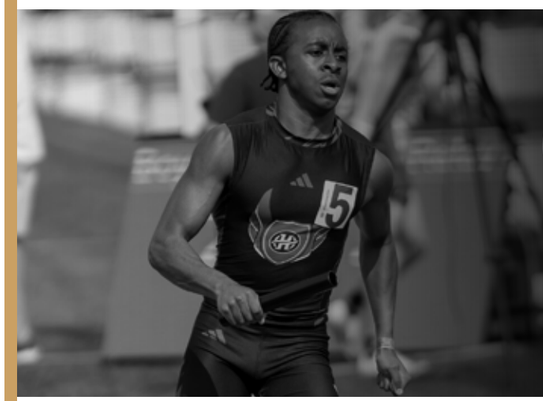
TULSA Jewish Review

Sivan/Tamuz 5786
June 2026

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN

"The arts at Holland Hall have taught me to be confident in myself, and it's a great creative outlet."

— Student from the Class of 2026



"The faculty not only encourages excellence but has built a diverse community culture, with a tradition of daily discipline and integrity on and off the track."

— Student from the Class of 2027

"Our rigorous, college preparatory academics set the standard. Our students are prepared for post-secondary opportunities throughout the world."

— Ashlee Lowry, Director of College Counseling

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June Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

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Front Cover

The JCC
Charles Schusterman Fitness Center

JEWISH TULSA

JEWISH TULSA Federation | CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN JEWISH TULSA | JEWISH TULSA Foundation | 60 YEARS 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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@CharlesSchustermanJCC
@JewishMuseumTulsa

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER Where Jewish Tulsa Gets Stronger

by Joe Roberts, Executive Director

There are places in Jewish life that explain themselves immediately. A synagogue sanctuary tells you what it is for. A classroom tells you what it is for. A museum, a camp, a boardroom, a social hall. Each has a purpose that announces itself.

The JCC is different. The JCC is harder to define because it is not one thing. It is a hundred things at once. It is a gym and a pool and a camp and a meeting place and a lobby and a basketball court and, on the right day, a place where you run into half the people you know. It is the living room of Jewish Tulsa, which means it is sometimes loud, sometimes messy, usually busy, and almost always full of life.

That is why I love it.

I love working out at our JCC. I love the camaraderie. I love seeing people of every age and background showing up, trying, sweating, laughing, encouraging one another, and quietly keeping promises they made to themselves. Some people are there to train seriously. Some are there to stay healthy. Some are there because a doctor told them they had to move more. Some are there because life is heavy and an hour on a treadmill or under a barbell is how they keep themselves steady. And some are there because they want to belong somewhere. The beauty of the JCC is that all of those are good reasons.

There is something deeply Jewish about a place like that. Judaism has never been a disembodied tradition. We are not a people of ideas alone, as much as we cherish ideas. We are a people of action. We light candles. We build sukkahs. We carry Torah scrolls. We visit the sick, feed the hungry, comfort mourners, raise children, embrace friends, and show up when showing up is hard. Jewish life happens through bodies. It asks something of our hands and legs and backs and hearts.

That is why caring for the body is not vanity. It is responsibility. Pirkei Avot teaches that we are not free to neglect ourselves. The body is not an idol, and Judaism has always been suspicious of making it one. But the body is also not disposable. It is the vessel through which we do almost everything that matters.

Max Nordau, one of the early Zionist thinkers, understood this when he called for "muscular Judaism." It was a provocative phrase, and intentionally so. Nordau was reacting to a world that had tried to make Jews small, frightened, dependent, and apologetic. His answer was not that Jews should become obsessed with physique. His answer was that Jews should become whole again. Strong in mind, strong in spirit, and strong enough in body to stand upright in history.

That idea still speaks. Not because every Jew needs to lift weights, run miles, or become an athlete. Most of us are simply trying to do a little better than yesterday. It speaks because strength matters. Health matters. Confidence matters. The ability to endure matters. We are a strong people, but even strong people have to put in the work.

And that work is easier, better, and more joyful when it is done in community.

That is what our JCC gives us. It gives the work a home. It takes something that can feel private, intimidating, or lonely and surrounds it with people. It turns exercise into encounter. It turns a fitness center into a place of friendship. It reminds us that becoming stronger is not only an individual project. It is a communal one.

Our JCC is for the deeply observant and the totally secular. It is for the synagogue regular and the person who has not set foot in a synagogue in years. It is for the marathon runner and the person walking slowly after surgery. It is for the serious lifter and the beginner who is nervous to ask how a machine works. It is for people who know exactly where they fit in Jewish life and for people still figuring that out.

You do not have to become someone else to walk through the doors. You can arrive exactly as you are.

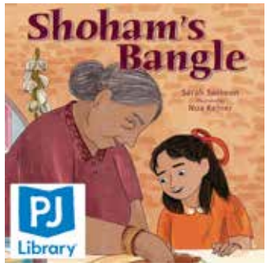
In a time when so much of American life feels fragmented, lonely, and angry, that matters more than we may realize. The JCC is one of the few places left where different kinds of people still occupy the same space, greet one another by name, and become part of one another's lives. It is not theoretical community. It is community with sneakers on. Community with coffee in the lobby. Community with kids running down the hall. Community with someone spotting you on a lift or asking how your family is doing.

I love this place because it makes Jewish life visible and human. I love it because it is joyful. I love it because it reminds me that strength is not only something we build for ourselves. It is something we build for one another.

So come join us. Work out. Swim. Walk. Sit in the lobby. Bring your kids. Bring your parents. Bring your whole self. **Anyone can join. Everyone belongs.**

The JCC is not only where Jewish Tulsa exercises. It is where we become stronger together.

UPCOMING EVENTS



PJ Library: Storytime with Sarah Sassoon | Sunday, June 7 | 3 pm | TBD

Gather round for a very special story time with PJ Library author and Elson Israel Fellow Sarah Sassoon! Spend the afternoon in joyful celebration of storytelling, culture, and connection. Sarah will bring her unique Jewish story to life with heart and imagination, captivating young listeners and their families alike. Don't miss this memorable experience!

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/pj-june26

YJP Torah on Tap | Tuesday, June 9 | 6:30 pm | Nothings Left Brewing Co

Post, Pause, or Push Back: Navigating Jewish Identity Online—What does it mean to show up as a Jew online right now? Join us for an honest, interactive conversation with Elson Fellow Sarah Sassoon on navigating social media. Together, we'll explore real-life scenarios, share strategies, and build the tools to engage (or disengage) in today's digital world. This program is hosted at a brewery that kindly offers a private room free of charge. There are plenty of nonalcoholic options available. First drink on us!

YJP (Young Jewish Professionals) are Jewish adults ages 21-40.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/torah-tap-june26

Lunch Bunch | Wednesday, June 10 | 12 pm | Burnstein Auditorium

Completing the Jewish Story: Mizrahi History Matters Now More Than Ever—Join Elson Fellow Sarah Sassoon for a conversation exploring the often-overlooked history of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. Through story and memory, we'll examine why Mizrahi voices are essential to understanding the full Jewish experience today.

$13 optional lunch

Menu: pesto pasta with vegetables, spring salad, fruit, and dessert

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/lb-june26

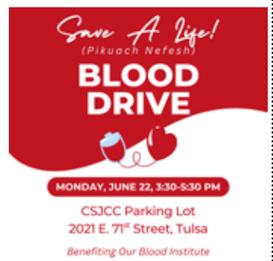
JMoms: Sharing Your Jewish Story with Sarah Sassoon | Thursday, June 11 | 7 pm | TBD

Poet, author, and Elson Fellow Sarah Sassoon invites you to an intimate writing workshop created just for JMoms. Through guided reflection and thoughtful writing, we'll explore and deepen our connection to Jewish identity while giving voice to our individual stories. You'll be supported in shaping a personal Jewish narrative. $10 per person.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/jmoms-june26

JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

UPCOMING EVENTS



Save a Life: Donate Blood | Monday, June 22 | 3:30 – 5:30 pm | CSJCC Parking Lot

We are proud to partner with Our Blood Institute, Oklahoma's mobile blood mobile, for an easy and convenient mikvah. In Jewish tradition, we are guided by the value of pikuach nefesh, the belief that saving a single life is like saving an entire world. This is a simple, meaningful way to live that value and show up for those in need. The Blood Mobile will be conveniently located in the CSJCC parking lot. Whether you're on the go or have a free hour, it's easy to stop by and make a life-saving impact. Appointments are encouraged, but drop-ins are welcome!

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/blood-drive-june26

Shalom, Sun 'n' Fun | Sunday, June 28 | 9 am | Sharna & Irvin Frank Aquatics Center

Calling all young families! Dive in and make a splash this summer with some sun and fun! Spend your Sunday morning poolside at this come-and-go event while enjoying music, bagels, and snow cones with your friends. The first 5 families to RSVP will receive a PJ Library beach bag full of goodies! $10 per family

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/pj-pool-june26

Feature your pet on the cover of the August Tulsa Jewish Review!

Make a new or additional gift of at least $72 to the Annual Campaign by July 1st.

JewishTulsa.org/pets
or scan here

The Shuk Comes to Tulsa

by Roniet Sachs and Debbie Zelkind,
2026 L'Chaim Campaign Dinner Co-Chairs

Michael Sachs running the Shuk

Vibrant and open-air, it is the heartbeat of daily life in Israel, where color, sound, and movement collide in an unrelenting rhythm. Narrow walkways pulse with conversation, the air layered with the scent of spices, fresh herbs, and food prepared in the moment. It is more than a marketplace. It is a place where life unfolds in real time and people from all walks of life come together.

That spirit became the inspiration for the Ultimate Night Out L'Chaim Campaign Dinner, held April 30, 2026, where we set out to bring the energy and warmth of the shuk into the heart of our own community. Serving as co-chairs, we, Debbie Zelkind and Roniet Sachs, felt both the privilege and responsibility of shaping an evening that carried deep meaning for Jewish Tulsa. From the outset, the Shuk Experience guided the vision: to create something immersive, welcoming, and full of life that reflected the richness of our community and brought people together across generations.

Bringing that vision to life was Chef Yaniv Cohen, known as The Spice Detective, whose work is rooted in spice as language, history, healing, and connection. More than simply preparing a meal, Yaniv created an experience. Through storytelling, hospitality, and bold Israeli flavors, he invited guests to connect not only with the food itself, but with the traditions and culture behind it. With him, the shuk was no longer just an idea. It became something guests could experience, taste, and share together.

What followed unfolded much like the marketplace itself: layered, dynamic, and full of discovery. Guests moved through the evening with curiosity, drawn into aromas and flavors that sparked conversation at every turn. But what lingered most was not any single dish or detail. It was the feeling in the room.

Again and again after the event, we heard people describe the evening as warm, welcoming, and joyful. Generations gathered side by side, from longtime Jewish Tulsa leaders to young professionals, families with children, recent transplants, and many new faces experiencing our community for the first time. Conversations crossed tables with ease, laughter moved freely through the space, and people lingered long after the formal program ended simply to continue being together.

That feeling of connection felt especially meaningful this year. In a time when the Jewish community around the world continues to face uncertainty, rising antisemitism, and the ongoing impact of war in Israel, the evening served as a reminder that our strength comes not only from shared history, but from how we show up for one another in the present.

This year's campaign theme and impact video centered around the idea of l'dor v'dor, from generation to generation. The message reminded us that the Jewish community we enjoy today exists because of those who came before us, those who gave generously of their time, leadership, and resources to build a strong foundation for future generations. We are deeply grateful to everyone who participated in the video and helped bring that message to life.

Now, it is our responsibility to continue that work.

The impact of the annual campaign extends far beyond a single night. The generosity of our community fuels programming, strengthens campus life, supports Jewish education and security initiatives, and ensures that Jewish Tulsa remains a place of belonging, learning, and celebration for generations to come.

We are deeply grateful to Chef Yaniv Cohen, Catering by Orr, our volunteers, donors, staff, and all who contributed their time and talents to make the evening possible.

To everyone who made a gift to the Jewish Tulsa Annual Campaign at the dinner or in the days following, thank you. Your generosity directly strengthens our community and helps ensure a vibrant Jewish future in Tulsa.

If you have not yet made your 2026 Annual Campaign gift, we hope you will consider supporting Jewish Tulsa. Together, As One, we can continue building something meaningful for generations to come.

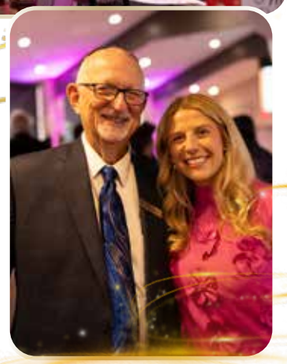
To make a donation, visit JewishTulsa.org/donate.

Nina Levine, Diane Bounphasaysonh, and Sarah Howman

Spice Detective, Chef Yaniv Cohen

Sara Rich and Barbara Sylvan

Mariel Ferreira and Miss Israel



Brian Brouse, Campaign Chair and Isabella Silberg, Director of Development

Adria and Brad Sanditen

Nancy and Robert Cohen Shopping the Shuk

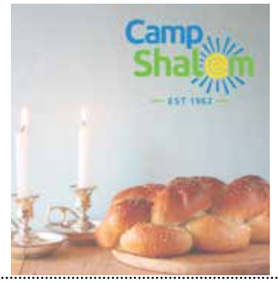
Your generosity directly strengthens our community and helps ensure a vibrant Jewish future in Tulsa.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN FITNESS

Fitness Challenge: Joyful Movement June

This June, we're focusing on how movement feels with our Joyful Movement June challenge. Instead of tracking reps or intensity, this challenge is all about tuning into your body and noticing the positive impact of movement. You may feel more energy, calm, strength, or simply a better mood. Each time you visit the gym, move in a way that feels good to you. You can walk, stretch, lift, take a class—then head to the Community Fitness Board and share one word that describes how you feel after your workout. Over the month, we'll create a wall full of positivity, motivation, and shared experiences. There's no pressure and no perfect way to participate—just show up, move, and let yourself enjoy the process.



Camp Shalom Shabbat Dinner | Friday, June 5 | 6 pm | Barbara & Dave Sylvan Auditorium

All camp families are invited to attend a camp-style Shabbat dinner! We will share the Jewish tradition of welcoming the Sabbath (a day of rest, reflection, and good food). It's less about rules and more about togetherness — slowing down, connecting, unplugging, and sharing stories, songs, and maybe even a few silly jokes. You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy it — everyone's welcome at the table! $20/family

RSVP: csjcc.org/cs-shabbat-June26

Pickleball Lessons | In the Squash Courts Mon. June 8, Wed. June 10, Mon. June 15 | 5:30-7 pm

Want to learn how to play the fastest growing sport in America? Join us for a fun and social Pickleball series in the first week of June. 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 Pickleballs are provided. The last lesson is two hours to allow for open play.

$30 for the series. All are welcome.

Register at the JCC Fitness Desk: 918-935-3681

Can't make the June class? Sign up next month for lessons July 6, 8, 13.

Volunteer | Friday, June 12 | 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/volunteer-June26

Camp Shalom Alumni Pool Day | Saturday, June 20 | 7 pm | Sharna & Irvin Frank Aquatics Center

More Than a Summer. A Connection for Life. To build Camp Shalom as more than a summer camp by creating lasting connections that engage, inspire, and unite our alumni at every stage of life. Join us for Camp Shalom's first alumni pool event as we begin building Camp Shalom as more than a summer camp by creating lasting connections that engage, inspire, and unite our alumni at every stage of life. Come swim, reconnect, and celebrate the memories, friendships, and ruach that make Camp Shalom so special.

RSVP: csjcc.org/cs-alumni-June26

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN JCC

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN

SWIM FOR ALL

Starting June 1

Swim For All, free life-saving swim lessons for children from neighborhood Title 1 schools, grades K-8, returns to the Sharna & Irvin Frank Aquatics Center for its 5th season! During swim lessons, the pool remains open to the public, and lessons are limited to specific areas. Lessons are taking place from 5-8 pm the following dates:.

- *JUNE 1-25 MONDAY—THURSDAY*
- *JULY 7-30 TUESDAY/THURSDAY*

To learn more about Swim For All visit:
csjcc.org/swim-for-all

GKFF GEORGE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

TULSA LIFEGUARD PRO

Sharna and Irvin Frank Aquatics Center

Summer Hours:	Back to School Hours:	Labor Day:
May 23 – August 2	August 4 – September 7	September 7
Monday – Thursday: 12—8 pm	Tuesdays & Thursdays: 5—8 pm	Monday | 12—8 pm
Friday: 12—4 pm	Saturday: 12—8 pm	
Saturday: 12—8 pm	Sunday: 9 am—8 pm	
Sunday: 9 am—8 pm		

STRENGTH TRAINING AT THE CSJCC: PERSONAL AND MINDFUL

by Hannah Bakewell, Fitness Manager and Personal Trainer

The Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center (CSJCC) has experienced steady growth in membership and activity over the past few years. With that growth comes an opportunity and a responsibility to support our community's strength, wellness, and overall well-being. As our members grow—we grow with you.

To meet this need, we've expanded our personal training offerings by welcoming additional trainers to our team. They are ready to help you begin or continue your journey toward improved strength, health, functionality, and mindset.

For many, stepping into the strength area can feel intimidating. Whether it's uncertainty about using machines or a lack of confidence in training independently, these barriers are common. Working with a personal trainer provides a supportive and approachable starting point, helping you build confidence while learning proper technique.

The benefits of strength training extend far beyond the gym. Physically, it plays a critical role in building stronger bones and joints. By placing controlled stress on the body, strength training increases bone density and can reduce the risk of conditions like osteoporosis. Many of our own members have even improved or reversed osteopenia through consistent training. Strength training can also help reduce arthritis discomfort by strengthening the muscles that support and stabilize joints, leading to improved range of motion and mobility.

This increased mobility translates directly into greater independence in daily life. Strength training combats age-related muscle loss, enhances balance, and supports long-term functionality. No matter your age, building strength helps you maintain the ability to move confidently and live independently.

In addition to physical benefits, strength training significantly impacts metabolic health. It helps your body burn more calories at rest, regulate blood sugar levels, and support heart health. A stronger body is not only more efficient—it's more resilient.

The mental benefits are just as powerful. Regular strength training has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression while improving overall mood and cognitive function. It's not just about building muscle—it's about strengthening your mind as well.

Independence, confidence, and longevity—these are the true outcomes of strength training. So what are you waiting for? Train with one of our personal trainers, join a class, or schedule a free orientation on the strength machines.

Whatever your starting point, the CSJCC is here to support your journey and help you grow stronger in mind, body, and soul.

Marla Austin

Marla Austin

Marla Austin has 30 years of experience working in the health and fitness industry.

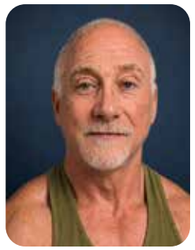
Marla enjoys helping individuals of all levels reach their personal fitness goals, ranging from building strength, mobility, balance, and endurance for the activities of daily living, looking and feeling better, to fitness and sports performance training. She holds credentials in the following areas: American Council on Exercise Personal Trainer, Health Coach, Senior Exercise Specialist, Post-Orthopedic Surgery/Injury Rehabilitation, and Group Fitness Instructor.

Hannah Bakewell

Hannah Bakewell

Hannah is an ACE-certified personal trainer and Fitness Manager at the CSJCC, with a background in Dance Performance from Oral Roberts University. Her passion for movement and understanding the human body led her to pursue a career focused on helping others move safely and effectively for life. She specializes in creating personalized training programs that emphasize proper form, functional movement, and long-term results, working closely with each client to understand their goals and build a plan that is both effective and sustainable. Within her first year as a trainer, Hannah was recognized as one of the top three personal trainers in Tulsa in Tulsa World's "Best in the World" contest, and she continues to train a wide range of clients, helping them build strength, confidence, and exceed their expectations.

Mike Grimes



Mike Grimes

Mike Grimes is a certified personal trainer and specialist in exercise therapy who helps adults build strength and stability and stay active as they age. After overcoming a broken neck and cancer, he understands firsthand how important smart, safe training is. At 65 years old, Mike continues to train at a high level and leads by example, proving that strength and resilience can be built at any age.

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN FITNESS

// Strength Training //

Train with one of our personal trainers, join a class, or schedule a free orientation on the strength machines.

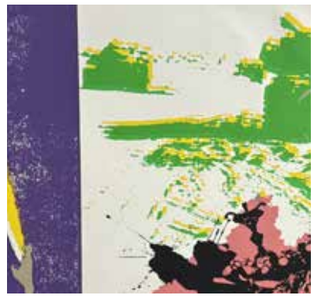
Whatever your starting point, the CSJCC is here to support your journey and help you grow stronger in mind, body, and soul.

Information at:

csjcc fitness desk

918-935-3681

~ EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS ~



Totally Tumarkin
Brodsky Gallery

Peter Martin Gregor Heinrich Hellberg, later known as Igael Tumarkin, was born in 1933 in Dresden, Germany, and immigrated to British Mandate Palestine (now Israel) with his family as a child. A renowned Israeli artist, sculptor, and stage designer, Tumarkin became known for his bold and controversial assemblages and memorial sculptures, including works honoring Holocaust victims and fallen soldiers. His provocative style helped reshape Israeli art in the 1960s. A series of Tumarkin prints was recently donated to the Sherwin Miller Museum by Sam and Rene Sax of Chicago and is now on display for the first time.

Tchotchke
Mezzanine Gallery

Remember your grandma's collection of ceramic figurines? Perhaps your mom collected decorative spoons from every vacation she took. Or maybe you kept your childhood Beanie Babies, and now they are worth a fortune. Well, there's a Yiddish word for all of that: tchotchke! You may also have heard these decorative objects referred to as knick-knacks or trinkets. This exhibition features tchotchkes not only from the museum's collection, but also from the homes and families of the Jewish Tulsa community.

The Big Beautiful Fried Exhibit
Mildred and Julius Sanditen Gallery

See a display of some of the largest works by Jewish Hungarian painter Theodore Fried. Fried painted a wide variety of subjects, including musicians, city scenes, and glimpses into everyday life.

The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art

Save the Date | October 25, 2026

In the Barbara and Dave Sylvan Auditorium | Catered by Summit Club Chef William Lyle

Royale Diamond Gala

Chairs

Sharon Cash and Caitlin Contreras

WELCOME MARCY MARBUT

Marcy Marbut

I'm excited to join The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art as the new Marketing and Design Specialist. As a Jewish creative professional, I feel especially connected to the mission of The Sherwin Miller Museum and the importance of preserving and sharing Jewish history, culture, and art in meaningful ways.

I am from San Antonio, Texas and come from a background in journalism, storytelling, and digital content creation. Helping people feel more connected through stories, art, and experiences is a passion of mine. In my new role, I will be supporting the museum's marketing, social media, and digital outreach while helping share exhibitions, educational programming, and community events.

My free time hobbies include painting abstracts, silhouettes, and charcoal drawings. As I begin this new chapter in Tulsa, I look forward to becoming more involved in the Tulsa Jewish community and contributing to the museum's mission for future generations. I already feel welcomed, and am delighted to be part of this warm and vibrant community! ■

THE SHERWIN MILLER MUSEUM OF JEWISH ART

TODA, TODA, TODA

by Tracey Herst-Woods, Chief Museum Officer

On behalf of the SMMJA Board, we extend our sincere thanks for all that David Patterson, Lori Frank, Dian Peacock, and John Sieler have done and accomplished as a member of the Museum Board. Your commitment to this Museum has allowed us to flourish and become who we are today through your generosity, dedication, and volunteerism. The SMMJA is better because of your participation in the accreditation process, exhibits, development, and membership cultivation. Celebrating the Museum's 60th Anniversary, we look forward to your continuing support not only as a past Board member, but also a community member, Museum member, and a cherished volunteer.

David Patterson

David came to the SMMJA through the Leadership Tulsa program. He has spent many years leading the Museum during both good and hard times. During his Museums Chairmanship the Museum won the **One Award for Education** from the *Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits* and the **Community Service Award** from the *National Association of Black Journalists*. He also led the charge for re-accreditation through the American Alliance of Museums. David has supported us through Galas, Board changes, receptions and events. Thank you, David

David Patterson

Lori M. Frank

Lori M. Frank, a graduate of Holland Hall and University of Texas at Austin, has made her indelible mark on the Zarrow Campus. As an SMMJA Board Member Lori has been an important and valuable Museum advocate. She has organized and help facilitate programs and exhibits to help make the Museum better. She has taken an active role in ensuring the SMMJA's future. Lori's involvement has been more than a member of the Museum Board but also, SMMJA Gala Chair, volunteer, Security Chair, and a friend that has made a lasting mark on the Museum's values and history. Her incredible knowledge and wisdom to the Museum family was evident with the establishment of the Sharna Newman Frank Education Gallery where an educational space brings local students and artists to the Museum and of The Oklahoma WWII Veterans Memorial dedication featuring a diverse mural of WWII Veterans. She also helped to add the Kinderstone statues to important locations on the Zarrow Campus and wife Lavonna is a Kinderstone Sponsor. Over the years, Lori has hosted some memorable events, such as, the Society's Cage Photograph Exhibit and Eva Unterman's birthday celebration. Her development of our Safe and Secure manual for the campus, not only keeps us safe, but was also a big component in the Museum's re-accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. Time and time again, Lori does the work. She has an idea and she carries that idea to the finish line. Thank you, Lori!

Lori Frank and wife LaVonna Reed

Dian Peacock

Dian Peacock came to the SMMJA through the Leadership Tulsa program. Under her leadership at the Museum, she Chaired the Membership Committee and worked on ways to build our membership and strengthen our community ties with the non-Jewish Community leaders. She helped bring our board closer and led by example. Dian always showed up. She is passionate and wants the Museum to be a shining star and shine light on all we do. Thank you, Dian.

Dian Peacock

John Sieler

John graduated from Edison High School and the University of Colorado and worked in the family bowling business for 26 years. After retiring he became a docent at the Tulsa Zoo for over 20 Years, a Docent at the Oklahoma Aquarium for 23 years and also the SMMJA for 15 years. He loves giving tours to both students and adults. As a board member John has been a treasurer to help further our mission and is one of our strongest cheerleaders. Thank you, John! ■

John Sieler

OUR STUDENTS LOVE JEWISH LEARNING

by Amanda Anderson, Executive Director

One of the most beautiful parts of walking through the halls of Mizel Jewish Community Day School is hearing the excitement from our students as they prepare for the next Jewish holiday, sing Shabbat songs together, or proudly share what they learned in Hebrew class that day. So much of that joy and energy comes from the incredible work of Morah Shira Sachs, whose warmth, creativity, and love for teaching help bring Judaism to life for our students every single day.

At Mizel JCDS, we believe Jewish learning should be hands-on, meaningful, joyful, and rooted in community. Especially for our youngest learners, that means experiencing Judaism through music, movement, storytelling, baking challah, creating holiday projects, celebrating traditions together, and building connections that make learning feel exciting and personal.

Shira Sachs teaching Shabbat to preK and K Students

Morah Shira has a special gift for helping children connect to Jewish life in authentic ways. Whether students are singing Hebrew songs, preparing for Shabbat, learning about acts of kindness, or asking excitedly, "What's the next holiday?" there is a genuine enthusiasm in the classroom that reflects the nurturing environment she creates.

Our students are not simply memorizing information. They are building relationships with Judaism, with one another, and with their community. That kind of learning stays with children long after they leave the classroom.

As a school, we are incredibly proud of the growth Mizel JCDS has experienced over the past several years. We have expanded enrollment, strengthened academic programming, introduced STE(A)M, culinary arts, yoga, music, art, Hebrew, and Judaic studies, and continued building a school culture centered around academic excellence, kindness, and Jewish values.

As our school has celebrated 50 years, reaching this milestone allows us to reflect on how far the school has come while continuing to invest in innovative learning experiences and a strong Jewish identity for the next generation.

Educators like Morah Shira Sachs represent what makes Mizel JCDS so special. Her passion, dedication, and joyful spirit help create a learning environment where students feel loved, supported, and excited to come to school each day.

At Mizel JCDS, Jewish learning is not something students simply study; it is something they experience, celebrate, and live together! ■

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REMEMBRANCE IS A CALL TO ACTION

by Nancy Pettus, SB 1671 Professional Development Consultant

What does it mean to truly remember—and why does it matter now more than ever?

At the heart of the Oklahoma Holocaust Legislation Coalition's mission is a powerful commitment: to ensure future generations not only learn about the Holocaust, but understand its enduring lessons. For the past four years, a dedicated coalition of educators, state legislators, Department of Education leaders, and community volunteers has worked tirelessly to bring Senate Bill 1671 to life, making Holocaust education accessible to every Oklahoma student in grades 6–12.

But this work is about more than history.

The Holocaust is not solely a Jewish story—it is a human story. It reveals the devastating consequences of unchecked hatred, the fragility of human rights, and the moral responsibility we all share to stand against injustice.

That urgency comes alive in the Coalition's dynamic, statewide conferences, offered free to Oklahoma educators. Each year brings a new lens and deeper exploration—from ***"The World Must Know" to "Voices from the Holocaust: It All Begins with Words" to "Unbroken Spirit: Resistance, Rescue, Resilience."***

This year's theme, *"Jewish Persecution and Beyond: Other Victims of the Holocaust,"* expands the conversation even further, examining who else was targeted, why they were persecuted, and how these histories connect to injustices closer to home, including the Trail of Tears and the Tulsa Race Massacre. The goal is clear: empower educators—and through them, students—to recognize injustice and take a stand against hate.

And it's working.

As one conference participant reflected, studying the Holocaust helps students recognize how easily rights and freedoms can erode—and how essential it is to protect them in any democracy.

Teachers consistently describe the conferences as transformative. "Each speaker brought ideas I could immediately use in my classroom," shared one Tulsa educator. Another participant from Norman called it "a wonderfully informative day that reinvigorated their teaching."

The impact doesn't stop there.

That same impact is being felt directly by students through in-class presentations led by Coalition educators, bringing history off the page and into real conversation.

Students are listening. And they're learning.

"Studying the Holocaust teaches resilience, resistance, and faith," wrote one student from Verdigris. Another from Jenks offered a powerful reminder: "Always speak out against hate because nobody thought Hitler would get as far as he did."

Nearly 80 years later, those lessons are not fading; they are becoming increasingly relevant.

In a time marked by rising antisemitism and division, the Coalition's mission feels more urgent than ever. Together, we are not just teaching history—we are shaping citizens to **fight hate, respect diversity, protect democracy, and carry these values forward.**

Because remembrance is not passive. It is a call to action. ■

SB1671 Eva Unterman 2026 Conferences for Holocaust Education

CONFEERENCE DATES & LOCATIONS:

Tues. June 23. . . . . Lawton
Tues. June 30 . . . . . Tulsa
Tues. July 14 . . . . . Norman
Tues. July 28 . . . . . Enid

For more information and for educators to sign up to attend this free, one-day conference visit: **www.sb167.org**

CELEBRATE SIMCHAS!

Cassidy Petrazzi and Jared Ashburn are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Oona Violet, born on April 23, 2026, weighing 6 lbs, 14 oz and measuring 19 inches. Oona is the baby sister of siblings Townes and Dune**. Mazel Tov Cassidy and Jared!**

Mazel Tov to Ellery Rettinger, daughter of David and Julie Rettinger, who graduated from Riverfield Country Day School and will be attending Skidmore College in upstate New York in the fall.

Mazel Tov to Jewish community member, **Dr. Yaniv Cohen**, who has published his first poetry book, Cast Yet Held. The Poet Nimrod Shein says of the book, "The manuscript is impressive—highly mature, self-aware, and clearly the product of considerable thought, to the point that it weaves a fully realized world, combining poetry in a high linguistic register with allusions rooted in the Bible. This book is celebratory, full of splendor, and contains profound poems crafted with the utmost care. Cast Yet Held is a unique artistic work, in dialogue with classical sources."

Yaniv is a neuroscientist who completed his postdoctoral research at NYU and recently served as a professor at Yeshiva University. He is currently working to establish a nonprofit laboratory in Tulsa dedicated to the study of memory disorders.

The book is available in both English and Hebrew at: www.alefbooks.co.il/product/cast-yet-held/

Share your simchas with the entire community! Send us your b'nai mitzvah, wedding announcement, birth of a child, graduation, or other milestone for our "simchas" section each month.

Send submissions for the Tulsa Jewish Review to Sandy Sloan, sandy@jewishtulsa.org

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VAN CLEEF & ARPELS' JEWISH ROOTS©

by Phil Goldfarb

Van Cleef & Arpels is one of the world's top luxurious jewelry brands, but few know the company's Jewish history.

Alfred Van Cleef was born on December 13, 1872 in Paris, France into a family of Dutch Jewish jewelers as his father Salomon (1835-1883) was a diamond salesman. After Alfred's father died when Alfred was eleven, his cousin and benefactor Leon Salomon Arpels (1846-1903), helped look after Alfred and his widowed mother, Melanie Mayer Van Cleef (1839-1919). Alfred completed an internship in jewelry-making then opened a workshop of his own in Paris. He soon fell in love with Arpels daughter Estelle Arpels (1877-1960) and they married on June 25, 1895 and gave birth to a daughter, Rachel, on October 22, 1896.

Alfred opened an elegant jewelry boutique in Paris along with Leon Arpels. His new brothers-in-law, Charles, Julien, and Louis Arpels, followed, joining the company and helping Alfred grow his business. Their beautiful pieces earned them a loyal following, and soon the young jewelers began looking for a larger space in a more fashionable quarter of Paris.

When the Ritz Hotel opened in the Place Vendome in 1898, Alfred and Estelle decided to move to this newly fashionable square and opened a larger store at 22 Place Vendome, which remains the center of the Van Cleef & Arpels empire to this day. They first focused on pearl jewelry, which was the rage at the time. Soon, their flawless gem settings began attracting notice and a loyal customer base.

The Van Cleef and Arpels family served with bravery during World War I. Louis Arpels enlisted in a Field Artillery Regiment and fought in Verdun before being injured by poison gas and decommissioned. Estelle worked as a nurse while Alfred Van Cleef, who was in poor health, worked for the army's auxiliary service in Paris. After the war, Alfred Van Cleef, Estelle Van Cleef, Louis Arpels, and Charles Arpels were each recognized for their bravery.

During World War I, Van Cleef & Arpels produced jewelry out of cheap materials, avoiding finery during wartime. They introduced a wildly popular "touch wood" collection, combining decorative pieces made out of wood with a popular belief in France at the time that touching wood somehow brought good luck. When World War I ended, the company began expanding and emphasizing luxury for a population that was weary of shortage and craving expensive charms.

Van Cleef & Arpels opened boutiques in holiday resorts such as Deauville, Vichy, Le Touquet, Nice, and Monte-Carlo, and was the first French jeweler to open boutiques in Japan and China. The company embraced the new Art Deco style and sold to actors and royalty. It introduced one of the first ladies' wristwatches in 1923.

In 1926, Alfred and Estelle's daughter Rachel Van Cleef took over as Artistic Director of the thriving company. Rachel changed her Jewish-sounding name to Renee, and on December 18, 1917 she married Emile Puissant, a racecar driver who had joined the Company until his death in a car crash on February 14,1926. Renee threw herself into her family business, guiding its expansion and ensuring that Van Cleef & Arpels remained on the cutting edge of jewelry design. In 1933 they introduced a way of creating invisible settings so that jewels appear to be floating on top of jewelry in the Art Deco fashion.

They introduced a wildly popular piece that could be used as a necklace, belt, or broach in 1939. Also that same year Van Cleef & Arpels created a priceless diamond and platinum set of jewels for Egyptian Princess Fawzia's marriage to Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who became the Shah of Iran. Other fans included King Edward VIII of England, who bought Van Cleef & Arpels jewelry for his future wife Wallace Simpson.

In 1939, some members of the Van Cleef & Arpels family traveled to New York to exhibit their company's work at an international jewelers exhibition there; the trip saved their lives. While Alfred Van Cleef died on June 11, 1938, World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, with most of the family still in the United States: they remained there for the duration of the war.

Renee and her mother Estelle remained in France, finding themselves in grave danger. Estelle Van Cleef assumed a false identity and worked secretly for the Free French resistance forces. Renee remained in Paris and worked to keep the store open amidst the chaos and death all around her.

German troops arrived in Paris on June 14, 1940. Under Nazi rule, it became impossible for Jews to own businesses. In 1941 Renee transferred ownership of Van Cleef & Arpels to a French nobleman, Comte Paul de Leseleuc in order to enable it to stay in business. Renee tried to flee to Portugal, but was turned back at the border.

(Continued)

Stuck in France, she secretly packed the most valuable pieces in the Paris store into a suitcase and travelled along with a trusted employee to Vichy, France.

Renee rented a suite of rooms in the Hotel Parc et Majestic in Vichy and was sure her friends would protect her from the anti-Jewish decrees. Vichy officials forced Renee to move out of her fancy hotel, refusing to allow a Jew to live in the same building. In 1942, Nazi Germany took control of Vichy France directly.

On December 11, 1942, all Jews in Vichy France were ordered to wear a Jewish star on their clothes. The following day, French police burst into Renee's third-floor hotel room; whether they were seeking to question her or arrest her will never be known. Panicked, Renee threw herself from the window and died on the pavement below.

The Arpels family regained control of Van Cleef & Arpels in 1944 after the Allied liberation of Paris. Claude Arpels returned to France from the United States; Jacques Arpels was still a refugee in Switzerland, working as a farmhand near Bern, and joined him later.

After World War II ended, Julien Arpel's sons Claude, Jacques, and Pierre became Directors. They continued to innovate, introducing playful animal and floral styles into the brand's jewelry design, and distanced themselves and the lore surrounding their storied brand from their Jewish roots.

In 1956, Prince Rainier of Monaco bought a set of diamond and pearl jewelry as a wedding present for his fiancé Grace Kelly, giving the brand another boost to its growing prestige. In 1967, the Empress Farah Pahlavi flew Van Cleef & Arpels artisans to Iran to create a crown and necklace for her coronation made with gems from Iran's crown jewels.

The last Arpels family members to lead the business would be Jacques Arpels' children Philippe and Dominique in the 1990s. In 1999, the brand was sold to the Richemont Group, a Swiss corporation that owns many luxury brands. ■

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

TEMPLE ISRAEL'S MARCIA JANKOWSKY MEMORIAL CANTORIAL CONCERT

On April 26th, Temple Israel was honored to welcome Cantor Azi Schwartz to Tulsa to perform for a crowd of 350 people in the Walter Arts Center on the Holland Hall campus. Cantor Schwartz is the Senior Cantor of Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City and is a world-renowned recording artist. Along with his Musical Director, David Enlow, and Cantorial Soloist, Jenny Labow, Cantor Schwartz performed a wide variety of traditional Jewish music and Broadway inspired tunes. An abundant dessert reception followed the concert. We are grateful to the Jankowsky family for their generosity, which made this event possible. ■

Cantorial David Enlow, Jan Jankowsky, Cantor Azi Schwartz

Cantor Azi Schwartz, Cantorial Soloist Jenny Labow, Musical Director David Enlow

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

Blatt + Blue
Thursday, June 11 | 7:00 p.m.

Visit tulsagogue.com/events for more information regarding the movie selection and viewing options. Join us for our film conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (918 583 7121). Newcomers are welcome to join the dialogue.

Bibi Dibi: Shabbat for Little Ones
Friday, June 12 | 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, we ask you to secure your spot for the meal by registering online.

Seventeenth Street Deli
Sunday, June 14 | 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 at tulsadeli.org and choose from our delightful pastrami, corned beef, or deli egg salad options.

Father's Day Co-Ed Sandlot Softball and Picnic
Sunday, June 21 | 10:00 a.m.

Grab your glove and bat and join us for a fun-filled game of softball at Whiteside Park, 4009 S Pittsburg, Tulsa. Don't feel like playing, but like watching an entertaining game while eating peanuts and Cracker Jacks? Bring the whole family to enjoy a day in the park with an impressive water play area and stay to join us for a picnic lunch following the game. Be sure to grab those swimsuits for the kids. There is limited seating, so please bring a folding chair or picnic blanket. This is a free event, open to the community, but please indicate your attendance through online registration.

Shabbat Shalom Musical Circle and Dinner
Friday, June 26 | 5:30 p.m.

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

Afternoon/Evening Services

Join us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:30 p.m. in the Davis-Goodall Chapel for traditional prayer and community Mourner's Kaddish. Both in-person and Zoom participation are available. Please register for in-person attendance on our website.

Shabbat Morning Services

Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., we celebrate Shabbat through song, Torah study, and fellowship. These services, available both in-person and via Zoom, offer a chance to mark anniversaries, celebrate milestones, and engage in our congregation's ritual life.

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INCLUSION IS MORE THAN A BUZZWORD

by Michael A. Sachs, Senior Director of Strategic Philanthropy

Izzy and Mike Sachs

Five years ago, as a 40-year-old adult, I received a diagnosis that, in many ways, answered questions about myself as far back as I can remember… Autism Spectrum Disorder. At the same time, my son received the same diagnosis. For me, it explained why I process the world the way I do, how I see patterns, and why certain environments drain me while others energize me.

As an adult, it didn't change who I am, but rather it explained who I had always been. For my son, 8 years old at the time, it was different. His first question when we told him was, "Do you also have it?" and I was comforted to be able to tell him yes and that it will be ok. I was saying it will be ok, but when you're a parent, the diagnosis doesn't stop with understanding… it immediately turns into questions. What does this mean for him? He doesn't look like Raymond Babbitt (Dustin Hoffman) in Rain Man. Did they get it wrong? So, what does autism actually look like for him? Will he have friends? Will he be able to work and live independently? What will his future be?

Those questions don't come from a place of doubt; they come from a place of fear. The fear of the unknown, fear of acceptance, fear of struggles, fear of limitation, fear that the world may not understand your child the way you do. Then, slowly, sometimes very slowly, something happens. Time passes, growth happens, and the narrative begins to shift.

Fast forward five years, and the things we once worried he might never achieve are now the very areas where he is thriving. Not despite his autism, but actually powered by it. That is because autism isn't a barrier to success; it's a different operating system. The problem was never him; the problem lies with our societal understandings. For too long, autism has been framed through a narrow lens that is defined by stereotypes, outdated portrayals, and a lack of exposure. When you step outside that lens, you start to see something else entirely different. You see potential, perspective, and capability that simply doesn't fit into a conventional box of what society describes as normal. I am reminded of a Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand) phrase used to describe autism. It is "Takiwātanga", which translates to "in their own time and space", and no better example of this was the last 5 years.

Nowhere is that shift in thinking more visible than in Israel.

In Israel, inclusion isn't a buzzword, it's an operating principle. The Israeli Defense Forces have gone so far as to actively recruit individuals on the autism spectrum. Through specialized programs like Unit 9900 and other tailored initiatives, young people on the spectrum are placed in roles that align with their strengths and allow them the opportunity to grow. With skills like pattern recognition, data analysis, and attention to detail, the unit has actually recently been featured in an article on the website We Are the Mighty (wearethemighty.com), a site led by US military veterans that celebrates stories that empower and inspire. The article talks about the over 400 soldiers now serving through the "Spectrum of Talent," deployed across roles that include satellite imagery interpretation, software quality assurance, data classification, electronics, and electro-optics.

Think about that for a moment. This little, young country sees something in these individuals that many others don't—potential. In many countries, the conversation around autism is still focused on limitations. In Israel, the conversation has moved to contribution. They didn't lower the bar, they redefined how to reach it. Israel is one of the most inclusive nations in the world when it comes to individuals on the spectrum, and everyone benefits. That's what inclusion looks like. From early diagnosis testing to complete wrap-around support, Israel is ALL-IN on investing the future of their neurodivergent community.

Now, it's easy to point overseas and say, "Look how far they've come." Real change doesn't start in another country, it starts right here at home. Not just inside your house but inside your community.

In Tulsa, we are already seeing what that change looks like. Schools like Mizel Jewish Community Day School are doing the work every single day, supporting students with diverse needs, meeting them where they are, and helping them grow into who they are meant to be. It goes beyond education.

These are the conversations we're willing to have. It's the stigma we're willing to challenge. It's the way our synagogues and communal spaces open their doors, not just physically, but culturally, to ensure that every child, every family, feels like they belong. Inclusion isn't a program; it is a fundamental mindset shift that will help all of us.

It's understanding that autism doesn't need to be "fixed" but rather needs to be better understood. It's recognizing that different doesn't mean less, it means different, and that's not a bad thing. Most importantly, it's creating environments where our children don't have to change who they are to fit in, but rather our environment adapts to them.

Five years ago, we were searching for answers. Today, we are watching them unfold in real time. We are not to be defined by a diagnosis, but that diagnosis gave us language, clarity, and direction. It allowed us to stop asking, "what's wrong?" and start asking, "what's possible?"—a much more powerful question. It allowed us to stop asking "will it be ok?" and start saying, "wait until you see what can be done!" The power of difference is the energy of the future and the power that will change the world.

When a community chooses understanding over assumption, acceptance over stigma, and inclusion over convenience, something remarkable happens. Our children don't cope, they thrive.

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!

Brotherhood Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., June 5 • 7:30 p.m.
Brotherhood welcomes Tulsa's own Phil Goldfarb as our guest speaker for this special Shabbat Service. Brotherhood will also recognize this year's Isaiah Award recipient, Michael Goodman, for his service and dedication. Stay after for a very special sweet oneg!

Birthday Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., June 12 • 6:00 p.m.
Celebrate our June birthdays with us at this special Birthday Shabbat! This service takes place each month and includes a Torah reading. Following the service, please continue celebrating with us at our sweet oneg.

"Time" For Learning * • Sat., June 13 • 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 Tammuz. This will be our last session in this series, so

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please join us! To make our study a sweet one, bagels and coffee are provided. Please sign up through the Temple Israel website events page by Thursday, June 11. Our learning will take place in the Activity Space at the Temple Offices.

Brotherhood Night @ The Drillers! * • Sat., June 13 • 6:30 p.m. Meet Up, 7:00 p.m. Game Time
Take yourself out to the ballgame and watch our Tulsa Drillers take on the Wichita Wind Surge! Stay after for 2nd Night Fireworks! This night at the ball game is open to all community members, not just Brotherhood. Make it a family night and enjoy America's favorite pastime. Tickets are $20 per person and include your ticket to the game and a $5 food voucher. Please sign up by Monday, June 8, via the Temple Israel website events page.

Gourmets on the Go at Oren * • Sun., June 14 • 6:00 p.m.
Sunday evenings are "Amberger's Pop-Up" at Oren restaurant in Brookside, including a variety of burgers and other tasty options. Join us for this pay-your-own-way gathering at a Tulsa favorite! Please sign up via the Temple Israel website events page by June 10th to ensure that we have enough seating.

Shabbat Services in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., June 19 • 6:00 p.m.
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat! Arrive early for our pre-oneg at 5:30 p.m., including a variety of light snacks and beverages.

Zarrow Pointe Shabbat Service • Fri., June 26 • 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., June 26 • 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.

Temple Reads – TI's Adult Book Club * • Tues., June 30 • 6:00 p.m.
Temple Israel's Adult Education Committee invites you to read Michael Chabon's The Yiddish Policeman's Union with us in June, then join us to discuss and enjoy light snacks! Please visit the Temple Israel "Events" page on our website for a full reading list and to sign up. Our book club will meet in the Activity Space at the Temple Offices. ■

TEMPLE ISRAEL GROUNDBREAKING AND GENIZAH

by Jon Stolper, Temple Israel Leadership Team

Temple Israel recently marked a major milestone with a groundbreaking ceremony held on a windy but dry afternoon on a grassy area of its campus at 22nd Place and Yorktown. The event represented the culmination of years of vision, discussion, and collaboration among congregational leaders and community members.

After more than 70 years in its current building, the congregation made a deliberate decision to remain rooted in Tulsa's historic Utica Square area, while creating a new space designed to reflect its values, inspire its members, and ensure that Reform Judaism continues to thrive in the region. The ceremony symbolized what Temple leadership described as "a community coming together with purpose and resolve."

The gathering drew a wide cross-section of attendees, including members of the congregation, clergy from both Tulsa congregations, donors, and City Councilor Laura Bellis. Following opening remarks, Interim Rabbi Batsheva Appel led a meaningful and lesser-known ritual: a genizah ceremony, the burial of sacred texts that are no longer in use, along with decommissioned ritual items such as shofars.

"For generations, our tradition has taught us to treat sacred words and objects with enduring respect," Rabbi Appel said. "This genizah ceremony is not an ending, but a continuation honoring what has guided us while making space for what will guide us next."

For many in attendance, it was their first time witnessing such a ceremony. While genizah burials are often held in cemeteries, Temple Israel chose to conduct this ritual on its own grounds as a way of honoring its history directly on the property where its future is being built.

The ceremony also highlighted the generosity and support that made the project possible. Temple President Brina Reinstein expressed gratitude to donors and community partners, emphasizing the collective effort behind the milestone.

"This day would not have been possible without the extraordinary commitment of our donors and supporters," Reinstein said. "Their belief in our vision has allowed us to take this meaningful step forward, not just building a structure but strengthening a community for generations to come."

Brina invited key contributors, The Sanford and Irene Burnstein Family Foundation and The Coretz Family Foundation, to participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking. Special recognition was also extended to the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation and the Magoon Family for their generosity. She especially thanked Crossland Construction, who took proactive measures to protect the genizah site following recent heavy rains, as well as to architects Finegold Alexander.

Additional thanks were given to the Jewish Federation of Tulsa (Jewish Tulsa) and Zarrow Pointe for providing temporary office and worship space during construction, and to Rabbi Appel for her leadership throughout the congregation's two-year transition. The leadership team was thanked for their dedication and guidance throughout the process.

Attendees were able to see visible progress on-site, including the poured foundation for the future placement of the Ten Commandments. Since the ceremony, those tablets have been carefully relocated by crane to their permanent position, where they will be visible when looking east from the sanctuary.

Construction continues on schedule, with completion anticipated in spring 2027. In the coming weeks, congregants and community members can expect to see the next phase take shape as steel uprights begin to rise, offering a tangible sign of the future Temple Israel is building together. ■

JEWISH TULSA

2021 East 71st Street
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