network of more than 500 college centers.
- **BBYO (1924):** Beginning with the Aleph Zadik Aleph youth fraternity and later joined by B'nai B'rith Girls, BBYO became a premier Jewish teen movement.

The organization also invested in Jewish camping, establishing B'nai B'rith Perlman Camp and Beber Camp, which became hubs for youth leadership development.

As antisemitism intensified in Europe, B'nai B'rith mobilized. In the 1930s, it sent emergency funds to German Jewish communities, supported children fleeing Nazi persecution, and created a Vocational Service Bureau to help young Jews overcome workplace quotas.

After the Nazi government shut down German lodges in 1937 and seized their assets, B'nai B'rith expanded its refugee assistance, providing affidavits for immigration and supporting displaced families across Europe.

During World War II, members served in the armed forces and supported the war effort at home. It is estimated that approximately 550,000 Jewish men and women served in U.S. Military branches. In 1945, B'nai B'rith President Henry Monsky represented world Jewry at the founding conference of the United Nations, advocating for Jewish rights in Palestine.

B'nai B'rith played a pivotal role in the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1947, at the organization's urging, Eddie Jacobson persuaded his best friend President Harry Truman to meet with Chaim Weizmann—a meeting that helped secure U.S. support for partition.

(Continued)

After Israel declared independence in 1948, B'nai B'rith sent shiploads of food, clothing, and supplies. It later established the B'nai B'rith World Center in Jerusalem (1980), strengthening ties with Israeli institutions.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the organization supported Israel during the Suez Crisis, advocated against the Arab League boycott, and purchased record amounts of Israel Bonds during the Six Day War.

B'nai B'rith became a major force in international diplomacy. It attained observer status at the Organization of American States and UNESCO, and its leaders met with Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, helping advance Catholic Jewish relations after Vatican II.

The organization was central to the global movement for Soviet Jewry, sponsoring the 1971 Brussels Conference and supporting campaigns that eventually helped secure Jewish emigration rights.

Domestically, B'nai B'rith expanded its community service programs, including the creation of a national network of affordable senior housing beginning in 1971. Today, it is the largest Jewish sponsor of federally assisted housing for seniors in the United States. The organization also launched educational initiatives such as the Diverse Minds writing challenge, the Enlighten America tolerance pledge, and Holocaust remembrance programs.

Since its first international relief effort in 1865, B'nai B'rith has responded to crises worldwide—from earthquakes in Haiti and Chile to tsunamis in Japan, wildfires in Israel, and drought in East Africa. Its disaster relief fund continues to provide aid to communities in need, Jewish and non Jewish alike.

Across nearly two centuries, B'nai B'rith has evolved from a small immigrant aid society into a global organization dedicated to Jewish continuity, human rights, and humanitarian service. Its legacy includes founding major Jewish institutions, shaping international policy, supporting Israel, and responding to crises around the world—all while remaining rooted in its original mission: to protect, uplift, and unite the Jewish people. ■

Phil Goldfarb is the president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Tulsa and can be e-mailed at: phil.goldfarb@cox.net.

Please visit www.tulsagogue.com/events for more information and to register for Synagogue services and events.

Shushan State Fair Purim Celebration
Sunday, March 1 | 9:00 a.m.

The fair is coming to town and landing in the Synagogue parking lot. Following a lively reading of the Megillah, starting at 9:00 a.m., the Synagogue parking lot midway will be open to enjoy a Persian fair, main stage concert, hamantaschen, carnival rides, games, and prizes. This celebration is free and open to the entire community. Please indicate your attendance through website registration.

Author Jon Meacham on the American Struggle
Sunday, March 1 | 7:00 p.m.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Jon Meacham will visit The Synagogue on tour for his new book, American Struggle, which will be released in late February. In this anthology, Meacham brings together centuries of essential American voices to understand our national debates and divisions from 1619 to the present, with his signature commentary on the consequential speeches, letters, and essays that led us to this moment. The event, in partnership with Magic City Books, is ticketed and expected to sell out in advance. Secure your tickets at magiccitybooks.com/events.

Schlep Up to the Mic - Purim Karaoke at Mercury Lounge
Monday, March 2 | 7:00 p.m.

Get ready to turn up the joy this Purim with a one-of-a-kind live band karaoke experience you won't want to miss! Put on your best costume, grab the mic, and sing your heart out backed by the Synagogue's very own Klay Kodesh band, bringing high-energy sound and Purim spirit to every song. Whether you're a shower singer, a stage star, or just present for the vibes, this is your chance to celebrate Purim loud, proud, and totally unforgettable. Please visit our website for the Mercury Lounge location and to indicate your attendance.

THE SYNAGOGUE
B'NAI EMUNAH

Purim - Traditional Megillah Reading and Morning Service
Tuesday, March 3 | 8:00 a.m.

All are invited to participate in a traditional chanting of the Story of Esther in observance of Purim. The morning service and reading will begin at 8:00 a.m. and last approximately one hour. Bring your noisemakers and fulfill the commitments of the holiday with community.

Sisterhood Book Club: Olive Days
Sunday, March 8 | 10:30 a.m.

Join Sisterhood in the discussion of Olive Days by Jessica Elisheva, a quiet, reflective novel about a young woman living in Israel and trying to figure out who she is and where she belongs. Her story focuses on everyday moments, relationships, and inner struggles, showing how ordinary days and small choices shape identity, love, and faith in a complicated place. At the conclusion of the book discussion, Sisterhood members will be joined, via Zoom, with author Jessica Elisheva to answer questions and offer insight into her own personal story.

Seventeenth Street Deli
Sunday, March 8 | 5:30 p.m.

Indulge in the delectable offerings of the Seventeenth Street Deli, where our kitchen crafts dishes with a perfect blend of slow cures, a touch of pepper, and heaps of love. Our much-loved pop-up restaurant invites you to enjoy both dine-in and take-out dinner services. Ensure your place in this culinary experience by pre-registering on the link below and choose from our delightful pastrami, corned beef, or deli egg salad options. Connect with us at 918-583-7121 or tulsadeli.org to be part of the culinary magic.

Lifelong Learners at Zarrow Pointe
Wednesday, March 11 | 1:00 p.m.

Lifelong learners from all over the community are invited to join Rabbi Kaiman for a learning session at Zarrow Pointe. Please check in at Zarrow Pointe Town Center, and you will be directed to the Theater Room. Light treats and refreshments will be served. There is no cost to attend the learning series, but please indicate your attendance through website registration.

Blatt + Blue: Running on Sand
Thursday, March 12 | 7:00 p.m.

Running on Sand is a dramedy about Aumari, an Eritrean asylum seeker in Israel who narrowly avoids deportation when he's mistaken for a Nigerian soccer star and recruited by a struggling local team. Forced to play along with the mix-up, he navigates fame, friendship, and the constant fear of being discovered. The film blends humor and heart to explore identity, belonging, and the precarious lives of migrants, using sports as a lens for social commentary. Join us for our conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (918 583 7121). Newcomers are welcome to join the dialogue.

Shabbat Shalom Musical Circle and Dinner
Friday, March 13 | 5:30 p.m. service, 6:15 p.m. dinner

Experience a musical Shabbat evening with songs and storytelling starting at 5:30 p.m. This inclusive and accessible event is an ideal introduction to Shabbat traditions, welcoming participants of all ages and backgrounds. After services, we'll enjoy a beautiful Shabbat dinner together at 6:15 p.m. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table through website registration.

At the Table: Parent-Teen Conversations
Monday, March 23 | 6:00 p.m.

Pull up a chair and join us for At the Table, a five-part dinner and learning series for teens and their parents. This experience creates space for meaningful connection, honest conversation, and learning side by side. Guided by Morah Sara and Anna Padgett Siegel, LCSW, we'll draw on Jewish wisdom and real-life insight to talk about what matters most to teens and families today—from friendships and wellbeing to identity, boundaries, antisemitism, and the world around us. Reserve your seat through event registration.

Bibi Dibi – Shabbat for Little Ones
Friday, March 27 | 5:30 p.m.

Join us for a Shabbat gathering crafted for babies and their families. Revel in the joy of singing songs, playing games, and savoring a delightful Shabbat dinner. It's an excellent opportunity to establish and embrace your own family traditions. While no reservation is required for the celebration, please secure your spot for the meal through event registration.

Family Jewish Cooking Club
Sunday, March 29 | 12:00 p.m.

Join the club and embark on a flavorful, family adventure. Participants will meet after ShulSchool for lunch, schmoozing, and a hands-on kitchen session. Throughout the experience, we'll learn about the history and meaning of a traditional Passover dish and get to work on making it ourselves. Each family will leave with their dish in hand, along with a recipe and instructions to recreate the experience at home. Please indicate your attendance through website registration.

Passover Second Seder at the Synagogue
Thursday, April 2 | 6:00 p.m.

Join Synagogue members, friends, and newcomers to Tulsa for a joyful celebration of the most important event in Jewish history. The seder will feature singing, storytelling, and moving music from the Synagogue's Klay Kodesh musical ensemble. In-person reservations are limited. To register, please call the Synagogue office at (918) 583-7121, or register online. Starting time is 6:00 p.m. We'll close at 9:00 p.m.

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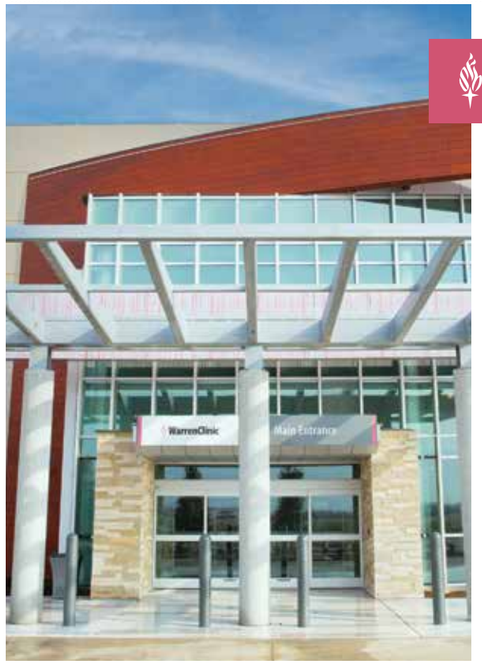

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CONGREGATION B'NAI EMUNAH

All services and events except those marked with * will be held on the campus of the CSJCC in the Sylvan Auditorium.

Jewish Federation of Tulsa
2021 E. 71st St, Tulsa 74136

Visit our Temple Israel website www.templetulsa.com and our events page for details about all we offer!

"Seuss"-Shan Purim Carnival! • Sun., Mar. 1 • 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Come one, come all for Temple Israel's community Purim Carnival! This year, we spin the grogger to a family-friendly, Dr. Seuss-themed spiel beginning at 9:30 a.m. The fun and games begin at 10:00 a.m. with inflatables, carnival games, and a face-painter. There are also games for the littlest revelers, so bring the whole family. What would a carnival be without concessions? At 11:00 a.m., the grill opens with hot dogs, hamburgers (including vegetarian), and chips, courtesy of Temple Israel's Brotherhood. Cost is $5/person or $18/family. Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page to sign up.

Purim for Grown-Ups: A Full Reading of the Book of Esther (in English) * • Tues., Mar. 3 • 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
This Purim, adults are invited to read the entire Book of Esther in English. Many of us know only a softened version of the story from childhood, but the text itself is complex and clearly written for adults. It includes sex, violence, political intrigue, moral ambiguity, and dramatic reversals of power. This program offers a chance to encounter the Megillah as it truly is—challenging, unsettling, and surprisingly relevant. No costumes required; curiosity encouraged. This event will be held in the Temple Israel Activity Space at the Temple Offices on the JCC Campus.

Sisterhood Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Mar. 6 • 7:30 p.m.
Temple Israel's Sisterhood invites you to welcome in Shabbat with our special Sisterhood Shabbat. Sofia Thornblad, Chief Curator and Director of Collections and Holocaust Education from Tulsa's own Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art will speak on women's role in Jewish history for this special evening. Celebrating the contributions of Jewish women to our community, Sisterhood will crown this year's recipient of the Queen Esther Award, Donnie Suter-Levin. Following the service, please join us for a sweet oneg.

Everything's Coming Up "Charoset"! * • Sun, Mar. 8 • 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Temple Israel's Adult Education Committee presents this opportunity to learn unique charoset recipes from across our rich tapestry of Jewish heritage. This tasty learning session offers you the chance to try your hand at charoset-making just in time for your Passover Seder! This event will be held in the Temple Israel Activity Space at the Temple Offices on the JCC Campus. Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page on our website for more information and sign up to join us.

Refugee Shabbat & Birthday Shabbat with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Mar. 13 • 6:00 p.m.
Working with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), Temple Israel proudly presents this special Shabbat Service in support of refugees struggling to find safety in the United States. Remembering that we once sought and struggled to find refuge, we spend this Shabbat in learning and contemplation of how we support refugees, particularly in these perilous times. Please visit the Temple Israel website for upcoming information and join us in this special night.

Congregational Dinner• Fri., Mar. 13 • 7:00 p.m.
Learn more about our Jewish community in Mexico from Temple Israel's Director of Engagement, Zach Singer, and enjoy a Mexican-themed congregational dinner immediately following our 6:00 p.m. Shabbat Services. Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page on our website for more information and sign up to join us.

Zamru l'Shabbat in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., March 20 • 6:00 p.m.
Celebrate with Elijah's Minor Prophets, our Temple Israel band, as we welcome in Shabbat. Each month, this talented group of musicians joins Cantorial Soloist Jenny Labow for a Shabbat Service filled with the joy and spirituality of Shabbat. Arrive early for our pre-oneg with your Temple family.

"Time" For Learning * • Sat., March 21 • 10:30 a.m.
Join us as Rabbi Appel continues our learning series based on Rabbi Dr. Dalia Marx's book *From Time to Time: Journeys in the Jewish Calendar*. Through text study, we will explore the holidays and traditions for each month in the Jewish calendar, journeying this month into Nisan, the month of liberation and Pesach. To make our study a sweet one, bagels and coffee are provided. This learning will be held in the Temple Israel Activity Space at the Temple Offices on the JCC Campus. Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page on our website for more information and sign up to join us.

Zarrow Pointe Shabbat Service * • Fri., March 27 • 4:00 p.m.
We cordially invite all those who wish to join us for this meaningful Friday evening service, held in the Burnstein Auditorium at Zarrow Pointe. We welcome all friends in our community who would appreciate being together on Shabbat, in addition to Temple members and Zarrow Pointe residents.

Anniversary Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., March 27 • 6:00 p.m
Welcome in Shabbat and celebrate significant anniversaries with us. Each month, we honor congregants with a special gift and a blessing on the bimah for reaching their milestone anniversaries. Start celebrating early at our 5:30 p.m. joyous pre-oneg.

Brotherhood After Hours * • Mon., March 30 • 6:00 p.m
Temple Israel's Brotherhood invites you to gather round some hearty Irish fare at Kilkenny's on Cherry Street! Enjoy the "pay your way" gathering in a special private room, and raise your glass in a *L'Chaim* and *Sláinte*! Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page on our website for more information and sign up to join us by Wednesday, March 25. ■

A MATTER OF CHOICE

by Kelsey Holder, Director of Lifelong Learning

This spring, we've embarked on journeys to Israel in Shorashim, our religious school, and begun a study of the Shoah in Midrasha, our combined high school program. A friend and parent suggested both topics after her school-aged child encountered virulent antisemitic remarks on the internet. In today's climate, she asked, shouldn't they be learning what we as Jews believe about Israel and how we as Jews view the Shoah, especially with the rising tide of antisemitism that Jews are being forced to navigate today?

We never shy away from challenging conversations with our children, even if we want to, and the opinions they will hear about Israel that leak over into blatant antisemitism present them with a shocking challenge. The comments they will read and hear, hearkening back to the atrocities aimed at the Jewish people during the Shoah are horrific. As an educator, teaching tough topics that will certainly raise tough questions from students and likely families is a daunting choice. Teaching the Purim story with its triumphs and celebrations offers seemingly smoother terrain.

When we think about Purim, though, we see that to be Jewish is to make difficult choices. Along with the carnivals and costumes, there's a story about a young Jewish woman's choice in the face of literal death. The choice arrived at a perilous time for her people, a time when we faced annihilation. Her uncle, older and wiser, took her to task about "artfully dodging" the task. Ultimately, Esther skillfully navigated the perilous course and made the choice that saved the Jewish people.

Given that history and the pressing current need, the choice to start the conversation is essentially already made. So, how do we talk to our children about difficult subjects, with difficult history, with difficult *contemporary* challenges?

In short, we just do. It is incumbent on us to teach our children about the proud history of Israel, and also answer questions they pose about what we face in supporting Israel today. We must teach our children about the Shoah, a dark and scary chapter in our Jewish story, and also equip them with the knowledge and tools to confront the eerily similar antisemitism they face today.

It is an inborn instinct to wish to shield children, ours and everyone else's, from the harsh realities of life. Ultimatums pose a dangerous risk, but one comes to mind here that seems to be emerging as a truth rather than a threat: Either we talk about the difficult topics we face as Jews with our children, or the world talks about the difficult topics we face as Jews with our children. Realistically, they will hear the world's voice on these subjects, anyway. But when we start the conversations in a safe Jewish space and answer the questions our Jewish children pose for us, we imbue them with Jewish identity and Jewish knowledge. And who knows that we aren't positioned for just such a crisis? ■

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