



# THE CENTRE CALL

GERMANTOWN JEWISH CENTRE

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## Connecting the Natural and the Human

by Rabbi Adam Zeff

The Bible and the ancient rabbis draw connections between human behavior and the behavior of the natural world that can seem surprisingly direct. In the second paragraph of the Sh'ma, for example, God promises that if humans act according to the

mitzvot then rain, fertile soil, and abundant harvests will follow. But if humans depart from the path that God has laid out for us then God will "close the heavens so that there will be no rain, the land will not yield its produce, and you shall quickly perish on this good earth that God has given to you" (Deuteronomy 11:17).

Conversely, the ancient rabbis teach that if something is going wrong in the natural world – a drought, famine, or plague – the first place to look for explanations is in the human world (see for example Mishnah Ta'anit I). What have humans done that might cause the natural world to act against the regular course of things? And how can human behavior – fasting, repentance, changing our ways – set things once again on the right path?

We see these ideas as strange at least partly because the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries taught people to view the natural world as a separate system from human society, its workings immune from human intervention. After all, could people really affect rainfall or climate, air or water or the fertility of the soil?! Surely large-scale changes to such things were beyond human control. As a result, for example, 18th century Europeans who came to this country didn't worry about planting crops like tobacco that they knew would exhaust the soil within a few years. And 19th century Philadelphians didn't worry about building factories that poured smoke into the air and toxic waste into the Schuylkill River. Surely the earth's bounty was inexhaustible, and there would always be new, fertile land, fresh air, and clean water for humans to take advantage of, no matter how they treated it.

In the 20th century, we learned more and more about the limits of nature's supposed immunity from human

intervention, just as we surpassed every limit we could have imagined on the human ability to despoil nature. It turns out that the water we need to drink, the soil we need to grow crops, the air we need to breathe, and the climate of the earth itself that sustains us are deeply susceptible to the destructive actions of human beings. Today, the viewpoint of the Bible and the ancient rabbis is beginning to make more sense to us. Nature is responding to our departure from the obligation to care for it that is given to us in the Biblical story of creation (Genesis 2), as we see droughts, unseasonal storms, contaminated soil, polluted water, undrinkable water, and a dangerously warming climate threaten our continued existence on this planet. And when we see such things happening, bringing human suffering in their wake, the first thing we have to ask, along with the ancient rabbis, is, "What did we do?" And we need to follow that up by asking how we can change our ways to set things right.

Clearly, there are some things that are out of our control, but there is also so much we can do. As I have said before, although government inaction is frustrating, and the current administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords is disappointing, neither frees us from our obligation to look to ourselves to find ways to fulfill the mitzvah of caring for the earth. We can each look to our own consumption of energy and water, we can band together to demand action on a local and state level, and we can search out methods for integrating consciousness of our effect on the natural world into our everyday lives.

May we learn from the ancient wisdom that the natural and human worlds depend deeply upon each other. And may we act in our time to restore desperately needed balance to our relationship with the earth and all that it contains.

## Welcome to the new Centre Call!

*Germantown Jewish Centre is pleased to present a new and exciting look to the Centre Call, which, as always, continues to highlight the connections we make with one another, and wonderful things we are doing in the world.*



# MAZAL TOV!

## SHABBAT & HOLIDAY CHAI-LITES

### July 1

- Charry Service moves to the Magil Chapel

### July 31

- Erev Tish'ah b'Av Service & Eicha

### August 26

- Charry Service: Mazal Tov to Denis Lattanzi, son of Haviva Goldman & Greg Lattanzi, on becoming Bar Mitzvah

**Kabbalat Shabbat** on Fridays at 6 PM  
(unless otherwise noted)

**Shabbat Morning Services** at 10 AM  
(unless otherwise noted)

### Shabbat Morning Kids Space

Kids are welcome to play Shabbat-friendly games in Room 305 - bring your own and some will be provided. Please respect the space, clean up after yourselves and put all games away after use.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Ruth Rosenthal,**  
a longtime member of GJC

**Stanley Abramowitz,**  
father of Adina Abramowitz

**Janice Florence Dobkin-Kardon,**  
mother of Lou Dobkin, grandmother of Jared

**Leonard Podell,**  
father of David Podell

## PLANNED GIVING & NER TAMID



Remembering Germantown Jewish Centre in your will, a trust, or retirement assets is a meaningful way to ensure that your commitment to our community continues to help our synagogue thrive for generations to come.

For more information on how you can include GJC in your estate plans, please contact Nina Peskin at 215-844-1507 x12

**Sylvia Lifschitz & Mitch Hirsch,** on the engagement of their son Josh to Stacey Snyder

**Susannah Fishman,** daughter of Josh Goldblum & Debbie Fishman, on receiving her Ph.D. in archeology from Penn

**Ned & Karen Kripke,** on the birth of their grandson Jordan Jacob, to Joe Kripke and Stephanie Winheld

**Amira Heep,** daughter of Jeremy Heep, on her Confirmation

**Elisheva Hollo,** daughter of Elana & Juha Hollo, on her Confirmation

**Nayan Klur,** son of Josh Klur & Nilmini Klur, on his Confirmation

**Abigail McCusker Levy,** daughter of Claire McCusker & Jonathan Levy, on her Confirmation

**Caleb Wolf Rudick,** son of Denise Wolf & Paul Rudick, on his Confirmation

**Ayala Silverman,** daughter of Chung Yi Young & Lee Silverman, on her Confirmation

**Jared Taylor,** son of Jessica Baskin Taylor & Thomas Taylor, on his Confirmation

**Avi Wolnek,** son of Rebecca Wolnek & Ivan Wolnek, on his Confirmation

**Rabbi Alanna Sklover & Rebecca Kirzner,** on the birth of their daughter Bina

**Anna Goldberg,** on receiving her Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College in Boston

**Marilyn Klein,** on being honored at the Overbrook School of the Blind

**Herb Levine,** on the publication of his new book, Words For Blessing The World, published by Ben Yehuda Press

**Sophia Gluskin-Braun,** the daughter of Rabbi Shai Gluskin & Sarah Braun, on graduating from Brown University

**Zachary Hahn,** the son of David Hahn & Barbara Weiss, on graduating from Central High School

**Isaac Spear,** the son of Michael & Shelley Spear, on graduating from Central High School

**Ken Weiss,** on his appointment as Robert L. Sadoff Clinical Professor of Forensic Psychology at the University of Penn

**Jake & Linda Kriger,** on the birth of their granddaughter, Kassia Hannah, daughter of Jeremy Kriger & Yoella Epstein

**Anya Friedman Hutter,** daughter of Rabbi Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger, on her graduation from the University of Penn

**Anat Ferleger,** daughter of Rabbi Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger, on her graduation from Delaware Valley Friends School

**Avram Ferleger,** son of Rabbi Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger, on his graduation from Delaware Valley Friends School

**Adam Mermelstein,** son of Andrew & Ellen Mermelstein and grandson of Maurice & Maxine Feldman, on his graduation from Barrack Hebrew Academy and acceptance to Swarthmore University

**Sheldon & Joyce Eveloff,** on the graduation of their grandson, Jeremy Philip Berman, from Germantown Friends School, and his acceptance to Brown University, double-majoring in Math & Classics

## President's Message

by Chip Becker, GJC President



Recently I had the opportunity to visit my alma mater, Williams College, on the occasion of my 25th reunion. Those of you familiar with the school know that Williams is located in the Berkshire Mountains of northwestern Massachusetts and that the outrageous winter cold is more than compensated by the stunning location, especially during fall foliage season when the

Purple Valley is enveloped in red and gold. There is nothing quite like an autumn walk in Hopkins Forest during a light rain, when the fall colors refract through the mist and paint the air itself.

Williams has never been an especially Jewish school. When I was there, about 8-10% of the school was Jewish. The percentage has not changed over the years. What has changed is the vitality of the Jewish community and its visibility at the school. In my time, the focal point of Jewish life at Williams was in a room below the Thompson Chapel – a gorgeous building that today serves as an ecumenical sanctuary but absolutely was built as a church. This basement room was nice enough and actually a pretty fun place to hang out. But the symbolism was unavoidable and the room's limitations obvious to all. So Jewish alumni raised money to fund the construction of a free-standing building that would prominently house Williams' Jewish community and be a center for Jewish life.

The Jewish Religious Center opened in the fall of 1991 during my senior year. Noted for its references to Moorish architecture, the building is visually stunning and must be understood as an emphatic statement by the Williams Jewish alumni of that time about both their commitment to the school and their commitment to ensuring that the Jewish community is recognized and clearly understood as playing an important role in the life of the school.

The building has fulfilled its supporters' intentions and then some. It contains a sanctuary, a library, a lounge area, a dining room, and a kosher kitchen. Because of its versatility and size, all kinds of programs happen there. All kinds of students spend time there, Jewish and otherwise, especially for Shabbat dinners that the students themselves cook. The students run Shabbat services. They run High Holiday services. They hang out and study and play games. There is now a rabbi who supports Jewish life at the school. The building itself has emerged as significant institution in the day-to-day life of the College.

It has matured into a well-established feature of the school's architectural and cultural experience.

Over the last thirty years, the numerical size of the Jewish community at Williams has not changed. But the community is more vital today than it was then. How do we understand this? In our world of electronic media and instant communication, it turns out that there's still nothing like a good old-fashioned brick-and-mortar building to generate and sustain a community of people. That building provides an organizing principle for people's energies and vision. It draws people into itself. Located in the center of campus, it provides casual reminders to people just by its existence. But of course, the building didn't appear magically from the autumn colors. It emerged from the determination of alumni to place Jewish campus life on a stronger footing than they themselves experienced. It is maintained because of school's ongoing commitment that vision, and because of the every-day decisions of students that ratify these continuing investments.

So it is with Germantown Jewish Centre. This synagogue and its dynamic culture illustrate that with all we can do on the internet these days, there is no replacement for face-to-face contact in a building we all can call home. Our commitment to the synagogue, the building, and each other are woven together. The building provides the organizing principle around which the synagogue experience is formed. Even the building's quirks help define the community in its subparts. Consider Dorshei in the Maslow and the outside table where kids read while adults pray, or Masorti in the basement near the playground. The physical spaces where people congregate help define the nature of those communities, their expectations, and rhythms. Nobody today would build a synagogue the way GJC was designed. At the same time, it is hard to envision the GJC community apart from the building in which it lives.

The Jewish Religious Center has become a central part of life at Williams College because it is versatile, accessible, and centrally located. GJC has achieved and sustained even greater prominence in Mount Airy and Northwest Philadelphia for similar reasons. We owe much to those who supported its construction and who have sustained the congregation to this day. It turns out that Northwest Philly is a pretty good place to build a Jewish community. The fall foliage isn't bad either.



## TIKKUN OLAM UPDATE

by Geanne Zerkowitz (GJC member & HAP co-founder)

On May 9, Denise Wolf and Sharon Webber became the first GJC members to volunteer with GJC's new collaboration with the Homeless Advocacy Project (HAP). HAP is a non-profit legal aid program that provides free civil legal assistance to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia. HAP's goal is to remove barriers that prevent homeless people from obtaining and sustaining stable and secure housing. This spring, GJC became the most recent organization to collaborate with HAP and that collaboration is the newest program under the Tikkun Olam umbrella. GJC members who are attorneys are encouraged to consider volunteering at the legal clinics led by HAP, at Stenton Manor, the largest family emergency shelter in Philadelphia. Denise and Sharon volunteered at the May clinic to help meet the needs of homeless women and children living at Stenton Manor.

"Attending the clinic was a very positive experience," Denise said. "I learned a lot and it felt good to provide some assistance to the women at Stenton." Although neither Denise, a criminal prosecutor, nor Sharon, a telecommunications lawyer, has a background in poverty law, they both felt comfortable dealing with the issues they encountered at Stenton because of the guidance and support provided by the HAP staff.

Denise met with a woman who needed birth certificates for herself and her children. While obtaining birth certificates is not a complicated legal task, it is a very important one. Government-issued identification is essential in order for homeless people to access the programs established to assist them in overcoming homelessness. But, because of living on the street, or because of the circumstances that caused them to become homeless, many homeless people have no identification. The process of obtaining any new identification begins with a birth certificate — but people can't get their birth certificates without identification! Attorneys can break through this "Catch-22" and obtain a birth certificate for a client based on the attorney's own identification, rather than the client's.

Denise also met with a second woman who came to the clinic for a birth certificate. Her careful interviewing revealed that the client also had a child custody issue that HAP could help with.

Sharon met with two clients, one needing a birth certificate and the second with a credit issue. HAP attorneys guided Sharon's first step to obtain a credit



*Sharon Webber works with a client at HAP clinic*

report in order to determine the scope of the client's problem.

Homeless clients may present a greater than usual challenge for their attorneys because they often lack even the simplest resources to deal with their legal issues. Denise noted that some of the women at Stenton didn't even have phones, making it more difficult to stay in touch. The problems, however, were small when compared with the clients' gratitude. "The clients," Sharon said, "were so very grateful, just for our being there."

### **HAP Was Founded in 1990**

HAP was founded in 1990 by a group of lawyers concerned about Philadelphia's growing homeless population. HAP's founders believed that homeless people have unique and complex legal problems that were often not being met by traditional providers of legal services to the poor. Homeless individuals lead transient, unstable lives, and are often debilitated by mental illness, substance abuse and inadequate education. They frequently lack an understanding of their legal rights and the ability to make use of more traditional providers of legal services that are available to assist them. Living in crisis, often without income or resources, homeless people are less able than other indigent clients, to use Center City-based legal services programs.

To address these problems, HAP's founders created an organization that would bring legal services directly to the homeless in the places where they live and eat. Since its inception, HAP has conducted legal clinics in shelters and soup kitchens throughout Philadelphia. By recruiting and training volunteer attorneys to staff these clinics, HAP is

## TIKKUN OLAM UPDATE (continued)

able to provide free legal counseling and representation to the homeless population. HAP holds over 125 legal clinics and serves approximately 3000 people experiencing homelessness each year.

### Volunteering is Easy

Stenton Manor, located at 1300 East Tulpehocken Street, is a perfect match for GJC volunteers. Sharon noted that "volunteer attorneys could attend a legal clinic on their way home to dinner."

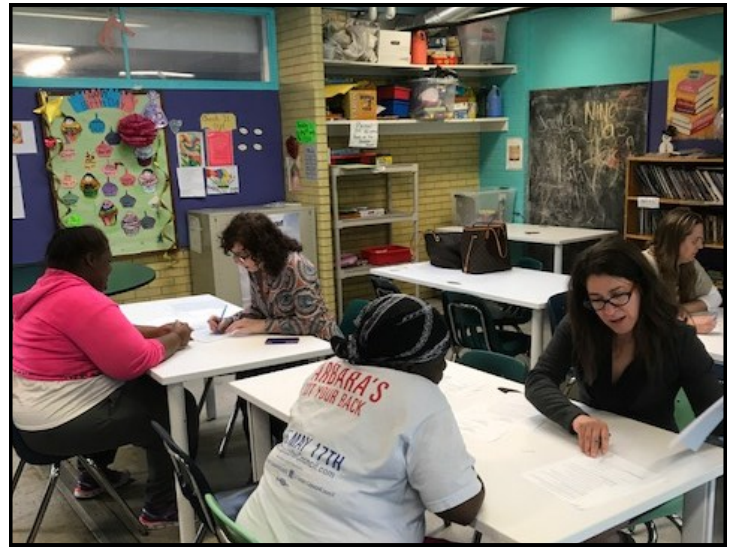
New volunteer attorneys attend a HAP orientation prior to their first clinic visit. HAP staff attend the clinics and are available to assist volunteers throughout the course of every representation. The clinic at Stenton Manor is supervised by HAP's Executive Director, Marsha Cohen.

Sharon Webber plans to keep attending the legal clinics. She hopes that additional GJC lawyers will volunteer at the clinics. "I would encourage more GJC lawyers to get involved. No lawyer should be reluctant to volunteer because they haven't dealt with these issues. HAP holds your hand every step of the way." Denise also plans to return. "It's so rewarding. You get so much bang for your buck."

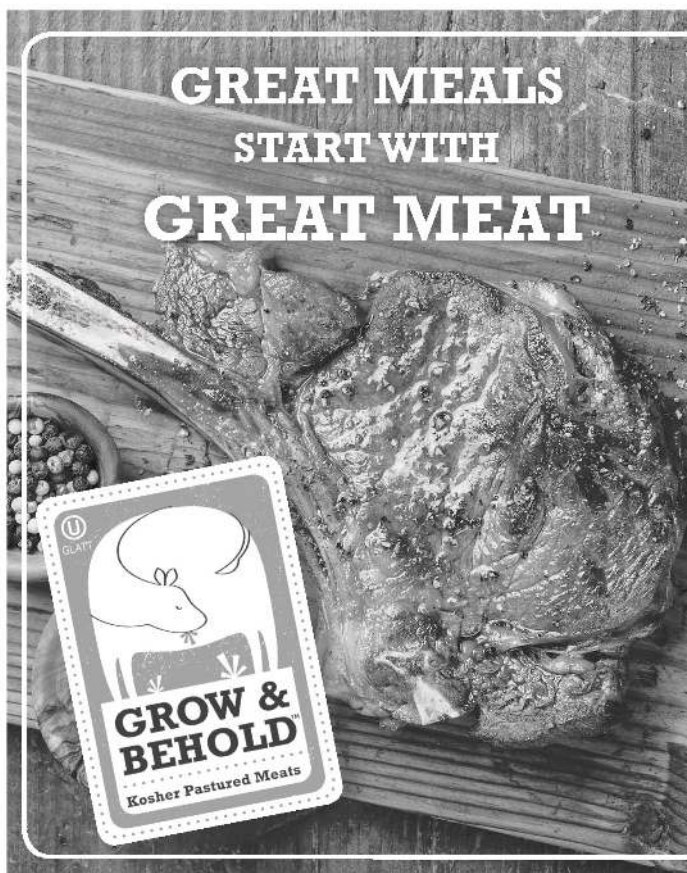
HAP holds a clinic at Stenton four times a year from 6:00

to 7:00 p.m. The next two clinics will be on Tuesday evenings, July 11 and October 10. While participation in the program is limited to lawyers, the Tikkun Olam Coordinating Team hopes that GJC's new relationship with Stenton Manor will provide opportunities for other GJC members to work with Stenton Manor to help support homeless women and children.

For further information, contact Geanne Zelkowitz at 215.242.4861 or at [gzelkowitz@verizon.net](mailto:gzelkowitz@verizon.net).



*Denise Wolf working with a client at HAP clinic*



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**(& TANI!) DR. NEYSA NEVINS &  
RABBI MALKAH BINAH KLEIN**

Neysa Nevins, 50, and Malkah Binah (Melissa) Klein, 44, are regulars at Dorshei Derech, and in 2002 were the first gay couple to be married at Germantown Jewish Centre.

Neysa was born in D.C. while her dad worked at George Washington University, and moved to Framingham MA at age 6, when her dad did research at MIT (Mitch Marcus, another Dorshei stalwart and former president of GJC was a grad student there at the same time). After her father took a teaching post at Georgia State University in Stone Mountain, the family went there.

Neysa's parents didn't join a synagogue when they first moved to Georgia but were moved to do so when Neysa's best friend, a Southern Baptist, told her she'd go to hell because she didn't believe in Jesus' divinity. "Two weeks later I was in Hebrew school" where she had a hard time fitting in. "I had to wear a dress and hose and I hated that," Neysa recalled. "I was a nerdy, socially awkward, shy kid. I wasn't part of the Jewish community."

Neysa took her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, where she discovered computational chemistry. She was excited about this emerging field, but felt family pressure to go medical school. She spent two years at Emory University Medical School in Atlanta. "My grandmother thought I should be a doctor," she said with a wry smile. "I knew the first day there I didn't want to be a doctor. I was miserable."

Neysa went back to the University of Georgia to get her doctorate, focusing on computational chemistry, followed by a post-doc at Emory. "I was also kicking the can down the road so I could get the social skills I'd need to go out into the world, so I would be strong enough to fly away." She was in her late 20s and living with her parents.

Regarding her sexuality, "I'd talked about it and my parents said, 'You're confused,' and her sister, 3 ½ years younger, said, 'Why aren't you dating women?'" Neysa recalled. "I had no idea what you did to start. No one talked about it."

By now understanding that her daughter was a lesbian, Neysa's mom told her about a gay and lesbian synagogue in Atlanta. "Turns out it is Reconstructionist," Neysa said. "This is 1994. It's lay led. I wanted to meet somebody." She didn't, but Neysa became secretary of the synagogue board, installed a listserv, a new technology in 1995 and a

synagogue website.

Neysa stayed at Emory for four years. She took six months off to travel in Israel, came back, and continued her post doc for another nine months before leaving. She then decided to do a sabbatical leave replacement and, at Elizabethtown College in Lancaster County, found a position as a physical chemistry professor.



"Other than sleeping, I was mostly working," she said. Still, she connected with Chisuk Emunah, a traditional synagogue in Harrisburg, which felt comfortable and welcoming.

Extending her stay at Elizabethtown for another year, Neysa moved to Harrisburg so she could walk to synagogue. "People were trying to set me up with their brothers and I explained that I'm a lesbian and if they want to set me up with their sisters..." Neysa said. A mutual friend introduced her to Malkah Binah, then known as Melissa. "I asked about her and they told me she was a rabbinical student and had been a chemistry major." They met at the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation convention in November of 2000 and the next July, Neysa moved to Philadelphia. She works for GlaxoSmithKline and is the listserv coordinator for Dorshei Derech.

Malkah Binah was born in New York City but grew up in Los Alamos, New Mexico, where her father was a scientist at the national lab. She has a brother, two years older. She attended public schools and Harvard, where she majored in chemistry and physics.

"I grew up in a town of scientists," she explained. "It was the whole culture. Judy Blume lived on my street when I was young and wrote a book called Tiger Eyes that talks about the pressures of growing up in Los Alamos." It was expected that she would carry on the scientific tradition.

"We had a special Jewish community: being isolated high in the mountains, Orthodox and interfaith families belonged to the one synagogue. This has affected my vision for Jewish community in powerful ways," she said. "I trust that we can come together beyond our differences. There's a rich opportunity for connection."

Malkah Binah graduated college in three years and then

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (continued)

spent two years in Israel from 1993-5, where she learned Talmud at Pardes. In Israel, at age 21, she realized she was a lesbian. She then moved to Boston, where she worked in Jewish education at the Bronfman Foundation and at the New Jewish High School, now known as the Gann Academy. She also worked at a research unit in a psychiatric hospital.

She had applied to medical school, but did not want to be a doctor. (Sound familiar?) "I'd wanted to be a rabbi since I was a teenager," she continued. "Meaning-making was what was compelling to me. It was very hard for my father and my mother's mother, both first generation Americans, to understand how a nice Jewish girl with great career potential could want to be a rabbi."

She applied to RRC. "I was not yet out" as a lesbian, she recalled. "RRC was a place where I found my voice: it was a very positive experience and an opportunity to learn from the first generation of women rabbis who had paved the way for my generation. Near the end of schooling I started working as a congregational rabbi in Allentown," she continued. "We moved there for two years and Tani," their son, 10, "was born there." She served Congregation Am Haskalah for seven years and was also the first woman rabbi to serve as the chair of the Jewish Clergy Group of the Lehigh Valley.

When Neysa decided to move in with Malkah Binah in the summer of 2000, they had a low-key ceremony in Harrisburg. "I'm actually very traditional," Malkah Binah said. "I wasn't going to have Neysa move in without sanctifying our relationship. We got rings and created a brit ahuvot ceremony drawn from Rachel Adler's book *Engendering Judaism*. Neysa pushed to have a wedding a year later because she wanted to give her parents the opportunity to celebrate.

"The wedding was very important to normalize our relationship," Neysa said. "My parents were so thrilled I met Malkah Binah" and "from the moment they met Neysa, they loved her." Malkah Binah added, "we decided to hold our wedding at GJC, where my rabbinical school friends Miriam Hyman and Mike Fessler had recently been married. But then we discovered that there had never been a gay wedding at Germantown or at any other Conservative synagogue in Philadelphia and the answer wasn't necessarily an automatic yes.

"We went to Lenny (Gordon)," she continued. "He explained to us his understanding of Conservative halacha (law)," which did not officially prohibit gay weddings. "He and the religious committee, which was co-chaired by

Mitch Marcus, were grateful for our query, and we got a call about a month after we met with the rabbi saying that we were welcome to celebrate our wedding at GJC."

Their wedding, on June 2, 2002, with 180 people, "was so beautiful," said Malkah Binah. "Our parents joyfully walked us down the aisle." Malkah Binah's teacher from rabbinical school, Rabbi Linda Holtzman, conducted the wedding. "Before we walked down the aisle, we stood on the stairs by the Charry lobby, Malkah Binah standing one step above so we could look into each other's eyes. Neysa is almost a foot taller than I. There was a lot of dancing," she continued. "We feel incredibly grateful to GJC for hosting this beautiful day and on our 10th anniversary we hosted a Kiddush for the whole shul." Eleven years after their Jewish wedding at GJC, same-sex marriage became legal. Their third ceremony, this time to sign the marriage license, took place at KlezKamp in the Catskills, also with a lot of dancing.

At GJC, Malkah Binah worked with Rabbi Zeff to create a Jewish healing service. She helped the leadership of Women's Club start the "Sharing our Stories/Sharing our Lives" series. This year, she has been leading Kol D'mamah, a community for contemplative practice, which includes a new Jewish meditation group in the Quitman Library Tuesday mornings at 9 am.

She has been on the Presser Shabbat Committee at Dorshei, which organizes an annual social justice program. She does "spiritual activism" as co-chair of the Philadelphia Chapter of PA IPL, an interfaith organization devoted to lifting up climate change as an urgent moral issue. She was on the planning committee for this year's GJC family retreat, which her family has attended the past seven years.

When she was born, she said, her parents gave her the names Malkah Binah and Melissa Beth. "When I hit my 39th birthday, I decided to embrace Malkah Binah, queen of wisdom. I had this resistance to stepping into that name. It felt too big, but I think the world needs us to be our brightest selves."

Malkah Binah said she is grateful to be in community at GJC with "such an inspiring, thoughtful, creative, and justice-seeking group of people." Neysa noted that she feels "fortunate to be part of the web of GJC community, to move with ease amongst the minyanim and through the hallways and spaces of the building. Most importantly for the friendship and support of members, staff and rabbis who day-to-day create a spiritual space for us to worship and hang out together."



## WOMEN'S CLUB

*Women's Club Annual Torah Fund Brunch honoring Dena Lake*



*Israeli Shopping & Dinner outing at My Little Redemption*





## WOMEN'S CLUB

by Sandy Meyer, Marcy Fish (outgoing co-president), and Vilma Lieberman (incoming co-president)

Though Marcy Fish's tenure as a Women's Club co-president has come to an end, she will never be far away. Seems all of the past presidents stay close! Women's Club is one of the communities at GJC with which you choose to stay connected. Sandy Meyer continues for another year, and Vilma Lieberman joins Sandy as co-president. Many other people stand at the ready to do their part, volunteer, support activities, or just join the fun!

The Torah Fund Brunch honoring Dena Lake was once again a successful and enjoyable event while supporting women's education at JTS. We will miss using Kathy and George Amron's home for this event as they will be moving next year. We thank them for their generosity and graciousness over the past several years.

Some people seem to think the Women's Club only asks for money. True, Women's Club raises funds for the Centre. Fact: Each year, Women's Club raises \$25K for the operating budget, \$18K to the Religious School, and varying amounts for Building Beautiful projects. That is hardly the whole story! True, The Little Shop is a fundraiser. Fact: it is also a service to the community! A place to purchase gifts, wine, Judaica, books. We have one of the best synagogue gift shops in the Philadelphia area! The Purim Bash is a fund-raiser. Fact: the Purim Bash is also a

party! People from all of the GJC communities come to have fun, eat, laugh, drink, dance, and eat some more! Fact: Women's Club provides holiday-related treats for the Religious School, ECP and college students. We provide the Tanakhim for the confirmands. Fact: WC helps sponsor the Rosh Hashanah Kiddush. Fact: throughout the calendar year, Women's Club sponsors and organizes (sometimes alone, sometimes in cooperation with other groups) panel discussions, outside entertainment, trips, theater excursions, and shopping events. And so much more! No alternative facts here!

Women's Club is a vibrant, active, supportive group of women. The simple act of joining helps to support everything we do. Then you get to pick and choose what appeals to you. PLEASE JOIN!

The first WC event of the fall will be our annual Walk in the Wissahickon on Sunday, September 17th. The first board meeting will be Wednesday evening, September 13th, at the Centre. All board meetings are open! Come to a meeting. Shop at the Little Shop (TLS will only be open on Wednesdays and Fridays from noon until 5 through the summer). Come to programs, and support this awesome place we call home!

### *The Humans of* **THE LITTLE SHOP**



Hillary Kruger "supports our synagogue one gift at a time." She appreciates the excellent assistance from Leslie, Marcy, Connie and Marilyn about fashionable accessories and wine selection.

#### Summer Hours

Wed-Fri 12-3 pm

**Summer 10% Sale  
at all times**



Haviva Goldman always likes to browse and check out the items featured in the center display.

## NEWS FROM HAZAK (55+ programming)

by Helen Feinberg & Coleman Poses (HAZAK co-chairs)

HAZAK concluded the program year with several memorable events. On April 26, we went to the LaSalle Art Museum, a closely-held secret gem in Philadelphia's art world. This one-floor museum, housed in Olney Hall on LaSalle's campus, contains several centuries' worth of fine paintings, arranged by century. Our excellent guide, Miranda Clark-Binder, warned us of her tendency to talk about the works in the collection, and she did not disappoint! Fortunately, her knowledge and presentation only enhanced the experience. For those wishing to go, the museum is open on weekdays from 10am to 5 pm and admission is free...definitely worth another visit! And after the museum, we enjoyed lunch at In Riva. The food was good and the company was terrific!

Our annual HAZAK Shabbat, held on May 6, provided the opportunity for our members to participate and be recognized and honored for all they have done during the past years. Our guest speaker Milt Cohen, story-teller extraordinaire, engaged us with the classic story "Challahs in the Ark," and we enjoyed a delicious kiddush lunch with time to socialize.

Our film series concluded with the showing of "Defiant Requiem" on May 17. This 2012 documentary tells the interwoven story of Rafael Schaechter, a young Czech musician who was imprisoned at the Terezin concentration camp, who managed to train a chorus of prisoners to sing Verdi's Requiem for audiences who came into



Theresienstadt (the concentration camp was miraculously and falsely transformed into a "city" for outsiders to see), and Murry Sidlin, an American conductor who brought an orchestra and choir to the original Terezin performance space in 2006 to recreate the performance of Verdi's Requiem. Sam Feinberg, our resident opera and music scholar, prepared us for what we would see. It was an extraordinarily moving film that we were privileged to watch together.

Please keep a lookout for our annual "Opera Under the Stars" evening, which should be sometime in August! Have a great summer!



### DID YOU KNOW?

HAZAK programs are planned for those age 55+, and are geared to both reflect common interests and get us to "stretch" to try new activities as well. Our well-attended book group meets monthly all year long. HAZAK also sponsors book talks by local authors, as well as speakers on topics of particular importance to our interests. We host Sam Feinberg each August to discuss opera, and we show great films! We also take day trips to cultural and natural sites in the area, often to places members have never been.

HAZAK is for all of us to stay connected to GJC and to each other: to venture out and experience parts of our city we haven't seen before, to read, learn and talk together, to keep us strong. We hope you will join us. Membership is \$10/year.

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## GJC's EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (ECP)

The ECP has been buzzing with energy this spring! We ended a fabulous school year with an imaginary trip to Israel in honor of Israel's birthday. We visited Jerusalem, Zfat, Eilat, and concluded our trip in Tel Aviv visiting a Shuk and Café. We also enjoyed celebrating the end of the school year with our Moving Up Ceremony and Pot Luck Dinner. A fabulous time was had by all. We wish everyone a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing everyone in the Fall! Happy Summer!



### DID YOU KNOW?

ECP is a special place for young children from 6 months of age through 5 years of age and for their families. Through the lens of Jewish culture and tradition, our children learn about themselves, and the world around them in a program which emphasizes learning through doing. The Early Childhood Program nurtures and respects individuality, while encouraging the children to develop a sense of community and friendship. Our talented, dedicated, professional staff provides age-appropriate activities that stimulate the development of the whole child in a warm and creative environment.

The preschool follows the yearly cycle of the Jewish holidays. Jewish culture, traditions, and values are woven into our curriculum. Through Mitzvot (commandments), Tzedakah (charity) and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), the children learn to respect themselves, others and the world they live in. We are committed to teaching and promoting respect and understanding of all persons.

Our program stresses "learning through doing" using a multisensory approach and emphasizes the importance of play. We understand that children's work is play. The teachers utilize many learning styles to engage the children and allow for individual differences. Through this approach the staff assists in the development of cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical skills.

Germantown Jewish Centre's Early Childhood Program is open to all!

## GJC YOUNG FAMILIES RETREAT

The seventh annual GJC Young Families Retreat took place in May at the Malvern Retreat Center. It was our largest gathering yet: 109 GJC members, ages six months and up, spent the weekend together celebrating Shabbat and our community. We enjoyed particularly beautiful music -- thanks to many talented musicians -- and activities as varied as family contra dancing, a discussion about "Getting ourselves ready to parent Jewish teens - with open eyes and hearts," and frisbee in the rain. As one parent commented afterward, "The kids bond, the parents bond, and everyone gets to be in a community of families for an extended period of time ... it really does feel like a village." We are already looking ahead to 2018!



## Religious School News

Mazal tov to Rabbi Alanna Sklover, Director of Lifelong Learning, and Rebecca Kirzner, on the birth of their daughter, Bina Yael Sklover Kirzner.



## ISRAELI DANCING

**Wednesdays 7-9 PM**  
**July 19th – August 23rd**

Taught by our wonderful, experienced dance teacher, Grant Shulman, GJC's Israeli dance group welcomes dancers of all ages and levels. We begin each session with 45 minutes of beginner dances, followed by instruction, review, open dancing and requests with increasing levels of difficulty. GJC's dance group is proud to be friendly and inclusive. For more information, contact Tamar Magdovitz at [tamarmagdovitz@gmail.com](mailto:tamarmagdovitz@gmail.com).



## WELCOME BACK!

returning member  
**Penina Hoffnung**

## TODAH RABBAH

"The humblest of stones has become the chief cornerstone." [*Rosh Pinah*] (Psalm 118:22)

GJC expresses its deep gratitude for the generous support of its congregants who have chosen the Rosh Pinah (Cornerstone) level of membership. Their contribution provides crucial support, enabling us to serve the entire GJC community. We cannot adequately thank the following members for their commitment to Germantown Jewish Centre:

Marcy & Dan Bacine  
Jane & Richard Baron  
Marta & Chip Becker  
Michael Beer  
Peninah & Albert Berdugo  
Harold Berger  
Dveera Segal & Brad Bridge  
Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger  
Sarah Braun & Shai Gluskin  
Myra & Gert Jacobsohn  
Linda & Jake Kriger  
Barbara Jaffe & Howard Langer  
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Barbara & Dick Menin  
Cyrilla Rosen  
Allyson & David Schwartz  
Denise Scott Brown & Robert Venturi  
Patty & Steve Segal  
Stefanie & Alex Seldin  
Jessica & Mathieu Shapiro  
Betsy & David Teutsch

## CORRECTION TO GJC ALUMNI COLUMN

There is no GJC alumni column this issue, but we apologize for misspelling our contributor's name in the May issue of The Centre Call. The correct spelling is Molly Bernstein.



## NEDIVOT LEV (Offerings of the Heart)

by Linda Kriger

Two years ago, when Deborah Julie Franklin's 5-year-old son, Edward, was in the Early Childhood Program (ECP) at Germantown, an incident in the classroom highlighted for her the need for specialized teacher training to handle sticky situations: A classmate who was holding a stuffed penguin that Edward wanted, told him he couldn't have it until his face turned white. "He was clearly distressed but couldn't tell me what happened," Deborah recalled. "The teacher said, 'But the President has a brown face,'" which was a wonderful answer.

"It was very nicely handled by the staff, but it was our first experience," Deborah recalled. "Had it happened out of the window of a passing car, I wouldn't have thought about it. The fact that it happened in my synagogue was a wakeup call. This is our truly lovely community, and I'm truly grateful it happened here," she continued. "If it had been anywhere else I'd have said, 'Oh, it's those people.' But it wasn't those people. I understood how much goes into raising little people."

Deborah approached Nina Peskin, GJC's executive director, and Jodi Gordon, ECP's director, with an idea for diversity training for ECP's teachers and staff. The first year they used a program developed by the Anti-Defamation League to provide anti-bias training to GJC's early childhood educators. "With Jodi and Nina's help, it has become more about professional development, not necessarily limited to race issues," Deborah said.

ECP achieves diversity in different forms. GJC member families are diverse with multiple nationalities, family structures and special needs. Since the program has a good reputation, non-Jewish neighborhood families often enroll their children and add to the cultural mix.

Edward is now seven and attends GJC's Religious School. "There's never been an incident like that again," Deborah noted. "He goes to GFS, and we live in a proverbial bubble...but occasionally kids look at us and ask, 'Are you his mom?' I answer, 'There are many ways to make a family.'"

"After Deborah offered to fund anti-bias professional development," said Nina Peskin, "her gift enhanced the professional experience of our teachers and the learning experience of our children. It helped shape the growing experience of our youngest members so that they view these matters more thoughtfully and with an open mind. It makes a difference in our corner of the world. I am so grateful to Deborah for her support."

ex. 25:1-2 ~ Adonai spoke to Moses saying: Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for me from every person whose heart so moves him.

To build the sacred space of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, each of the Israelites brought an offering of their heart. Each issue, we will highlight how members of our community are bringing their offerings of the heart to build and enrich the sacred space of our community.

Jodi Gordon agreed. "I feel that the extensive anti-bias and diversity training given to our teaching staff has now permeated into each classroom. It has developed a filter through which the teachers plan, implement, and evaluate all materials, activities, and interactions with children, parents, and staff. The Franklin Family Professional Fund has truly been a wonderful gift that keeps on giving."

Deborah's intention is to fund the professional training for a while longer, in the hope that additional people will join in. This would enable the program to continue strengthening ECP's ability to address the many social challenges children will encounter, including race, disability, mental illness, gender, xenophobia, and religious prejudice. Deborah believes in the importance of helping the dedicated people who care for and guide our community's children to expand these skills.



*ECP teachers participating in Jewish Learning Venture training on creating a classroom library reflecting diversity in literature.*



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# TODAH RABBAH

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Sincere thanks and appreciation to those who remember to honor their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.

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Adult Education Fund	Hillary & Judd Kruger Levingston	in appreciation of Allen Gottlieb
	Jill Nissen	in appreciation of Elena & Rob Emas
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Camp Scholarships Fund	Yael & David Moses	in memory of David Schick, father
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	Ellen Ufberg	in memory of Irving Spivack, father
Chesed Fund	Jordan Spivack	in memory of Pearl Axelrod, mother
Dorshei Derekh	Ed & Dena Lake	in memory of Irving Spivack, father
	Barbara Pearson	in memory of Stanley Abramowitz, father of Adina Abramowitz
Early Childhood Program Fund	Richard Bazelon	in memory of Frank Wundohl, father
	Beth Rosenbaum & Noel Eisenstat	in memory of Miriam Bazelon Knox, mother
		in honor of Aryeh & Reena Friedman, on the wedding of their daughter, Tamar, to Aaron Wilson
		in memory of Dvora Friedman, mother of Aryeh Friedman
		in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
		in honor of Michael Masch & Rachel Falkove, on the wedding of their son, Solomon
		in honor of Jake & Linda Kriger, on the birth of their new granddaughter
		in honor of Sam & Connie Katz, on the birth of their new granddaughter
	Maurice & Maxine Feldman	in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
	Marcia Garland	in honor of Ned and Karen Kripke
	Diane Ajl & Neil Kitrosser	in honor of Connie & Sam Katz, on the birth of their granddaughter
		in honor of Linda & Jake Kriger, on the birth of their granddaughter
	Louise Leibowitz	in memory of Jack Leibowitz, father
	Lois Robbins	in memory of Melvin Polak, father
Floral Fund	Joan Silver	in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
	Bev & Ira Somerson	in honor of Rabbi Alanna Sklover & Rebecca Kirzner, on the birth of their daughter
General Fund	Evelyn Caplin	in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
	Naomi Adelman	in memory of Dora Nierenberg, mother
	Glenn & Kathi Barkan	in memory of Ruth Rosenthal, a long-time member of GJC
	Lawrence Charap	in honor of Rabbi Adam Zeff
	Arnold Eiser	in memory of Stanley Charap, father
	Mikael Elsila & Dina Pinsky	in honor of Kol D'mamah
		in memory of Stanley Abramowitz, father of Adina Abramowitz
		in honor of David & Betsy Teutsch, on the wedding of their daughter, Nomi, to Micah Weiss
	Stuary & Shari (Stoltz) Feldman	refuah shleimah to Brad Stoltz, for a full and complete recovery
	Aaron Finestone & Patricia Wright	in memory of Margalit Berdugo, mother of Albert Berdugo
	Aryeh & Reena Friedman	in memory of Margalit Berdugo, mother of Albert Berdugo

## Contributions *continued*

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		in memory of Jerold G. Klevit, brother
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		in memory of Richard Rosenbaum, father of Beth Rosenbaum
		in honor of Aryeh & Reena Friedman, on the marriage of their daughter, Tamar, to Aaron Wilson
		in memory of Shirley Spicehandler, mother of Rabbi Reena Spicehandler
		in memory of Stephen P. Cohen, father of Tamara Cohen
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		in memory of Linda Joyce Zion, mother of Adam Zion
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		in honor of Rabbi Alanna Sklover
	Barbara Menin	in memory of Mildred Lance, mother
	Jim & Sandy Meyer	in honor of Ned & Karen Kripke, on the birth of their new grandson
	Maria Pulzetti	in appreciation of Rabbi Adam Zeff
		in appreciation of Rabbi Annie Lewis
		in appreciation of Rabbi Tamara Cohen
	Pace & Mary Lou Reich	in memory of Ruth Rosenthal, a long-time member of GJC
	Patricia Segal	in memory of Benjamin Bateman, father
	Beth Stearman	in memory of Al Denniberg, grandfather
	Chuck & Eileen Steinberg Dwell	in honor of Dan Bacine, on his special birthday
	Carol Wernick & Family	in memory of Ruth Rosenthal, a long-time member of GJC
Hazak Fund	Sonia Dishler	in memory of Isaac Feinberg, father
	Helen & Michael Feinberg	in honor of Chuck & Martha Schleifer, on their 50th wedding anniversary
		in memory of Stanley Abramowitz, father of Adina Abramowitz
Interfaith Hospitality Network Fund		in honor of David & Betsy Teutsch, on the wedding of their daughter, Nomi, to Micah Weiss
	Jim & Sandy Meyer	in honor of Paul Minkoff, on his special birthday
	Louie Asher	in memory of Rhea Asher, mother-in-law
		in memory of Maurice Asher, father-in-law
		in memory of Steven Asher, husband
	Ken & Ellie Batchelder	in memory of Ruth Rosenthal, a long-time member of GJC
	Howard & Yona Diamond Dansky	in honor of Michael Masch & Rachel Falkove, on the wedding of their son, Solomon
	William Kavesh	in memory of Max and Miriam Kavesh, parents
	Norman & Adina Newberg	in memory of Saul Spodek, brother of Howard Spodek
	Frieda Sanders	in memory of Abraham Goldenberg, brother
		in memory of Charles Wasserberg, uncle
	Howard Spodek	in memory of Yetta Spodek, mother
	Ellen Ufberg	in memory of William Axelrod, father
	Geanne Zolkowitz	in memory of Edward Kulberg, father
Israel Affairs Fund	Yona Diamond Dansky	in memory of William Diamond, father
	Cyrilla Rosen	in memory of Abram Gaber
	Judy Schwartz	in memory of Ida G. Prager, mother



## Contributions *continued*

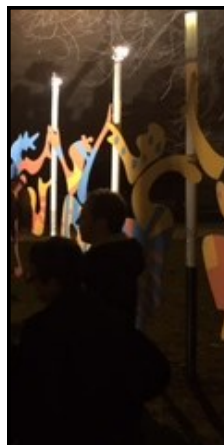
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Israel Affairs Fund	Judy Schwartz & Jay Seitchik	in honor of Paul Minkoff, on his special birthday
Israel Garden Fund	Sheila Erlbaum	in memory of Nathan Erlbaum, brother
	Norman & Adina Newberg	in memory of Margalit Berdugo, mother of Albert Berdugo
Kiddush Fund	Richard Menin	in memory of Irvin Menin, uncle
	Bev & Ira Somerson	refuah shleimah to Debbie Stern, for a full and complete recovery
	Joan W. Stern	in memory of Ruth Winderman, mother
		in memory of Frances Winderman, aunt
Library Fund	Nancy Fredland	in memory of Beth Wiener, mother
Minyan Masorti	Beth David Reform Congregation	in honor of Ned & Karen Kripke, on the birth of their new grandson
Memorial Shabbat Fund	Wendy Weingarten	in memory of Robert M. Traub, father
Music Fund	Evelyn Caplin	in memory of Sophie Barash, aunt
	JoAnn & Ted Erfer	in honor of Chuck & Martha Schleifer, on their 50th wedding anniversary
	Maurice & Maxine Feldman	in honor of Chuck & Martha Schleifer, on their 50th wedding anniversary
	Jonathan Moselle	in memory of Claire Moselle, mother
	Norman & Adina Newberg	in honor of Aryeh & Reena Friedman, on the wedding of their daughter, Tamar, to Aaron Wilson
	Norman & Adina Newberg	in honor of Jake & Linda Kriger, on the birth of their new granddaughter
	Martha Schleifer	in memory of Esther Myers, aunt
Playground Fund	Mitchell Berk & Beth Stearman	in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
Prayerbook & Ritual	Evelyn Caplin	in memory of Herbert Caplin, husband
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Rabbi Zeff's	Diane Ajl	in memory of Samuel Ajl, father
Discretionary Fund	Chip Becker	in memory of Edward Becker, father
	Meryl Bonderow	in memory of Ida Rosenbloom, grandmother
		in memory of Helene Bonderow, mother
	Shirley Chalick	in honor of Marty & Carol Kaplan, for their generosity, dedication, and of Judaism and GJC
	Nini Engel	in memory of Barney Engel, father
	Maxine Feldman	in memory of Annetta Satkin, sister
		in memory of Fannie Berger, mother
	Allen Gottlieb & Ellen Fleishman	in honor of Benji Axelrod, son of David Axelrod & Keira Chism Axelrod, on his Bar Mitzvah
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	Neil Kitrosser	in memory of Beatrice Kitrosser, mother
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	Lauren Rich Scribner	in memory of Richard Rosenbaum, father of Beth Rosenbaum
	Joan Silver	in honor of Marcy Landesberg, on her goth birthday
	Joan N. Stern	in memory of Clarence Stern, father
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Religious School Fund	Maurice & Maxine Feldman	in honor of Rabbi Alanna Sklover & Rebecca Kirzner, on the birth of their daughter
	Hillary & Judd Kruger Levingston	in honor of Isaac Spear, son of Michael & Shelley Spear, on his graduation from Central High School and matriculation at the University of Penn
		in honor of Zachary Hahn, son of David Hahn & Barbara Weiss, on his graduation from Central High School
		in honor of Adam Mermelstein, son of Andrew & Ellen Mermelstein, on his graduation from Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy
	Latifa DiPaolo McLeary	in honor of Religious School Staff
	Judy Schwartz & Jay Seitchik	in honor of Rabbi Sklover & Rebecca Kirzner, on the birth of their daughter

## Contributions *continued*

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Religious School Fund	Jordan Spivack	in memory of Irving Spivack, father
Special Education Fund	Norman & Adina Newberg	in honor of Sam & Connie Katz, on the birth of their new granddaughter
Spring Fundraiser	Avi & Naomi Decter	in honor of Barb & Dick Menin, on being GJC's annual spring fundraiser honorees
	Linda Cherkas & Chaim Dworkin	in honor of Barb & Dick Menin, on being GJC's annual spring fundraiser honorees
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	David & Betty Ann Fellner	in honor of Benji Axelrod, son of David Axelrod & Keira Chism Axelrod, on his Bar Mitzvah
		in honor of Caleb Shapiro-Mendelsohn, son of Alan Mendelsohn & Mindy Shapiro, on his Bar Mitzvah
		in honor of Elayne Blender, on her special birthday
	Lynne Jacobs	in memory of Dora Jacobs, mother
	Richard & Alice Mandel	in memory of Lucille B. and Henry S. Mandel, parents
	Norman & Adina Newberg	in memory of Gisha L. Berkowitz, a long-time member of GJC
		in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
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Torah Restoration Fund	Rosalie & Sidney August	in memory of Esther Reich, mother of Morris Reich
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		in memory of Dvora Friedman, mother of Aryeh Friedman
	Maurice & Maxine Feldman	in honor of Dena Lake, for being honored at this year's Torah Fund Brunch
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		refuah shleimah to Debbie Stern, for a speedy recovery
		in honor of Chuck & Martha Schleifer, on their 50th wedding anniversary
Women's Club	Berel & Susan Sternthal	in honor of Ed & Dena Lake, grandparents of Clara Phillippe
	Lana & Bernie Dishler	in honor of Marcy Landesberg, on her goth birthday
	David & Betty Ann Fellner	in honor of Kathy Amrom, for her generosity of home and heart
		in honor of Dena Lake, for her enthusiasm and work for GJC's Women's Club
	Frances Gold	in memory of Gertrude Meloff, sister
		in memory of Arthur Auerbach, cousin
	Jim & Sandy Meyer	in honor of Sam & Connie Katz, on the birth of their new granddaughter
	Linda & Jeffrey Needleman	in honor of Sam & Connie Katz, on the birth of their new granddaughter
		in honor of Dena Lake, for being honored at this year's Torah Fund Brunch
		in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
Youth Activities Fund	Norman & Adina Newberg	in honor of Caleb Shapiro-Mendelsohn, son of Alan Mendelsohn & Mindy Shapiro, on his Bar Mitzvah
	Curtis & Leslie Pontz	in honor of Phill & Anna Goldberg, on the birth of their son
		in honor of Rabbi Alanna Sklover & Rebecca Kirzner, on the birth of their daughter
		in honor of Dan Bacine, on his special birthday
		in memory of Janice Dobkin-Kardon, mother of Lou Dobkin



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*If you are interested in writing for The Centre Call, we would love to hear your ideas! Please contact Kate Lawn at [program@germantownjewishcentre.org](mailto:program@germantownjewishcentre.org). The deadline for every issue is the 1st of the previous month.*



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