

THE
CHRONICLE

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A photograph of a forest path with sunlight streaming through the trees. The path is a dirt road that curves through a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. The trees are tall and thin, with some evergreens and some deciduous trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

*Acknowledging
the Positive...*

And Everything Else

The Two Sides of Positivity

Rabbi's Corner

By Rabbi David Kosak

One of my dearest friends in college always smiled. He seemed upbeat and positive. It took a long time for me to understand that beneath his energy and achievement was a deep depression. In the years since, I've learned that there's a psychological term for this sort of façade-building known as smiling depression. Individuals such as my friend, who died tragically young, often have unreasonably high expectations for themselves, in part because their self-esteem is built upon a perfectionist bent that hides a sense of inadequacy.

Most of us don't suffer from smiling depression. That said, most of us do develop a public persona early in life that is based upon what we think others want from us, or what will allow us to get by more easily, or even what will make us likable. None of that is necessarily bad, but it can lead us to become inauthentic, sometimes in ways that are hard for us to recognize about ourselves.

There is an unhelpful side to positivity that flows out of this need to fit in. This sort of positivity can sometimes seem saccharine or unintelligent. Sometimes being positive is a terrible choice because it can prevent us from assessing danger, or because there are times when it is valuable to connect with feelings of sadness, loss, or even despair. Sometimes, like my college friend, Dimitri, positivity becomes a way to avoid real issues in our lives or to become numb to our emotions and what they can teach us.

Despite these caveats, focusing on positivity is an incredibly helpful and even religious way to live. First, Judaism is a

religion of hope and optimism. Second, we view life as a gift. Nu, should we feel bad about such a precious gift? Definitely not. We ought to accept this time-limited gift with tremendous gratitude. Third, Judaism recognizes the enormous power we have to change our experience of reality by how we think. There are some commandments that can't be fulfilled properly without a change in attitude. For example, giving *tzedekah* in an unpleasant manner is considered less effective than giving *tzedekah* happily.

If there is an upside and a downside to positivity, how can we make sure that our positivity is, well, positive?

Some of us have learned about the Jewish term, *kavannah*, or intention. We need to be mindful to perform many actions in an immersive way, such as the example of *tzedekah*. The opposite of *kavannah* is *hessech da'at*, or distraction. Mental distraction can disconnect us from our experience to such a degree that we don't even know what we are doing, which interferes with a type of deep engagement that leads us to feel positive. For example, if we recite the *amidah* and miss a section, we are instructed to return to the beginning and repeat the entire prayer. This teaches us that we need to be internally present for our prayer to feel like a prayer. Put differently, when we recite a prayer in a distracted manner, we tend to find praying more boring. Rather than providing us a meditative moment in which we can recharge and connect, such detached prayer depletes us.



Our medieval mystics offer us a powerful model to think about positive positivity and negative positivity. They speak of two states of awareness, *mochin d'katnut* and *mochin d'gadlut*. These terms aren't easy to translate, but we can think of *mochin d'katnut* as constricted awareness. When we are in this state, we are more cut off from life as a whole. We are caught up in fears and worries, get wrapped up in small issues, which sap our energy, often leaving us feeling separated from others and even ourselves. *Mochin d'gadlut*, on the other hand, is a more settled, expanded form of awareness during which we feel a greater sense of connection. That can occur when we practice meditation, take in a sunset, or interrupt the negative thoughts which are typical of *mochin d'katnut*. When we think about what a mature and healthy form of positivity is, it is our ability to respond with grace and flow to the challenges of our

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Good!

Rabbi's Corner

By Rabbi Eve Posen

I have a tendency towards a doomsday mentality. I can find the negative in almost any situation, and in some cases, multiple negatives. Acknowledging the good is something I have always struggled with. This is partly because I hold on to the negative feedback I receive so tightly that it can be a struggle to remember any positive feedback at all. At one point in my early rabbinic career, a mentor suggested I create a folder in my email inbox titled "Good!" That way, if I'm feeling down or perseverating on something negative, as I tend to do, I have an easy way to remind myself of the good. This is some of the best advice I've ever received, and it has served as much more than just a reminder to my own self about noticing the positive.

Seeing the positive in the world around me and acknowledging the good in others seems to come a little more naturally. We make it a practice in our home to tell our kids each week, when we bless them on Shabbat, one thing we're proud of them for. After I teach a class, I've made it a habit of trying to send just a quick note to students who were exceptional, or who worked really hard, to make sure they feel they are seen.

The idea of focusing on goodness is woven into Judaism as well. It is near impossible to pray on a daily basis if we're not open to seeing something positive in the world. Our daily prayers begin with gratitude for waking up. Then there's the blessing for bodies that function, the ability to move our bodies, the ways in which we use our words, and so on. Even when I just want to go back to bed, there's a religious practice that pushes me to at least find a moment of joy.

As we enter a time of the year when we see more darkness than light in our natural world, and as we walk through the Covid-19 journey, hopefully finding more opportunities to connect, let us reflect on the blessing of the Jewish practice that asks us to acknowledge the good, no matter how small. *Baruch hatov v'ha'maytiv*. Blessed is the good and the One who



makes good. Let us look for the good in ourselves, in one another, and in our world. As we approach Tu B'shvat, the holiday of the trees, let us plant only goodness and help it to grow throughout our lives.



Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah



Trevor Gilbert | January 15

Trevor Gilbert is the youngest son of Robb and Bari Gilbert, and brother to Sophia, Ethan, and Jordan Mickey. Grandparents are John (z'l) and Marcia Grado (St. Johns, FL), Morton and Carol Greenfield (Boynton Beach, FL), and Joel and Marsha Gilbert (Portland, OR). Trevor is a hardworking 9th grader at Tigard High, excelling in a biliteracy Spanish program. When not obsessing over TikTok or figuring out how he'll join the likes of Paul Allen, he brings people together as a YouTube influencer, enjoys BBYO/NCSY, and looks forward to Camp Schechter. He's grateful to his community for sticking with him as he reaches this simcha!

Jewish Pride and Jewish Leadership

Cantor's Corner

By Cantor Eyal Bitton



A 2021 poll reveals that 65% of Jewish college students feel unsafe and that 50% hide their Jewish identity. A University of Vermont sexual assault support group stated that they were welcome to everyone - except to people who believe that Israel should exist. *Mezuzot* have been taken down at Tufts University and at the Northeastern University Hillel. A Torah scroll was vandalized at a George Washington University fraternity house. The Graduate Student Union at the University of Toronto refused a request to bring kosher food options to campus because Hillel is pro-Israel. The U of T's Student Union (Scarborough) passed a

motion refusing to participate with organizations that support Israel's right to exist, adding: "Efforts should be made to source Kosher food from organizations that do not normalize Israeli apartheid..."

British student Chloe Santaub writes in *The Times* (UK), "There is a relentless environment of hostility towards Jewish students and scholars on European campuses. A climate of hate, of othering and of intimidation. It is so profoundly embedded... that most people cannot even recognise it." Congressman Ritchie Torres writes, "There's a concerted effort to ideologically cleanse progressive politics of anyone or anything that dares to believe in Israel's right to exist. The fearmongering about 'Zionist organizations' has an undeniable undercurrent of Antisemitism that cannot and should not be ignored."

What are Jews to do? Agree to be defined by others? Deny our heritage and indigenous roots in the land of Israel? Deny the countless passages in our prayers and devotional texts calling for the return to Zion? Declare ourselves a faith and reject peoplehood, just for the promise of being accepted? We know what being a people without a Jewish homeland looks

like as we've had that experience for two millennia and reject it.

So, what does the future look like? For Israel, it looks good. Spitting at Jewish teens on a bus in London or demanding that Jews pass a political litmus test for entry into institutions isn't going to make Israel disappear. As alliances with Arab states are forged and deepened, Israel's place in the Middle East is being solidified, not threatened. It's the Jews right here in America and around the world who are being threatened.

What brings me hope is a new generation of young Jewish leaders like Blake Flayton, Eva Barlow, Ysabella Hazan, Ben M. Freeman, and others. They are part of a movement that believes that changing who we are in order to be accepted by the non-Jewish world is not the way. We must define ourselves. We must tell our own narrative. By affirming our identity as a religion and a people, a people linked to Israel past and present, we strengthen ourselves. We cannot determine what hostility towards their Jewishness our youth will face, but we can help them to face that hostility with a firm sense of who they are - with a firm sense of Jewish Pride.

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To contact us with ideas, comments, or
to become a contributor:
programs@nevehshalom.org

Subscriptions and member news:
news@nevehshalom.org

Membership inquiries:
mcaplan@nevehshalom.org

For a full staff list go to:
nevehshalom.org/staff

Congregation Neveh Shalom
2900 SW Peaceful Lane
Portland, OR 97239
(503) 246-8831
www.nevehshalom.org

Lead Editor and Graphic Designer:
Brian Rohr

Copy Editor
Sara Safdie

CONTRIBUTORS

Rabbi David Kosak, Senior Rabbi
Rabbi Eve Posen, Associate Rabbi
Mel Berwin, Director of
Congregational Learning
Glen Coblens, President
Amy Leona Havin
Jenn Director Knudsen

Happy New Year!

President's Corner

By Glen Coblens, CNS President

2021: What a year, full of challenges and suffering. Yet, despite all the pain, so much good has come. In my house, we refer to this phenomenon as 'Covid bright lights': positive things that would not have happened had it not been for Covid.

Let me start close to home, where 9-year-old Levi just got vaccinated. Not just Levi, but his entire soccer team all got vaxxed over a four-day period, spurring each other on with photos and words of encouragement. We are so fortunate to live in a country that was able to produce, afford, and marshal the resources to rapidly deploy millions of vaccines in such a short period of time. I am so proud of how our CNS community has risen to the occasion, with the vast majority already vaccinated. *Kol Hakovod!* Thank you for helping keep each other safe and healthy.

It's easy to criticize government as inefficient or ineffective, but the speed at which federal funds were pumped into the hands of individuals, companies, and organizations is certainly a Covid bright light. The stock market is up, jobs are available for anyone willing and able to work, wages have never been higher, and equity has never been a higher priority. CNS was a beneficiary too; the federal funds we received have helped ensure we are in a strong financial position.

Look around Portland, beyond the tents and trash, and admire the many "street seats" — covered, heated outdoor eating spaces, some in parking spaces, some entire blocks. This innovative program saved countless restaurants and jobs, while demonstrating an excellent use of public infrastructure.

Another bright light near and dear to my heart: Eastside Jewish Commons, which thanks to Covid was able to secure a lovely space that more than twenty CNS families now use for close-to-home tutoring. As an early supporter, advisor, and community partner, CNS is proud to be one of the first to call EJC our home away from home.

Yes, many of us were unwillingly forced to pivot. Our oldest son, Skyler, was on the verge of taking a job with the NY Mets in ticket sales in the Spring of 2020. Overnight, that job disappeared. But out of that disappointment, an opportunity rose with a different company, FanDuel. Better pay, more flexibility, more opportunity. He absolutely loves it and is thriving in Brooklyn, where he lives with his cousin, David Menashe. Ah, to be in one's twenties in New York with a good job, fun roommates, and a groovy apartment right next to a train station. Sweet!

Covid led many of us to take care of deferred home maintenance, or to invest in infrastructure improvements, with parking lot upgrades, a new exterior paint job, and a new HVAC system being some prime examples. What's next you may ask? You will soon see work on the lower courtyard and the front gates.

Many of us learned new virtual technologies, especially our teachers and kids, who certainly will be better off thanks to the bevy of innovations they were



forced to learn. Haven't we all gained an even greater appreciation for the beauty of our region, our outdoorsy culture, and how we all look out for each other in our community?

Finally, many found 2021 to be a year of reassessing priorities. Some people retired early, while others changed jobs, moved, downsized, or decided to focus on family. We struggled, we faced challenges, but we faced them together, in our homes, at CNS, in our local community, and around the globe.

Welcome, 2022! May we face whatever comes our way with **positivity**, and may we face them **together**!

What is your Covid bright light? Let's continue the conversation at cnsresident@gmail.com.

Itai Dewar, z"l

Mel's Corner

By Mel Berwin, Director of Congregational Learning

Our whole community grieves the loss of **Itai Dewar z"l**, who left this world on Thanksgiving weekend, just before the start of Chanukah. A dedicated 5th grade and adult education teacher for over ten years at Neveh Shalom, he was also an accomplished musician and linguist. He grew up in Oregon and spent many of his adult years in Israel, serving in the military, living and working on *Kibbutz*, and soaking up the rich culture of language, arts, and history. As a Jew by choice, Itai was passionate about learning and teaching. He put his faith and his community at the center of his life; living in the caretaker apartment at the synagogue was the perfect spot for him. The caretaker of a synagogue is called a *shamash*, just like the guiding light of the Chanukah. Itai will be deeply missed in our community. *Y'hi zichron baruch*. May his memory always be a blessing.

Below is a sampling of the many tributes we received remembering Itai, z"l.

Congregation Neveh Shalom recently adopted a new vision statement: that of a more humane world cultivated through Jewish living, learning, and celebration. Itai embodied this vision in his own values and in every interaction with each person he encountered. It is truly impossible to imagine Neveh Shalom and our teaching community without him. The quiet impact of a dedicated teacher will live on for us, inspired by Itai's gentle, quiet light.

—Mel Berwin (from eulogy at funeral)

He was truly a light unto the world. He lived life as a poem.

—Wolpin-Kohl family

His light was so bright; may it continue to shine in the hearts of all of us fortunate to feel his warmth, and may his

memory be a blessing.

—Morah Bari Gilbert

He was such a wonderful calm voice last year for my kiddos' at-home 5th grade learning.

—Julie Newman

While you were my tutor, we got to be friends. I have many fond memories of you, like when we'd be sitting in the JCC: your eyes would light up, and a big smile would cross your face whenever you saw PJA or Neveh Shalom students passing by. Your delight got even bigger whenever a former or current student would come over to say hello. It was so apparent how much you loved kids and teens!

—Randi Rosenfield

Itai and I shared a passion for classical music. We once went together to an open rehearsal for the symphony. We spent three hours with our eyes and ears open, in our happy place. This past summer I was working on a new song and he and I worked together to craft the Hebrew words that translated my intentions. Here is the English: "Here in this place where you walked, where you prayed and where you cried, I hear your prayer and taste your tears." These words will now always mean something else to me.

—Sharon Fendrich

I was especially lucky to work closely with Itai in the past couple of months in his *Kita Hey* classes on Sunday mornings, where I assisted and enjoyed watching him teaching about our traditions, sharing his passion for Judaism, the Hebrew language, and the Land of Israel. He truly was a special person that lived to make Earth a better place, and I am sure that like me, each of the people that knew Itai will carry a piece



of his spirit with them for the rest of their lives.

—Gal Cohen (Assistant teacher to the 5th grade and ALIYAH Hebrew tutor)

We are so appreciative of Itai and his incredible commitment, kindness and dedication to the Neveh community. His joy for life was contagious. The Yoken family have all been blessed to have crossed paths with Itai and to have been students of his.

—Yoken Family

It wasn't uncommon for our daughter, Miya, to ask about him. She was utterly fascinated that he lived at the synagogue. How lucky! When Miya heard that Itai had passed away, she asked if she could make a heart for him so that we could leave it at his grave.

—Michele Tredger & Cantor Eyal Bitton

I'm so grateful for the countless hours we spent on Zoom talking about music, teaching, languages, and life. Grateful for that last hug, and that last email. Relieved that I responded promptly. Hopeful that he saw my Hanukkah card before he went to sleep. May his memory be a blessing.

—Stephan Nance

CNS's "Glass Three-Quarters Full" President

By Jenn Director Knudsen

Coach is what is at the core of Glen Coblens.

Congregation Neveh Shalom's president is in the middle of his second and final year in the post. Glen wears many hats: father, husband, brother, business associate, consummate shul volunteer and fundraiser, and athlete. Undergirding every hat, perhaps especially the baseball cap he often wears backward during a workout, is that of coach and the positive mentality that goes with being a successful one.

Success is not something Glen measures in terms of a win or loss; rather, it's measured in positive personal growth, and, in the context of Neveh Shalom, that of the *kehilla*. Glen's theme for 5781, his first year as synagogue president, was "Year of Positivity"; in 5782 it's "Year of Togetherness." "I want to combine the two ideologies because both are positive in nature and promote keeping people together," he said, reflecting on his themes, work accomplished, and work yet to be done.

Basketball is Glen's favorite sport to coach. His mission statement of helping kids develop as people through basketball reflects that preference: his original professional goal thirty years ago was to coach the country's best college basketball players and maybe even the pros. When that initial goal proved elusive, he answered the call of a friend to help coach his alma mater Wilson--now Ida B. Wells--High School.

"When I got my first high school varsity coaching job two years later, I flipped my goal," he said. Rather than help folks



(L to R) Sasha Birk-Stachon, Mia Birk, Levi Birk-Coblens, Glen Coblens, Skyler Birk

at their pinnacle get even better, Glen realized the positive impact he could have on children and teens, both on the parquet and off. Glen has since coached thousands of people, of all ages, genders, and abilities.

He explains that basketball is a microcosm of life because it requires teamwork, sportsmanship, drive, hard work, and a long time-horizon to reach goals and improve. Coaching, too, requires all those skills, plus the ability to strategize, plan, assert leadership, and communicate clearly.

For example, Glen took a page out of coaching practices to launch CNS Town Hall, an opportunity that Glen hosts pe-

riodically so our *kehilla* can gather virtually to discuss key ideas and topics of importance and interest. Topics have included Covid-19 policies, High Holy Days preparation and details, and CNS's Long-Range Plan. On average, more than a hundred congregants consistently participate in CNS Town Halls.

"I stole this from coaching, thinking it would be a great way for people to participate during Covid-19, to connect even if we can't always be in-person, and to have other shul leaders receive exposure," such as those helping the comprehensive Long-Range Plan Committee, he said.

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Mixed Blessings: Jewish Education from the Lens of Mental Health

By Mel Berwin



When I was starting out in Jewish education, teaching Hebrew to children, I always felt most connected to those students who didn't quite fit in to the classroom environment. They struggled with Hebrew or with learning in a classroom. I often spent time one-on-one with these children, curious to learn how they learned, wanting to connect with the child and in turn help them connect with the language and traditions that were so meaningful to me.

When my oldest son was diagnosed with autism at age four, I already knew that he had strengths and challenges that were unusual for a child his age. His memory, his way of putting words together, his emotional landscape, his fear of other children were all evidence of his developmental differences. I was both relieved and completely rocked as I learned more about autism. I was also determined to connect with this new community that opened up to me with support and resources to help him learn what he needed to be who he wanted to be in this world.

As is often the case, Lev's autism came hand-in-hand with depression and anxiety. I knew he needed professional help when he told me, in fourth grade, that his every thought was bleak, and he felt he was failing at everything, even though that was clearly objectively not the case. I was

so tuned into his moods and his language that it was shocking to me when my daughter, Nava, was diagnosed with anxiety a couple of years later. It looked and sounded so different with her that I hadn't recognized the signs.

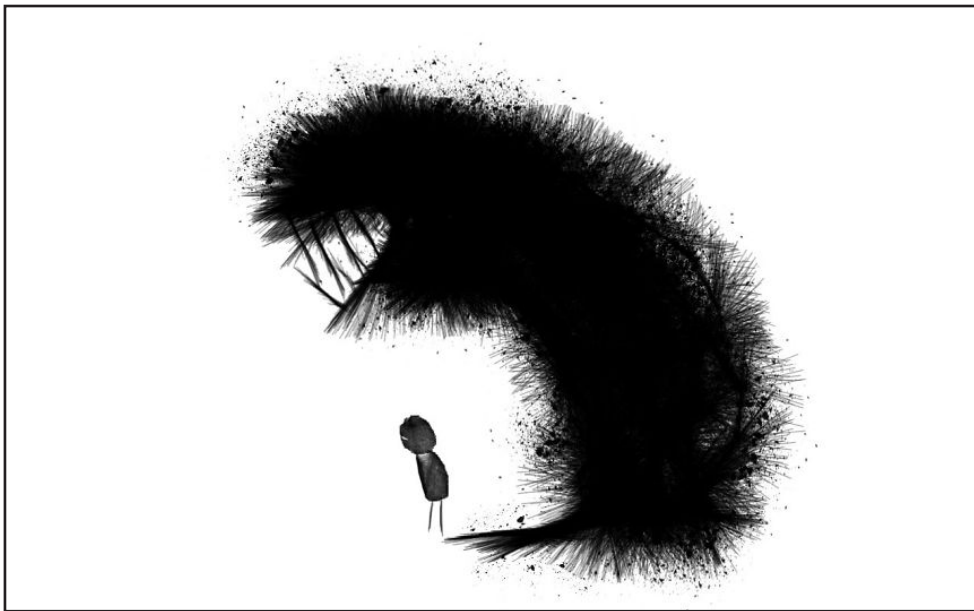
Each of my kids has, for their own unique reasons, struggled significant-

ly with mental health. I have learned along with them, through therapists and, eventually, a two-year course in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, a menu of essential skills for coping with overwhelming feelings of distress, fear, and hopelessness. DBT, in particular, offered a way of understanding the connection between feelings, thoughts, and behavior. We learned to pay attention to the feelings and thoughts we experience, making conscious choices about our actions that allow us to accept or change our situation, or at the very least, not make them worse.

I've always been open about our family's experiences of disability and mental health challenges; I've appreciated the ways that doing so allowed other families to share with me and trust me to care for and work with their children. As my kids and I integrated the vocabulary and skills of distress tolerance and emotional regulation into our lives, I was also thinking about how to trans-



Teachers Hani and Ela in ALIYAH teacher training, which focused on the emotional needs of children this year.



Artwork by Nava Weingrad (Mel's daughter), created at age 14

late these essential life skills to our education context in ALIYAH, as well as how they mesh with the vocabulary of Jewish texts and values that are the pillars of Jewish learning.

In DBT, we learned about unhealthy thinking patterns, such as all-or-nothing thinking, often signaled by the words “always” or “never” (I always fail; this will never work out...), which are hallmarks of both anxiety and depression. This thinking pattern was very familiar to me from Lev’s childhood, when I learned to model “flexible thinking” rather than “rigid thinking.” I often spoke my thoughts out loud to him, especially when encountering challenging situations. “This didn’t go as I expected. I’m disappointed, and I wonder what I could do instead of my original plan...”

Over the years at Neveh Shalom, we have seen more and more children in our schools who have this rigid thinking pattern, e.g., “If I can’t do it perfectly, I shouldn’t even do it at all!” I therefore chose a theme for ALIYAH that we could use to help shift this thinking pattern to a healthier one. For the school year beginning in 2019, we taught “Elu v’Elu,” a phrase from a Talmudic text in which God interrupts a debate between two rabbis on how to interpret the law,

to say “Elu v’elu – both these laws and these laws are the words of the living God.” This idea—that two seemingly mutually exclusive things can BOTH be true, is the basis of dialectical thinking.

"It was clear to me that our focus as we brought our kids back together this year would need to be how to support our children's – and teachers' and families'—emotional well-being."

Little did we know at the beginning of that school year that a worldwide pandemic would begin six months later, which would pull all our usual expectations and rituals out from under us. Dialectical thinking became essential. “This feels impossible, but we’ll try our best anyway.”

Since then, mental health, anxiety, self-care, and other terms relating to the unique stresses of our time have become mainstream, daily parts of conversation. It was clear to me that our focus as we brought our kids back to-

gether this year would need to be how to support our children’s – and teachers’ and families’—emotional well-being. One of the workshops I led (offered through Portland Area Jewish Educators last month) was called “Working with kids with anxiety—a Jewish approach.” In addition to Elu v’Elu, here are two of the other Jewish texts we looked at and how they can model healthier thinking: *Lo alecha ha’melacha lig’mor v’lo ata ben chorin l’yibatel mimena*. It’s not your obligation to complete the work, but you’re not free to avoid it. This verse, from *Pirkei Avot*, turned into a familiar song, reminds us to shift from all-or-nothing perfectionism to a more pragmatic attitude. It also can help remind us to break down big tasks into smaller, more achievable goals.

Mevarech al ha ra’a k’ein hatovah. We bless on the bad as we do on the good. This line from *Mishna Brachot* may give us pause, but it also reminds us that a blessing is not necessarily gratitude but an acknowledgement. When we slow down enough to acknowledge our thoughts and our feelings (negative or positive), we can choose how to respond to them in healthier ways. This teaching reminds us that there would be no joy without sadness. We live in the fullness of life with all its ups and downs; when we acknowledge and even find blessing in our challenges as well as our strengths, we all grow as individuals and as a community.

As parents, it is so hard to see our children suffer. As educators, we want our children to feel connected and successful in our classrooms. Finding ways to model and teach social emotional skills feels essential to any educational context today; integrating that learning with Jewish language and values has become my passion. We don’t ask for the challenges that befall us or our children. But when we are honest about what we are facing, with ourselves and with others, we can find unexpected blessings in the communities and the learning that opens to us.

If You Get “The Call,” Know That You Are Not Alone

A Collaborative Article Between the Chronicle Editorial Team and Sharsheret

You’ve likely received “the call” at some point in your life, perhaps from a family member, a friend, or even for yourself. *I have breast cancer.* These are words that are spoken too often and are words that you or someone you know have likely heard. One in eight women and one in 1000 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. One in 72 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer, but for many that risk is even higher.



Michelle Caplan and her family.

One in forty Ashkenazi Jews – men and women – are carriers of a BRCA gene mutation leading to a significantly increased risk for breast, ovarian, prostate, pancreatic, skin, and male breast cancers. There are numerous other mutations linked to hereditary risk for these cancers including ATM, CHEK2, PALB2, and more.

Michelle Caplan, Neveh Shalom’s Director of Congregant Connections, was one who once had to make that call. In 2016, she learned of her own diagnosis and began the healing path that so many other women have been on.

“Obviously the news was devastating. One week after my diagnosis I received a call from a friend who said I needed to reach out to Breast Friends, a local organization supporting women with breast cancer. I made that call, and I still vividly remember sitting on the deck with the founder of the organization, talking, and the immense support I received. I cannot stress or recommend enough any-

one who is starting this journey to not do it alone, and to find a trustworthy organization to reach out to.”

There are several local and national organizations that support women and their families who have been touched by breast cancer. From Breast Friends to Fighting Pretty and more, help is there for those who need it.

One organization with a Jewish focus that Neveh Shalom will be partnering with in January is Sharsheret.

According to Jenna Fields, the California Regional Director of the organization, Sharsheret is a national Jewish non-profit that provides one-on-one mental health support for women and their families touched by breast and ovarian cancer, as well as those with increased genetic risk. Their social workers and genetic counselors are available for anyone impacted by this issue, including

those recently diagnosed, caregivers, those facing advanced cancer, and women in survivorship. All their services are free, confidential, and available by phone, making Sharsheret easily accessible to the Jewish and greater community of Oregon.

For many Oregonians touched by this issue, the Sharsheret community, as well as those of the other organizations, have been a source of comfort, support, and education during the pandemic.

According to CNS member, **Nicole Sacks**, who learned she was BRCA2 positive earlier this year, “Sharsheret has been by far the most supportive resource for me from the day I received the BRCA2 positive test results, through my preventative surgery, and my first MRI screening. The genetic counselors and social workers have made a significant difference in my journey and will continue to provide support.”

Another CNS member, **Marianne Braunstein**, also had a positive experience working with this non-profit. “Sharsheret is an amazing organization, but what impressed me the most is the ability for them to meet individuals on their terms, ranging from experts that can provide truthful information, to individuals that can provide emotional support, and to entire communities to envelop you. They understand that each of us is different and take personal needs into consideration to support those of us facing a health event, both during and on the road after.”



CNS member Marianne Braunstein remarks, "I am still wearing my bracelet, the same one given to me — and also worn — by my friends throughout my journey. It is a constant reminder of the love and support I felt from my family, friends, care givers, and community, and my endless gratitude to them."

There are things that all people can do to safeguard their health, from paying more attention to changes in their bodies, asking families about cancer history, consulting with a genetic counselor, or scheduling that delayed mammogram.

One way to take action is to integrate more healthful ingredients into our diets. In this area, Neveh Shalom is partnering with Sharsheret for a webinar on Monday, January 10, at 10:00am, called *Sharsheret in the Kitchen*, with celebrity dietitian Rachel Beller, MS, RDN, and CEO of the Beller Nutritional Institute. Rachel's webinar is designed to help get a jumpstart on incorporating easy anti-cancer foods into our kitchens. Register at: link.sharsheret.org/rachelbeller. Everyone is invited and we hope you will be able to join us. We will also be partnering with Sharsheter for a "Pink Shabbat" on February 11.

Unfortunately, you or someone you love may get "the call." Please know that if this happens, you are not alone. There are places to turn to should you ever need support.

If you or someone you love is facing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, or increased hereditary risk, you can contact Sharsheret at: www.sharsheret.org or 866.474.2774 or Breast Friends at: breastfriends.org or 503.598.8048.

Coach Glenn *Continued from Page 7*

Liza Milliner, President-elect, said, "Glen has been great about taking the time to ensure every voice is heard. While he is a busy person, he makes the time to listen and provide positive feedback and encouragement."

Another page taken from coaching is Glen's philosophy of "coaching ahead rather than behind," meaning rather than correcting and making adjustments, using another basketball term, he says he "coaches the next possession." Glen notes, "This allows me to think ahead and be proactive, which is much more strategic and effective."

A synagogue-based case in point, he said, is the Financial Stability Task Force led by **Mark Kalenscher**, Neveh Shalom's treasurer. Its work is to pinpoint strategic decisions to make now, while finances are stable, to increase revenue, decrease expenses, and identify focus

areas like fundraising as well as additional ways to have a positive impact on the community.

Glen is clear-eyed about goals he has put forward but that haven't yet -- and may not -- come to fruition on his watch. One example is convening a group of women to pave the way for more women to assume leadership roles; another is his effort over 18 months to host a large group of congregants looking for a great weekly workout in the community.

While he said a "small but passionate" group did regularly log in for Coach Glen's curated workout, it didn't take off the way he'd envisioned. "I'd rather try something and fail than not try anything at all," he stated.

"I'm an optimist," Glen added. "You can always find the negative, but if we can find the positive within ourselves, the positivity goes out from there."



After Glen completed the IRONMAN Arizona in 2019, his family posed for a victory photo (l to r): Russell Birk, Todd Coblens, Levi Birk-Coblens, Mia Birk, Glen, Myra Jackson, Sasha Birk-Stachon

Blessing the Good and the Bad

For this issue, we gathered a compilation of responses from our congregants of various ages, preschool to elder and in-between, to the question:

What does the idea of blessing the good and the bad mean to you?

Foundation School Pre-K
Grizzly Bear Class

"Like rain—it's a good thing because water helps the plants grow but I like when it's sunny because we can play outside."

-Colette (age 4)

"What's good about the sun is that it gives us light."

-Riley (age 5)

"But darkness is good because that's when you can sleep."

-Nava (age 5)

ALIYAH K-6

We say blessings on all things because they exist and not just because they're good.

-Elijah (4th grade)

We say *shehechyanu* on the first time something happens, but it might not always be a good thing.

-Erez (4th grade)

We say a blessing on the bitter herbs at Passover because we're sad that even though we got through the Red Sea not everyone made it.

-Shiri (3rd grade)

CNS Community

God is all, good, bad, and in between. Without bad, would would we know good?

-Bruce Banasky

Nonsense.

-Mary Goldhammer

What this phrase means to me is that we are grateful for the good and that we must find the positive in the bad for the learning opportunity and growth it can provide.

-Brenda Schwartz

Being a fan of 50s and 60s Broadway musicals, the first thing that immediately came to my mind was this line from Fiddler on the Roof:

"Rabbi, is there a proper blessing for the Tsar?"

"A blessing for the Tsar? Of course! May God Bless and keep the Tsar...far away from us!"

-David Meltzer

The universe is not all about me, rather it's about my/our relationship to it. Humbling.

-Brian Rohr



Our Nefesh is always interpreting and responding to our environment/society and making judgements of good vs. bad. We can give thanks and be grateful for the goodness. A way to bless the bad is to remember that our world is not yet perfect, and we have the ability to choose how to respond to that imperfection. When misfortune happens, one must first accept it, then pray for courage, strength, wisdom, and hope. We can pause and ponder how we can use the bad experience for true self-exploration, change, and growth. When you are aware, you can find a "silver lining" in something negative and bless that discovery. "Where there is a crack in the vessel, the light will shine through."

- Written as a collective from The Neveh Shalom Mussar Vad (Mussar-Jewish Ethical Behavior from Torah). Vad is a group with a purpose. We have been studying, sharing ideas and growing for almost three years: Sheri Cordova, Melanie Birnbach, Dana Sirkin, Lynn Bliss, Laurie Fendel

On the Importance of Ritual in Our Lives and Culture

By Amy Leona Havin



Settings for a Tu B'Shvat Seder. Tu B'Shvat is on Jan 17 this year.

As I light this year's first Shabbat candles to celebrate the secular new year, I am reminded of the important rituals that keep us all grounded. Not only do holiday rituals such as gathering around a dining table, lighting the Chanukiah, cooking large meals, or taking part in sing-along songs at the piano play a huge role in the way that we, as individuals and family units, move through our calendar year, but they also greatly affect our day-to-day existence within society.

As Jewish people, we have used ritual to help us through times of great difficulty as well as times of joyous celebrations. During the Covid-19 pandemic, which continues to define our cultural moment through various forms and variations, many took to the internet in search of new daily rituals they could develop during a period of social and

emotional need. Whether it was baking bread, weekly virtual happy hours with friends, or an affirmation practice, people across the globe developed the necessary rituals to help them press onward.

Whether grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, first-generation Israeli immigrants, recently converted Jews, or any other iteration of the many Jewish individuals who make up our community, I believe that we all know, or at least feel first-hand, the importance of ritual in our lives. Ritual is a common thread, through both our religion and general culture, that has us continuously reaching outward for community in large ways. During the holiday season, American Jews practice Chanukah both within the bounds of its religious intent as well as a sort of counterbalance to a predominantly Christian time of year. With each "Merry Christmas" blessing,

my circle of friends makes sure to wish me a "Happy Chanukah" in the hope that I feel welcome in a season heavily occupied by mall Santas, candy canes, and decadent lighting displays. While I enjoy and delight in the typical Christmas rituals of many of my neighbors, I recognize with amplified importance the imperative of highlighting Jewish traditions, not only for Jewish people but also for those friends unfamiliar with them who are willing to learn. Through ritual and repetition, we can teach our children and others how to appreciate and coexist. We solidify our bonds as Jewish people in a contemporary age while keeping strong the traditions that come into play during happy and blessed occasions, times of upheaval and mourning, and transitions into a brand-new year.

While ritual may feel like a prescribed structured set of actions for some, an important part of partaking in ritual is to make it our own. Feeling a connection to the motions we are going through can make the difference between a meaningful and connective experience and the sense of obligation. While connection, obligation, and meaning can all be intertwined in a healthy relationship with both Judaism and ritual, I find that listening to our inner voice will often be the determining factor between wanting to recreate an important observance for years or generations to come. From eating the same meal with friends each Pesach evening, making flower crowns instead of a full Sukkah during Sukkot, spending time outdoors during Tu B'Shvat, or lighting candles with our families on each inaugural Chanukah sundown, we are always greater for partaking in positive rituals, regardless of their form.

Neveh Shalom Happenings

Please enjoy this sampling of what is being offered at Neveh Shalom. The best way to get the latest information is through our weekly eblasts. You can sign up at: news@nevehshalom.org. Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/calendar.

Sisterhood Interfaith/BIPOC Meetings Wednesday, Jan 5 & Feb 2, 7:00pm

Women of different backgrounds come together from a desire to learn and grow while discussing questions of faith and confronting Social Justice issues. RSVP to Michelle limori-Goldenberg: smallfryeterp@icloud.com.

Sharsheret in the Kitchen, with celebrity dietitian Rachel Beller Monday, January 10, 10:00am

Join celebrity dietitian Rachel Beller, MS, RDN, and CEO of the Beller Nutritional Institute for a webinar about jumpstarting adding easy anti-cancer foods into our kitchens. Register at: link.sharsheret.org/rachelbeller.

Israel360: Daniel Sokatch, of the National Israel Fund

Thursday, January 13, 6:30pm

Please join I360 in partnership with the MJCC for this special presentation.

Women's Torah Study

Saturday, Jan 15, Feb 5 & 19, 12:00pm

Join Mel Berwin for an hour of uplifting study and conversation. All levels of experience welcome. RSVP for link to: mberwin@nevehshalom.org.

Living a Sustainably Life

Sunday, January 16, 12:00pm

Presented by English Professor Sara Safdie, join the Sisterhood for this presentation about sustainability. Contact: cantor.shivers@gmail.com.

Sisterhood Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, January 21, 6:15pm

Neveh Shalom Blood Drive

Wednesday, January 26, 12-5pm

Please consider the life-saving gift of a blood donation, especially at this time where there is a shortage, and it is needed more than ever.

Sisterhood Meetings

Thursdays, Jan 27 & Feb 24, 7:00pm

For details, please contact Michelle limori-Goldenberg: smallfryeterp@icloud.com.

Sisterhood Book Club

4th Monday of the month, 7:00pm

Jan 31: The Lost and Found Bookshop, by Susan Wiggs

Feb 28: Israel, by Noa Tishby

RSVP to Diane Kahn, dianeandjosh@hotmail.com.

Pink Kabbalat Shabbat with Sharsheret

Friday, February 11, 6:15pm

The Art of the Jewish Family Presented by Laura Liebman

Sunday, February 13, 12:00 PM

Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College, Laura Liebman's talk will focus on her new book about five objects owned by a diverse group of Jewish women who all lived in New York in the years between 1750 and 1850. Contact Linda Shivers at cantor.shivers@gmail.com

Morning Minyan and Shabbat Services

Please visit the website for more info: nevehshalom.org/current-services

Morning Minyan

Monday-Friday, 7:15am / Sunday, 9:00am

Kabbalat Shabbat

Fridays, 6:15pm

Saturday Morning Shabbat Service

Saturdays, 9:30am

In person and online options

Downstairs Minyan Shabbat Service

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

Young Families

For more information, please contact Rabbi Eve at: eposen@nevehshalom.org.

Kiddush Club

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 9:30am

Morah Sarah Rohr and Moreh Gershon Liberman alternate leading Kiddush Club.

Tot Shabbat

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10:30am

Join Morah Levia as she leads our Tot Shabbat service.

4th Fridays Sing-a-Long with Rabbi Eve

4th Fridays, 5:15pm

Join Rabbi Eve as she leads a Shabbat service for families. There'll be singing, a story, and blessings.



Member News

Thank you to everyone who participated in our October Blood Drive. There were 22 donors registered, with five of them first-time donors! 16 pints of blood were collected, which will help 48 patients! A big thank you to **Deb Freedberg** for helping to coordinate with the Red Cross this time and many other times over the last few years.

Mazal tov to **Sami Oberlander** and **Moshe Agam** on the wedding of their son **Mati Agam** to **MacKenzie Gansert** in Atlanta, GA last week.

Mazel tov to **Michelle limori-Goldenberg** and **Randall Goldenberg** whose son, **Youki**, will be completing his Bachelors in Illustration from Rochester Institute of Technology this December. In addition, he is now a published illustrator with **Marje Jacobson** as the author.

Marcia and Mark Meyer are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter **Shana** to **Michael Barta**, son of **Sandy and Thomas Barta** of Warren, New Jersey. **Shana** is the granddaughter of **Lora and the late Jim z"l Meyer** and **Eleanor and the late Sheldon z"l Halpern**.

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

Our condolences to **Gabriel Berg** on the passing of his cousin, **Steven Pories, z"l**, at the age of 81 in Dinwiddie, VA.

We are saddened to let you know of the passing on Motzei Shabbat (Saturday evening) of our dear member, **Marilyn Hasson, z"l** at the age of 91. **Marilyn** is loved and remembered by her son, **Barry (Leslie) Hasson**, grandchildren including **Michelle, Lauren, and Jenna Hasson**, and **Brett (Stephanie) Rudolph** and **Corey (Michelle) Ruudolph** and great-grandchildren. **Marilyn** was predeceased by her children, **Michael Hasson (z"l)** and **Janise Rudolph (z"l)**.

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of our member, **Sondra Greenberg (z"l)** at the age of 86. **Sondra** is loved and remembered by her daughter, **Sue Denny**

and sons **Steve (Katie) and Michael (Rose) Greenberg** along with four grandchildren.

We are so very sad to let you know of the passing of our dear friend, and CNS and Portland Jewish Community leader, **James (Jim) Meyer - Avraham Ya'akov ben Moshe v'Rachel**, at the age of 85. **Jim** is loved and remembered by his wife, **Lora**, children **Mark & Marcia Meyer** (Portland), **Tom & Shawn Fields-Meyer** (Los Angeles), and **Richard & Erika Meyer** (Portland), his brother, **Les (Marie Dalton-Meyer) Meyer** (Burlington, Vermont), and grandchildren, **Shana and Alex, Ami, Ezra, and Noam**, and **Avi, Dalya and Orly**, as well as many nieces and nephews.

We are so very sad to let you know of the passing of our longtime Neveh Shalom leader and friend, **Stuart Alan (Stu) Davis, z"l**, on November 2nd at the age of 86. **Stu** is loved and remembered by his wife, **Reena**, children **Elizabeth (Ron Jacobs) Davis, Alexander (Esther Goldberg-Davis) Davis, and Anna (Scott Weinrobe) Davis**, and grandchildren **Sophie, Hannah, Sammy, Yonah, Koby, Micah, Ami, Joshua, and Ravi**.

We are so very sad to let you know of the passing of our longtime Neveh Shalom member and friend, **Ira Gottlieb, z"l**, on November 2nd at the age of 83. **Ira** is loved and remembered by his wife, **Julie**, children **Katherine (Scott) Jackman, Justin Gottlieb, and Anne Gottlieb**, and sister, **Honey (Gerry) Kasten**.

We are sad to let you know of the passing of **Leonard Springer, z"l**, on November 2nd at the age of 84. **Len** is loved and remembered by his wife, **Arnette**, son, **David (Joanne) Springer**, brother, **Norman Springer**, and grandchild, **Anna**.

We are sad to let you know of the passing of **William Leisner, z"l**, on November 4th in Los Angeles, CA at the age of 91. **William** is loved and remembered by his wife, **Lynda**, son and CNS member, **Jay (Rochelle) Leisner**, daughters **Debra (Steave) Trelut** and **Kim Kramer**, grandchildren **Joshua Leisner, Hanna and Jeremy Kramer**, and brother, **Joseph (Jerry) Leisner**.

Our condolences to **Joel (Hilarie) Wasserman** who recently lost both his brother, **Michael Wasserman, z"l**, of Los Angeles; and his brother-in-law, **George Girey, z"l**, the husband of his sister, **Ellie Wasserman Girey**, of West Hills, California. In addition to **Joel Wasserman**, **Michael** is survived by his sister, **Ellie Girey**, and seven nieces and nephews.

We are so sad to let you know of the passing of our dear friend and member, **Rosalind (Ros) Kane (z"l)**, on October 22nd at the age of 81. **Ros** is loved and remembered by her son **Daniel (Leslie) Petcher**, sister **Ruthanne Gould**, stepson **Lee (Gina Rosito) Kane**; and stepdaughter **Shoshana (Stephen) Silver**. Her loving husband, **Phil Kane, z"l** died on November 24.

We are so sad to let you know of the passing of our dear friend and member, **Phil Kane (z"l)**, on November 24th at the age of 84. In addition to all of us at CNS, particularly our Morning Minyan daveners and regular service attendees, **Phil** is loved and remembered by his children, **Lee Kane** and **Shoshana (Steven) Silver**, grandchildren, **Samuel and Sophie Silver**, brother, **Lynn Kane**, sister-in-law, **Ruthanne Gould**, stepson and daughter-in-law, **Daniel and Leslie Petcher**, and his niece, **Sara Kane** and nephew. **Phil** was predeceased by his wife, **Rosalind**, just a few short weeks prior.

We are so sad to let you know of the untimely and unexpected passing over the Thanksgiving weekend of our beloved building caretaker and tutor/teacher in our ALIYAH program, **Itai Dewar, z"l**, at the age of 64. In addition to so many in our Neveh Shalom community, both children and adults alike, **Itai** is loved and remembered by his sister, **Loren (Mark) Troen**, brother, **Daniel Dewar**, niece, **Lindsay (Bruce Connors) Horst**, and great-nephew, **Ernie**.

We are sad to let you know of the passing of **Gayle Rosenthal (z"l)** on November 29th in Dallas, Texas at the age of 78. **Gayle** is loved and remembered by her sons, **Scott (Anna Davis) Weinrobe** and **David Weinrobe**, daughter, **Kathy Kaplan**, and grandchildren, **Joshua and Ravi**.

The congregation gratefully acknowledges the following contributions:

Please note that as a result of our migration to the new database, our Contributions List now has a different format, as this is how the new system exports the information. We are grateful for all who offer contributions. We hope you enjoy this new layout.

ADULT EDUCATION FUND

in memory of

Marika Aigner from Eva Aigner
Anna Aigner from Eva Aigner
Itai Dewar from Lisa Marie & Michael Lynch
Moritz Spiegel from Eva Aigner

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Arden Shenker from Natalie Pelavin

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Jim Meyer from David & Deborah Menashe
Jim Meyer from Jeff & Sandy Axel
Jim Meyer from Michael Olds & Gloria Borg-Olds

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Jim Meyer from Taya Meyer
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Jim Meyer from Andrea Spandau
Jim Meyer from Anne & Jim Holtz
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Rabbi Kosak *Continued from Page 7*

life without avoiding or suppressing important issues.

We have all experienced these moments of expanded consciousness when we feel deeply at ease and happy. What we all deserve and desire is to have more of these moments. I have recently started to make my way through Shirzad Chamine’s book, *Positive Intelligence*.

As part of it, I am also using his PQ app, which provides numerous meditative exercises that help me to move more readily into a state of greater openness. A long time ago, I had a daily mediation practice which accomplished the same thing, but, unfortunately, I let it drop. Thankfully, the skills are still there, so it is easy for me to “drop back in” to this state of openness. My hope is that by

actively engaging in Chamine’s book, using the app, and working with some friends, I will find a time-efficient way to enhance my own positivity in an authentic and durable manner.

Whatever way you chose, I hope that you also will seek out ways to be more positive. It’s good for your health and it’s good for your heart.

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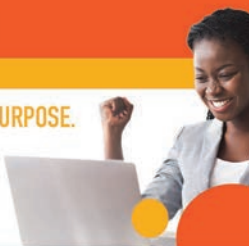
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