

Chailights

FEBRUARY 2026

Join us!

Unleash Your Creative Side: Fused Glass Butterfly Class

Sunday, February 15, 2026 | 1:00 PM

Stillwater Hospice / The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center

5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne

We invite members of our Jewish community to join us for a special hands-on fused glass workshop. Together, we will create a fused glass butterfly, a symbol of remembrance, renewal, and hope.



Emily from Sol Eye Glass will guide us step by step in creating a beautiful, one-of-a-kind piece.

Details:

Space is limited to the first 20 participants

[RSVP by February 1](#)

Fee: \$18 per adult; free for children age 10 and under

Light snacks will be served

Thank you to the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation for its continued support.

An Afternoon of Tradition, Reflection, and Connection

Interfaith Women's Passover Seder

Sunday, March 15, 2026 | 12:30 PM

5200 Old Mill Road, Fort Wayne

The Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne and the Temple invite women of all faiths to a meaningful Interfaith Women's Passover Seder.

Led by community volunteer Nola Katinsky, this special gathering will feature readings from a women-centered Haggadah and thoughtful reflections on the themes of freedom, resilience, and shared stories.

While Passover officially begins on April 1, this event offers a wonderful opportunity to explore the spirit and traditions of the holiday in advance — together, in community.

Guests will enjoy a catered Passover lunch in a warm and welcoming setting.



Details:

Cost: \$35 per person

[RSVP by March 2](#)

Space is limited; payment is required with registration

We look forward to sharing this meaningful afternoon with you!

Our mission is to support the well-being and continuity of the Jewish people in greater Fort Wayne, in Israel, and throughout the world.

MICHAEL THEISE - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Our 2025 concluded with several beautiful and meaningful Hanukkah gatherings in Fort Wayne. Before reflecting on these celebrations, we must pause to acknowledge the challenges facing Jewish communities worldwide. The tragic attack during a Hanukkah celebration in Bondi Beach, Australia, reminds us of the resilience and courage required to uphold our traditions in the face of adversity.

Here in Fort Wayne, we celebrated ancient miracles and reaffirmed our strength and continuity—together with friends, family, spirit, candles, smiles, and cherished traditions. Highlights included:

- Hanukkah cookies with our religious school (thank you, Bonnie Pomerantz, Stephanie Gottesman, and the Temple team)

- A Hanukkah reading at Barnes & Noble (thank you again, Bonnie)
- A large downtown gathering with a beautiful outdoor candle lighting (thank you, Chabad team)
- A joyous Hanukkah service combined with a special birthday celebration for Doris Gottlieb (congratulations to Doris and thank you to our amazing Temple team)

A special thank you to all the caring and generous members of our community who ensured that students away from home—our “adopted” Israeli student athletes—felt the warmth of Hanukkah.

Looking ahead, we’re excited that our long-term Camp Joe Levine staff is already planning for a wonderful summer. If you have camp-age visitors in Fort Wayne this summer, please reach out—whether for a full session or even just a week.

Our Holocaust education initiatives are also in full swing. Local schools continue to welcome our programs, with many meaningful events planned this spring, including three classes from New Haven High School visiting the Auschwitz Exhibition in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. David Lindquist’s seven-week course, *Confronting the Shoah*, is underway with higher enrollment than last year.

Finally, as we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding, please note that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s exhibition *Americans and the Holocaust* will be at the Warsaw, IN library from June 15 to July 27, 2026. We encourage everyone to explore the events planned in Warsaw during this important time.

Finally, in the spirit of the Jewish Federation, I would like to recognize the special work undertaken by Bonnie Pomerantz, Mimi Zelman, and Cheryl Schorey on short notice, to prepare and deliver 92 nutritious meals to Community Harvest. Well done!



In celebration of Presidents Day, our office will be closed on Monday, February 16.

past events

Rosh Chodesh Dinner at BB's Indian Kitchen

Eight women from our community gathered for a lovely evening at BB's Kitchen on Wednesday, November 12. The group enjoyed delicious food, relaxed conversation, and the chance to unwind and connect with both familiar faces and new friends. It was a warm and welcoming night that reminded us how meaningful these gatherings can be.



We look forward to many more evenings like this as our Rosh Chodesh group continues to grow and share time together.

Cookie Decorating and Story time

Before Hanukkah got busy, Rosh Chodesh had fun decorating Hanukkah cookies with the religious school students. Many masterpieces were created!

After we finished decorating the cookies, we headed over to Barnes & Noble - Glenbrook Mall for a wonderful story about Hanukkah. We got to play dreidel and take home some gelt. A fun time was had by all!

A special thank you to **Stephanie Gottesman, Melissa Kessel, PJ Library, Barnes & Noble - Glenbrook Mall** and the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation for making our events so memorable!



Federation Tackles Food Insecurity with Community Support

Thanks to a \$500 [Repair the World](#) Food Insecurity Grant, the Jewish Federation was able to assemble **92 complete, shelf-stable meals** for individuals and families in need. These meals were donated to [Community Harvest Food Bank](#), helping to provide nourishment and support to our neighbors facing food insecurity. We extend our heartfelt thanks to **Mimi Zelman, Cheryl Schorey, and Michael Theise** for their leadership and hands-on efforts in making this meaningful project possible. Your dedication truly helped turn compassion into action.



Bad Shabbos Movie Night Recap



Thank you to the 30 community members who joined us for our recent *Bad Shabbos* movie night at the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center! We enjoyed sharing lots of laughter and time together, and we look forward to gathering again soon for more meaningful and fun community programs.

Thanks to the Dr. Harry W. Salon foundation for its continued support.

Community Highlight: Stories from the Heart

**Jaki Schreier (retired CEO of JFFW) & Eric Schreier, MD
Jewish Federation / Community: Fort Wayne, Indiana**

A special memory about Partnership2Gether:

Jaki: All of my Western Galilee P2G experiences have been truly special. P2G has enriched our family in countless ways, including my husband Eric's life and that of our daughter, Mallory, who participated in both the 2024 Budapest and 2025 Israel missions.

One particular memory that stands out is from my many mission trips to the Western Galilee with P2G—in 2014, 2016, 2018, and most recently in March 2024, during the height of the October 7th War. In 2014, Michelle Korin greeted me with the words, "Welcome home, Jaki." It was such a beautiful thing to say, and it rang true.

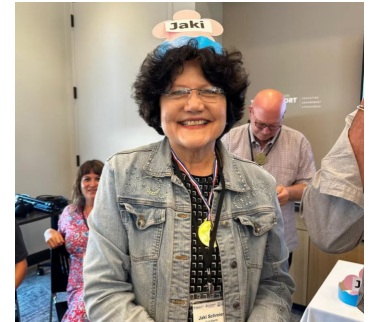
Eric: Across several medical missions to the Western Galilee, I saw firsthand how medicine can be a bridge across differing nationalities and religions. One defining episode came in 2018 when I worked with Dr. Atzmon Tsur in rehabilitation and Dr. Arie Eisenman of the Galilee Medical Center (GMC) in emergency medicine, providing health care in the protected underground hospital to gravely injured Syrian rebel fighters. I learned how coordinated medical treatment can help restore hope to those in need.

The second was a January 2025 Military Medical Airborne combat search and rescue in which I collaborated with the 300th Bara'Am Brigade at the Lebanese border during the war with Hezbollah. The mission underscored how readiness and highly skilled teamwork under potential enemy fire save lives when seconds count. Together those experiences taught me that effective medical service in conflict requires not only medical excellence and teamwork, but compassion, as well.

Shout out to a P2G person who is important to you and why:

Jaki: Some of the best people I know in this life are part of the Partnership. They have become like a family. Yet my very favorite P2G person is my husband, Dr. Eric Schreier. He has a deep passion for the Western Galilee and for the diverse cultures that call it home. The respect he holds for the dedicated medical personnel—and the work he himself has done at the Galilee Medical Center—is truly inspiring.

Eric: Kudos goes out to Dr. Sandy Bidner of Austin, Texas, for all his hard work helping to make the medical missions possible. Dr. Bidner is the immediate past U.S. Consortium co-chair of the Medical Committee for the Western Galilee P2G.



Jaki



Jaki and friend



2025 military medical airborne
combat search and rescue



2018 Galilee Medical Center

Reprinted with permission from email dated February 2, 2026

Guest Article: Mallory Schreier's Bearing Witness, Building Partnership: Reflections from a Partnership2Gether Mission to Israel

For a little over a week in late October and early November 2025,



sunset at Rosh HaNikra at the very start of the Israel Sea Trail

I traveled to Israel, representing the Fort Wayne Jewish Federation, to attend the Partnership2Gether Western Galilee Main Summit and the Young Adult Summit Add-On focused on leadership in times of crisis. Participants came from 17 Jewish communities across the United States, as well as from the Jewish community of Budapest, Hungary. I arrived in Israel knowing this would not be an ordinary visit, but I could not have anticipated how deeply personal it would feel.

This mission was not about checking sites off an itinerary or sitting through briefings in conference rooms. It was about standing with people, listening to their stories, absorbing

their grief, and witnessing their resilience at a moment when Israel is still dealing with the trauma of October 7, 2023, and what followed, just weeks after the release of the remaining living hostages on October 13, 2025.

From the first conversations in Akko and nearby communities to our final reflections in Jerusalem, the experience required us to simply be present rather than look for easy answers. Being there meant dealing with complexity, discomfort, and responsibility all at once. It meant seeing how partnership is lived, not declared, especially in times of crisis and when the government does not do nearly enough.

Over the course of the mission, we traveled from northern partner communities, particularly Akko in the Western Galilee, to the Gaza Envelope during the main seminar, and finally to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as part of the add-on Young Adults Seminar. What emerged was a complicated, deeply human picture of a country navigating profound loss while continuing to invest in its people and its future.

Northern Partnerships and Shared Society

We began our seminar by spending several days in the north of Israel with long-standing partner communities that sit close to the Lebanese border and have endured months of displacement, financial strain, and uncertainty. Early on, we toured the Old City of Akko, walking its historic streets and visiting a local mosque, where we learned about the city's layered history and the everyday life of its largely Muslim population. True to form, every stop came with generous hospitality, and by the end of the first day it became a running joke that no conversation could begin until we were offered coffee, pastries, or a full meal. Saying no was clearly not an option!



members from the Yanuh-Jat Druze community

In the Druze village of Yanuh-Jat, community leaders welcomed us

with warmth and candor. They spoke about Druze identity, faith, and the community's deep connection to the State of Israel. Druze men serve in the IDF at very high rates, and many families have been directly affected by the war. Since October 7, losses have been felt both personally and collectively.

Despite these hardships, the message we heard repeatedly was one of loyalty, partnership, and mutual responsibility. Residents emphasized that relationships, between Jewish and Druze communities and between Israel and the Diaspora, are not abstract ideals but lived commitments, tested most during moments of strain.

Across the region, we also saw how education and youth frameworks act as stabilizing forces. Programs supported through the Jewish Agency and Federation partnerships provide mentorship, structure, and emotional support to children and families under stress. One such program we toured was the A-CAT technological school in Akko, which serves students from multiple religious backgrounds. Especially in times of crisis, these initiatives help preserve routine, education, and hope.

The Gaza Envelope: Bearing Witness

Traveling south into the Gaza Envelope, through communities including Sderot and neighboring towns along the border, brought the events of October 7 into stark focus. Passing farmland and residential neighborhoods so close to Gaza made the security realities impossible to ignore. In Sderot and surrounding communities, residents described the trauma of that day, the disruption that followed, and the ongoing challenge of rebuilding trust and safety.

We met civilians who, in the absence of immediate formal support, stepped forward to organize aid, manage evacuations, and care for neighbors. Their leadership was informal but essential, driven by necessity, courage, and a refusal to let their communities unravel.

We visited memorial sites honoring civilians, first responders, and security personnel who were killed defending their cities, including Heroes Park, also known as the Eternal Pillars Memorial, in Sderot. The site commemorates those who died during the battle for the city and the destruction of the local police station. Each name and story underscored the human cost behind the headlines.



Bring Them Home Now graffiti

One of the most difficult moments of the mission was visiting the NOVA Music Festival Memorial Site, where hundreds of young people were murdered while fleeing the attack. What had been a gathering celebrating music and freedom is now a place of mourning. Standing in the fields, bomb shelters, and

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parking areas where people fled, hid, and were killed was profoundly sobering. Hearing testimonies from two NOVA survivors, Yasmin and Shon, transformed overwhelming numbers into deeply human stories of fear, courage, loss, and survival. It was a reminder that remembrance is not passive and that it carries responsibility. The somber emotions I felt upon seeing the NOVA sites in person hit me like a ton of bricks, similar to how I felt when I visited Auschwitz when I was only 15 years old.

Youth, Leadership, and the Future



The principal from the A-CAT technological school in Akko

The program also highlighted Israel's continued investment in future leadership, even amid ongoing crises. We met young people participating in pre-military leadership and educational frameworks, including the Garin Tzabar and Mechinot programs in several communities. These initiatives prepare teens and young adults for service and civic responsibility, emphasizing resilience, values, and mutual accountability.

While perspectives and views differ, the shared understanding was clear. The strength of Israel's future depends on people willing to lead, serve, and care for one another under extraordinary pressure.

Jerusalem: Complexity and Civil Society

Our final days in Jerusalem highlighted the city's complexity and the important role of community organizations.



discussion with Palestinian educators in East Jerusalem

One of the most meaningful and challenging parts of that time for me was speaking directly with Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Listening to their experiences of daily life shaped by restriction, fear, and economic uncertainty required me to slow down and sit with discomfort. They spoke not in slogans, but about families, livelihoods, and the desire for dignity and stability.

These conversations did not provide easy answers, but they stayed with me, reminding me that partnership begins with listening and that understanding this place requires holding multiple truths at once.

At the Jewish Agency's educational campus in Jerusalem, we concluded the mission with a reflective seminar that asked difficult but necessary questions. How do we respond to rising antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric? How do we communicate more effectively across difference? How do we move from empathy to action, even without wealth or influence? Even there, serious conversations were never far from another tray of coffee and snacks, a familiar reminder that in Israel, care is often expressed first through food.

We also visited HaMiffal, a grassroots art and culture center housed

in a historic building in downtown Jerusalem. There, activists, artists, and educators use creativity as a tool for dialogue, inclusion, and healing. Conversations about religious pluralism, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and leadership on the margins highlighted a dimension of Israeli resilience that is cultural and communal, not only political or military. The café inside makes incredible coffee as well, just FYI!

Reflections on Partnership

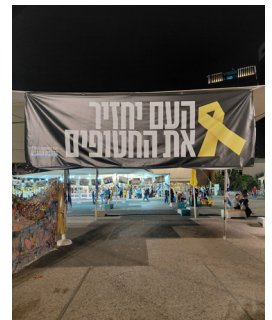
Throughout the mission, one theme remained constant. Working together matters most when circumstances are the hardest. For a community like Fort Wayne, participating in missions and seminars like this one is not ancillary; it is essential. Showing up in person deepens understanding, strengthens relationships, and affirms that even smaller Jewish communities have a meaningful role to play in the global Jewish story. From Druze allies in the north to traumatized but determined communities farther south, we saw how Federation-supported partnerships turn into real, tangible help, including funding, education, mental health support, youth mentorship, and civil society leadership.



Western Galilee P2G building

This trip was emotionally challenging and deeply meaningful. It reinforced the importance of showing up, listening closely, and remaining engaged long after the news cycle moves on. Bearing witness is not an endpoint; it is a commitment.

Still, what I carry with me most is hope. I saw it in young people preparing to lead, in educators and artists building spaces of care, in communities choosing partnership over isolation, and in conversations that continued even when they were difficult. Our Federation's continued investment in Partnership2Gether and related initiatives shows that shared responsibility is not just an idea, but something we actively do. In



Entrance to Hostage Square in Tel Aviv



Friends who also attended the P2G Budapest trip in 2024 at the Israel Gala

moments of uncertainty, that practice becomes a source of strength, reminding us that connection, compassion, and partnership are not only possible, but essential for the future we

are trying to build together. Please consider joining me for future P2G seminars and feel free to reach out if you would like more information on how to participate in this wonderful program.

Chailights

Your Direct Connection to Israel

[Partnership2Gether \(P2G\)](#) is a program of the [Jewish Agency](#) and the [Jewish Federations of North America](#). The vision of P2G is to build a global and united Jewish people made up of a tapestry of strong, lively, flourishing and interconnected Jewish individuals, families and communities working together to enrich Jewish continuity, identity and cultural understanding between Jews in Israel and their peers around the world. [Read more here.](#)

From Our Friends at [Partnership2Gether!](#)

Along with 13 other U.S. cities and Budapest, Hungary, our Federation belongs to the Central Area Consortium, partnered with the Western Galilee area of Israel. Our members have benefited from programs we've offered with guests who've come from the Western Galilee to Fort Wayne, as well as opportunities to travel in our Partnership area. We are excited to share with you a diverse list of a la carte programs from our [Partnership2Gether](#). We invite you to sign up for the programs that spark your interest! These programs are a great way to engage with Jewish communities throughout our [Partnership2Gether](#) Consortium without needing to leave your home.

SAVE THE DATE!

P2G BOOK CLUB




Sunday, March 8th

12pm CT | 1pm ET | 6pm Budapest | 7pm Israel

THE DOOR

by Magda Szabo

Conversation will be facilitated
by Fruzsi & Kriszti, faculty members at the
Lauder Jewish school, Budapest

RSVP

Save the Date! P2G Book Club Session: We'll discuss "The Door" by Hungarian writer Magda Szabo with facilitators from the faculty of Budapest's Lauder Yavne Jewish Community School.

Sunday, March 8, 2026 - 1pm EDT

Stay tuned for RSVP link.

What are we talking about this month:

Be an Eco Kid: Easy Activities to Get in the Tu B'Shevat Spirit



All year round, it's important to take care of the [environment](#). There are many, many everyday ways to help. We can pick up trash, [recycle](#), and compost. We can turn off lights and not waste

water. We can walk or ride a bike instead of driving in the car.

On [Tu B'Shevat](#), we dedicate ourselves to doing all of these things, and we also plant. If you live where it's too cold for outdoor planting, you can plant indoors or give money to a local charity or conservation effort to plant trees.

Protect a Tree



Even when we're not planting them, trees may need our protection. Is there a tree in your yard or neighborhood that could use some care?

Water it.

When the weather stays hot and sunny, most trees appreciate a drink.

Weed it.

Invasive grasses and weeds can stress a tree out. Pull them out by the roots so they don't grow back.

Clean it.

Pick up litter around your tree (and elsewhere).

Hug it!

Hey, it can't hurt.

Plant a Tree

In real life:



Here are some fertile tips for planting your own trees: Wait until the best time for planting. If the Jewish birthday of the trees isn't the right time to plant where you live, pick a different season. You can

at least use Tu B'Shevat to "plant" your intention.

Look for trees that work well in your growing zone. Your favorite tree may not be the best fit for your climate. Find a tree that will be happy growing beside you.

No yard? [Consider a container sapling](#). Some trees can grow for quite a while in a large container. Then eventually you can transplant it into a permanent location. However you do it, the more trees there are in the world, the better off we all are.

Online:

In the United States:

- [JTree](#)
- [National Forest Foundation](#)

In Israel:

- [Jewish National Fund \(JNF\)](#)

Worldwide:

- [One Tree Planted](#)
- [The Nature Conservancy](#)

Plant Parsley

Here's a lovely way to "cross-fertilize" your Jewish holidays. Plant parsley in a specially decorated flowerpot for Tu B'Shevat, and pick the parsley just in time for [Passover](#)!



Sprout an Avocado Pit

Want to grow your own tree for Tu B'Shevat (or anytime)? The next time you eat an avocado, [save the pit for sprouting](#).



More

[9 Ways to Celebrate Tu B'Shevat With Kids](#)
[Green Thumb Training for Tu B'Shevat](#)
[Explore the Seven Species](#)

[Reprinted with kind permission](#)



SHARE SOUPER BOWL SHABBAT DINNER

Warm up a cold winter evening at the Temple's "Souper Bowl" Shabbat on Friday, February 6. We'll begin with our Shabbat service at 6 p.m., followed by dinner. We'll sample a variety of homemade soups before declaring the top three "people's choice" winners. [Find out more](#) how to enter the soup competition.

Please RSVP to the Temple office at (260) 744-4245 by Friday, January 30. Let us know if you will be bringing soup and what kind. The cost is \$8 per person (no charge for children 5 and under). Please [make payment online](#) or send a check in advance to the Temple (payable to "CAV- The Temple") at 5200 Old Mill Rd., Fort Wayne, 46807. Thank you to Co-Chairs Kate & David Crell.

PURIM FESTIVITIES AT THE TEMPLE INCLUDE MOTOWN SHPIEL, CARNIVAL, AND HAMENTASHEN BAKING!

Purim Carnival

Get your costume ready – both adults and kids - to join us on Sunday, March 1 at noon at the Temple for our annual [Purim Carnival](#)! **New this year:** An extra hour of fun, with activities until 3 p.m.!

We have an exciting afternoon planned for all ages, including kids' games and prizes, a bounce house, a scavenger hunt, photo booth, mahjonn, an adult trivia contest, a traveling mime and costume parade. We'll cap off the carnival with a magic show for all ages.

This lively Purim celebration is a beloved tradition and an important fundraiser. Be sure to check out the silent auction, with a variety of great items and experiences. Proceeds directly support our family-focused activities – so bid generously!

We'll also have a Hamantashen Bake-Off contest again this year. Each carnival participant will get to vote for their favorite, and prizes will be awarded to the winner. If you're planning to enter, please RSVP to the office at (260) 744-4245 or office@templecav.org by February 22 to let us know your flavor(s). Thank you to Cassie Balfanz for organizing!

In addition to hamantashen, we'll enjoy a lunch spread of lox, bagels, tuna salad, chopped liver, kugel, fruit salad, pizza, popcorn cart, cotton candy and Purim Speakeasy (cash bar).

Tickets for the carnival are \$10 per person, available at the door, which includes everything except the cash bar and silent auction items.

Thank you to our creative Carnival Crew, including Kate Crell (chair), Stephanie Gottesman, Dawn Hammond, and Deborah Bauer. If you'd like to join the crew or volunteer for a specific job, please contact Kate (eisenka@gmail.com).

Share Motown Magic at Shpiel

The Temple's [Purim shpiel](#) is getting groovy this year! Are you up to get down? This Megillah is the real deal!

Bring the whole family on Monday, March 2 at 6 p.m. at the Temple to hear Jewish tradition retold with classic Motown flair. We'll share Esther's story of bravery and triumph with enough Motown magic to get Haman trippin'. Wear a costume, grab a grogger, and be part of a truly happening evening of soul songs and good vibrations.

Please join us in person or on [YouTube](#). An Oneg follows, featuring hamentashen made by a team of Temple bakers. All are welcome. Thank you to Cassie Balfanz for coordinating the shpiel!

Bring boxes of macaroni and cheese to shake when Haman's name is mentioned. The food will be donated to the food bank at [Wellspring Interfaith Social Services](#). We'll have traditional groggers available, too.

Hamentashen Baking

Join the Temple baking team in getting ready for Purim as we make a variety of delicious hamantashen on Sunday, February 22 at 1 p.m. to serve after the Purim shpiel. Dough will be provided, but please bring your favorite filling. [Find details](#)

RSVPs are required by Tuesday, February 17 to office@templecav.org or (260) 744-4245 so that adequate supplies will be available. For questions, please contact Co-chairs Mimi Zelman (mimiz21@msn.com) and Bonnie Pomerantz (bonniepom@gmail.com).

LEARNING CAFÉ: WHAT HOLDS US TOGETHER IN UNCERTAIN TIMES?

We are living in a moment when the world can feel fast-moving, fragmented, and overwhelming. Many of us are asking big questions about belonging, trust, dignity, and how we stay connected to one another when so much feels uncertain.

Please join us for Learning Café on Wednesday, February 4 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Temple when we explore what Jewish tradition has to say about living through complex times. Drawing on classical Jewish texts and contemporary reflections, we'll consider how values like human dignity, listening, responsibility, and community can help hold us together, personally and as a society. [Find out more](#)

Bring your lunch, and come ready to learn, reflect, and engage in thoughtful conversation. Can't come in person? A zoom link will be available in the Temple's weekly email.

ZIONISM: A JEWISH CONVERSATION ACROSS TIME

Zionism is often spoken about as a modern political movement, but it is also a much older Jewish conversation about peoplehood, land,

longing, power, and responsibility. Join Rabbi Meir on Wednesday, February 11 at 7 p.m. on Zoom as we explore Zionism through a guided journey across traditional, historic, and modern Jewish texts, asking how different generations of Jews understood the relationship between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, and why those ideas continue to matter today. [Find out more](#)

Whether you feel deeply connected to Zionism, conflicted by it, or simply want a clearer grounding in Jewish texts and history, we will share space to learn, reflect, and wrestle together. The link is available through the Temple's weekly email.

SHARE A JOY VEY MORNING WITH JULIETTE NEHRING

Families with young children are invited to share a special musical morning of [Joy Vey! A Kid-ish Shabbat](#) on Saturday, February 14 at 10:30 a.m. with musician Juliette Nehring. Meet us at the Temple to introduce your child to the beauty of a Shabbat morning service with prayer, singing, movement, joyfulness, and friends. Folks are encouraged to stick around afterwards for a nosh and social time. Thank you to the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation for its support.

THOUGHTFUL THURSDAYS RETURNS ON FEBRUARY 4

Join the Jewish Community's Thoughtful Thursdays team on Wednesday, February 4 at 10 a.m. when we assemble bags of food and household items for the Brightpoint Head Start families who attend class in our building.

Thanks to Co-Chairs Cheryl Schorey and Lily Noga. Questions? Contact Cheryl at cheryl.schorey@yahoo.com. Thoughtful Thursdays is a project of [Congregation Achduth Vesholom](#) and the [Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne](#).

CELEBRATE SHABBAT AT THE TEMPLE

Begin a winter weekend with Shabbat and share the warmth of Jewish community at [Congregation Achduth Vesholom](#) in person or via livestream on YouTube.

Rabbi Meir Barger leads services most Fridays at 6 p.m. Ron Friedman leads worship on most first and third Saturdays at 9:45 a.m., with Rabbi Meir offering a D'var Torah. [Souper Bowl Shabbat](#) will be held on Friday, February. [Joy Vey! A Kid-ish Shabbat](#) will meet on Saturday, February 14 at 10:30 a.m. for families with young children. Find the schedule at www.templecav.org.

SAVE THE DATE FOR TEMPLE'S 2ND SEDER
Passover begins on Wednesday evening, April 1 when we retell the story of the Jews' exodus from Egypt and freedom from bondage. Please save the date to join our Temple family for the Second Seder on Thursday, April 2 at 6 p.m. at the Temple. [Details will be coming at www.templecav.org.](#)



The Northeast Indiana Jewish Genealogy Society (NEIJGS) is pleased to announce our next virtual public program, featuring Steve Little.




Steve will present two engaging sessions on February 15, beginning at 2:00 PM:

- **Most Effective Uses of AI in the Genealogy Space**
- **Three AI-Powered Genealogy Projects to Illustrate GenAI Tools**

Steve Little is the AI Program Director for the National Genealogical Society, founder of *AI Genealogy Insights*, and co-host of *The Family History AI Show*. A recognized leader in the integration of artificial intelligence and genealogy, he brings graduate training in computational linguistics and natural language processing, along with a prior career designing information systems for libraries and archives. His current work focuses on endogamy, pedigree collapse, and the practical applications—and limitations—of AI in genealogical research.

****Registration is required to attend this free virtual program. The link can be found at the NEIJGS website at www.NEIndianaJGS.org/upcoming-events/.****


Thank you to the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation, the Dr. Louis and Anne B. Schneider Foundation, and the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center for their continued support of NEIJGS programming.



USING AI WITH GENEALOGY RESEARCH

STEVE LITTLE

Feb. 15, 2026, 2:00 pm EST



2:00	Most Effective Uses of AI in the Genealogy Space
3:30	Three AI-Powered Genealogy Projects to Illustrate GenAI Tools

Bring your questions! Let's explore how AI can help you discover your family's story.

****Registration is required to attend this free virtual program. The link can be found at the NEIJGS website at www.NEIndianaJGS.org/upcoming-events/.****

Thank you to the Dr. Harry W. Salon Foundation, the Dr. Louis and Anne B. Schneider Foundation, and the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center for their continued support of NEIJGS programming.

www.NEIndianaJGS.org

WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

Lion of Judah



History and usage

The Biblical Judah (in Hebrew: Yehuda) is the original name of the Tribe of Judah which is traditionally symbolized by a lion. In Genesis, the patriarch Jacob ("Israel") gave that symbol to his tribe when he referred to his son Judah as a Gur Aryeh, a "Young Lion" (Genesis 49:9) when blessing him. In Jewish naming tradition, the Hebrew name and the substitute name are often combined as a pair, as in this case. The Lion of Judah was used as a Jewish symbol for many years, and as Jerusalem was the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, in 1950 it was included in the Emblem of Jerusalem.

Who They Are:

Dynamic philanthropic Jewish woman who create social justice, aid the vulnerable, preserve human dignity and build Jewish identity. 17,500 women around the world are proud Lions of Judah, donating at least \$5,000.00 to Federation every year.

Pomegranate Pin

An ancient symbol found carved into the lintels of the earliest synagogues, the pomegranate has carried with it the concepts of Judaism for generations.

The Pomegranate pin was introduced as a way to inspire giving from women of all stations. Three decades after its inception, more than 7,000 pins have been distributed across North America.



It represents the best of what Federation does – bringing together like-minded donors to do a world of good.

To qualify, women must donate \$1,800.00 or more to the Federation's Annual Campaign.

Where can you get challah, Kosher or Vegan items in Fort Wayne?

TRADER JOE'S®

[4110 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46804](https://www.traderjoes.com/locations/fort-wayne)

[260-432-5828](tel:260-432-5828)

www.traderjoes.com



[6306 W Jefferson Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46804](https://www.thefreshmarket.com/locations/fort-wayne)

[260 -459-9691](tel:260-459-9691)

www.thefreshmarket.com



[7605 Coldwater Rd
Suite A
Fort Wayne, IN 46825](https://www.lovingcafe.com/locations/fort-wayne)

[260-489-8686](tel:260-489-8686)

[lovingcafe.com](https://www.lovingcafe.com)



[2021 Broadway, Fort Wayne IN](https://www.georgesinternationalmarket.com/locations/fort-wayne)

[260-420-5565](tel:260-420-5565)

[georgesinternationalmarket.com](https://www.georgesinternationalmarket.com)



[1612 Sherman Blvd, Fort Wayne, IN 46808](https://www.3riversfood.coop/locations/fort-wayne)

[\(260\) 424-8812](tel:260-424-8812)

www.3riversfood.coop

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

The Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne is excited to remind our families about the Jewish Studies tuition reimbursement program.



A student whose family is a member of the Federation will be reimbursed at a rate based on one-half the tuition cost per Indiana University credit hour for classes taken in Judaic Studies.

As many of our youth are attending college all over the country and the tuition varies considerably from college to college, this policy provides equitable treatment to all of our university students.

A transcript, showing the course and grade received, and a copy of a fee payment receipt must be submitted as proof for reimbursement. The Federation reserves the right to request a syllabus or additional description of the class taken. A C+ grade or its numerical equivalent must be earned in the course work in order to qualify for reimbursement.



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Family membership is defined as a minimum gift of \$108.00 to the most recent Federation Annual Campaign, which runs from November through March.

Any questions, please call Michael Theise at (260) 456-0400 or contact him at director@fwjf.org

S.K.I.P (Send a Kid to Israel Program)

Established in 1984 by the [Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne](#) in partnership with [Congregation Achduth Vesholom](#), and revised in November 1999, the program has provided a savings vehicle for many families and has helped make a trip to Israel a reality for so many of our youth. The Federation portion of the savings plan is provided by income from the Federation Endowment Fund for members of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne.



The Federation, for each year a child participates in **S.K.I.P.**, contributes \$200.00 per year per child. This is matched by a Congregational contribution of \$75.00 per year. Your parent contribution, on behalf of each participating child, is \$175.00 or more per year.

The program is available to local youth enrolled in their congregational religious school in grades 1-10. The fund may be used for an organized trip to Israel any time after grade 10 until the youth reaches age 23.

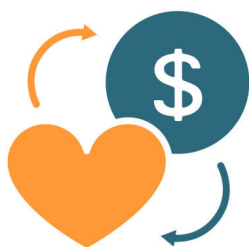
Each **S.K.I.P** account is supplemented by a gift from the **HY AND LORRY GOLDENBERG BIRTHRIGHT FUND** and the **MINNETTE AND MEYER RUCHMAN FUND**.

Looking for a bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation or special gift for one of our local youth, then please consider making that gift to their **S.K.I.P.** Fund account. An acknowledgment will be sent to you and a card indicating your gift will be sent to the designee.

Enrollment packets will be sent to all families not yet enrolled. If you do not get a packet or have any questions, please contact Federation's Executive Director Michael Theise at director@fwjf.org or (260) 456-0400.



GIFT GIVING MADE EASY



Setting up your own philanthropic legacy is easier than you might think. Through the Jewish Federation, you can establish a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with no setup costs or administrative fees. This personal charitable fund allows you to make tax-deductible contributions, invest the assets for potential growth, and recommend grants to your favorite charities over time. Whether you're interested in supporting Jewish causes or any other charitable organizations, a DAF offers a simple, flexible way to organize your giving while potentially reducing your tax burden. The Federation's staff will handle all administrative details, allowing you to focus on the joy of giving.

CREATE A JEWISH LEGACY - SEASONS CHANGE, BUT YOUR LEGACY IS ETERNAL



Jewish tradition teaches that one of our main responsibilities is to make the world a better place for future generations.

Federation's role is to secure the future of the Jewish community at home, abroad, and in Israel.

Working with local, national and international partners, we help Jews around the world live a Jewish life, and ensure that no Jew is left behind.

You can create a lasting legacy with the [Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne](#) to benefit your children, grandchildren, and future generations, while supporting the causes you care about. Using a current or deferred endowment gift, you can become part of Federation's Legacy Society.



Registration is open for Camp Joe Summer 2026!

Good news! Camp Joe is back at [Metea County Park](#). Camp will be held June 22 - 26, June 29 - July 3 and July 6 - 10. [Register for one, two or all three weeks!](#) In addition, we are offering an [Early Registration discount again](#). We are excited for the upcoming summer season! Larisa and Samantha, Camp Joe Co-Counselors

WE ARE HERE TO HELP



We are very fortunate to have a social worker who is able and willing to assist any member of the Fort Wayne Jewish community in need of services.

She works for us as a volunteer on an as-needed basis.

If you become aware of someone in the Jewish community who may need assistance at some point, please let us know. Obviously, this would be kept in the strictest of confidence. Contact us at (260) 456-0400 or office@fwj.org.



Help is Available

We know that during these trying times, we can all use a little help once in a while. For those in need, we do offer food vouchers and gas cards. Please call the [Federation](#) office at (260) 456-0400. All calls are confidential.

We are also accepting donations of gas cards. If you would like to make a donation, please send in a check with "gas card" in the memo or call the office.



Do you have a car, truck, van, SUV, boat, motorcycle, ATV, RV, trailer or airplane that you no longer need or use?

Donating them has never been easier! Simply choose [CARS](#) and their trained staff will guide you through the donation process.



The Audrey & Joe Gerson Free Loan Fund was set up to offer an interest-free loan up to \$2,000 to members of the Jewish community who are undergoing financial hardships. Please call the Federation office at (260) 456-0400 to speak to someone confidentially.

We are here to help!



Wellspring provides essential necessities of clothing, food, and personal hygiene items. In addition, Wellspring offers after-school and summer programs for youth, as well as programming for older and disabled adults. Call today at 260-422-6618 or visit our website www.wellspringinterfaith.org to learn more. All services are free of charge and no referral or voucher is needed. We are here to serve all who need our help.

FUNDS AND DONATIONS

JEWISH FEDERATION FUNDS

ENDOWMENT

- **Audrey and Joe Gerson Free Loan Fund**
- **Baum/Goldenberg Scholarship**
- **Emergency Cash Assistance Fund**
- **Holocaust Education Fund**
- **Jewish Experience Fund**
- **JNF - Plant a tree in Israel**
- **Prejudice Reduction Elimination Fund**
- **Community Relations Committee (CRC):**
To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne.
- **Goldenberg Camp Joe Fund:**
Every year we get a number of requests for assistance with the registration for our three-week Camp Joe Levine Day Camp.



- **Janet Finkel Campership Fund:**
In April 2008, Audrey Gerson established the Janet Finkel Campership Fund in honor of Janet Finkel. This fund makes it possible to help youngsters go to a Jewish Camp or to a Music Camp.
- **PJ Library:**
Supports reading anytime of the day, but we know that many families sit down to read books at bedtime, in their pajamas. PJ Library books can be enjoyed any time you want a good story.
- **The Martha Rothenberg Replane Theater & Creative Arts Fund:**
This fund was created in memory of Martha Rothenberg Replane to honor her memory and her love for theater and creative arts. The fund will be used to encourage theater and creative arts presentations and knowledge in our community.

DONATIONS

Emergency Cash Assistance Fund

- A donation was received from **Larry Mastbaum** in honor of **Cookie & Leonard Mastbaum**

General Operations

- A donation was received from an **anonymous donor** in honor of **Juan Suarez and Michael Theise**
- A donation was received from **Larry Mastbaum & Marni Blomquist** in honor of **Cookie & Leonard Mastbaum**



A donation was received from **Jo Ellen and Mike Rush** in honor of **Michael Theise**

- Donations were received from **Joy & Marc Cohen, Janet & Andy Katz, Enid & Stanley Rosenblatt and Juan Suarez**

JNF - Plant a Tree in Israel

- Donations were received from **Robert Elliott, Jr.** in memory of his aunt **Patricia Loe** and friend **Florence Schuler**
- Donations were received from **Juan Suarez**

Online Donations Accepted!

The [Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne](#) now accepts [online donations](#). You may contribute to our General Fund, or select a specific fund that you want to support. In addition, you may elect to have a donation made in Honor of or In Memory of an individual, and a card will be sent letting them or their families know the donation has been made.

It's secure, fast, and easy to support the work the Federation does to support the well-being and continuity of the Jewish people in greater Fort Wayne, in Israel, and throughout the world.

Thank you for your support. It is sincerely appreciated!



Scan QR code to donate

R.O.M.E.O.s
(Retired Old Men Eating Out)

February 5 – China Palace
5810 Bluffton Road

February 19 – BBs Indian Kitchen
3235 N. Anthony Boulevard

March 5 – CASA! Ristorante
7545 W. Jefferson Boulevard

March 19 – Wu's Fine Chinese Cuisine
4411 Coldwater Road

Anyone interested in joining the ROMEOS for lunch can contact Denny Reynolds at 260-637-0507 or dennisreynolds@me.com

2025 - 2026 Board of Directors

Officers:

President: Ben Eisbart
Vice President: Bob Walters
Secretary: Lee Pomerantz
Treasurer: Jaki Schreier
Executive Director: Michael Theise

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Rhonda Gerson-Hurwitz
Maureen Grinsfelder
Mike Rush
Scott Salon
Ellen Tom
Aliza Tourkow
Josh Wallet
Mimi Zelman

Rabbi Meir Bargerone

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Executive Director
director@fwjf.org

Jeff Griggs
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Bonnie Pomerantz
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office@fwjf.org

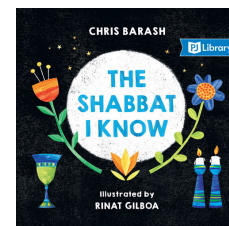
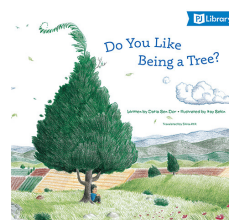
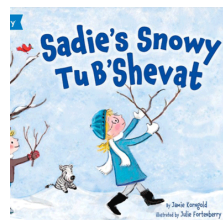
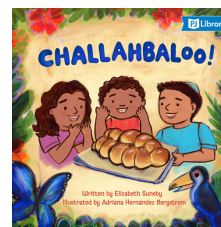
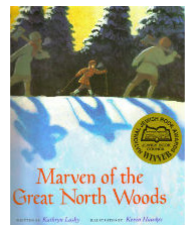
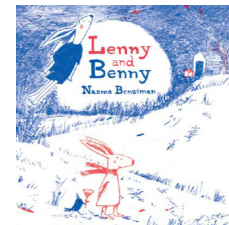
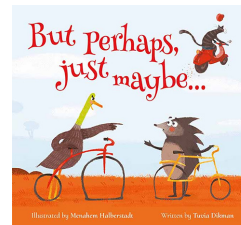
Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne
5200 Old Mill Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

(260) 456-0400 phone
(260) 456-0500 fax
www.fwjf.org



Which books did you receive this month?

A program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, PJ Library is made possible through partnerships with philanthropists and local Jewish organizations. Families with kids ages 6 months through 8 years old with Judaism as part of their lives are welcome to sign up.



PJ Our Way is for kids ages 9-11. It is kid-driven - they choose their own books, creating a totally tailored experience based on their own interests and reading level. To make the choice easier, our website includes summaries and author bios, along with ratings, reviews, and video trailers created by members themselves. Kids can also take polls and quizzes, participate in monthly interviews and challenges, post their own reviews, and comment on blog posts.

