

# CONNECTIONS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026 Tevet/Shevat/Adar 5786

www.kolaminj.org



## THE RABBI TEACHES My "Why"

By Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel

As the "theme" for this issue of *Connections* is "What is your 'why?'"—Why do you do what you do? Why did you choose Kol Ami? I couldn't help but think back to being ten years old and receiving my first *siddur* (prayerbook) back when I was in religious school.

I was so excited to bring it home! That afternoon, I arranged all of my stuffed animals, and my younger sister, on the living room couch, draped a white bed sheet over my shoulders as a *tallit*, put on a baseball cap as my *kippah*, and proceeded to lead Shabbat services for them. The only problem was that with only a fourth grade Hebrew reading ability, each prayer took me about five to ten minutes to sound out. At the one-hour mark, my sister had had enough and walked out, but my stuffed animals remained as my loyal congregation, and I loved every minute of leading them.

Fast forward to my tenth grade Confirmation year, and I found myself beginning to ask those eternal questions: Why do bad things happen to good people? What can prayer really do? What power does God really have? The synagogue where I grew up had just hired a new rabbi who taught our Confirmation class, and I spent that year soaking in everything he was teaching us. When I had questions, he would stay after class to answer them. When I wanted to delve deeper into specific topics, he showed me the shelves in his office where I was welcome to borrow a book. When I wanted to get more involved, he recommended that I run for a board position for our synagogue youth group. I began to spend most of my free time at the synagogue—working as a *madricha* in religious school classrooms, working in the ECC after school, and creating services and Jewish programming for my peers.

In college, I spent a summer interning as a social worker at a Jewish senior living facility, spending my days talking with the residents, putting on Shabbat programs, and assisting with outings and special events. I loved hearing the stories the residents would share and being with them as they navigated the challenges they faced as they aged. It was the best summer job I ever had and I didn't want to leave when it was time to head back to school. When I was home again over winter break, I "shadowed" my rabbi for a few days, watching as he prepared a couple for their

*(continued; see "The Rabbi Teaches" on page 3)*

CONGREGATION KOL AMI *Many Voices. One Community.*  
**DUELING PIANOS**  
 SING IT LOUD!  
 SATURDAY JANUARY 24  
 \$95 Patron – \$50 General Admission  
 Doors Open 7:00 pm / Show Begins: 7:30 pm  
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CONGREGATION KOL AMI *Many Voices. One Community.*  
 God Science Spirituality  
**The Zohar & Kabbalah for Today**  
 Scholar-in-Residence Weekend 2026  
**Dr. Daniel Matt**  
 Author and Teacher  
 of Kabbalah, Zohar & Jewish Spirituality  
 March 6-8, 2026  
 See page 7 for more information.

**FRIDAY MARCH 13**  
**SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA & CONGREGATIONAL DINNER**  
 Mark your calendar! Details coming soon.



## FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

**Paul Chernin,  
Vice President**

We all move through life making countless decisions, some big, some small, some easy, and some incredibly difficult. Behind each choice is a reason, a guiding force that shapes who we

are and how we show up for the world. In Judaism, we're often encouraged to live with intention, to bring meaning into our daily actions rather than simply coasting through them without much thought or meaning. For me, reflecting on my own "why" has helped me understand not only what I value, but why those values matter. Between family, friends, career, faith, personal enjoyment, health and wellness, and civic responsibilities, there are many reasons I make certain decisions. Here, I'm focusing on my top three.

At the center of my "why" are my crazy, loud, loving, precious children. They are the quiet voices that remind me to choose integrity when shortcuts are tempting, honesty when excuses would be easier, and empathy even when frustration rises. Usually, I want them to grow into adults who recognize right from wrong. Not because someone told them or because they know someone is watching, but because they've seen it lived. My hope is that the way I carry myself gives them a blueprint for character, resilience, confidence, and love. Parenting isn't about perfection. It's about presence and showing them through my actions that doing the right thing is rarely the easiest path—but it is always the most meaningful one. I just hope they realize it by the time they're writing *Connections* articles 30+ years from now.

Another powerful part of my "why" is my marriage. My wife, Gillian, deserves a partner who loves and respects her without conditions. Someone who invests in the relationship with the same commitment and gratitude she brings every day. The choices I make...how I speak, how I listen, how I prioritize...are shaped by the desire to honor that partnership. Loving another person deeply is both a privilege and a grounding force. It reminds me that my actions ripple outward, touching not just my own life but the lives of those I care most about.

Finally, my "why" includes taking care of myself: my time, my mental and physical health, and my overall sense of wellbeing. I've learned that when I neglect those areas, everything else suffers. By valuing rest, boundaries (still working on balancing when I say "yes" and "no"), and personal growth, I'm better able to show up for my family and my community. Our tradition teaches that caring for ourselves is not separate from caring for others; it's part of the same responsibility.

Together, these pieces form the foundation of my purpose. My children, my marriage, and my own wellbeing guide the choices I make and the person I strive to be. Understanding my "why" doesn't mean I always get it right, but it does help me stay grounded and intentional. I hope that by sharing my own reflections, others might feel inspired to consider their own "why" and to live it in ways that enrich not only their own lives, but also those around them.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Jennifer Stofman**



People often ask me what drew me to Jewish communal work, and why I serve as an Executive Director of a synagogue. The answer is both simple and heartfelt: I believe in the transformative power of Jewish community, and I've witnessed firsthand how a vibrant synagogue can change lives—including my own.

My commitment to this work flows from three interwoven streams: my love for Judaism, my passion for building community, and my dedication to ensuring Jewish continuity for generations to come.

Judaism has been my anchor and my inspiration through every season of my life. The richness of our tradition, with its emphasis on *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), Torah study, and *gemilut chasadim* (acts of loving kindness), offers wisdom for navigating modern life. Every Shabbat service, every program, every lifecycle moment I help facilitate reminds me that we are links in a chain stretching from Sinai to this very moment. When I see a child in our ECC sing the blessing over challah, or watch a new member's "ah-ha moment" during a class taught by our clergy, my choice is confirmed.

Judaism doesn't exist in the abstract. The mitzvah of *kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*—all Israel is responsible for one another—isn't just a beautiful teaching; it's the heartbeat of everything we do. Some of my most meaningful moments as an Executive Director have nothing to do with budgets or building maintenance. They happen when I see unlikely friendships blossom across generations, when congregants gather in the rotunda to make blankets to comfort the sick, and when a devoted team of volunteers creates Thanksgiving dinner packages for our members and the broader community. The synagogue is where souls are nurtured and Jewish life flourishes.

This brings me to Jewish continuity, which I think about not as an abstract goal but as fulfilling the sacred commitment we made with those who came before us and those who will come after. *Edor vador*—from generation to generation: every program we create, every family we welcome into our Kol Ami family, every young person we inspire represents our investment in the Jewish future. I'm motivated by the people I see every day—the teenager finding their voice during Hebrew High School, the young couple building a Jewish home, and the seniors sharing precious stories from their past. I have the privilege of working with an amazing team to create sacred spaces where Jews of all backgrounds can explore, question, grow, and ultimately, belong.

The work isn't always easy. There are difficult conversations that keep me up at night. When I walk through our building and see it filled with learning, prayer, celebration, and connection—I know in my heart exactly why I do this work. I do it for the Judaism that has given me so much, for the community that makes that Judaism come alive, and for the Jewish future we're building together, one mitzvah, one Shabbat, one sacred moment at a time.

## THE RABBI TEACHES

(continued from page 1)

upcoming wedding, as he worked with B'nai Mitzvah students, as he attended community meetings, as he visited people in the hospital, and as he prepared for a funeral and upcoming Shabbat services.

Somewhere along the way, it hit me—everything that I loved doing was what my rabbi got to do every single week. That feeling never wavered. There are, most certainly, challenging days and difficult weeks. There are hours when we go from celebrating a baby-naming to sitting with a family in a hospital room as they try to absorb awful news. There are days when we get to participate in once-in-a-lifetime celebrations and ceremonies. We get to share in the wonder of our littlest learners, and hear new interpretations of our Torah portions from our B'nai Mitzvah students. We teach and we learn, and we get to share Shabbatot and holidays with our congregational community. We get to raise our own families within the greater Kol Ami family. In each of these moments, and in every moment in between, I'm always aware of what an incredible honor it is to be invited into people's lives at the most joyous and the most vulnerable of times, and to be able to share in part of the journey with them.

As I so often share, Kol Ami is a synagogue where, if I wasn't the rabbi, I would choose to be a member—because I so fully believe in the vision we strive for in all that we do. It's a place where we can see Jewish values and Jewish tradition come to life through shared experiences and in meaningful and inspiring ways. It's a place where connection and relationships matter, where partnership is sacred, and where no one journeys alone. What we are creating here, together, is something truly special, and I am proud and grateful to be part of it every single day.

One of my favorite prayers is the one first said upon waking up in the morning, *Modeh Ani*, which reads: "I offer thanks to You, ever-living Sovereign, that You have restored my soul to me in mercy." The prayer ends, *rabba emunatecha*, "How great is Your faithfulness."

So often we talk about OUR faith in God. This prayer reminds us, each morning, of God's faith in us to live up to our potential, to live the day to its fullest, to make a difference, to add more holiness to a world in desperate need of it. This prayer informs who I am, what I do, and why I believe that what we do here at Kol Ami is so deeply important and impactful.

I am part of a community that  
**FEELS LIKE HOME.**

Janet Kaufman,  
Assisted Living Resident



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CONGREGATION  
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**LIFE CYCLE**

*Mazal Tov to...*

**Kathy & Aaron Hauptman**  
on the naming of their daughter,  
Sadie Hauptman

**Erica & Rich King**  
on the marriage of their daughter,  
Zoe King, to Jakob Saidman

**Susan & David Olinsky**  
on the naming of their  
grandchildren, Marcus Hayes Olinsky  
and Oscar Cartini

**Ann-Linn Glaser & Allan Pepper**  
on their Commitment Celebration

**Janine & Mark Sobel**  
on their daughter, Megan Yellin,  
receiving the Herbert & Margot  
Garon Young Leadership Award  
from the Jewish Federation of  
Greater New Orleans

**Rolane & Steve Sunshine**  
on their 60th wedding anniversary

**Laura & Cory Zimmerman**  
on their vow renewal ceremony

*Life Cycle lists are inclusive from the last issue of  
Connections through December 12, 2025.*

CONGREGATION  
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One Community.  
קול עמי

MONTHLY

**MUSSAR  
MOMENTS**

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

Mondays, 12:00-1:00 pm (Zoom)

**JANUARY 12  
FEBRUARY 9**

Dive into the Jewish study of balance  
and learn how we can incorporate it into  
our own lives. Each session will focus  
on a different *middah* (character trait).

No cost for congregants, \$10/session for non-congregants.  
Registration required: [www.kolaminj.org](http://www.kolaminj.org)

## We Mourn...

**Irma Abrams**

mother of Stewart (Barbara) Abrams

**Ruth Amiel**

mother of Barbara Pearson  
grandmother of Rachel Baratz

**Barry Berson**

brother of Janet Berson

**Chaya Nechama Cohen**

aunt of Donna Moshe

**Lynne Cohen**

wife of Edward Cohen

**Marshall Fineman**

husband of Myrna Fineman

**Darrin Glass**

brother of Wendi (Todd) Cohen

**Joseph Greenbaum**

father of Adam (Ahliise) Greenbaum

**Steven Knopf**

son of Rosalyn & Richard Knopf

**Robert Mintz**

husband of Jackie Mintz

**Howard Pearlman**

uncle of David (Jamie) Rosengard

**Eleanor Rubin**

aunt of Jaye Halpern

**Ruth Siflinger**

mother of Alan (Sharon) Singer

**Bernice Wigman**

mother of Amy (Elliot) Bodofsky

## FROM THE EDITOR

### Marlene Dworkin

Young children ask “why” often. We try to answer them, but they keep asking a series of “why” questions until we have exhausted our knowledge and/or patience. I’m not sure how this came about, but my grandson, Rafi, does not ask “why?” Instead, he asks, “what happened?” This is so much easier! If we know the answer to the question, we can answer it. If not, the answer becomes, “nothing happened,” and the conversation moves on to a different topic. We need to make sure he teaches his younger brother this question!



My “Why”... When I meet new people and they ask what I do, my response is that I am a professional volunteer. After I retired from my other professional life to raise my children, I needed something to do to meet new people and feel fulfilled, so I started to do volunteer work.

Helping others is in my DNA. My father was always helping others; he would give you the shirt off his back, even if it was his only shirt. He often drove people to the airport or to doctors appointments. (Pre-cell phones, it was sometimes difficult to find him when his own family needed him!)

Choosing to volunteer in our synagogue was an obvious choice for me. Growing up, I went to religious school, my family celebrated every holiday and attended services on a regular basis. Being Jewish is a part of who I am, it’s not just a description.

I have served on just about every synagogue committee we have except for the Finance Committee. Fundraising interests me, budgets do not!

Now, as the editor of *Connections*, I am utilizing so many of my skills from all different parts of my life. My mother always read, taking at least four books out from the library at a time. My love of reading came from her; I am a member of three book clubs.

There is one particular author whose books I had to stop reading. She had great stories to tell, but they were filled with run-on sentences, and many started with the words “and” or “but.” I was tempted to take a red marker to a copy and send it back to the publisher. Typos and misspelled words often jump out at me, especially on menus. I learned how to proofread from a former boss who could always find the one error anyone made. It became a game; could I find any errors before he did? When they were in college, my son and daughter used to send me their papers to proofread.

Serving on the Board of Trustees and several committees makes me aware of what is happening at our congregation. That knowledge helps with putting together this newsletter. I enjoy the process and working with the team of talented people who create this product.

It is my hope that when you read *Connections* you are informed about what is happening at Kol Ami, you are entertained, and you feel a sense of connection to our community.

**CKA Cabaret** Saturday, March 21  
7:30 pm

SAVE THE DATE to join your **very talented** friends and congregants\*  
for an evening of entertainment and dessert. More details to follow.

\*Interested in performing? Contact Marlene Dworkin (dworkin4@verizon.net) or Maxine Pinzur (mpinzur@hotmail.com).

# Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:

[www.kolaminj.org/events](http://www.kolaminj.org/events)

## JANUARY

### Winter Break

*Offices & Schools closed  
December 25 through January 4.*

### First Friday

Friday, January 2, 6:15 pm  
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

### Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 2, 7:00 pm  
We celebrate January anniversaries.

### Torah Study

Saturdays, January 3, 17, 24 & 31,  
9:00 am (Zoom only. Alt. offering Jan. 10.)

### Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, January 7 & 21, 12:30 pm  
(Off-site; contact [allanpep@yahoo.com](mailto:allanpep@yahoo.com).)

### First (Second!) Thursdays: Tribal Encounters: Jewish-Indian Relations in American History

*Presented by Dr. Brien Brothman*  
Thursday, January 8, 7:30 pm (Hybrid)

### Tot Shabbat

Friday, January 9  
5:15 pm Tot Family Dinner  
6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service

### Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 9, 7:00 pm

## LOAVES OF TORAH

### Braiding in the New Year with Rabbi Vanessa Harper

Saturday, January 10  
9:00 am Torah Study & Spice Up Your  
Judaism. Catered lunch.  
7:00 pm Challah inspired Havdalah  
with instruction & wine tasting.

Sunday, January 11  
12:30 pm Interpretive Challah Shaping  
& Discussion. Rosh Chodesh  
event for women only.

### Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, January 10, 10:30 am  
Bar Mitzvah of Parker Phillips

### Boomers Plus Book Club: Tap Dancing on Everest

Sunday, January 11, 7:00 pm (Zoom)

### Monthly Mussar Moments

*Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar*  
Monday, January 12, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

### Dine to Donate: Norma's

Tuesday, January 13, 4:00-9:00 pm (Off-site)

### The Torah of Belonging

*Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar*  
Three Wednesdays, January 14, 21 & 28,  
10:30 am (Hybrid)

### Yiddish Shmooze Group

*Facilitated by Norman Rednik*  
Thursday, January 15, 10:30 am (Zoom)

### Boomers Plus Lunch: Black Olive

Thursday, January 15, 12:30 pm (Off-site)

### Shabbat Evening Service: MLK Shabbat with Koleinu

Friday, January 16, 7:00 pm  
Koleinu lends their voices to our service.

### Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, January 17, 24 & 31,  
10:15 am (Zoom only. No session Jan. 3.  
Alt. offering Jan. 10.)

### MLK Mitzvah Day

*Offices & Schools closed*  
Monday, January 19, 10:00 am  
See details on page 9.

### Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 7:30 pm

### Caring Caps Knitting Session

Friday, January 23, 10:00 am

### Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, January 23, 7:00 pm  
We celebrate January birthdays.

### Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, January 24, 10:30 am  
Bar Mitzvah of Harrison Felsenstein

### Dueling Pianos

Saturday, January 24, 7:00 pm

### KAFTY Jr. Escape Room (Grades 6-8)

Sunday, January 25, 12:30 pm

### Torah on Tap

Wednesday, January 28, 6:30 pm (Off-site)

### Shabbat Mishpacha (Family) Service: Grade 6 Shabbat

Friday, January 30, 7:00 pm  
We celebrate our sixth graders.

### Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, January 31, 10:30 am  
Bat Mitzvah of Sophia Feld

### Grade 5 Shabbaton

Saturday, January 31, 5:30 pm

## FEBRUARY

### LGBTQIA+ Torah Study

Sunday, February 1, 9:30 am

### Club K'ton Event (Grades K-2)

Sunday, February 1, 11:30 am

### Sisterhood Tu B'Shevat Seder

Sunday, February 1, 2:00 pm

### Congregational Day Trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC

Monday, February 2, 8:00 am departure

### Men's Club Lunches

Wednesdays, February 4 & 18, 12:30 pm  
(Off-site; contact [allanpep@yahoo.com](mailto:allanpep@yahoo.com).)

### Yiddish Shmooze Group

*Facilitated by Norman Rednik*  
Thursdays, February 5 & 19,  
10:30 am (Zoom)

### First Thursdays: An Evening with Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner

*Special Guest: Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner,  
Director of the Religious Action Center of  
Reform Judaism*  
Thursday, February 5, 7:30 pm (Zoom)

### First Friday

Friday, February 6, 6:15 pm  
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

### Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 6, 7:00 pm  
We celebrate February anniversaries.

### Torah Study

Saturdays, February 7, 14, 21 & 28,  
9:00 am (Zoom only)

# Upcoming Events

## Spice Up Your Judaism

Saturdays, February 7, 14 & 21,  
10:15 am (Zoom only. Alt. offering Feb. 28)

## Monthly Mussar Moments

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar  
Monday, February 9, 12:00 pm (Zoom)

## A Journey into Jewish Food

Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar  
Monday, February 9, 5:30 pm  
Add'l series dates: Mar. 19 & Apr. 27.

## Talmud Talks

Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.  
Tuesdays, February 10, 17 & 24,  
11:30 am (Zoom)

## More Books They Never Taught Us

Led by Rabbi Richard Address  
Three Wednesdays,  
February 11, 18 & 25, 10:30 am (Zoom)

## Cocktails & Cupcakes

Wednesday, February 11, 7:00 pm

## Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 13, 7:00 pm

## Boomers Plus Movie Night: The Way We Were

Saturday, February 14, 7:00 pm (Off-site)

## Presidents' Day

Monday, February 16 – Offices closed

## Social Action at MANNA

Tuesday, February 17, 10:00 am (Off-site)

## Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 7:30 pm

## Shabbat Evening Service

Friday, February 20, 7:00 pm

## Club Noar Event (Grades 3-5)

Sunday, February 22, 11:30 am

## Shabbat Mishpacha (Family) Service: Grade 5 Shabbat

Friday, February 27, 7:00 pm  
We celebrate our fifth graders and  
February birthdays.

## Alternative Service

Led by Cantor Callis  
Saturday, February 28,  
10:15 am (Hybrid)



## MEN'S CLUB

By Doug Cohen

*Connections* publications have themes for each issue, and the current them is about finding your “Why.” I thought that it would be good for me to think about “Why CKA”—that is, why did we choose Congregation Kol Ami, and why do we look forward to our continued active participation. While thinking about why CKA, I could not get the song “YMCA” out of my head. So, I took the liberty of ymcing my attachment to CKA to the tune of that song. Here goes:

When looking for a place to belong  
There's a spot where the spirit is strong  
You can learn, you can pray, you can sing  
Find meaning in everything.

You walk through the welcoming door  
And feel something that you just can't ignore  
There's a warmth there, and a joy and a spark  
That will bring you out of the dark.

I want to say that is Why CKA.  
I like it here and that's Why CKA.  
They have Torah to start,  
And I really feel part,  
And the clergy are really smart.

I feel wanted that's Why CKA.  
It's close to home and that's Why CKA  
Nobody is rude  
I get in a good mood  
And I really enjoy the food.

The Temple is the home that I need  
Where tradition and helpfulness lead  
The committees operate at high gears  
And we're never short volunteers.

Holidays and Friday night lights  
You'll find friendships and purpose and light.  
There's a bond. There's a heart. There's a way.  
To feel connected every single day.

I'm telling you that is Why CKA  
Our Vision's clear so that's Why CKA.  
Bring your heart and your soul  
Come and make your life whole  
At CKA you can reach your goals.

I'm happy here and that's Why CKA!

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**DAY TRIP TO THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM**  
WASHINGTON, DC

Join us for a meaningful day of learning, remembrance, and connection as we travel together to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

**Cost:** \$54 per person  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2026**

Walkers and canes welcome. Wheelchairs cannot be accommodated. Space is limited. Open to Kol Ami members only.  
Registration is required: [www.kolaminj.org](http://www.kolaminj.org)



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קול אמי

## SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By *Bobbie Israelsky*

As we head into the cold, dark days of winter, Sisterhood is shining light and warmth with all of the wonderful events that we have planned. Doing mitzvot expresses acts of human kindness to others, in keeping with Jewish tradition. Sisterhood encourages you to give a little bit of your time on Mitzvah Day, January 19. Sisterhood is honored to team up with the Tikkun Olam Committee to make this Mitzvah Day a success.

Our next special winter event is a celebration of the very meaningful holiday of Tu B'shevat, most commonly known as "the New Year for the trees." Tu B'shevat has become a symbol of our attachment to the land of Israel as well as an example of the Jewish sensitivity to the environment. Sisterhood is celebrating this holiday on Sunday afternoon, February 1, from 2:00-4:00 pm, with an inspiring seder. We will gather to learn more about this annual holiday, eat lots of fruits and nuts of the trees, and share this wonderful seder experience together.

We have many other Sisterhood events throughout the winter and well into the spring, and we will be teaming up with Men's Club, Boomers Plus, and Empty Nesters. Please look for more details on our synagogue website. These interactive events will be filled with fun, friendship, and flair.

Last but surely not least, the theme for this *Connections* article is actually "What is your Why." For me, my "Why" is very clear. Why did I decide to accept the job of Co-President of Sisterhood? Well, I must tell you, that I really love all of the amazing women. The friendships that I have made are life-changing. These women are loving, caring, hard-working, generous, and honest. I enjoy spending time with these wonderful ladies, and I am happy to give of my time and efforts, to continue to make Kol Ami Sisterhood a thriving and successful group. So, in conclusion, I encourage you to attend some of our great events, join a committee, give a little of your time, and support Sisterhood for future generations to come.



God



Science



Spirituality

## The Zohar & Kabbalah for Today

### Scholar-in-Residence Weekend

**Dr. Daniel Matt**

**March 6-8, 2026**



Have you ever wondered how Creation as described in the Bible might relate to any of today's scientific findings? Do you think there is evidence of God to be found in our material world? Could there be a feminine side to God?

Explore those questions and many others at the Helen & Leon Weinberg Scholar-in-Residence Weekend, March 6-8, when noted author, teacher, and acknowledged world expert on the Zohar, Dr. Daniel Matt, comes to Kol Ami. Open yourself to learning about the Zohar, the mystical commentary on the Torah that is the basis for Kabbalah. The Zohar, according to Dr. Matt, "takes the juiciest midrashim, the most poetic, even radical, stories and raises them a notch."

Join in the First Friday pre-service nosh sponsored by the Scholar-in-Residence Committee, then hear the thoughts expressed by cosmological Kabbalist and Professor of Spirituality, Dr. Daniel Matt, during the Friday evening service on March 6.

On Saturday, March 7, Dr. Matt will discuss several topics that explore the "modern and ancient words" to be found in the Zohar that he has completely, and remarkably, translated into English from the original Aramaic. Saturday morning, after a light breakfast, Dr. Matt will explain how the Zohar, the masterpiece of Jewish Mysticism, is relevant for today's spiritual seekers. Following a break for lunch, Dr. Matt will consider "God and the Big Bang," to discover if there can be harmony between Science and Spirituality!

Do register for this fascinating program at the "Early Bird" rate of \$18 member/\$36 non-member and aid in the planning by reserving your spot early. After the February 25 deadline, costs become \$30 and \$48 respectively.

Sponsorships are welcomed for this exciting weekend and continuing Scholar-in-Residence programs and are \$180 per person. They include a signed copy of Dr. Matt's book.

Look for more information closer to the Weekend and be sure to mark your calendar!



**Fall Fun...** The annual Young Family Havdalah Hayride saw smiling faces and perfectly cool temperatures for s'mores and farm fun.

**Study Session...** The Adult Education Committee hosted its third annual Shabbaton with guest Rabbi Stacy Rigler.



**Blanket Statement...** Volunteers for our Blankets of Hope project enjoyed a productive no-sew blanket-making session creating warm throw blankets for congregants facing adversity or illness.



**Supper Support...** Members enjoyed supporting Kol Ami Sisterhood by eating out for a delicious Dine To Donate evening at Dooney's Pub in Voorhees.



**Happy Homecoming...** Some of our Burkett/ELITE members reunited to join us for a Thanksgiving weekend Shabbat dinner and evening service.



**Sing a Song...** In November, Koleinu joined with other choirs for A Festival of Song at Temple Israel of the City of New York, and, among other notable choral pieces, beautifully performed Cantor Callis' original award-winning cantata, *The Song of Jonah*.



**Gifts Galore...** The annual Holiday Gift Bazaar sponsored by Sisterhood saw congregant and outside vendors showcasing Judaica, jewelry, clothing and gifts to a great turnout of shoppers.



**Babka Baking...** Congregant and professional baker Neomi Eliezer shared her talents and taught babka twisting skills to participants at our Young Families Parents' Night Out in December.

**Empty nests, full bellies...** In recent months, our new Empty Nesters cohort enjoyed two food-centric events: a November dinner at Allora and a December latke-making event at Kol Ami lead by congregant and chef Chad Satanoff



**8 Nights in 1...**

The ECC hosted an afternoon of Chanukah fun with bingo, crafts, games, latke-making, and lots of holiday spirit.



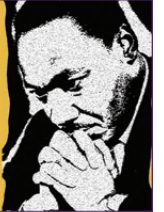
CONGREGATION KOL AMI



**MLK2026**

**MITZVAH DAY**

Honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



**MONDAY, JANUARY 19**

**10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Families & individuals of all ages are invited to participate in our Day of Service

**SERVICE PROJECTS AT KOL AMI**

- Make placemats for Cathedral Kitchen (ages 3+)
- Paint rocks for Camden Children's Garden (ages 9+)
- Make chocolate covered pretzels for Gift of Life Howie's House (all ages)
- Make blankets for Kol Ami congregants (ages 13+)
  - Make custom journals for Samaritan Hospice
- Make cat toys (ages 7+) & pumpkin-peanut butter dog treats (ages 12+) for AWA and Voorhees Animal Orphanage
- Make peanut butter & jelly sandwiches for Cathedral Kitchen (all ages)

**OFF-SITE SERVICE PROJECTS**

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Game Day at Lions Gate (ages 13+).** Engage with residents in the assisted living building. Enjoy Mah Jongg, Rummikub, card games, board games & more. Registration required in advance.
- Giving Blood is a Mitzvah.** To donate blood on behalf of Congregation Kol Ami at a location near you, please visit: [bit.ly/482E7tl](http://bit.ly/482E7tl)

**10:30am LEARNING FOR LITTLES AT KOL AMI**

Stories & Songs with Rabbi Frenkel, Cantor Callis, and Morah Jill. Children (and their grown ups) can learn about MLK and the mitzvah of doing good deeds.

**More Info & Registration: [www.kolaminj.org](http://www.kolaminj.org)**

# January B'NAI MITZVAH



## Parker Phillips

January 10

*Son of Michael & Sara Phillips*

*Sister: Olivia*

I am a 7th grade student at Voorhees Middle School. I enjoy playing baseball and flag football, cheering on the Eagles, Red Sox, and Celtics, surfing, fishing, traveling, studying

history, and spending summers at camp in the Adirondack Mountains. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I volunteered as a buddy with the Camden County Miracle Baseball League. It was incredibly meaningful to help kids, teens, and young adults with disabilities play baseball on a field designed to be safe, supportive, and fun. I am also raising money for the Orthopedic Surgery Research Fund at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) in honor of my sister, Olivia. She was born with bilateral hip dysplasia and has received exceptional care from CHOP. Supporting research in this field is important to me because it helps ensure that children like Olivia can continue to enjoy being active throughout their lives. Becoming a B'nai Mitzvah means so much to me. It is an honor to carry on the traditions my ancestors have followed for thousands of years, and I look forward to passing these traditions on to my future children and the generations that follow.

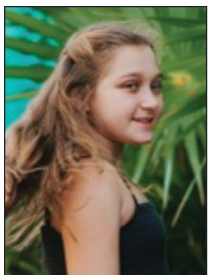
## Harrison Felsenstein

January 24

*Son of Maya & Matthew Felsenstein*

*Brother: Jacob*

I am a 7th grader at Rosa International Middle School. I love playing sports, swimming, jamming on my guitar, diving into video games, or hanging with my dogs and friends. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I am volunteering at the Animal Adoption Center in Lindenwold, helping care for the dogs and collecting empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls so I can make frozen peanut-butter treat toys for them. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means stepping into new responsibilities and choosing to do the right thing—even when it isn't always the easiest. It's a moment of growth, kindness, and showing strength of heart.



## Sophia Feld

January 31

*Daughter of Eden & Michael Feld*

*Siblings: Chloe and Aidan*

I am in 7th grade at Rosa International Middle School. Some of my hobbies are playing volleyball, soccer, and art. In my free time, I also like playing video games and singing. For my Bat Mitzvah

project, I volunteered my time at a local food pantry to help those in need. To me, becoming a Bat Mitzvah means I am one step closer to being an adult.



**CKA HHS at NYC...** Mamma Mia on Broadway and Vessel at Hudson Yards were two stops during the Congregation Kol Ami Hebrew High School day trip to New York City in early November.



## Fiddler...

Our Hebrew High School students and their families enjoyed a private performance of Fiddler On the Roof at Haddonfield Plays & Players.

## WHY WE SERVE

*By Lynn Branfman*

Karen Marinoff and I co-chair the **Branfman Children's Library** at Kol Ami. For the past three years, our wonderful library volunteers have been reading to the Sunday School classes, from pre-K through Grade 2, on selected Sundays. This school year, we have welcomed several new, additional volunteers.

All of our library volunteers feel rewarded when we read books in the classrooms, covering important topics such as Jewish holidays, Jewish history, Jewish values, and more. We also bring a variety of books for the children to sign out at the end of each reading session. We are so glad to meet these children, and to get to know the Sunday school teachers in these classes, and also their madrichim (teen helpers). When we read to these students, we hope to inspire not only their interest in learning and gaining knowledge, but also in experiencing the thrill of reading at home as well, often with their parents beside them, for warm family moments together. This year, with prizes being offered to students who sign out books and return them faithfully, we hope to further instill the practice and joy of reading with parents and family.

The other wonderful benefit of volunteering with the Branfman Children's Library is that we see a bond forming amongst our volunteers. In the spring, Karen Marinoff and I host a reception in honor of our volunteers, expressing our thanks for their work with the children. Our volunteers get to know each other better at these events, too, sharing more about our lives, and forming warm friendships. Karen and I can't wait to host our next volunteer appreciation event!

If you are interested in becoming part of our volunteer librarians' group that reads to the Kol Ami Sunday School classes, from pre-K through Grade 2, please contact Lynn at [tensb@aol.com](mailto:tensb@aol.com).



## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

**Sheri Greenblatt**

*Director of Education*

Michael J. Fox, actor and now a leading advocate for Parkinson's Disease awareness, once said, *"Happiness grows in direct proportion to your acceptance, and in reverse proportion to your expectations."* Diagnosed when

a young father at the height of his career, he recalls that his first reaction wasn't *"Why me?"* but *"This can't be me."* For nearly a year, he struggled to accept the reality of his diagnosis. When acceptance finally came, everything shifted. Acceptance didn't mean surrender; it meant acknowledging the truth so he could choose how to move forward with purpose.

Fox now speaks openly about the unexpected gifts his illness brought: deeper relationships, new career paths, and a sense of meaning he might never have found otherwise. His journey reminds us that discovering our "why" begins when we accept what we cannot change and focus on what comes next. Fox recognized that while we can't choose what happens to us, we can choose our response. As he put it, *"I don't have a choice about this. But I have a million other choices, what I do when I get up in the morning, the attitude I carry, what I do with my life."* That focus on what we can control is what helped him not just cope but truly thrive.

Ultimately, that's at the heart of finding purpose: choosing where to place our energy, our gifts, and our joy.

Which brings me to my own "why."

My purpose, what genuinely makes me happy, is creating meaningful experiences for my students. I want our religious school to be a place students want to come, where they feel safe, seen, curious, and connected. I want this place to be one that goes beyond teaching facts and instead offers memories, community, and moments that help shape who they are becoming.

I can't control everything, but I can choose the attitude I bring and the environment I help build. I choose to make this school a place where learning feels meaningful, where joy shows up in small ways, and where every student knows they truly belong.



Our families and students are the Religious School's and ECC's "why."

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Laura Hoffman**

*Director of Early Childhood Education*

When thinking about "why" we, the ECC staff, are here at Kol Ami ECC, many reasons come to mind:

*We love working with children! ... It's a great place to work!... We have a great community! ... We collaborate for the betterment of the children!*

Why, though, do families pick Kol Ami ECC for their children? Parents often want to give their children's teachers gifts for different occasions, but the BEST gifts are the notes and letters the teachers and the director receive from current and "graduated" families.

"We truly appreciate all the hard work, time and energy you put into the school—it is really your life! Thank you for taking such good care and loving my kids over these past several years."

"Thank you for creating such a nurturing and supportive environment at Kol Ami. We are so grateful for your dedication to our child's well-being and development."

"I cannot begin to express my gratitude for all you have done for our family. Our child is sad to be moving on to kindergarten, and he speaks nonstop of all that happens and how much he loved his days at school."

"We want to thank you for the love, care, and dedication you show to all the children at Kol Ami ECC! Your hard work creates a safe and happy place for our little ones to grow and thrive."

"From the start, Kol Ami has been a special place for our girls (and us!). Within days of starting here, the girls were eager to get to their classrooms to be with their friends and teachers. The relief that flooded me as I dropped them off each day was immense; it's a priceless feeling knowing your children are in such safe, loving, nurturing hands."

These are just a few of the messages we receive. The staff of the ECC are why *parents* choose to send their children to this school when there are other choices nearby.

The families, especially the children, are why *we* are here. We are grateful to our families for trusting us with their precious children.

### ECC Dates to Remember:

- January** 5 Return to School
- 9 Tot Shabbat
- 14 June in January
- 19 Martin Luther King Day – *No School*
- 20-23 Parent-Teacher Conferences – *School in session*
- February** 2 Tu B'Shevat – *Birthday of the Trees*
- 11 Jumpin' Gymnasee
- 16 Presidents' Day – *No School*
- 20 Art Show Premiere Night

**BOOMERS PLUS SOCIAL GROUP**  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 12:30 PM**

**Black Olive**  
 GREEK CUISINE

SPACE IS LIMITED  
 RSVP BY JANUARY 11  
 WWW.KOLAMINJ.ORG

**KOL AMI** Many Voices.  
 One Community.



## BOOMERS+ SOCIAL GROUP

By Judy Lubetkin

Lots of people may be asked what synagogue they belong to when engaged in discussing Jewish geography. Reasons for joining one synagogue over another range from location, denomination, or where your friends and children belong. This is where I belong because I was already here when two great congregations decided to join together and become one.

If I was asked today, exactly what is it about Kol Ami that makes me want to be a member, I would start at the top with walking in the door. A few weeks ago, my husband Steve and I attended services at a synagogue that was not Kol Ami. The congregation didn't know us and we didn't know this congregation. They were very friendly and we were treated as if we had always attended their services. I thought that is exactly how I feel at Kol Ami—and that is what I've heard new members say about Kol Ami, too. It is a vibe of positivity and inclusion that I am so happy our community possesses.

I have found my "why" by being co-chair of the Boomers Plus Social Group of Kol Ami with Karen Ginsburg and previously with Lynn Branfman. Let me explain. Boomers Plus is such a great group of people who have created (and continue to create) wonderful events. Boomers Plus is a group that is driven by its members, no matter how involved anyone is or wants to be.

Boomers Plus is looking forward to all our future activities, such as our lunches, Shabbat services, hikes, book discussions, and more! Keep an eye out for announcements and emails for our upcoming events.

## FINDING PURPOSE THROUGH TIKKUN OLAM

By Michele Zeldner



People often ask me why I chose to serve as Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee, and the answer goes back many years. I grew up watching my mother and grandmother devote themselves to the Jewish communal world—showing up, helping others, and living their values in action. Their example taught me what it means to be part of a Jewish community: we care, we advocate, we repair, and we lift one another up.

When I first stepped into this work, I chose to serve as Social Action Chair, hoping to help our congregation connect more deeply with the broader community. Today, I'm proud to co-chair the newly merged Tikkun Olam Committee with Jane Bloom. Together, we bring our shared commitment to service, justice, and meaningful engagement.

For me, *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, is not a slogan but a guiding principle. I believe in the power of advocacy, outreach, and hands-on projects to bring Jewish values to life. I believe many people join a synagogue because they want opportunities to express compassion, engage with purpose, and feel part of something larger than themselves.

My "why" is simple: I want to help create those opportunities and make it easy for every member to participate in ways that speak to their heart, interests, and, of course, available time.

That's why I'm especially excited for **Mitzvah Day on Monday, January 19**, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, chaired by Beth Hurwitz. We'll make chocolate-covered pretzels for Howie's House, paint kindness rocks for the Neighborhood Center in Camden, host Game Day at Lions Gate, and create decorative journals for seniors. These are just some of the many activities planned. Mitzvah Day is open to participants of all ages. For our youngest helpers, we'll offer story-time and songs about social justice with our clergy, along with decorating placemats for Cathedral Kitchen, simple acts that make a real difference.

Beyond Mitzvah Day, our congregation can stay engaged throughout the year with the **Mini-Mitzvah Committee**, chaired by Gaby Fish and Estherose Heyman, which offers monthly hands-on projects for those who are able to take part.

At the heart of it all is a desire to help repair the world, one act at a time, and to help others discover the joy of doing the same. I hope you'll join us.

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## GROWING GREENER

### Expanding Kol Ami's Stewardship of the Earth

We hope you will now notice that the blue recycling bins throughout the synagogue have signage indicating our expanded efforts to recycle paper, glass, plastic, and metal. The book of Genesis implores humanity to both tend to the earth's needs (*avad*) and protect the earth from harm (*shamar*). We wish all who visit our campus to honor this divine mandate. Specifically, we should all try to recycle the following, in the blue bins:

- **Paper** – programs, newspaper & cardboard that doesn't have glossy surfaces
- **Glass** – empty liquids first in trash cans then place bottles, containers & jars in a blue bin
- **Plastic** – # 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 or "PET" around the bottom triangle is recyclable...blue bin
- **Metal** – empty liquid first into a lined trash can then place can or metal pan in a blue bin

With your help we can all do our part to **reduce** the amount of trash going to our landfills, **reuse** materials already harvested to preserve limited resources, and **recycle** as much as possible to minimize fossil fuels in manufacturing. Kol Ami's Sustainability Committee is always looking for more volunteers and ideas to help fulfill the divine imperative to protect the earth for our community and future generations. Contact Sharon Parnes ([sparwr@hotmail.com](mailto:sparwr@hotmail.com)) or Bill Fisher ([williamjfisher@gmail.com](mailto:williamjfisher@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.



**GenXtra**  
For folks in their 40s & 50s

*We're too old for the youth group and too young for the early bird special.*

Born between '65 and '80?  
Join the GenXtra Committee!

We're building a GenX community at Kol Ami and we're looking for you to help us plan events both inside and outside the building. Let's celebrate our generation (RIP MTV).

Get involved:  
Reach out to Wendi Lyons at [CKAwendi@yahoo.com](mailto:CKAwendi@yahoo.com).

**NORA AND HER BODY**

WRITTEN BY  
JESSICA SOPHIE CHANG HOROSCHAK, DO  
SUSAN I. KAUFMAN, DO, FACOG

ILLUSTRATED BY  
HALEY McDEVITT

Amazon book size: 8.25 x 6

Lulu Bookstore book size: 11 x 8.5

This book equips parents with a helpful tool to introduce puberty and periods to their daughters. Nora, who is on the autism spectrum, shares her journey offering a positive perspective. Plus, a section for parents, a parent statement & resources.

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WEDDINGWIRE COUPLES' CHOICE AWARDS \*\*\*\*\* 2023

## WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

In times of happiness or sadness, Congregation Kol Ami offers a variety of ways to share your wishes and thoughts with others. Contributions may be sent to the synagogue office as well as completed online. For a complete list of funds and tzedakah opportunities, visit [www.kolaminj.org](http://www.kolaminj.org).

### Abraham & Sylvia Angstreich Beautification Fund\*

Linda & Steven Angstreich *in memory of Jane Berezow*  
Heather & Judd Zimmerman *in memory of Mark Zimmerman*

### Ahavat Limud (Love of Learning)

Boomers Plus Social Group *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Debra & David Faye *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Sylvia & Stewart Levine *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Sisterhood *in memory of Bernice Wigman*

### Amy Silvers Israel Trip Scholarship Endowment Fund\*

Arlene & Norman Silvers  
*in memory of Lydia Moss*

*in memory of Paul Babitz*  
*in memory of William Mennen*

### Branfman Children's Library Fund

Elise Miller *in memory of Elaine & Martin Friedman*  
Marjorie & David Potts *in memory of Sylvia Scharf Steinberg*

### Cantor Anita F. Hochman Choir Fund

Beth & John Gamel *in honor of Cantor Callis*  
Brian Glaser *in honor of Ann-Linn Glaser's birthday*  
Ann & Ed Goldberg *in memory of Tobe Alperin*  
Deborah Lisker & Edward Chernoff  
*in honor of Ian Wachstein's birthday*  
Anita Moliken *in memory of Tobe Alperin*

Stephanie & John Riviello

*in honor of the birth of Teri & Neal Nover's grandson*

Alison & Alan Schorr *in memory of Jane Berezow*

Judi & David Weinberg

*in honor of the birth of Teri & Neal Nover's grandson*

Pauline & Jacob Weiner *in appreciation of the choir during this year's High Holy Day services*

Hilda & Bruce Weinger *in memory of Tobe Alperin*

#### **Clifford R. Levine Adult Education Fund**

Mary & Elliot Ames *in memory of Dr. Samuel & Jean Levenson*

Liz Levine

*in memory of Bernice Wigman*

*in memory of Clifford Levine*

Judy & Steve Lubetkin

*in appreciation of Rabbi Lewis Eron*

*in honor of the birth of Rabbi Lewis Eron & Gail Trachtenberg's granddaughter*

#### **Dorman-Raich Senior Fund**

Margaret & James Sell *in honor of Aunt Carol (100 years old)*

#### **Frisch-Trautenberg Choir Fund**

Michele Figures & Ira Miller

*in memory of Morris Rubenstein*

*in memory of Sophie Miller*

*in memory of Tobe Alperin*

Ruth & Neal Goldman *in appreciation of Gaby Fish & Jason Richeck*

Sidney Schnall *in appreciation of Eileen Winter*

#### **Helen & Leon Weinberg Scholar-in-Residence Endowment Fund\***

Erica & Richard King *in honor of the marriage of their daughter, Zoe, to Jakob Saidman*

Sharon & Jack Weinberg

*in memory of Charles Lobue*

*in honor of the marriage of Erica & Richard King's daughter, Zoe, to Jakob Saidman*

#### **Honorable Steven P. Burkett Graduate Fund**

Amy & Jason Sonstein

*in honor of Maddie Cook becoming a Bat Mitzvah*

Sarah & David Zalcman

*in honor of Maddie Cook becoming a Bat Mitzvah*

#### **Jeffrey Halper Memorial Fund**

Carole & Arthur Halper *in memory of Keith Dayton*

Marjorie & David Potts *in memory of Lewis Steinberg*

#### **Jeremy Kane Gift of Israel Fund**

Melinda Kane *in memory of Bernice Wigman*

Teri & Neal Nover *in memory of Lucille Rizman*

#### **Louis & Helene E. Walker Social Action Endowment Fund\***

Sheila Lever *in memory of Geoffrey Lever*

Erica & Richard King *in memory of Irma Abrams*

Sheila Goodman *in memory of Irma Abrams*

Alice Oppenheimer *in memory of Irma Abrams*

Valerie Schmid-Sadwin & Stuart Sadwin

*in memory of Bernice Wigman*

#### **Lynne Rednik Early Childhood Center Fund**

Lynne & Norman Rednik

*in honor of Jaymin Chernin becoming a Bar Mitzvah*

*in honor of the marriage of Erica & Richard King's daughter, Zoe, to Jakob Saidman*

*in memory of Tobe Alperin*

#### **Margie & Joe Sobel Family Assistance Fund**

Anonymous *in honor of Wendy Silverberg*

Toby & Len Berman *in memory of Steven Knopf*

Bruce Matez *in memory of Jane Berezow*

Barbara Pearson & Ruth Amiel *in memory of Norman Amiel*

Janine & Mark Sobel

*in honor of Jack David's Bar Mitzvah*

*in honor of Megan Sobel Yellin*

*in honor of Sammy David's Bar Mitzvah*

*in memory of Murray Savar*

#### **Merle Steinberg Religious School Scholarship Fund**

Judy & Steve Lubetkin *in appreciation of Merle Friedman*

#### **Rabbi David Education Fund**

Rochelle Cohen *in memory of Noah H. Cohen*

Sheri & Rand Greenblatt *in memory of Fran Rivera's mother, Trudi*

Harilyn & Leo Schwartzberg

*in memory of Bernice Wigman*

*in memory of Ruth Siflinger*

#### **Rabbi David Good Works Fund**

Mary & Elliot Ames

*in memory of Dr. Milton Ames*

*in memory of Ruth Ames*

Roslyn Appell & Robert Purdy

*in memory of David Appell*

*in memory of Evelyn Appell*

*in memory of Harry Rubin*

*in memory of Jerome Kohn*

*in memory of Louis Rubin*

Judy & Barry Bennett *in honor of Rabbi David*

Debra & Sanford Gips *in memory of Alvin M. Jeffer*

Jill & Alan Meltzer *in memory of Eleanor Slotnick*

Ferne Sandler & Norman Weiss *in memory of Carol E. Weiss*

#### **Rabbi Richard F. Address Caring Community Fund**

Jane & Rabbi Richard Address *in memory of Martin Address*

Amy Finke *in appreciation of Gail Donner*

Scott Kushner *in memory of Irma Abrams*

Marlene Spector & Amy Lipson *in memory of Louise Weiner*

#### **Rabbis' Good Works Fund\***

Mary & Elliot Ames

*in memory of Bernice Wigman*

*in memory of Max & Esther Abramson*

Susan Bookman *in memory of Ruth Siflinger*

Amy & Scott Brandt *in memory of Jane Berezow*

Lynn Branfinan

*in honor of Michael & Sandra Wolk's anniversary*

Lynn Branfman  
*in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
*in memory of Ruth Siflinger*  
Rick Clauson *in honor of Sue Bookman*  
Nadine & Doug Cohen *in appreciation of Rabbi Frenkel*  
Beth & John Gamel *in honor of Rabbi Frenkel*  
Sheila Goodman *in memory of Tobe Alperin*  
Rose Greenblatt *in appreciation of Rabbi Frenkel*  
Maddie & Matt Kaminer *in honor of Rabbi Frenkel*  
Irene Kauffman *in memory of Susan Nassau*  
Rosalyn & Richard Knopf *in appreciation of Rabbi Milan-Polisar*  
Lisa & David Lanter *in memory of Jeanette Schwartz*  
Shari & David Leff  
*in appreciation of Kol Ami for honoring the Veterans at Shabbat*  
Deborah Lisker & Edward Chernoff  
*in honor of the birth of Rabbi Lewis Eron & Gail Trachtenberg's*  
*granddaughter*  
*in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Judy & Steven Lubetkin *in memory of Steven Knopf*  
Joel Magnus *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Paula Rabinowitz *speedy recovery to Donna Snyder*  
Sharon & Alan Singer *in memory of Ruth Siflinger*  
Marlene Spector & Amy Lipson *in memory of Sam Spector*  
Marlyn & Harry Starkman  
*in honor of Lori, Ryan and Blake Winter*  
*in memory of Margaret Rogalli*  
Sharon & Ely Swerdlin *in memory of Miriam Swerdlin*  
Caryn & Edward Weiss  
*in honor of the birth of Teri & Neal Nover's grandson*  
Carol & Paul Weller  
*in honor of our clergy*  
*in memory of Janet Entriken Weller*  
Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Laura & Cory Zimmerman *in appreciation of Rabbi Milan-Polisar*

**Rabbi Newburge Tzedakah Collective  
Social Action Fund**

Toby & Gary Heflich *in memory of Bernice Wigman*

**Ravi Bloom Memorial Endowment Fund\***

Linda & Steve Gilbert *in memory of Pamela Gilbert*  
Pomegranate Guild, Delaware Valley Chapter *in honor of Kol Ami*  
Stephanie & John Riviello *in appreciation of Kol Ami*  
Randi & Alan Salkowitz *in memory of Jane Berezow*  
Sarah & David Zalcmann  
*in appreciation of Cantor Anita Hochman*  
*in appreciation of Sheri Greenblatt*  
*in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Nathan Sacks*  
*in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Maddie Burkett-Cook*

**Refugee Assistance Fund\***

Carolyn & Veniamin Barshay  
*in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world*  
Jonathan Berger *in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world*  
Sharon Cooper *in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world*  
Gail & Dick Donner  
*in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world*  
Bruce Matez *in honor of the marriage of Erica & Richard King's*  
*daughter, Zoe, to Jakob Saidman*  
Nancy & David Oberlander *in memory of Alice Browdy*

Adeline Schultz & James Klein *in honor of Ian Wachstein's birthday*  
Ronna Shusman *in appreciation of Steve Friedman*  
Marsha & Allen Zechowoy *in memory of Max Zechowoy*  
Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein *in honor of the engagement of*  
*Ilyse & Steve Janove's son*

**Stanton Deitch Leadership Fund**

Board of Trustees  
*in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Gillian & Paul Chernin's son, Jaymin*  
*in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Rabbi & Peggy David's*  
*grandson, Jack*  
*in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Rabbi & Peggy David's*  
*grandson, Sammy*

**Thelma & Donald Spivack Creative Arts and  
Artist-in-Residence Endowment Fund\***

Eileen & Robert Elias  
*in honor of the marriage of Erica & Richard King's daughter, Zoe,*  
*to Jakob Saidman*

**Warren & Doris Elias Special Needs Endowment Fund\***

Jane & Daniel Abesh *in memory of Jane Meltzer*  
Ellen & Steven Zinn *in memory of Michael Friedman's mother*

**Yahrzeit Memorial Fund**

Elaine Belson *in memory of Shelly Belson*  
Marilyn & Michael Breggar  
*in memory of Herbert Breggar*  
*in memory of Mildred Breggar*  
Phyllis & Paul Fishbein *in memory of Gloria Fishbein*  
Shirley Frankel *in memory of Clara Halpern*  
Tracy & Harris Goldberg  
*in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
*in memory of Rebecca Kleidermacher*  
Alla & Alex Khazan *in memory of Leonard Khazan*  
Elise Miller  
*in memory of Dr. Sidney Rosenblatt*  
*in memory of Ruth Fuhrman*  
Donna Moshe *in memory of Bernice Wigman*  
Margaret & James Sell *in memory of Elizabeth Sell*  
Marlene Spector & Amy Lipson *in memory of Jean M. Spector*  
Mara & Scott Steele *in memory of Stan Dublet*  
Rolane & Stephen Sunshine  
*in memory of Sam Lichtenfeld*  
*in memory of Sarah Lichtenfeld*  
Wayne Tarken  
*in memory of his loved ones*  
*in memory of those he loved and who loved him*  
Karen Wallenobrien & Don O'Brien *in memory of Anna L.*  
*Wallenobrien, Julie O'Brien, Selma Wallenobrien*  
Judi & David Weinberg  
*in memory of Frederic Weinberg*  
*in memory of Rowena Weinberg*  
Carol & Paul Weller *in memory of Norbert Weller*

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*Funds noted by an asterisk (\*) are restricted funds—that is, contributions are used solely for the fund's stated purpose. Contributions listed are inclusive from the last issue of Connections through November 26, 2025. We apologize for any errors or omissions.*

**You may be right...  
Kol Ami IS the place to be for PURIM!**



**Shushan  
State of Mind**

**SUNDAY MARCH 1**  
Pre-Purim Shpiel performance during Religious School  
**11:30 am - 1:30 pm PURIM CARNIVAL**

**MONDAY MARCH 2**  
Dress in costume and join us for Purim, Pizza & Pop!  
**6:00 pm FAMILY DINNER**  
**7:00 pm FAMILY FUN SERVICE**  
**8:00 pm PURIM SHPIEL**

Carnival tickets, dinner registration & more info coming soon: [www.kolaminj.org](http://www.kolaminj.org)

Congregation Kol Ami 2026

**Tribute Dinner**

honoring

**Eileen & Robert Elias  
Janine & Mark Sobel  
Adam Roth**

for their outstanding and tireless contributions  
to Congregation Kol Ami and our community

Sunday evening  
**April 19, 2026**

Secure your sponsorship now!  
Tickets and Tribute Journal  
opportunities coming soon.

For additional information, contact Jennifer  
Stofman at [ExecutiveDirector@kolaminj.org](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@kolaminj.org),  
call the Kol Ami office at 856-489-0029,  
or visit [www.kolaminj.org/tribute2026](http://www.kolaminj.org/tribute2026).

