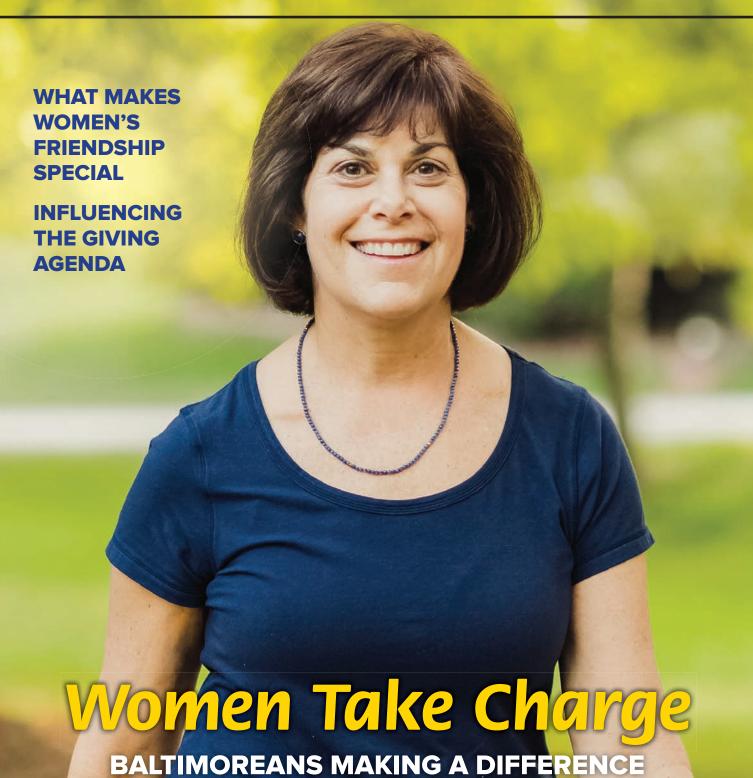


## Jewishwomen



## THE PARK SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE Congratulates

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AMANDA LIPITZ, A 1998 GRADUATE
OF THE PARK SCHOOL, is a Tony
Award-winning Broadway producer
and documentary filmmaker. She is the
director and producer of STEP, released
by Fox Searchlight in August 2017.
Amanda's new film documents the
senior year of a girls' high school
step dance team (The Lethal Ladies)
in the heart of Baltimore.
Check local listings for screening information.





Learn about Park alumni as they pursue further academic achievement, develop professional pursuits, and continue the process of choosing for themselves from the wide range of possibilities life offers: <a href="mailto:parkschool.net/alumnistories">parkschool.net/alumnistories</a>

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### CHANA Brings Educational Teen Programming For Building Healthy Relationships To Area Schools

Now in its 13th year, CHANA is working with area schools to facilitate prevention education programs about healthy relationships and dating abuse. The program provides customized workshops that help teens understand what is healthy and



unhealthy. These workshops focus on aspects of healthy relationships such as developing self-esteem, communication skills and mutual respect, as well as tackling issues of risky behaviors, the importance of the bystander and how to help a friend.

CHANA's prevention programs and workshops are tailored specifically for coeducational and single sex groups in secular as well as religious schools, because both genders can be targets of different types of physical, sexual, verbal/emotional and electronic abuse.

Zoë Reznick Gewanter, CHANA's new youth educator, has visited nine schools and camps over the past nine months delivering the message of early intervention and education in teen relationships to more than 650 students. To schedule a program, contact Zoë at the CHANA office at info@chanabaltimore.org or 410-234-0030.

### **Seeking Jewish Women Professionals**

Looking for a chance to network with other Jewish women professionals, and learn together through a Jewish lens?

Check out The Associated's Jewish Professional Women (JPW), a group of career-minded women who meet throughout the year to mix and mingle and learn from their successful female counterparts.

"It's an opportunity for women in various professions and in various stages of their careers to connect and network, find mentors, socialize and learn together," says Laura Rubenstein, co-chair of JPW. "I've seen a number of professional referrals and personal friendships develop from JPW."

Programs vary and have ranged from featuring successful



female executives such as
Beth Kaplan, former president
and CEO of Rent the Runway,
who talked about shattering
the glass ceiling to a breakfast
and LeadHERship panel
featuring Lynn Abeshouse:
managing principal, commercial
real estate, Laura Black: entrepreneur, attorney, author and
Jody Berg: CEO, founder, media
entrepreneur.

To learn about upcoming programs and how to get involved, go to associated.org/jpw.



## Jewish **WOMEN**

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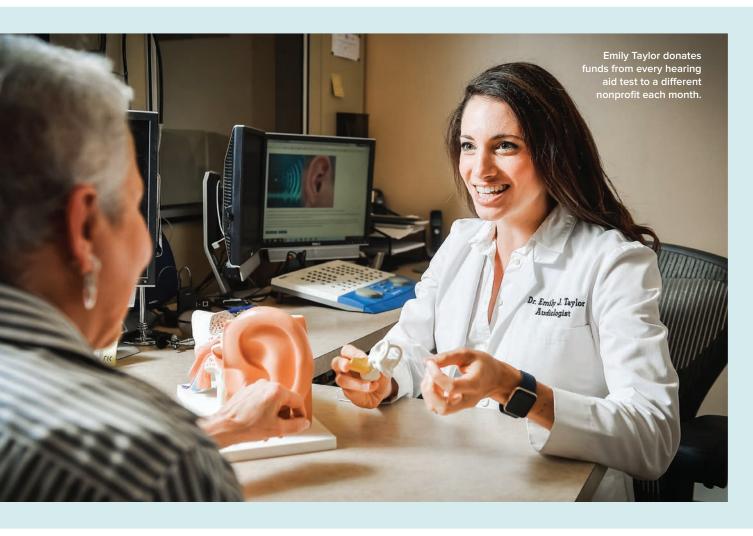
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## Packing a Philanthropic Punch:

WOMEN AS INFLUENCERS

BY MELISSA GERR

Twenty-first century women are a force to be reckoned with, wielding more financial power and holding high profile leadership roles now more than ever before.

That status extends into the world of Jewish philanthropy too, where women's giving is still "the jewel on the crown"

of federation contributions, according to Andrea Wasserman, founder and president of Social Profit Ventures.

For now, Wasserman says, conventional outreach strategies still work to keep women engaged, citing data from her nationwide delve into women's gift giving trends. But it seems their daughters —

the next generation of benefactors — approach the experience of "giving" within a community differently. She asserts institutions might be well served to customize philanthropic involvement so that younger women will stay involved.

Emily Taylor is a case in point. The mother of toddler twins, Taylor "Younger women who have more discretion and influence of how money is spent are saying 'I want my influence to be felt.'"

ANDREA WASSERMAN,
 FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF
 PROFIT VENTURES

opened her audiology practice in 2013, but didn't simply hang up a shingle and invite patients in. She set out with the additional mission of giving back to the community.

"I didn't know what that would look like at the time, I just knew that was important to me," she says.

Now, Taylor Listening Center donates refurbished hearing aids to those for whom cost might be a barrier. They also donate the funds from every hearing aid test they perform to a different nonprofit each month. Recently, Taylor added The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore's collaborative giving fund, the Jewish Women's Giving Foundation (JWGF), to her philanthropic list.

A giving circle that empowers women as funders, decision makers and agents of change, JWGF members each contribute the same amount to a community fund, and each woman has an equal voice in directing the grant making decisions. JWGF focuses its grant-making on women and children.

Taylor and her husband, Ross, give as a couple "but I wanted this to be a check [to JWGF] from me. I was excited to pick something that's really important to me, making the decisions and seeing where [my

donation] went."

Amy Harlan, a serial volunteer, a Lion of Judah level donor and 10-plus-year JWGF veteran, agrees.

"JWGF is like, 'ok team, we've got all this money, let's make something happen,'" referring to how the group leverages the women's donations into a larger sum. She loves going on visits to see nonprofits' work and describes the caliber of women in the group as "intelligent and thoughtful."

But it's important too, for Harlan to "get her hands dirty," and she does, quite literally, volunteer gardening with aphasia patients. She also gives rides to seniors through CHAI's Northwest Neighbors Connecting.

"I like to spend my volunteer time with organizations that pull at my heartstrings and hopefully make a difference," says Orlee Engler Kahn, a Jewish Community Services board member and its Associated liaison.

Kahn also negotiates giving with her husband, Jeffrey, and says, "I think it's very empowering, as a woman, to give as an individual. Even when you're married, it's important to make some philanthropic decisions in your own name."

A graduate of Chapter Two, The Associated's 10-month educational and engagement program, Kahn is also the director of planned giving

### MILLENNIAL VS BABY BOOMER WOMEN

### HOW THEY GIVE

- Boomer women are more confident and strategic in their philanthropy.
   Seventy-two percent of Boomer women are satisfied with their philanthropy, compared with just over half of Millennial women.
- Millennial women are more likely than Boomers to lead with their hearts and they are more likely to include conversations about philanthropy in their social relationships.
- A top priority for both generations of women is hunger and access to nutritious food.
- Millennial women are more likely to be interested in causes related to women and girls as well as supporting international causes.

at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, so she offers a bilateral perspective. She notices women, including herself, gravitating toward philanthropy that "concerns families, women, children, education, domestic abuse and other issues that affect those populations."

"What I also see is women assuming more leadership and taking charge of their philanthropic dollars. With their own portfolios and their own investments, women are recognizing how they can truly affect change with their philanthropy and their resources," she says.



But, heeds Wasserman, "younger women who have more discretion and influence of how money is spent are saying, 'I want my influence to be felt, I want my leadership to be felt. ... The gift is emblematic of a commitment that I and my family are making, but I'm more than just a women's gift."

Wasserman also cites differences between men's and women's giving as "transactional versus relational," so offering opportunities for deeper involvement to decide where dollars go is a big appeal all around. She also lauds federations for "building a sisterhood of women doing great things in the Jewish world," from which Taylor feels the effects.

"I'm learning from them and learning other ways to give back," [Orlee Engler Kahn] notices women, including herself, gravitating toward philanthropy that "concerns families, women, children, education, domestic abuse and other issues that affect those populations.

Taylor says. "And they're busy women who are making time to do this too, because [giving back to the community] is so important to them."

Above all, "I think it's important

that everybody give," Harlan says.
"Whether you're a millionaire or
someone who's struggling and can
only give a little bit, it feels like you're
contributing to the greater good."



### How Interfaith Families are Finding Their Way

BY SALLY WOLF

AFTER 23 YEARS of marriage to her husband Bill, Susan Fidel, who was raised Episcopalian, decided to take the Introduction to Judaism class, a seminar offered through the Jewish Community Center's (JCC) Interfaith Baltimore program, prior to her formal conversion. Although she agreed to raise their two children, now 21 and 19, in the Jewish faith, it wasn't until recently that Fidel felt the need to make it official herself.

"The Jewish religion is amazing. I fell in love with Judaism. It's very simple. As a Jew you should emulate G-d and help out when needed," Fidel says. "At services, everyone seemed happy to have me and recently made me a cake that read 'Welcome to the Tribe' for the Oneg held in my honor after I became Jewish."

Fidel, who sits on the board of her synagogue, was given the Hebrew name Eliana, meaning my G-d has answered. She specifically chose the name for herself because she believes G-d really did answer her prayers. Fidel is hoping to have a Jewish ceremony to celebrate her 25th wedding anniversary.

It used to be that marrying outside of your religion was rare, but in today's society, outside of the Orthodox



community, marrying partners with different faith and cultural backgrounds, like the Fidels', has become more commonplace.

Since 2010, interfaith unions have steadily increased; four in

10 Americans reported being in a religiously mixed marriage, according to the findings from the 2014 Pew Forum Religious Landscape Study. This number is up 20 percent from 1960.

In 2013, recognizing the

importance of addressing the needs of interfaith families, The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and the JCC jointly launched a task force to examine opportunities to welcome, support and connect interfaith couples and families to Jewish life in the Baltimore community. As a result, the JCC launched programming and services to help Jewish families of all backgrounds feel inclusive without feeling different.

Now in her third year as program director for the Center for Jewish Life at the JCC, Lara Nicolson serves as a community concierge to those interfaith families who are looking for opportunities to explore and connect to Jewish life.

"Couples come to me because they feel the door is being closed elsewhere," says Nicolson, who is in an interfaith marriage herself. "As a professional, I see the value in helping and supporting interfaith couples make Jewish choices important to them. Finding a way to welcome them and include them in the Jewish community means they will feel more connected."

Navigating marriage and partnership, even in the best of times, often brings its fair share of challenges and compromises. So, what's the secret to successfully merging families with two very different cultural and religious upbringings?

According to Nicolson, communication from the beginning of any relationship is paramount.

"For me personally, my husband and I spoke early on about how we were going to blend our families. It was important for us to keep lines of communication open between our families and ourselves. Most importantly however, is knowing that we share common life values," she says.

The Center for Jewish Life at the JCC offers a variety of classes about Judaism and Jewish family living and provides resources and support in a nurturing and inclusive environment

to individuals and couples from all walks of life.

In 2010, Mark and Debbie Davis enrolled in the Introduction to Judaism class, and two years later, married in St. Michaels, MD. When they first started dating, Debbie, a practicing Christian, was actively involved in a small women's study group that explored topics of interest dealing with the bible and theology and encouraged faithful conversation.

At the time, the women were discussing the book, *The Faith Club* by Ranya Idliby, a groundbreaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect. It seemed almost *beshert* then that Mark, a young Jewish professional from the

Pikesville area, came into her life.

"Mark wanted to impress me when we first started seeing each other so he read *The Faith Club* in one week as a way of connecting to me through participation in our discussion group," Debbie recalls.

"I would represent the Jewish faith and answer the group's questions that I knew and I followed up later on those that I wasn't sure of myself," Mark adds.

According to Debbie, Mark instantly won them over and the two continued to challenge each other to personally apply the lessons they learned to daily life. This openness to inclusivity laid the foundation for what would become the cornerstone

Sharyn Stein, whose children are in interfaith marriages, believes parents should keep an open mind.





of their relationship — a union based on respect of their commonalities, as well as their differences.

"We never look at it as who is right and who is wrong," explains Debbie, "but rather what can we learn from one another so we can grow stronger together."

"We were then, and we are now, two people of faith with different religions. We feel lucky to have our families, on both sides, be supportive and open," says Mark.

Both Debbie and Mark feel connected to Interfaith Baltimore and are working with Nicolson to help expand the program's resources. They are looking forward to participating in the Love and Religion class, a program designed for all life cycles, and continuing to network and learn from others on similar paths.

Today, one-quarter of millennials (27 percent) say they were raised in a religiously mixed family. Recognizing the impact this can have on extended family members, particularly grandparents, makes programs such as those offered at the Center for Jewish Life even more relevant.

Sharyn Stein, former director of the JCC's preschool and kindergarten program, served as a facilitator to one of the early "Grandparents Circle" seminars. Stein, a recently retired school counselor and mother of three adult children — all of whom are in mixed faith marriages — stressed the importance of keeping an open mind.

"It's important to judge the choice of your child based on what you see in front of you, not by religion," says Stein. "Get to know why your child chose the person they chose and have faith in your child."

The interfaith grandparents program today helps empower participants to share with their children and grandchildren their Jewish traditions and values in a loving and open manner without crossing boundaries. The threesession seminar provides support to Jewish seniors who may need guidance in dealing with sensitive issues regarding religion, heritage and culture.

Stein says in her family they approach the holidays with a huge amount of sensitivity.

"We try to make sure everyone is included and participates in all festivities, perhaps with a different cultural slant," she explains. "It is important to all of us that diversity and acceptance be part of our value system and we respect everyone's differences."

Visit the interfaith website at interfaithbaltimore.org for more information or questions about programming, resources and support.

### Recommendations for Interfaith Couples Considering Marriage

- Talk about what religion means to you early in your relationship.
- If children are part of your future plans, make sure their religious upbringing is part of your early conversations.
- Learn about, and share each other's religious traditions take classes, read articles and books, visit interfaith family websites, speak to and meet with clergy, attend religious services together.
- Begin considering what you want to incorporate within your interfaith family.
- Always show respect to your partner even though you may not understand or agree.
- Talk to your parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. about your interfaith relationship. Let them know what is important to you, and work to maintain open lines of communication.
- Celebrate holidays together with each other's family to learn and experience these together so you can make choices for your family.

Source: Beth Land Hecht, Jewish Community Services



Whether it happens suddenly or is expected, one is never really prepared for the death of a spouse. The weeks and months following can be overwhelming as one handles untold grief coupled with the process of adjusting to a new reality.

Yet for many women, this new reality brings a new fear for their future — a fear for their financial health.

"I've found that women, no matter how much money they have on paper, fear they will end up like the bag lady," says Dorie Fain, founder and CEO of &Wealth, a financial advisory firm for women who are managing major life events and their finances for the first time.

Fain says that women are better off not to wait until they are in a crisis before they think about their finances. "I often find widows surprised by how much there really is or shocked by how little is left."

It is for that very reason that in all marriages, women need to understand their family finances way before something happens.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Even if one's husband is in charge of the finances in a marriage, Fain says, it is important for women to stay informed of basic financial information.

That includes the name of a financial advisor, account numbers, titles, who to call and account

passwords. Passwords should be readily available in a safe place like a cheat sheet or an online password keeper and updated immediately when changed. It is also important to know where documents are kept, including mortgage statements, bank statements and insurance policies.

"Often I see women who really have no idea how much the monthly bills are and where to go to find out," says Fain.

Eleanor Fried, service coordination team manager for Jewish Community Services (JCS) encourages women to periodically check their credit report during their marriage as she's seen examples of husbands not paying all the bills. She also urges married women to establish credit in their own name while married.

"If something happens and you need to strike out on your own, having a good credit history will help you get what you need," she says. "You don't want that financial shock when you apply for credit on your own."

### WHERE DO I BEGIN IF MY HUSBAND PASSES AWAY?

While you are grieving, sifting through your finances can simply be overwhelming. It's important to surround yourself with people you trust. And that includes a trusted financial advisor.

"Our anxiety can cause us to rush into unwise decisions," says Fain, "like selling a stock too soon and not understanding the tax consequence or keeping a house too long due to emotional attachments, when you are

no longer able to afford it."

One of the first steps is to make a list of assets, sources of income and expenses. Then make a list of priorities. What financial projects need to be addressed within the next few months and what can be dealt with down the road. You don't want to be overwhelmed with too many decisions and you don't want to force yourself to make a decision before you are ready.

#### WHAT CAN I AFFORD?

Whether it's with your financial advisor or with an organization like JCS, professionals can work with you to determine what you will need for the future and help you develop a plan to ensure you get there.

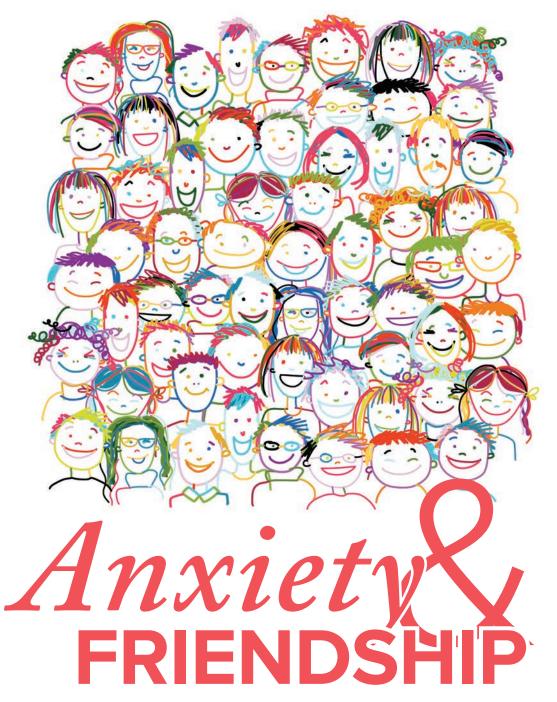
Once you understand what you have, it's important that you set aside at least a cash reserve. This provides piece of mind and provides flexibility if there are unanticipated expenses, such as a new roof, medical emergency or unexpected downturn in the market, explains Fain.

JCS will spend time with women reviewing their income and expenses and providing suggestions on how and where to cut, when possible. JCS also encourages clients to apply for benefits, including social security, to see if they are eligible and can assist with the process.

And, Fried adds, sometimes JCS professionals will sit down with a woman who brings in her bills to see how they might be able to restructure them or get certain fees waived.

The process usually takes between one and two months. Many clients become financially independent again in six months to one year, although some clients take a little longer as every circumstance is different.





## Encouraging Relationships for Children with Social Challenges

BY LINDA L. ESTERSON

Sara Goldberg\* has seen her eight-year-old daughter's anxiety levels increase recently.

"It started in nursery school," says this Pikesville mother. "But it's a lot more noticeable now. It started as social and now it's (evident) in other things."

A most recent example was on

her daughter Shana's\* last day of camp. When performing a dance for parents and staff, Shana chose not to participate. She feared she would "mess up" the girl next to her, and that would detract from the girl next to her *and* the girl next to her.

The condition also impacts her success at school as fellow classmates

pick on her. As a result, she has a hard time making friends. Despite soliciting help from teachers, certain children play on her weaknesses, her mom says.

"If you look at her, she's a beautiful, happy, sweet girl," Sara explains.
"You don't think anything is wrong.
There are little social skills that are



off just enough to make it hard for her."

Shana's anxiety is linked to her Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis, for which she takes medication. It helps somewhat with her defiant tendencies, another symptom of the condition, as well as distractedness and disorganized thinking.

Building relationships proves challenging for children with attention or anxietyrelated difficulties, which may be present as part of a learning disability or occur independently, says Faye Friedman, program director for SHEMESH, a program of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. SHEMESH provides educational support for Jewish children with learning differences.

Behaviors like impulsivity, interrupting and a lack of focus can deter children from befriending others, Friedman adds.

"Changing the topic without warning, jumping from one thing to another is difficult to follow," Friedman notes. "It also can be interpreted as rude. The child may be bursting with ideas, but it is frustrating for both conversational partners."

Children with speech or language disabilities and lack of proficiency also find themselves unable to adequately express their thoughts and feelings and socialize with others.

"We take for granted the socialization piece," says Friedman. "It's when you're trying to teach someone, you realize how complex it really is."

Inclusion in school, camp and outside activities provides mutual benefit for children with social challenges, as well as others who need to learn to relate to them.

"It's not just a one-way relationship," Friedman explains. "It's more than tolerance and kindness."

Fitting in is an example of the human need to be connected to other people, says Stacey Meadows,

"CHOOSE WELL WHEN
YOU CHOOSE A CHILD
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CHILDREN IN ADVANCE FOR
THE PLAYDATE ALSO HELPS ..."

— FAYE FRIEDMAN, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SHEMESH

LCSW-C, manager of Jewish Community Services' (JCS) child therapy services.

"All of us in some ways want that," says Meadows. "It's an important crusade to go on as parents to find connections and acceptance for our children. It's more challenging for parents of children with special needs ... especially if a child's communication skills or social skills are not at the same level as their peers."

Friedman suggests that parents create playdates for their children

with challenges starting when they are young. Parents should remain nearby during the playdates, and limit the number of children, even to one-on-one, to create the greatest chance for success.

Creating the right opportunities also proves essential. Find common interests like bowling or swimming or even going out for ice cream. Choose an ideal partner who exhibits patience, is easygoing and may be more willing to follow rather than lead.

"Choose well when you choose a child to come over," Friedman says. "If your child is bossy or socially anxious, do not choose someone with the same traits. Find a good match."

If a playdate goes badly, talk to the child about it, she adds. Discuss what went wrong, what different choices could be made and what to do the next time. Preparing children in advance of the playdate also helps, especially if they discuss what they like to do and what their friends prefer.

Martha Goodman's fun-loving, 13-year-old daughter, Meira, has Down Syndrome. Her characteristic language and other delays cause others to not view her as someone to befriend or socialize with regularly. However, she succeeded at Camp Kesher in New York, passed the deep water test and made a few friends during her time at the month-long overnight camp.

But back home in Baltimore, she's in a self-contained class of five girls at Bais Yaakov School for Girls.

## TIPS FOR ALL PARENTS

- Teach your children acceptance, to be open and friendly to everyone, including those who are different.
- Discourage mean behavior toward others; teach empathy and respect.
- Practice social skills.
- Model good behaviors in relationships.
- Find common interests and encourage joint participation.
- Schedule repeated playdates to develop relationships.
- Be thoughtful of time leave them wanting more.
- Stay close by during playdates.
- Consider what environments over or under stimulate your child.

Compiled from JCS, SHEMESH and CJE

## SUGGESTED READING

Your Defiant Child: 8 Steps to Better Behavior by Dr. Russell Barkley

It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend by Richard Lavoie

Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success by Karl Albrecht

What To Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner, Ph.D.

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss



SHEMESH provides a weekly social group with the girls to explicitly teach problem solving and conversation skills. In addition, the girls have daily opportunities to interact at specials, lunch and during break times with their typically-developing peers.

The girls collaborated with 12 other sixth graders and performed at the grade bat mitzvah dinner earlier this year. And Meira has been invited to bat mitzvah parties for girls her age. But other than that, her mother says, she has limited contact with them outside of school.

"No one calls her, no one invites her over," Goodman says. "She has almost no purely social contact with kids other than the monthly Yachad event." Yachad, a Jewish organization, offers social events for individuals with disabilities.

Meira attends a long school day, goes to the Macks Center for Jewish

Education's
(CJE) Gesher
LaTorah,
a religious
school for
children with
significant
disabilities
and a Sunday
afternoon
program. She

participates in activities a few days a week after school. There is limited opportunity to make friends in inclusive settings.

"Find opportunities to have children participate in things they enjoy with other children," suggests Rachel Turniansky, director of disability and inclusion services at the Macks CJE and principal of Gesher LaTorah. It goes a long way to building a friendship."

"Sometimes there may need to be facilitation from the parent. If you are playing a board game and taking turns, you may need to explain to the other child and parent, 'He really wants to play the game but I'm going to help.' We want it to be a fun experience for everybody but it may mean changing the way the game is played."

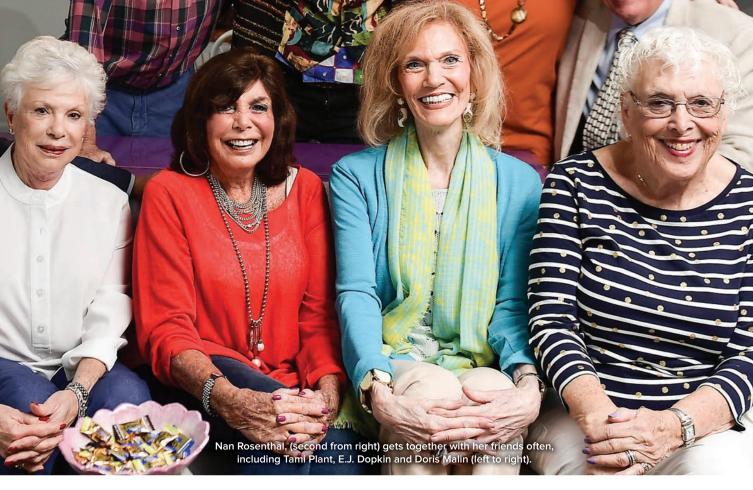
A few months ago, Meira invited a schoolmate for dessert. The playmate followed Meira's lead, but the playing wasn't parallel because of their cognitive differences, Martha says.

Yet Martha understands the value of these friendships.

"I want people to value Meira for who she is, and what she has to offer. Even if her relationships are limited or circumscribed, they are still very valuable. The more people who know her, the safer and happier and connected she'll be."



\*Sara Goldberg and Shana Goldberg are pseudonyms.



# Frences!

BY CAROL SORGEN

## "What would life be without friends?!" exclaims Randy Jacobs.

"I'd be at a loss without my family and friends," continues the 64-year-old Jacobs, who has known her best friend, Pam Schneider, virtually since birth. The two are just six months apart in age, grew up as next door neighbors, and now live around the corner from each other in Northwest Baltimore County. Not only are Jacobs and Schneider best friends, so too are their daughters.

Though Jacobs is long divorced and Schneider long married, that

makes no difference in their relationship. "I'm one of the family," says Jacobs. The two families even take an annual beach trip together every summer (though these days, with everyone's busy schedule, it's usually just the adults).

"She is my go-to person," says Jacobs, director of operations at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. "She knows everything — and more — about me, and vice versa. She's my rock."

The two "besties," as the young folks say, do have other friends as well. Jacobs has two pals whom she first met in fourth grade, and though she doesn't see them as often as she sees Schneider, when she does, "time melts away."

"And there's never been a family event that we haven't shared together," Jacobs adds. "We'll always be Ellen/ Laurie/Randy...all one word," referring to her grade school friends.

Jacobs has also always made it a priority to make new friends, especially since her married friends are not always available to join her on, say, a trip to Alaska.

But it's her longtime friends who share her history ("they knew me when"), are part of her present, and, hopefully, will be there in the future



Melissa Shear Langer's busy life can make it hard to see her friends, but she says they all know they are there for each other.

to share in both the good times, such as a child's wedding, and the sad times, such as the deaths of parents.

"Friends mean support," says Jacobs.

Good friends already know how helpful they can be to one another, but researchers are also extolling the benefits friendship can have on our health, observes Dr. Miriam Alexander, medical director of Employee Health and Wellness at LifeBridge Health.

"There is strong evidence that there are many physiological benefits of friendships," says Alexander, noting that:

- Friends can inspire each other to adopt healthier lifestyles.
- Social ties reduce stress, which can lower blood pressure.
- Hanging out with friends lowers the risk of depression.
- Dementia is less common among folks who have strong social ties.
- Support from friends can lower your risk of heart disease.

Developmental psychologist Susan Pinker, author of *The Village*  Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make Us Healthier, Happier and Smarter, also notes how friendships can give us more than just the "warm and fuzzies."

"Those with a tightly connected circle of friends who regularly gather...are likely to live an average of 15 years longer than a loner," says Pinker.

Pinker also observes that people with active social lives have greater physiological resilience and recover faster after an illness than those who are solitary. She cites a recent study of women with breast cancer which found that those with a large network of friends were four times as likely to survive as women with sparser social connections

What researchers are beginning to find, Pinker explains, is that social contact switches on and off the genes that regulate our immune responses to cancer and the rate of tumor growth.

"Social connections are as protective as regular exercise," says Pinker.
"Those with the most face-to-face connections have a two-and-a-half-year survival advantage over those with the same disease who are isolated.

"A hug, a squeeze on the arm or a pat on the back lowers one's physiological stress responses, which in turn, helps the body fight infection and inflammation," she continues. "Being there in person is key."

Which means, says Pinker, that while Facebook may help you reconnect with people from your past or even meet new friends, carrying on a friendship solely online will not provide you with the same physiological and emotional benefits that a night out with your BFF will.

In discussing friendships in these hectic times, Helene Cooper, a therapist at Jewish Community Services, shares concerns that many of us may consider our online friends to be a satisfactory substitute for the friends we used to spend time with in the real world, but have lost touch with over time.

"Online relationships have some value, but can't take the place of spending time with people who genuinely care about us," says Cooper. "The beauty of friendship is in tending to each other's needs, sharing good times and hard times, feeling supported and valued, which is enhanced by spending time with the people who matter to us."

"Be open to new friendships at every stage of life," Cooper says, adding that "you're never too old to make new friends." Volunteering (consider The Associated), taking a yoga class, joining a book group, or a knitting club are just a few of the options to meet potential new friends who share your interests.

"The beauty of friendship is having people in our life who care about us," Cooper says."

That's not to say that texting and social media don't have their place. For community organizer Rachel Kutler, 29, who has spent the past year living in El Salvador, technology has helped her remain in almost constant contact with her friends in Baltimore and across the country. "I'm thousands of miles away but we haven't lost touch at all."

That's important, says Kutler, because as she gets older she finds that she treasures her longtime friends even more.

"When I was younger, I had a lot of different circles of friends," says Kutler. "Now I have a core group of friends I've known for years. ... they're people I know and love and can count on."

Kutler has also found that friendships go through stages; she's now at the point where many of her friends have serious relationships — as does she — or are getting married, and they're learning to incorporate the new partners and spouses into the friendship circle. "Being in a relationship means having friends in a way we haven't experienced before," she says.

For Melissa Shear Langer, 42, having young children and a busy career as an optometrist influences the amount of time she can spend with her friends. "It's hard for us to see each other," she admits, so, like Kutler, she and her friends supplement their occasional

get-togethers with texting and social media

While she'd like to spend more face-to-face time with her friends, Shear Langer says they all know that they're there for each other, in happy times and in tough times. "My friends remind me of what's important in life...to have fun, to laugh, and to realize we're not alone."

Getting older can also bring an end to friendships, whether through illness, death or simply a friend moving out of town to begin a new chapter in life.

For Nan Rosenthal, a special events planner, the past several years has seen the death of a very close friend she had had since their days together at Camp Louise, the illnesses and deaths of several other close friends, and the relocation out of state of other longtime friends.

These difficult changes have made Rosenthal treasure even more the many friends she does have, from camp friends to high school and college friends to friends she has met through her public relations career, her dance, theater and television experience, as well as her board positions and many volunteer activities.

"I have a wide range of friends," says Rosenthal, "without regard to color, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, income or age ... I choose my friends because I can trust them, have fun with them, learn from them and enjoy the many facets of these non-judgmental, interesting and loving relationships.

"I feel very lucky to have such loyal and trusted friends in my life," Rosenthal continues. "They are my support system and I am theirs, for which I am most grateful."

The bottom line, says Cooper, is "to value the special and irreplaceable friends in your life, and to be open to growing in friendship with the new people you come across throughout the course of your daily living."

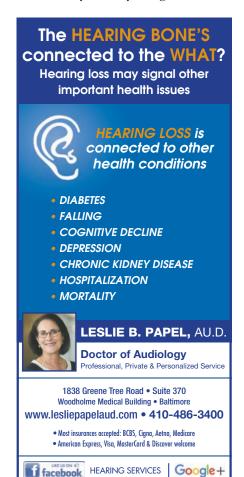
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## Women Take Charge

Whether it's of their health or their community, these three women are taking charge.

BY SARA MALINOW

## **SALLY DAVIS**A Birthday Wish

In the excitement and anticipation of gift opening, we can all shamefully admit that the card, the most genuine and personalized part of any gift, is often the last thing on our minds in the birthday gift ripping race.

But for those living with so little, it is often not what is beneath the wrapping, ribbons, bows or cards that is important, but simply the wrapping, ribbons, bows and cards themselves.

For VolunTeam leader Sally Davis, it was this experience that fueled her desire to celebrate those who often go uncelebrated.

Davis, a Philadelphia-raised, Goucher-graduate, part-time dentist and proud mother of two, started a

"IT WASN'T ABOUT WHAT WAS BENEATH THE WRAPPING, BUT THE FACT THAT WE HAD MADE HIM FEEL SPECIAL."

- SALLY DAVIS

VolunTeam through Jewish Volunteer Connection (JVC) to provide birthday parties to children living at the Sarah's Hope at Hannah More shelter.

Her inspiration came from an



article she read in a Southwest airplane magazine titled, "Birthday Party Project." She described it as a piece about birthday parties at homeless shelters that are devoted to changing a child's life.

With several years of involvement, service and leadership under her belt, including serving on the board and as chair at Goucher Hillel, participating in ACHARAI Cohort V, a Jewish leadership program, volunteering at



Beth Tfiloh and being a board member and part of a VolunTeam at JVC, Davis reached out to JVC's Ashley Pressman and Erica Bloom to jumpstart her idea. JVC's close relationship with local shelter Sarah's Hope at Hannah More led to a conversation to see if this was a concept that could be actualized. The shelter was thrilled and said this VolunTeam would fill a need.

After a few months of preparation, coordinating with the shelter and approaching the community for donations, Davis and her VolunTeam held their first birthday party for those celebrating July birthdays at the Sarah's Hope shelter. The party was filled with decorations and goodies donated from local retailers. Davis' VolunTeam, whom she calls her 'Party Pals,' provided each child with a goodie bag filled with toys and treats.

Davis recalls the smile on one birthday boy's face when he received his very own present with a card reading "Happy Birthday Chris" in big, bold letters. "He was so excited his name was on it," Davis remembers. "It wasn't about what was beneath the wrapping, but the fact that we had made him feel

that is where she found herself when she visited the Kids Safe Zone in Baltimore City with The Associated's

"THE IDEA IS TO TRY TO EXPOSE THESE KIDS TO AS MANY JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES AS POSSIBLE. NETWORKS ARE SO IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCESS AND WE REALLY WANT TO BUILD THAT FOR THESE KIDS AND SHOW THEM THAT 'WE HAVE A CONNECTION FOR YOU.'"

- SARAH DAVID

special." For Davis and the other volunteers, that was the moment that validated all their time and effort.

## **SARAH DAVID**Promoting A Future

Attorney and new mother Sarah David was never one to get down on the floor with a group of kids and start teaching games. However, Young Leadership Council (YLC). That visit caused her to realize the enormous potential of young children and the difference she could make in their lives.

With the help of JVC and the Kids Safe Zone, David created a VolunTeam program that educates these youngsters about various job possibilities. Underlying this mission is the realization that many of these

Thanks to the Edward A. Myerberg Center, Roz Cornblatt ran a 5K for the first time at age 73.

youngsters have little exposure to the wide range of jobs in our communities.

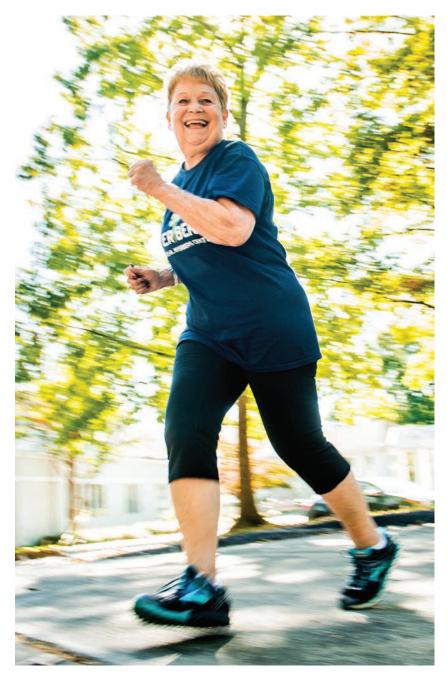
Initially, David's VolunTeam consisted of fellow prosecutors, members of the Baltimore City Bar Association, her YLC classmates and her own network. Over a six month period, they met bi-weekly with the group, talked about what they do and worked together on a mock trial that showcased a real world scenario.

Through her newfound connections and growing network over the past year, David, with the help of VolunTeam lawyer, Mark Edelson, has since expanded its VolunTeams to include other professionals, such as dentists, nurses, financial workers, even Under Armour employees.

"The idea is to try to expose these kids to as many jobs and opportunities as possible," David says. "Networks are so important when it comes to success and we really want to build that for these kids and show them that 'we have a connection for you."

David has always been a volunteer, whether as an undergraduate student at Johns Hopkins University teaching civics in schools, tutoring English for Sudanese refugees while living in Cairo, mentoring children after school while working in the Counterterrorism Division of the New York City Police Department or tutoring at a Maryland prison for the Goucher Prison Education Partnership after law school. However, it was the children she met at the Kids Safe Zone, while simultaneously working as a prosecutor on a case that took place in the same neighborhood as the Kid Safe Zone, that inspired her to create a program where she could also make a lasting impact.

Now a mother to a five-month



old, David hopes to expand the VolunTeam further and provide these children with inspiration from as many occupations and outlets as possible.

"Every time I go, I'm impressed, excited and motivated by these kids and it is exciting to see what they take out of it each time," she says.

To learn more about Sarah David's VolunTeam contact her at sarahrdavid@gmail.com. Go to jvcbaltimore.org for volunteer opportunities.

### **ROZ CORNBLATT**Age is Not a Factor

For many, running a 5K is a rather challenging feat. For 73-year-old Roz Cornblatt, it was a goal that she was determined to complete.

In June of 2016, Cornblatt, proud mother, grandmother and Edward A. Myerberg fitness center regular, crossed the finish line of the Charm City Women's Classic, to the rousing cheers of family and friends.

Euphoria is the one word Cornblatt used to describe that special moment. Recalling her lack of athleticism in school and her not-so-strong back, Cornblatt never saw running a 5K in her future, let alone finishing in 11th place for her age group. "I would have taken 20th place," Cornblatt jokes. "But it's not about where you finish, but that you finish."

Cornblatt first got the idea to run the race from Ross Wilson, her personal trainer at The Myerberg Center. For the past two years, she's worked with Wilson, coming in three days a week for one-hour sessions. He inspired her to be active each day and even ran the race with her, side-by-side, from start to finish.

"He changed my life completely with exercise," Cornblatt says of Wilson. "I never would have thought I could have done it if it weren't for Ross."

Besides training on her own,

walking around Meadowood Park or her neighborhood every day, Cornblatt owes much of her fitness success to The Myerberg.

"The Myerberg had a HUGE impact," Cornblatt recalls. "It's not

and work to achieve them.

One year later and Cornblatt has already run another 5K and plans to start training again for another. She says that despite daily feelings of doubt, she kept going to prove to

## "IT'S NOT ABOUT WHERE YOU FINISH, BUT THAT YOU FINISH."

ROZ CORNBLATT

just a gym, but a gym for seniors, and that makes a difference." She remembers going to work out and seeing the trainers helping 80- and 90-year-olds reach their fitness goals. It was moments like these that inspired Cornblatt to set her own fitness goals

others and to herself that she could achieve her goals.

"Just do it," she says. "Get off the sofa and move your body because the feeling is absolutely wonderful."

Learn more at myerberg.org.







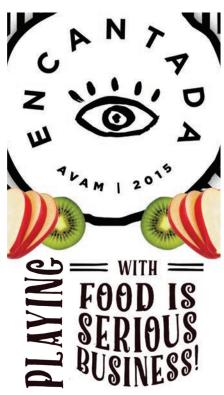






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# THREE YOUNG JEWISH WOMEN TALK WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JEWISH

BY ROCHELLE EISENBERG

**IN 2013,** the Pew Research Center released a landmark study, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," which asked Jews in 50 states what being Jewish means in America today.

What it found was that 93 percent of Jews in the Greatest Generation (born 1930-1946) identified as Jewish on the basis of religion, whereas only 68 percent of Millennials did. Meanwhile 32 percent of Millennials described themselves as having no religion, identifying as Jewish on the basis of ancestry, ethnicity or culture. Yet, despite the changes in Jewish identity, 94 percent of U.S. Jews said they were proud to be Jewish.

What about Baltimore's Jewish women? As young Jewish families move outside the traditional Jewish zip codes to downtown, Lutherville-Timonium, even Harford County neighborhoods, many still connect to their Judaism, particularly after they had children. These three women talk about what Judaism means to them.

32 percent of Millennials described themselves as having no religion, identifying as Jewish on the basis of ancestry, ethnicity or culture.



### **LUCY LEIBOWITZ**

### I GREW UP IN ST. LOUIS AND CHICAGO.

Today, I live in Locust Point with my husband, Steve, and our two young children, Jasper and Finn.

GROWING UP, MY FAMILY BELONGED TO A REFORM TEMPLE. One of my favorite childhood memories was celebrating Jewish holidays together. We would often go to New York for Passover to spend Seder with my grandparents.

### WHEN I WENT TO COLLEGE, I DECIDED

to keep kosher. For me, it was something I could do daily that would make me stop and think about being Jewish. It was not so much about following the *kashrut* laws perfectly, but about being mindful. We now keep a kosher home and enjoy having conversations with our sons about why we do what we do with respect to keeping kosher and celebrating holidays.

WHEN WE MOVED TO BALTIMORE, I WAS LOOKING TO CONNECT WITH OTHER JEWISH FAMILIES. I became involved with the [Macks Center for Jewish Education's] Connector program when our family attended a Chanukah program hosted by Stacey [Harvey]. Since then, we have attended a few programs with the connectors, including Shabbat morning get-togethers, where we sing songs, eat bagels and mingle.

I WANT MY KIDS TO HAVE A STRONG
JEWISH IDENTITY and be educated
about our religion's rich history.
I hope they will be well-versed in
holidays and traditions — why we
do what we do. We celebrate
Shabbat with the blessings and we
love how our older son now knows
the prayers and has even made
challah multiple times.

MY FAVORITE JEWISH HOLIDAY is Rosh Hashanah. It is the start of a New Year and both sides of our

New Year and both sides of our family gather together.

### MY GRANDMOTHER MAKES EXCELLENT

LATKES. She hand grates the potatoes and onions, and I think that is one of the secrets. Another key is that she makes them small and crispy. We often have to convince her that she needs to make more; she always thinks no one will eat all of them, but nevertheless they are always gobbled up. She has shared her recipe, and we've tried to make them, but they just never taste as good.

OVER THE YEARS, I have become more observant and our family currently is temple-hopping to find the right synagogue to join in Baltimore. I don't speak Hebrew fluently so I want to make sure that the prayers are not exclusively in Hebrew so that I can understand what it is being said.



### **AMY AKMAN**

**LIVES IN LUTHERVILLE, MD** with her husband, Jared and, daughters, Bryn (26-months-old) and Taylor (newborn).

I GREW UP IN PIKESVILLE and my family were members of Beth El Congregation. I went to Hebrew school, had a bat mitzvah and a

confirmation. (Rabbi Schwartz also married my husband and me. My husband's family also belongs to Beth El.)

FOR A WHILE, JUDAISM wasn't as important to me as it is now. I remember I didn't go to synagogue much after high school and wasn't too involved with my Judaism in college and as a young adult.

NOW THAT I HAVE KIDS, I'm becoming involved again. My family celebrates Shabbat and the holidays. And I'm finding that everyone I know with young families feels similar to me. Many of us took a break, but are coming full circle again. And, we all want our children to go to Jewish preschool.

I FIRST GOT INVOLVED WITH A
CONNECTOR PROGRAM when I went
to a challah demonstration where we
learned about the meaning of challah.
I've also been to numerous programs
from a cooking demonstration
around Passover, where we made
different kinds of *charoset*, to Mom's
Night Out. I like meeting other
Jewish families who I may not have
been connected to otherwise.

WE ALSO RECEIVE PJ LIBRARY BOOKS.

My daughter loves getting PJ Library

books. One of our favorites was a book about Rosh Hashanah called *Rosh Hashanah is Coming!*, which we read every night for three months straight. We also loved *Shabbat Shalom*. She knew the song and we would sing it together.

I REALLY LIKE ROSH HASHANAH. It's the beginning of the New Year. I like the idea of a new start and a chance to reflect on what happened over the past year and think about what I might want to do differently.

WE TRY TO INVITE PEOPLE who don't have a place to go to our holiday table. One year, we had my husband's law school friend who couldn't go home. Everyone is always welcome.

### JEWISH TRADITIONS AND VALUES

ARE very important to me. I really like that in the Jewish tradition we name our children after those who are no longer with us. My mom and Jared's dad both passed away and our daughter, Bryn is named after both of them. My mother's name was Shelley, Jared's father was Bryan. My second child will be named after my grandparents, with whom I was very close. (Also named after Jared's uncle... I never got to meet him as he passed away in the early 90s.)

### **DEBORAH LEVI LOWY**

### I GREW UP IN BALTIMORE COUNTY

and went to Krieger Schechter Day School. I live in Baltimore City with my husband, Eric, who was confirmed at Temple Oheb Shalom, and our two young sons.

**I BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE CON- NECTOR PROGRAM** because my family wanted to connect to other Jewish families and they offered downtown programming.

### THE CONNECTORS ARE A FAMILY-ORIENTED JEWISH EXPERIENCE.

The relaxed environment and the warmth from the connectors and families feels like a local *chavurah* group. Families come as they are (chaos and all) and can enjoy a Shabbat or Havdalah with other families in the community.

WE SEE BEING JEWISH AS OUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND and culture. Both of our families were uprooted and heavily impacted by the Holocaust.

Therefore, it is important to us that our boys know who they are, where their family came from and why.

### WE WANT TO INSTILL JEWISH VALUES

in our children. We want them to grow up, be good people, and help this world. Of course, no different than any other parent.

**Short A GOOD BAGEL**, lox, and short And I enjoy Break fast...not a holiday, I know...but it is when I can get my good short.



### **RECIPES**

Here are two Jewish favorites from Lucy and Amy.

### LUCY LEIBOWITZ'S PASSOVER KEY LIME PIE

### *INGREDIENTS*

#### Pie Crust

Graham cracker crumbs or macaroons 3 Tablespoons parve margarine

### **Lime Filling**

5 large eggs plus 3 yolks

 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar

1/4 cup lime zest (about 3 regular limes)

½ cup fresh lime juice (the three zested limes plus 1-2 more limes)

½ cup (1 stick) parve margarine

1 drop green food coloring (optional)

### **Meringue Topping**

<sup>2</sup>∕₃ cup sugar

1/4 cup water

2 large egg whites

### INSTRUCTIONS PIE CRUST

 Melt margarine. Crumble graham crackers or macaroons and mix with margarine. Press into pie shell and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

### **LIME FILLING**

 Place the eggs, yolks, and sugar in a heatproof bowl and set over a medium saucepan with simmering water (or use a double-boiler). Stir to combine. Add the lime zest and juice and stir into

- the egg and sugar mixture. Cook uncovered for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until a thick mixture is formed.
- Remove from the heat and whisk in the margarine in tablespoons until the cream is smooth. Add the green food coloring, if using, and stir.
- 4. Pour into prepared crust. Place on a cookie sheet and bake for 25 minutes until edges of the cream are set. Cool. Place in refrigerator for at least four hours.

### **MERINGUE**

- 1. In heavy saucepan, bring the sugar and water to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Continue to cook the sugar until it reaches 230°F (use a candy thermometer to check the temperature).
- 2. While sugar is cooking, in a medium bowl, beat egg whites with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff. When the sugar is ready, turn the mixer speed to low and then slowly pour the cooked sugar into the bowl, down the side of the bowl, not directly onto the wire whisk. When sugar has been poured in, turn the mixer up to medium-high and beat for one minute until meringue is thick and shiny.
- 3. Add meringue to pie.

Adapted from My Jewish Learning

### AMY AKMAN: AUNT JANET'S HONEY CHALLAH FOR ROSH HASHANAH

- 9 Tablespoons butter, divided
- 3 1/2 cups bread flour
- 34 cup warm water
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 eggs
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast (from one \(^1/4\)-ounce envelope)
- 2 teaspoons Kosher salt
- $1 \frac{1}{2}$  Granny Smith apples, peeled, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick slices (about 1 3/4 cups)

#### **DIRECTIONS**

- Butter large bowl, and melt four tablespoons butter over mediumlow heat; cool. Combine two tablespoons melted butter and the next seven ingredients in a large bowl. Mix until dough forms. Turn dough onto floured surface. Knead until smooth, about 10 minutes.
- 2. Transfer dough to buttered bowl.

  Brush with one tablespoon melted butter. Cover with plastic. Let rise in a warm place until dough doubles in volume, about 1½ to 2 hours.
- 3. Turn dough onto a floured surface. Pat into an 8 ½ x 14" rectangle. Top with apples; knead to incorporate. Return to bowl. Brush with one tablespoon melted butter; cover. Let rise again in warm place until dough almost doubles in volume, about one hour more.
- 4. Preheat oven to 375° with rack in the lowest position. Butter a 9" round cake pan. Roll dough into a rope (about 24") on floured surface. Coil into a circle and transfer to pan.

  Butter plastic wrap, and cover dough. Let rise again until dough almost doubles in volume, about 45 minutes more.
- Heat remaining one tablespoon butter until it melts. Remove plastic from dough and brush dough with the butter. Bake until golden brown and firm, about 35 minutes.
- Cool in pan on wire rack for 30 minutes. Turn out loaf.









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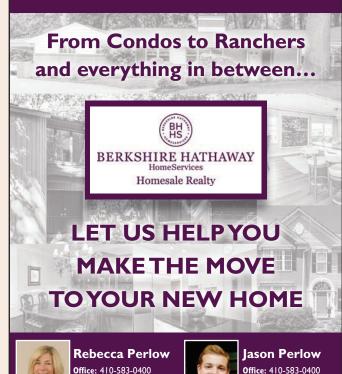
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