

The Jewish VOICE

Informing and Connecting Jews in El Paso-Las Cruces

Adar – Nisan 5780
March 2020

Happy Purim!



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Jewish Federation
OF GREATER EL PASO

Up Close: Debra Kanof

The Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) has been called "our vehicle to pursue justice together, as a community." Seeking justice is a way of life for this year's JCRC chair: Debra Kanof, who has been a key member of the U.S. Attorney's office since 1987 and was El Paso's first career female prosecutor.

While her parents might have preferred that she follow other family members' footsteps and become a physician, by the time Debra Kanof was seven, she knew she wanted to go to law school.

Growing up, she lived in El Paso, Germany and Italy, wherever her father, a 30-year Army veteran who retired as a colonel, was posted. Her parents made sure she received a proper Jewish education and when she lived in El Paso, she and two brothers attended Sunday School at the Jewish chapel at Fort Bliss. When her oldest brother, Stuart, died in a car accident in his freshman year of college, the loss left a lasting impact on the family, even changing their approach to Judaism.

Her passion at Burgess High School had been speech and drama classes, where she learned to excel in extemporaneous speaking and debating. She graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in speech communication.

Her class at the University of Houston Law School was the school's first class with a significant number of women – almost one-third – yet only two women served on the faculty. Deb became the first woman to win the John Black Memorial Moot Court competition, besting one of the law school's brightest stars, a man who had been courted by some of the state's most prestigious law firms.

After working for a small Houston firm and Shell Oil Company, Deb pursued her dream of working in a prosecutor's office in El Paso and became the legal advisor to the juvenile court diversion and prosecution programs in 1980. In 1982, she moved to the El Paso District Attorney's Office to handle the Rape and Child Abuse special prosecution unit.

Since 1987, she has served in many federal prosecutorial positions, including Chief of the El Paso Division, Chief of Major Crimes and Chief of Organized Drug Crimes. As a Senior Litigation Counsel, she currently maintains a line position as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas.

As a civil rights prosecutor for 30 years, Deb sees the Federation's work as very important today. She notes that it is stunning to see how many more crimes are committed against Jews than any other religious sects including, for instance, against Muslims. It is time for the Jewish community to unite to educate others on tolerance and civility.



What do you value the most in your friends?

Their ability to accept me as I am and forgive my many imperfections.

What might we be surprised to learn about your interests?

On doctor's orders 23 years ago, I began lifting weights and learned: 1). I like it, and 2). I have a genetic predisposition for strength. I get a real kick out of lifting more than any other woman (and many men) in the gym, even at my advanced age of 66.

I also crochet, design and complete needle point, and spend an inordinate amount of time cuddling with my dog. Can going to Vegas be considered a hobby? It's definitely an interest!

Who's your favorite Jewish hero?

Ruth Bader Ginsberg! (no surprise)

What made you decide to get involved with the Jewish Federation and serve on the board?

As a young lawyer, I was very involved in many nonprofit organizations until my work in pursuing white-collar offenders began to complicate my volunteer work. Later I was on the El Paso Holocaust Museum board for ten years and served as its president. I served on the Federation's JCRC for several years as the Holocaust Museum representative.

When I got a call from Janet Wechter inviting me to join the Federation board, I gladly accepted. As I'm speeding toward retirement, I wanted to get more involved in the Jewish community. I get comfort from attending Jewish services and look forward to becoming part of a congregation.

What are some plans for the JCRC this year?

Part of (physical) security is knowing and having relationships

with the community around you, so one of our goals is developing partnerships and increasing communication and education with the interfaith community. We plan to develop community volunteer projects that enhance our commitment to Tikkun Olam throughout the year, not just on one designated day, such as periodic, routine collections for the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank.

What is your favorite Purim memory?

Purim was always my mother's favorite holiday. Her true name was Esfira, but was later "Americanized" into Elsie. Esfira was the Russian word for Esther and like Queen Esther in the Purim story, my mother was very beautiful. So she claimed the holiday and the hamantaschen.

What's the best thing about being part of El Paso's Jewish community?

Developing a sense of ethnic and religious belonging that I never had and making new friends. Our Jewish identity is very, very important especially in light of what is going on in the world today.

Born: Queens, Long Island; moved to El Paso when she was four

Parents: Irving Lee Kanof, born in Brooklyn to Ukrainian immigrants, and Elsie Rawlson Kanof, who immigrated with her family from Ukraine when she was three. All four of Deb's grandparents fled the pogroms, travelling to the United States in steerage with only the clothes on their backs.

Siblings: Brian N. Kanof and the late Stuart R. Kanof

Don't Miss in March!



March 12, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
EIPasoConnect
For those of us in our 20s, 30s, and 40s

Top Golf and Dinner
Two hours of golf and vegetarian buffet
\$5 donation to Jewish War Veterans of America
Funded by Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso
Register at jewishelpaso.org/EIPasoConnect

March 8, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
PJ Library
For pre-schoolers and their families

Courage Climb at X-Zone
4563 Doniphan Drive
Climb and read about Jewish perspectives on courage
Register at jewishelpaso.org/PJLibrary

March 4 and 18, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Borderland's Café Europa
For those of us over 65

March 4 Speaker: Debra Kanof
"40 Years of Faith-Based Prosecution"
March 18 Speaker: Melanie Benjamin
Together with Congregation B'nai Zion Book Zone
Funded by Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso
Request Shalom Shuttle Ride at 842-9554

Israel Trauma Coalition: What El Paso needed

On August 3, Jewish Federations of North America leadership reached out to Robert French, our Federation's executive director, to provide support and resources. Among those resources: paying for Israel Trauma Coalition professionals to spend time in the city to work with those on the front lines of post-traumatic reactions: therapists, first responders, and faith leaders.

Two highly trained trauma experts stayed in El Paso for a week in February, working with Celeste Nevarez and other professionals at Emergent Health Care, El Paso County's Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities Authority. For more information, read the February Jewish

Voice cover story at jewishelpaso.org/voice.

The Israel Trauma Coalition training was exactly what our community needed six months after the Wal-Mart shooting on August 3. The training was empathetic, educational, and uplifting.

Emergence Health Network invited therapists from the community to attend a three-day clinical workshop to learn new skills and strengthen their resilience. One day was dedicated to faith-based leaders and community leaders in order to develop a "leadership in crisis" approach to serving the community. And one day was dedicated to law enforcement and first responders to provide a space for them to process their

experiences and broaden their skill set.

The participants reacted positively and shared feelings of relief to process their own vicarious trauma in a safe space.

They also reported that they took away new interventions, approaches, and viewpoints in responding to crisis and trauma. The Israeli facilitators, Tal and Vanessa, took the time to understand the needs of each training group in order to provide precise educational methods.

I have worked as a therapist for nearly ten years, and I was impressed with how effortless the ITC approach was to address such a substantial topic as trauma. The interventions taught were simple, accessible, and effective.

Every attendee was able to walk away with a new set of tools to utilize



Today Rabah to Our Volunteers

Jewish Film Festival 2020

Jennifer Ehrlich and Dana Frank, Co-Chairs
 Joyce Anenberg, Wendy Axelrod, Mike Batkin, Oscar Beltran,
 Brenda Ehrlich, Romaree Herbert, Rebecca Krasne,
 Joan Korn, Lowry Martin, Wendy Siegel

Pacesetters

Jon and Arlene Sonnen, Co-Chairs
 Wendy Lanski and Robin Furman, Campaign Co-Chairs
 Debra Kanof and Monika Kimball
 Brian Kanof, photographer

Rise Against Hunger

Lee Chayes and Noel Hollowell-Small, Co-Chairs
 Joyce Davidoff, Naomi Estrada, Holly Hernandez,
 Steve Newcomb, Meagan O'Toole-Pitts, Harriet Roth,
 Marcia Schwartz, Marilyn Silverstein, Judy Weiser

Café Europa

Scott Stevens
 Paul Geneson and Guy Hauptman

These We Honor With Tributes

FEDERATION

- TO:** The Family of Ann Schaechner in Memory of Your Beloved Wife and Mother
FROM: Leslie and Robert Beckoff
- TO:** Jewish Federation in Appreciation for the Café Europa Shabbat Dinner
FROM: Rochelle Saks
- TO:** Cindy and David Metrikin in Honor of the birth of their Granddaughter Olivia Levine
FROM: Janet and Randy Wechter
FROM: Sue Bendalin

- TO:** Amanda and Adam Levine in Honor of the birth of their Daughter Olivia
FROM: Janet and Randy Wechter
- TO:** Sam Ellowitz in Honor of his 90th Birthday
FROM: Janet and Randy Wechter
- TO:** Susie and Eddie Goldman in Honor of the birth of their Grandson Nathan Pretiger
FROM: Sue Bendalin

Camp Kadima Memorial Scholarship In Memory of Leona Goldfarb and Minna Frank

- TO:** Sam Ellowitz in Honor of His 90th Birthday
FROM: Bobby Goldfarb



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The Jewish VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso

The Jewish Voice of El Paso, published ten times a year, is dedicated to informing, educating, and uniting the Jewish community by providing news items of local, national, Israeli and international concern.

The Jewish Voice will consider for publication any materials submitted that support the mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso and have relevance and appeal to the El Paso Jewish community. Articles are subject to editing at the editor's discretion and are subject to space limitations. Letters cannot be longer than 150 words and articles must be kept to a maximum of 300 words. Please email to thevoice@jfedelpaso.org

Opinions are those of individual writers and not necessarily those of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso. The Jewish Voice is not responsible for the kashrut of any product or eating establishment advertised herein.

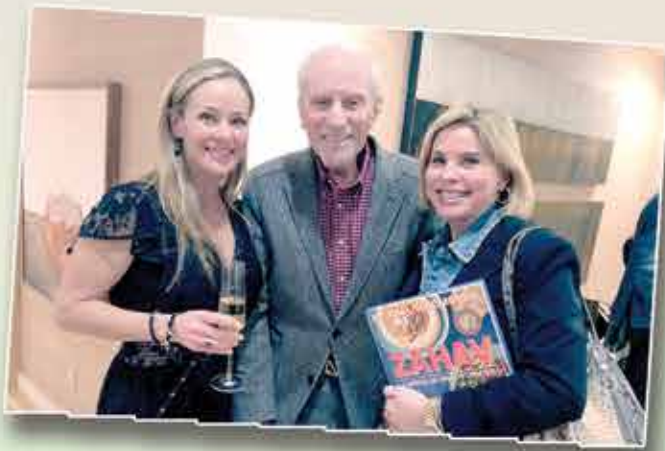
Executive Director: Robert French
 Campaign Director: Sue Bendalin
 President: Janet Kent Wechter
 Office: 915-842-9554
 7110 North Mesa, El Paso, TX 79912

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**Jewish Film Festival:
Dinner with Chef Michael Solomonov**

*Fa
& G*



Pacesetters 2020 at Globo Rojo Car Collection

Photos by Brian Kanof





Rise Against Hunger

Places



Celebrating Tu B'Shvat



Temple Beth-El, Las Cruces

Borderland's Cafe Europa


Chaplain's Catering

Gerry Chaplain

3950 Doniphan, Suite P
El Paso, Texas 79922

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goodfood@whc.net

GOOD DEEDS DAY



WHEN
March 29th
9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Temple Mount Sinai
Since 1898

WHERE
Schwartz Hall
Temple Mount Sinai
4408 N. Stanton St. El Paso, TX 79902


ALL AGES EVENT

BENEFITTING ORGANIZATIONS:
*Kelly Memorial Food Pantry
*Borderland Rainbow Center
*CASV Center Against Sexual & Family Violence
*Reynolds Home

ACCEPTING

For Birthday Bags: Cake mix, frosting, paper plates, birthday napkins, disposable cake pan, and granola bars.
For School Supplies: pencil box, crayons, scissors, glue, erasers, notebooks, folders, and rulers.
For toiletries: shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, bar soap, razors, and deodorants.
Clothes: Used shirts, sweaters, jackets, pants, and shoes. New socks and underwear.

TOGETHER With:



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And they lived happily ever after...

In many Jewish communities Purim jesters visit homes to enliven the festivities and collect money for worthy causes. They sing a famous Yiddish song-song that roughly translates to this: "Today is Purim, tomorrow no more. Give me a dollar and throw me out the door."

Once the last crumbs of Hamantashen

Haman was killed, the Jews lived happily ever after..

That's not what happened. Haman cast his lots two days before Passover and scheduled the Final Solution for eleven months down the line. Mordechai and Esther swiftly sprung to action and within three days Haman was hanging from the gallows, but his murderous decree was still very much alive. Since it was signed with the king's signet ring, so long as Achashveirosh remained in power the Jews still faced a terrifying end.

Even after Esther begged and pleaded that he rescind the decree, the mighty king demurred claiming it was against "the process." Once a decree was stamped with the royal signet ring

it was unchangeable. For two months Mordechai and Esther petitioned incessantly, until Achashveirosh agreed to issue a counter decree that the Jews should defend themselves on the day they were condemned to death. By no means had the danger passed until they were victorious the next year.

The decree had an interesting loophole since it only targeted "Yehudim" which referred specifically to Jews who refused to become heathens. A Jew who would forsake his or her faith in G-d would be spared death but no one used this escape.

The entire Jewish nation faced the ultimate test of faith and they passed it with flying colors. For a full year, every single Jew clung to Judaism under penalty of death.

It emerges that the miracle of Purim did not only unfold in the halls of power, but in the behavior of every Jewish man, woman and child for the duration of

an entire year. Their deepest connection to G-d was on full display - every single day.

More than any other holiday, Purim illustrates that Torah and Mitzvot are not exclusive to special times and places. Judaism is not only relevant on Shabbat and Festivals, in the synagogue, around the seder table or next to the menorah. We are Jews every moment of the day, wherever we are. Turns out that every day is Purim.



Rabbi Levi Greenberg

Best wishes for a joyous Purim!
Rabbi Levi Greenberg
Chabad El Paso

Be sure to celebrate Purim by fulfilling the four Mitzvahs of Purim.

1. Hear the Purim story as it is read in the original text from a genuine scroll – and be sure to bang out Haman when he is mentioned – on March 9 in the evening and on March 10.
2. Give generously to (at least) two charitable causes throughout the day of March 10.
3. Share gifts of food with your friends and acquaintances throughout the day of March 10.
4. And of course – partake in a delicious festive meal 'til you can party no more.

disappear and the costumes get stored away is Purim truly no more?

Upon studying the Megillah closely many are surprised to discover that the miracle of Purim was an episode that extended for close to a year. Often storytellers make it seem as if once

Congregation B'nai Zion

MEGILLAH READING & PURIM PARTY

**Friedman Social Hall
Monday, March 9th
6:00 pm**

805 Cherry Hill Lane

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