

THE
CHRONICLE

A PUBLICATION OF CONGREGATION NEVEH SHALOM

"It is not upon you to complete the work, but neither are you free to refrain from doing it... And know that the giving of reward to the righteous in the future will come."

-Pirkei Avot, 2:16

A Covenant of Love

By Rabbi David Kosak

We have reached a moment in America when race inequities have once again captured our national attention. In response, Neveh Shalom has pledged to make a *brit*, a covenant to work against racism in three areas. Before addressing that, let's take a look at what a Biblical covenant is.

One of the central features of the Torah and ancient Israelite culture is *brit* or covenant. The Torah outlines several sorts of *britot* (plural of *brit*). There is a covenant of peace that God makes with Pinchas and his descendants. There is the unique and lesser-known *brit bein habitarim* that God exacts with Abraham.

There are two parts to that pact. First, that we would become slaves. Second, that we would be freed and gain eternal possession of the land of Canaan. This "covenant between the pieces" defines the work of the Torah and of us as Jews.

Simultaneously, the desire to put the dark history of racism and slavery behind us also defines American history. Black people still are seeking equality and to live in an America that can be a promised land. Our Torah commands us to help them achieve that.

Of the covenants depicted in the Bible, a main type is between one party which is more powerful (God) and a weaker party (Abraham, the people Israel). There is also a type of *brit* known as a reciprocal or conditional covenant. These outline mutual responsibilities and promises made to one another. It is that latter sort of covenant to which we are being asked to commit.

As a religious community, our values

are expressed in our sacred writings. It therefore seems appropriate to describe the *brit* we will be making by referring to an ethical maxim In Pirkei Avot, and framing our commitments using the following phrase:

עַל שְׁלֵשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד: עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הַעֲבוּדָה וְעַל גְּמִילוּת נְטוּטִים...

For the world to exist, it depends on Torah, on Prayer and on Acts of Kindness.

We commit to addressing racism by dedicating the next 12 months to:

Learning about racism in its structural forms and our own implicit biases. **Praying** for strength and courage and inviting black faith leaders into our services on a monthly basis as well as attending services in their houses of worship. **Committing to positive actions** that can move us closer to the vision of America as a nation for all, including social action and *tikkun olam*.

To have a significant impact, we request willing congregants to sign on to this *brit* and commit to working on all three areas at least three times during the year for a total of nine interactions.

One possible root of *brit* means to cut, and we see this in the last widely-followed Jewish covenant of the *bris* or *brit milah*, in which the foreskin, or *orlah* is removed from a male child. A *brit* requires cutting or removal. Several times



in the Torah and the prophets, we read of those who have an uncircumcised heart and are enjoined to remove that covering. By committing to the above, we each have the opportunity to circumcise our hearts so that we can truly see and support our Black brothers and sisters.

"To have a significant impact, we request willing congregants to sign on to this brit [on the next page] and commit to working on all three areas... during the year"

If you are willing to take part in this covenant, this *brit tzedek v'ahava*, please fill in the form at the bottom of the next page and mail it to the synagogue at: **2900 SW Peaceful Lane, Portland, OR 97239**. You can also fill it out online at: tinyurl.com/CNSBritJustice.

Sharing the Load

Rabbi's Corner

By Rabbi Eve Posen

Ever since hearing Ruth Messinger say the words, “We cannot retreat to the luxury of being overwhelmed,” this has been my go-to quotation. These words resonated with me deeply from the moment I first heard them from her, and even more strongly today, with 14 weeks of a pandemic and the blatant, sickening mistreatment and murder of B`lack individuals at the top of every news program or social media feed. I am overwhelmed, and I imagine many of you might be as well. But if we listen to and heed the sage advice of my mentor Ruth Messinger, this is not the time to retreat. This is not the time to throw our hands up and claim that it’s simply too overwhelming.

Then what do we do? How do you act when you feel like no action is ever enough? If you’ve already been fighting racism for millenia, how is anything now suddenly going to make a difference?

This is when I turn to our roots in Jewish text, specifically *Pirkei Avot*. *Pirkei Avot* chapter 2, *mishnah* 16 teaches “He (Rabbi Tarfon) used to say: It is not upon you to complete the work, but neither are you free to refrain from doing it. If you have studied much Torah, you will be given much reward, and your employer

is faithful that he will pay you reward for your work. And know that the giving of reward to the righteous in the future will come.”

You’re probably familiar with the first part of this teaching, the strong voice reminding us that we will not solve all the world’s problems, but that is not license to give up. Rather, our job and indeed our mandate as human beings is to do our part in inching the world towards justice and *tikkun olam*, a greater fix.

Typically the quote ends there, and the next few lines aren’t included, but I believe that the last line is as powerful as the first. “And know that the giving of reward to the righteous in the future will come.” You’d think the words in Hebrew would be *l’olam habah* for “the world to come.” Instead, Rabbi Tarfon says *l’atid lavo*, for the “future” that will come. *Olam habah* is used to refer to a belief that reward comes when the messiah comes, at the end of days. The words of Rabbi Tarfon, “the future that will come,” mean

something different. He preaches to us that the work we do, step by tiny step, brings righteousness to the earthly days ahead. The work might be hard, but our job is to keep going so that we and our descendants might actually have the chance to live in a better world. Overwhelming? Yes. Necessary? You already know the answer is yes.



BRIT AHAVAH V’TZEDEK-A Mutual Covenant of Love (fill out below or online at: tinyurl.com/CNSBritJustice)

I, _____, and my family (y/n) commit to engaging in CNS’s year-long program dedicated to addressing racism by looking inward and outward. I will take part in at least nine of the opportunities the synagogue is creating, three in each of the areas of **Torah** (Learning), **Avodah** (Prayer and Service), and **Gemilut Chasidim** (Acts of Kindness). It is my hope that by committing to this, my heart will become uncovered to injustice and pain and that I will continue to advocate for necessary change.

Signature:

Date:

A Jew of Color, A Jew, and a Rainbow

By Cantor Eyal Bitton



ing a Canadian citizen, a Jew. He immigrated to Canada, with nothing, at a time when McGill University's quota on Jews made no differentiation between Jews who were "white" or "of color." My mother, ethnically speaking, is a German Jew. She was born in London to parents who had fled Nazi Germany. My mother didn't marry a "Jew of color". My father didn't marry a "white Jew". Each married a Jew.

My mother's "whiteness" mattered little when, as a blonde, blue-eyed child playing at her friend's house, she was chased away by her friend's father for being a "dirty Jew." It mattered little when they settled in a city that had an official sign telling Jews to "scram while the going is good."

The intention to define some Jews as Jews of color is noble; our community is looking inward and outward to help shape a more just society, one that does not discriminate based on color. Racism based on color, like all discrimination to-

wards any group, is reprehensible and unjust. Everything must be done to end it – on an individual, societal, and systemic level. My reflections here are not a comparison or commentary on any other group's experience but about how I see myself as a Jew - and how we are asked to see ourselves.

The USA is supposed to be a melting pot, where a multitude of people come together to create one nation. The Jewish people are the same in that sense. The Jewish community I grew up in in Kinshasa, Zaire, was made up of this color and that color and this shade and that shade, and when I looked in their faces, I saw a rainbow of one; this was all my people and my community.

I want my children's mix of heritage and culture to be celebrated and I want them to understand that, whether our background is North African, East African, Levantine, or European, we are all Jews: of the religion and of the people. I also want my children to understand that all humanity was created in the image of God.

In the context of recent discussions on race, I have heard many in the Jewish community categorize themselves as white and some as Jews of color. This got me thinking: when you look at me, who do you see?

My father is a Moroccan Jew, born in Marrakech. He is a Jew – a dark-skinned Jew. Ask him what his identity is and he won't tell you that he's a person of color but that he is, in addition to be-

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Our New President

By **Glen Coblens, CNS President**

President's Corner

It is particularly humbling to step into the President's role at this moment in time when our world is facing such immense challenges. For those of you who don't know me, I was born and raised in Portland and have been involved in many aspects of our Jewish community, from the Maccabi games to MJCC, BB Camp, East-side Jewish Commons, and more. My career has revolved around sports, from 15 years at Nike to 30+ years coaching basketball.

I see becoming President as a fulfillment of one of my highest priorities: give back to the people and places that helped me become the person I am today. The pride I have in where I attended Foundation School, had my Bar Mitzvah, was married, celebrated my daughter's Bat Mitzvah (and my son's in a few years) is matched by the pride I take in my loving, supportive, blended, and extended family. From my grandparents, parents Myra and Hy Jackson, and Uncle Alan and Aunt Debbi Montrose, who reared and steered me with family first, community-involvement values, to my wife Mia and children Skyler, Sasha, and Levi who allow me to be me. I am only able

to do what I do because of them. Challenges bring new opportunities. For those who attend virtual morning minyan, you know exactly what I am talking about. It's at times a little chaotic and out of sync, but always beautiful. Truly, CNS clergy, staff, lay leaders, and our amazing volunteers have turned lemons into lemonade with wonderful programs, events, classes, and services shared via live stream or Zoom. Thanks to their creativity and dedication, we now have more ways to be together.

During this period of uncertainty, I am asking everyone to overcommunicate. In return, I pledge to be a good listener. I also ask we all communicate and receive information in a positive and constructive manner, and treat everyone with love and respect. We must remain empathetic to others' thoughts, feelings, and fears.

Living in a household that includes three children ages 21, 18, and 8 as well as my 26-year-old niece, all of us with varying levels of fears and concerns, the pan-



demical has forced us to communicate now more than ever. The practice of compassion and mindfulness along with being non-judgmental has brought us closer together as a family.

In 50 years, this period will be in the history books for future generations to learn about. As things evolve, please stay patient and understand we will always act in the best interests of our *kehillah kadoshah*, our sacred community. We can and will get through this together.

Welcome to Our 2020-2021 Board of Directors

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Thank you to Noah Barish and Karen Twain for your years of service on the CNS Board.

Our Community and Our Re-Opening

By Fred Rothstein, Executive Director

On Sunday, March 15, with a growing understanding of the seriousness of COVID-19, the Neveh Shalom Executive Committee made a brave, necessary, and smart decision to close our building to in-person / on-site programming, education, and religious services. That decision, and each one since then, has been guided by:

- Science and health knowledge & guidance
- Jewish values
- A continuing commitment to serve our members and community in as meaningful yet safe a manner as possible.

We all understood and agreed immediately that closing the building did not mean closing the synagogue. A meaningful congregation, after all, is not based on a physical structure...that is only one tool that assists in serving our mission. The true foundation for meaning is found in relationships. That has continued to be a guiding principle as clergy, staff, and lay leadership pivoted quickly to creatively develop new approaches to meet the needs of our congregants.

Livestream and Zoom have clearly become important tools in continuing connections. Foundation School offered day-long sessions for our young learners. ALIYAH and Tichon continued to provide the finest in Jewish education. Morning minyan tripled in participation through the online platform. So much more, both happy and sad, have continued—holidays, socialization, pastoral care, life cycle events, all aspects of synagogue life.

The virus, health advice, government

guidance, and our own decision-making have been dynamic and ever-changing. Along the way, we found an approach to allow for families to keep the scheduled B'nai Mitzvah dates for their children. Our clergy and educators understood that in addition to technology, our members needed some ability to interact "in person" with each other – leading to Shabbat greetings in our traffic circle and Tailgate gatherings. As we continue to look forward, Foundation School will operate a small, controlled, and limited summer camp initially offered to first responders and essential workers in our congregational community.

The congregation has established a "Reopening Task Force" made up of lay leaders, health professionals, clergy, and staff representatives. Their task will be to recommend policies and protocols based on the same values and priorities noted above, so that when conditions are right, we will be ready to welcome all back to our building in as safe and healthful a manner as possible. The task force has organized itself into six workgroups:

- Health
- Education
- Membership / Programming
- Ritual
- Human Resources
- Facilities

We know there doesn't appear to be a full solution to the pandemic anytime soon. Our clergy are already working to plan a High Holy Day season that will be



meaningful and inspiring. We believe that regardless of whether we'll have large crowds of people in the building in late September, the holidays will be designed as primarily an online experience. We are committed that, while different, they will touch each of us in the ways we would want and hope for our holiday experience.

"A meaningful congregation, after all, is not based on a physical structure...that is only one tool that assists in serving our mission."

We care about each of you. If you're having difficulty during this (nearly) unbelievable experience, please let us know. If you have questions or concerns, or suggestions and ideas, please let us know. We wish for each of you good health and, one day soon, hugs for all of us.

No Whole Without All the Pieces

By Mel Berwin, Director of Congregational Learning

If the different groups and subgroups that make up a community or nation are parts of a greater whole, there is no whole without all the pieces... [and] what is true of communities is also true of selves.... [T]he further effect of this separative understanding of community is that individuals within subordinate groups repress those aspects of themselves that are despised in the culture... Those whose differences might have enriched and challenged the greater communal life learn to forget or keep hidden pieces of themselves. —Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*, 1990

There is no whole without all the pieces. In the past 15 years that I've been involved at Congregation Neveh Shalom, our congregational community has worked hard, and succeeded, in opening up our hearts and actively changing our philosophy and policies to create more explicitly welcoming space and roles of leadership for interfaith families, for LGBTQ+ members of our community, and those with disabilities. Our work in these areas is never done; we continue to learn, to relate, and to reevaluate what is needed as our society shifts and our understanding evolves. We are now being called upon to look at the ways that we have failed to include, listen to, and value people of color within our community and our country, and to actively change our philosophy and policies so that all feel welcome, safe, heard, and valued.

"It is our job to make sure that we invite in the full and diverse range of our community..."

Our congregation has always been a home to political, religious, and personal diversity, and that diversity is not al-

ways easy to navigate, especially when we live in a world where we can choose to read news that reflects our own politics and can "unfriend" acquaintances whose views differ from our own. But I would also argue that we are, as Conservative Jews, positioned to face that challenge. The Conservative movement neither throws away traditional texts nor contemporary perspectives but brings them into conversation with each other to guide us in our evolution; the only constant in our religious life is the way we constantly discuss, debate, update, and record these conversations, and the way we continue to wrestle with and respond to every crisis in every generation through the lens of our Jewish concepts of justice and dignity.

Education certainly plays an important role in this process. After all, as educators we are given a holy task: nurturing human beings and offering them space to grow their understanding of, and engagement with, the world around them. From Foundation School, where our children first learn to listen, to problem-solve, and to share, to ALIYAH, where we explore many different lenses of Jewish traditions and values through which we understand our own lives better, to Tichon, where we explore the diversity



of the Jewish world and challenge ourselves to understand where we stand on the most pressing ethical issues of our time, we recognize that creating community and a sense of belonging is our number one job.

There is little worse than feeling that we have to hide parts of our identities, or that our stories are not valued or represented, in a place where we wish to belong. "Those whose differences might have enriched and challenged the greater communal life..." It is our job to make sure that we invite in the full and diverse range of our community who do and can enrich and challenge us to be the fullest representation of our movement and our congregation possible.

Jewish Resilience: What Does It Mean to You?

By **Jenn Director Knudsen**

It's hard not to think about the pandemic. When Brian Rohr, Mel Berwin, and I met to determine the theme for this Chronicle edition – which would be the first published after the special coronavirus issue – we couldn't deny the ubiquitous presence of the invisible virus that has upended everything. With the novel coronavirus in mind, we determined that its guiding principle should be "bigger than ourselves" and place an article about Jewish resilience at its center.

Then George Floyd, an African-American, was murdered by a white police officer, and the world that already was off-kilter tilted further off its axis.

How could I write an article about Jewish resilience without also considering Black resilience, or Latinx resilience, or Asian-American resilience, or Muslim resilience, or...? The time certainly did not feel right to risk positing Jewish exceptionalism.

And yet.

Jewish resilience is a thing. And it has been since time immemorial. Our people survived and persevered following the destruction of the Temple, the plague in Europe, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the pogroms, the Holocaust, for G-d's sake. The list goes on.

Not surprisingly, the phrase "Jewish resilience" means different things to different people. Here is a snapshot of how some members of our *kehillah* characterize and apply it to their own lives, be they a person in her 80s, a family with a member of the Class of 2020, a phy-

sician with three young-adult sons, or a volunteer ensuring houseless teens get prepared food.

"Resilience, in the context of Jewish history, can often mean using new tools to preserve and/or transmit new ideas," said Prof. Natan Meir, who in early June completed teaching an online class through the Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies at PSU that he titled, "Creativity and Resilience: Jewish Life in Eastern European, 1500–2020."

Meir has a number of examples in his historical toolkit, such as when, in the early 19th century, most Jews in much of Europe, for whom Yiddish was their mother tongue, believed the time was right to speak primarily the lingua franca of their geography. So they adopted French and German, for example, "as their *umgangssprache*, or language of daily use – no longer solely for business – and made the decision to educate their children in it," Meir said.

He said this "was a huge shift" and represents resilience via creative adaptation. "...[T]hey felt that they could strengthen Jewish identity by transmitting Jewish education and culture in the languages that their children had already been speaking fluently since birth," Meir said.

"Similarly, today many Jewish communities are using the new technologies of the internet to come together virtually



Julie and Sam Zola

for prayer, study, and community," Meir continued. (Zoom, anyone?)

The professor said, "In this we are no different from many other religious and ethnic communities around the country and the world, but we are also carrying on a long legacy of resilience and creative adaptation to new challenges."

Prof. Dean Bell, president of Chicago-based Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning & Leadership (from whom **Michelle Caplan** recently took a course), said, "We often think of resilience as bouncing back," but a thing changed never returns to its natural state. "We are always changing as are conditions around us, and we must find ways to learn from the challenges we face and be agile and adaptive," Bell said.

The Zola family lives by this idea, whether in "normal" times or now. **Sam Zola** is

the Sunset High School Class of 2020 salutatorian and off to Purdue University in the fall, though the start of his college experience may be like the end of his high school career: non-traditional.

“I’d say we practice resilience every single day because that is what is required of us to ensure we can accomplish our goals and dreams,” **Julie Zola**, Sam’s mom, said. She called it a “blessing” that Sam has to deal with major disruptions now, at a very young age. “[T]hink of how much he will have grown by the end of 2020, and the opportunities he will have had to prove to himself that he has perseverance and great strength.”

Octogenarian **Selma Duckler**, who lost her husband **Dr. Larry Duckler**, z"l, of 62 years in 2013, is mother of five and grandmother of nine and leans heavily on the word “resilience” in the phrase “Jewish-resilience.”

“Resilience is within oneself,” she said, calling it “an excellent resource.” “If we grow up Jewish, many areas of our culture probably contributed to our resilience, but if we are not Jewish, the same can be said of whatever culture we grew up in.” A very social person, Duckler said that while in quarantine, living alone has

been her biggest challenge. She expressed her distaste for isolation to a dear friend. He responded simply with: “We got out of Egypt; this too will pass.”

“I was then able to laugh and I gained a better perspective,” she said, “and, with that, rise above the problem.”

Her friend riffing on the Haggadah is but one of multitudinous people with whom Duckler is in regular contact via email. She said that some write back, some don’t; some like what she shares, others don’t. But the act of being in constant touch with people “connected me to a social life that I had to replace because I could not live without it.”

In contrast to Selma’s characterization, **Ellen Singer**, a physician and mother of young adults **Eli**, **Benjamin**, and **Daniel**, believes Jewish resilience is a combination of a Jewish approach to life coupled with simultaneously withstanding life’s

stresses and working toward a safer, better future.

“I think the duality of this forward moving sense of time with the cyclic nature of our shared history and practice is why we are resilient,” Singer said.

She leans on an illustrated depiction from a 1940s book of Bible stories her mom used to read to her of Joseph’s dream of seven good years followed by seven bad.

“I think I was struck by the knowledge that the good times will end, we’ll have hard times and then things will get better again. ... I’m not sure if that is really the tempo of life but I’ve been fortunate to be able to generally pull through hard times knowing that they won’t last forever,” Singer said.

In somewhat of a contrast, **Rick Botney** said his sense of resilience is not linked to his Jewish identity but certainly contains a spiritual component. “There are many spiritual principles to apply and that support resilience,” he said.

“One other principle, which is central to much of how I approach things, is the concept of service: being of service to others,” which informs his commit-



The Singer-Molloy family after Dan’s graduation from PSU in 2017. From left to right: Ben Molloy, Ellen Singer, Dan Molloy, Eli Molloy, and Eamon Molloy



Selma Duckler and Jakob Kryszek z'l talking in April 2019 in his home about Jake’s recollections from the Holocaust. He died only one month later. (Attribution: Jenn Director Knudsen)

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Our Friend, (Morah) Leah Rubin, z"l

By Lois Shenker

"A friend is one to whom one may pour out the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that gentle hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away." -George Elliot



Leah Rubin, z"l

This George Eliot quote beautifully describes our friend, (Morah) Leah Rubin, z"l. While these words describe a "friend," in Leah's case we could change the word "friend" to "teacher", "administrator", "co-worker", "wife", "mother", "grandmother"...and they would still apply.

Leah was the "genuine article." What you saw was what you got. First and foremost she was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She was kind and caring, a consummate professional, a good friend; someone with integrity who was non-judgmental, nurturing, compassionate, and filled with goodness. When it came to children, no matter how challenging they might be, she was patient in the extreme, got down to their level

so she could speak with them eye to eye, and listened—really listened—to what they had to say. She was a mentor who brought out the best in each of us, inspired by who she was and how she behaved.

The Rubin family moved to Portland in 1969 and chose to make Portland their permanent home. In 1974, Nikki Director, whose daughter **Jenn** was then two-and-a-half years old, approached Leah asking her if she would consider re-starting the Neveh Shalom preschool providing Nikki could gather enough children. Leah agreed...and the rest is history.

Leah served as director of the re-named Foundation School for 32 years. Her expertise in teaching, dealing with young children and their parents, developing curriculum, supervising teachers, and creating a smoothly running program was unparalleled. Leah's life was filled with meaningful Jewish observance, which she taught to others by her example and through her work. Her influence is still felt by those with whom she came in contact, both professionally and personally.

Nikki Director, a parent and grandparent of students in Founda-

tion School, said of her, "I admired her gentle wisdom—she reminded me of Mr. Rogers as she engaged with the children and their parents."

Two teachers, **Jeanne Newmark and Roz Shenker**, observed, "She treated everyone fairly and equally", and, "She always had time to listen to whatever you had to say."

Cantor Marc Dinkin, a Neveh Shalom co-worker and friend commented, "Leah had the unique talent of resolving a situation in a way with which you may not have concurred, and yet were pleased with the results."

And finally, comments from two of her closest friends, **Sandey Fields and Lora Meyer**, concluded: "Leah had a positive outlook and a true interest in others. She was creative, sensitive, tactful yet strong. Her kindness gave all indi-



Leah Rubin, z"l, surrounded by kids

viduals and groups comfort: she was a role model to all.”

“Leah was dependable, devoted, and determined in all of her endeavors. Her leadership at Foundation School gave generations of children the opportunity to benefit from the basics of Jewish learning and nurturing care. For my family, she was a reliable support, and her family were our ‘friends who became family.’ I treasure her memory.”

Leah is survived by her beloved husband **Mark**, her children **David (Darcy)**, **Dan (Melissa)** and **Gary (Cari)**, and her grandchildren: **Sydney**, **Sophie**, **Jack**, **Leo**, **Sarah**, and **Abby**.

We are told in *Pirkei Avot* “by their deeds shall they be known.” Leah still lives on in our hearts and minds through the memories of her deeds and the special person she was. She was not only our friend; she was a gift to all who knew her. She will be sorely missed.



Leah Rubin, z"l, and Lois Shenker

Addressing Racism By Steve Sirkin

On the last evening of May, Neveh sponsored an event “in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, to seek solace and show support for our African American neighbors and friends.” For those of us who participated, we heard the moving words of Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee, Emmett Wheatfall, and Rabbi Kosak, in addition to Rabbi Eve Posen and Cantor Bitton.

Toward the end of the evening, Pastor Hennessee encouraged those of us who were ready to participate in addressing the challenges we all face in Portland to become involved in the Inter-Faith Peace & Action Collaborative (IPAC) by contacting Tom.Peavey@portlandoregon.gov.

In spite of our living in Happy Valley and not in Portland, my wife Dana and I chose to follow up on his suggestion. We did this both as deeply concerned citizens, as well as a more personal reason of how this affects our family. Our son-in-law and granddaughter are beautiful people of color.

As a result, we found ourselves listening in to a most moving Zoom discussion that involved members of the clergy, the then-Police Commissioner, and a number of her assistant Commissioners, leaders from the African American com-

munity in the city, a variety of white representatives of their faith communities, and two of the leaders of the demonstrations.

What evolved over the next hour was a deeply meaningful dialogue among people from diverse backgrounds all, ultimately, sharing the same desire to address the issue of undoing the impact of racism on our society. Police officials, sharing their personal frustrations, and openly reaching out for insights from those who led demonstrations who, in turn, bluntly described the limits of their knowledge on how to move forward and asked for the insight and wisdom of experienced community and religious leaders. A person who had been a leader in the “Occupy” movement a decade before, observing how the effort had splintered, expressed her concern that today’s efforts will “burn out” over time and fall short of what’s so desperately needed.

Some were “hopeful, but not optimistic” that the needed responses and changes would come. An overriding perspective was the need to “listen to people’s pain,” letting them know “we see you, we hear you.”



Steve and Dana Sirkin’s son-in-law, Marcus Brown; grand daughter, Xyla Brown; and daughter Laura Brown.

Is this a process that will help in finding the path forward? Does it involve enough people in positions of authority to generate real change? For a few minutes police and protest leaders were really “listening” to each other. Was this the final turning point for Police Commissioner Jamie Resch that led to her decision to step aside and appoint Chuck Lovell as her replacement?

This a process which requires the participation of more of us from Portland’s Jewish community, including those of us from Neveh Shalom. If this reflects your feelings, consider contacting Tom Peavey (see email above) or, at least, letting us at Neveh Shalom know you’d like to be involved, and we can find ways to plug you in.

Safety and Security on Campus

By Dena Marshall, Development Director

Law enforcement and social services professionals often share an insight as the days get longer and months get warmer: mischief ensues. For truly legitimate reasons, we are witnessing (and experiencing) a lot of anxiety and anger, and a lot of compelling protest activity despite quarantine and social distancing measures. The coronavirus, economic recession, Black Lives Matter movement, urgent calls for police reform, and an end to systemic racism impacts every one of us. Our issues of the day are extremely important. Do not turn away.

Against this backdrop a person would be inattentive if she didn't ask what are we doing to ensure the safety of our synagogue, Neveh Shalom, the "Oasis of Peace." First and foremost, we are not immune to the reality of things. Now, here's what we're doing to stay safe, healthy, balanced, and remain open as a trusted refuge for the spirit.

As you might already know, we have a crew of amazingly dedicated congregants who volunteer on the Safety & Security Committee, bringing their open ears and open minds to the table. This is one of two committees I feel honored to staff. I'd like to highlight the exceptional work of CNS Board member **Steve Sirkin** who has regularly taken a steady lead on so much of the Committee's progress, including contributing to the new standardized Emergency Operating Procedures (EOP) for all the Jewish organizations in town, working with the ad hoc taskforce to draft new CNS policy language, defining the structure and training curriculum for the new volunteer Safety Team, and reminding us all to maintain perspective and use this current challenge as a chance to prepare for our next yet unknown challenge. Steve, thank you!

The Safety & Security Committee recently approved and forwarded to the Board draft policy language on the topic of weapons on campus (weapons are not allowed, with a few clearly defined exceptions). Moving from policy to practice, the Committee will also build a volunteer Safety Team, ideally in time for the high holidays. In line with our capacity building goals for staff and volunteers, I am delighted to share with you that we recently received a generous grant from the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation to support an as-yet-unscheduled community resilience workshop in which we will deliver American Red Cross training in First Aid / CPR / AED and provide tools and resources for a make-your-own emergency kit. Stay tuned for an invitation to become a part of these highly relevant and potentially life-saving training opportunities.

Under the project management of Facilities Director Kurt Rice, Neveh Shalom has completed the installation of a new video monitoring and access control system, and a network of motion sensors. In addition to the system upgrades, we also acquired several dozen Stop-The-Bleed kits and we are installing them throughout the building. I know you'll find the new systems intuitive and easy to use, as soon as the building reopens. Prior to building reopening, we will provide details on the new access choices.

Finally, I'd like to share with you an update on the current round of Non-Profit Security Grant Program funding through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/Department of Homeland Se-



curity (DHS). In April I submitted a grant proposal for the DHS grant. Like last year, the proposal seeks the maximum funding allowance for target-hardening activities such as installing protective window films, bollards, interior security partitions, and specialized training for our staff. And like last year, the grant process is extremely competitive, with notifications expected late summer or early fall. Even though the coronavirus pandemic has put a wrinkle in so many administrative and human processes, I feel confident that this grant review will proceed on time, giving us all a sense of how our future security enhancements might look.

Dear friends, it continues to be an honor to be with you through this vibrant and dedicated virtual space we have all created. Despite the sometimes quiet, sometimes loud fear and nerve-wracking uncertainty of things, I look forward to the not-so-distant future when we can enjoy the physical space again.

Member News

Kvell With Us

We send a very special Mazel Tov to all of our graduates!



While this has been a unique year, you have all risen to the challenge and have completed your studies and received your diploma. We are so proud of you!

Mazel Tov to Sarah Honigstock who recently celebrated her Bat Mitzvah on March 7th in Falls Church Va. Sarah is the daughter of Adrienne and Jay Honigstock and the granddaughter of **Susan and David (z"l) Honigstock**, and Lori and Shel Rakotz of West Bloomfield Mi. Sarah is a 7th grader at Kenmore Middle School. She is an honor student and an avid reader. She is first chair trumpet in the Kenmore Symphonic band and also plays in the Jazz band. Sarah also makes time for drawing, writing and spending time with her dog Rezza. For her Mitzvah project, Sarah raised over \$260 through her art and bake sale for the Lost Dog Rescue Foundation.



Mazel Tov to member and ALIYAH teacher Sarah Rohr who was invited to deliver one of the four student commencement speeches for PSU's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences graduation ceremony on June 14. She graduated with a degree in Judaic Studies.

Mazel Tov to Norman and Kathy Chusid on the birth of their fourth grandchild, **Mason Nicholas Chusid**, born on April 20, 2020 in Kentfield, California. Proud parents are Adam and Megan Chusid. His older sister Charlotte (age 2-1/2) is excited to have a new playmate.

Kol HaKavod to Jennifer Kalenscher for organizing a national Women's Education Day for NxNW Sisterhood on May 31 that attracted women from around North America for sessions taught by **Mel Berwin** and **Rabbi Eve Posen** on the theme of Women, Modesty, and Power.

Mazel Tov to Roz Babener on the birth of her newest grandchild, a baby boy born on May 25. Mother / baby/ family are all doing well.

Mazel Tov to Dr. Jonathan Yoken, Retina specialist at EyeHealth Northwest, has been elected to the American Academy of Ophthalmology Leadership Development Program for the class of 2021. This is an honor and great opportunity, 20 ophthalmologists are selected each year from the AAO membership, and each state is only given a nomination slot every other year.



Mazel Tov to Sandy and Jeff Axel on the birth of their newest granddaughter, **Hannah Miriam Axel**, born on May 28.

Kol HaKavod to Josh Berkman, sophomore at Beaverton Academy of Science & Engineering, and son of **Akiko Saito and Eric Berkman**, on having his editorial on education published in the Oregonian on Sunday, June 14.

Yihi Zichram Baruch – Our condolences to CNS members who have recently lost loved ones.

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Leah Rubin, z"l, beloved wife of **Mark**, mother of **David (Darcy) Rubin, Daniel (Melissa) Rubin and Gary (Cari) Rubin** and grandmother to **Sydney, Sophie, Jack, Leo, Abby and Sarah**. In addition to her family, Leah is remembered and loved by so many as Director of Neveh Shalom's Foundation School for 32 years.

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Alice Potter, z"l, at the age of 102. Alice is the dear mother of **Irving (Arlene) Potter, Linda (Stanley, z"l) Hochman and Carol, z'l (Bob, z'l) Ginsberg**. She also had 8 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Jerry Fishman, z"l, in Stamford, CT. Husband of Judy, and dear brother of **Linda (Sid) Alpert**. Mr. Fishman had 3 children and 7 grandchildren.

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Bill Hoffman, z"l, brother of **Barbara (Marvin) Wolf**. Bill passed away in Portland, and is also remembered by his sons, Brett and Bradley, nephews Eric and Howard Wolf, many cousins in the community, and partner of many years, Charlene Miller.

Virtual Happenings at CNS

As you have read in these pages, clergy, staff, leaders, and volunteers have made a quick pivot to moving our community's activities and services to an online format with great success. Below is just a sampling of what is being offered. The best way to get the latest information is through our weekly Eblasts. You can sign up at: news@nevehshalom.org.

Ongoing Events

Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/virtual-events

Exercise with Coach Glen Coblens Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30am

Coach Glen Coblens is pleased to offer a dynamic and fun 45-minute, online Zoom workout for all. Guaranteed to be a stress reducer and energy builder. No previous athletic ability required. Focus will be on building core strength.

"Through a Lens of Fire: Hasidic Insights on the Torah" with Rav D Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30pm

From Rabbi Kosak: "Hasidic writings are one of my most trustworthy sources of spiritual connection. These are the texts I privately turn to for nourishment. While I don't always agree with the entirety of their message or their world view, they consistently provide a road map for how to think about being human and sense our connection to all of

creation. If you'd like to join me, we will be exploring these texts together."

Socialize and Engage with Your Kehillah Wednesday Nights, 8:00-9:00pm

Watch for new summer themes and topics to socialize and engage with your kehillah. For more info contact: mcaplan@nevehshalom.org.

Lunch and Learn with Rabbi Eve Thursdays, 12:30-1:30pm

Grab your lunch and do a bit of interactive learning with Rabbi Eve. Have a topic to suggest? Email Rabbi Eve at eposen@nevehshalom.org.

Women's Torah Study Various Sundays, 12:30pm

Join Mel Berwin for an hour of uplifting study and conversation. RSVP for upcoming dates and login info to: mberwin@nevehshalom.org.

Weekly Musical Midrash Project Sundays, 8:00am | Mondays, 6:00pm (Starting in Aug)

Join Mark Sherman for a weekly 30 min. Musical Midrash Project session. Each week, a new song will guide participants in making a strong, musical connection to the weekly Torah reading.

One-Time Events

Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/virtual-events

Musical Midrash Project: Songs from the Book of Numbers - Tues, July 7, 7:00pm

The Musical Midrash Project brings you a musical tour of our wandering lives—the ups and downs of a journey that speaks to us across the ages. Mark Sherman will present 10 songs, with a lively simultaneous chat among the community of listeners.

Sisterhood Virtual Happy Hour Sunday, July 26, 4:00pm

Join the Sisterhood for a fun virtual happy hour. To join and receive Zoom link, please email: coprez22@gmail.com.

Morning Minyan and Shabbat

Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/virtual-services

Morning Minyan

Mon-Fri, 7:15am | Sun, 9:00am

Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Fridays, 6:15pm

Saturday Morning Shabbat Service

Saturdays, 9:30am

Downstairs Minyan Shabbat Service

2nd, 4th, 5th Saturdays, 9:30am

Young Families

Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/virtual-services. For more information, please contact Rabbi Eve at: eposen@nevehshalom.org.

Kiddush Club

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 9:30am

Log into Zoom for a virtual Kiddush Club. Morah Sarah Rohr and Gershon Liberman will alternate leading Kiddush Club until we can gather again in person.

Tot Shabbat

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10:30am

Log into Zoom for a virtual Tot Shabbat. Amy, Levia, Morah Leah, and Rabbi Eve will alternate leading Tot Shabbat until we can gather again in person

Young Family Flashlight Havdallah 2nd Saturdays, 6:30pm

Grab a flashlight and join us for a short reflection on our week, a little singing and Havdallah ritual.

4th Fridays Sing-a-Long with Rabbi Eve 4th Fridays, 5:15pm

Join Rabbi Eve as she leads our Shabbat service for families on Zoom. We'll do a bit of singing, a story, and blessings.



The congregation gratefully acknowledges the following contributions:

Adult Education Fund

Laura Burda:

In appreciation of Deborah Freedberg

Jay & Michele Gilbert:

In memory of David Sachter

Priscilla & Tony Kostiner:

In memory of Solomon Menashe

Marlene Weiner:

In memory of Arnold Weiner

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In memory of Stanley Constantine

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In memory of Harold Goodman

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In memory of Ethel Ehrlich

In memory of Joshua Lynch

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In memory of Marc Tobin

In memory of Michael Rothstein

In memory of Jerry Fishman

Roman Govshiyevich:

In memory of Lev Govshiyevich

In memory of Manya Govshiyevich

Barbara Grashin:

In memory of Solomon Menashe

Inge Hamburger:

In memory of Rosa Lindemann

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In memory of Bernard (Bob)

Hasson

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In memory of Nevin Duckworth

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In memory of Alice Potter

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In memory of Marc Tobin

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Jeffrey Menashe & Wendy**Gutmann:**

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Sandy & Wendi Menashe:

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Vic & Toinette Menashe:

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In memory of Alice Potter

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Ellie & Fred Rosen:

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Dan Rubin:

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In memory of Sue Hayden

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In memory of Leah Rubin

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Get well wishes for David Ushman

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Jeffrey Lazarus**Nan & Allan Lipton:**

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In appreciation of Rabbi David

Kosak

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In memory of Reba Hoffman

Vic & Toinette Menashe:

In appreciation of Rabbi David

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Mourners

Sarah Coblens:

In memory of Alvin Konick

Dale Oller:

In memory of Solomon Menashe

In memory of Alice Potter

In memory of Michael Rothstein

In memory of Leah Rubin

In memory of Anne Tobin

Jewish Resilience *Continued from page 9*

ment to Outside In, a local non-profit that provides, among many services, food to houseless and at-risk teens. And Botney is a big part of securing donated funds and coordinating Neveh Shalom volunteers to ensure teens prepared meals despite Outside In's facilities being closed at this time.

"I focus on being in the present, doing and taking care of what is right in front of me," he said, "but recognizing that I am not in control of outcomes, how things turn out."

Duckler, the grandmother of nine, said that following her husband's death, she was the close companion of **Jakob Kryszek**, z'l, an Auschwitz survivor originally from Poland who died in May 2019 at age 100. Duckler said over the course of their relationship he shared with her and her family his nightmarish experiences of the Holocaust, including that after the Sho'ah,

he returned to Lodz to learn he was the sole surviving member of his large family.

"[H]e was thankful he was part of another large, loving family, and it brought us to tears and shock and speechlessness" she said. "Nothing we ever read would match the six years of experience of resilience we learned from him."

Said Duckler: "No one may know of your struggle, but you do; you know the fear, the anxiety and the treasure of achievement. You may feel it was Judaism, you may feel it was your parents, or a teacher, or your spouse, or your children, but it was yours all along and you used it. We are capable of great things; we are capable of living well, it is a gift we have. Be thankful."

Summer in the Time of Quarantine

By Whitney Thaxton

There's really no way to sugar-coat what life is like right now with small children. As the mom of a three-year-old and a six-year-old, parenting during the time of pandemic and protests is pretty daunting. Whereas most of us would use the summer to travel, get outdoors, attend overnight camp, and hang out with friends, now we must exercise caution and distance. With playgrounds, splash pads, and campgrounds closed for the foreseeable future and several months of lockdown under our belts, we're all looking for ways to get some space and welcome summer sunshine and freedom.

The most important thing we are focusing on as we move into this season is stability. With so much upheaval, the best thing we have found we can do for our kids is to continue the routine we established once lockdown began. We've tweaked it since school has ended, but it allows for a little bit of screen time after they finish their chores and emphasizes outdoor play with a few well-disguised continuing education activities (we've

been doing a lot of potion making and woodshop work). We're fortunate enough to have a large backyard where they can splash around and chase the chickens. Taking nature walks and long bike rides around our neighborhood has also become an important part of our everyday. We have been making obstacle courses and

forts with sheets and pillows, getting the kids more involved with baking, and instituting an hour of quiet time each day to help them reset. Usually we read books, color, or let them get down with some tactile play with sensory bins and Play-Doh. There are also many museums and aquariums like the Louvre, the Oregon Aquarium, and the Oregon Zoo that have weekly livestreams and online tours. Our kids also helped us plant our vegetable garden and build a coop for our baby chickens in March.

Another thing we're doing to stay connected to our community is attending virtual Havdallah on Monday mornings and Shabbat on Friday with our Foundation School family. Neveh Shalom is also continuing with virtual Fourth Fridays and Tot Shabbat for young families.

We have also started to make plans to expand what we're calling our "quarantine bubble." Our family has been discussing how to handle birthdays and holidays this summer, which brought up how to begin ending social distancing practices only with our immediate family. This way our kids can enjoy each other's company while still minimizing the



Bodie and Ben Thaxton painted up as scary dinosaurs

potential to spread illness that comes from being in a large group.

Which brings up to another important part of our summer activities – establishing and continuing discussion and education with our boys around the protests and activism they've been seeing glimpses of. This means we're reading books like *A is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara, *Trombone Shorty* by Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews, and *Saturday* by Oge Mora, and answering the questions that naturally arise.

There are lots of resources online for not only book lists, but also how to start these conversations and really listen to your children and their concerns. Several family-friendly protests around the Portland Metro area have popped up, which would be a great experience for older kiddos.

We don't really have much of an idea what the next few months are going to look like. This is a time of great uncertainty and stress, but I believe focusing on what is important to your family will make this unsettled time easier to manage.



Ben and Bodie Thaxton doing kid yoga

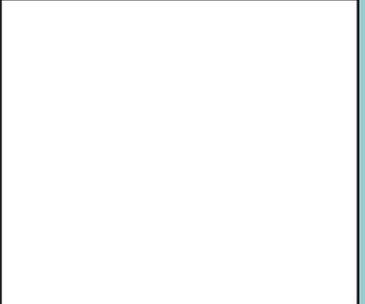
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Mitzvah Moment 2020

By Lindsay von Colditz

As with many things this year, the Congregation Neveh Shalom's beloved annual gala and auction was swept up in the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. The auction co-chairs, guided by the 2020 theme of "All You Need Is Love!", worked tirelessly with the auction committee and CNS staff to find a way to gather virtually and honor our tradition of coming together for this celebrated event. By keeping an eye towards love, community, and utmost caution, the auction committee, with the support of the CNS staff and Board of Directors, ultimately decided to postpone it.

The annual auction is the largest single fundraising event of the year for CNS, and the Mitzvah Moment is the capstone of that effort. The funds raised from the Auction go directly towards a full range of spiritual, educational, and social outreach programs that embody our commitment to *tikkun olam*, which in these challenging days is more critical than ever.

With the creativity and hard work of **Cantor Bitton** and **Ken Klein**, Klein Films, the Mitzvah Moment video was completed before "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" was put in place. While we missed gathering together in person, the magic of the Mitzvah Moment was real. The virtual Mitzvah Moment and the debut of "Hey You!" raised a record-setting amount, close to \$50,000!

Kudos go to the auction chairs **Doug Blauer** and **Glen Coblens**, who did an outstanding job providing leadership during this unprecedented time. Their love and commitment to this community are infectious! Special thanks for the vocal stylings of **Michelle Tredger** and a special appearance by the Tredger/Bitton children. Additionally, thank you to the dedicated volunteers of the auction



committee, for planning and night-of event support.

A special thanks to our generous sponsors that have extended their continued commitment to our ongoing operations! Stay tuned for the date of the 2021 auction and gala!

Want to view the Mitzvah Moment video? Visit nevehshalom.org/mitzvah-moment-2020. There is still time to make a Mitzvah Moment pledge!