

The Jewish VOICE

Informing and Connecting Jews in El Paso-Las Cruces

Shevat-Adar I, 5782
February 2022

JEWISH DISABILITY ACTION & INCLUSION MONTH

“WE ARE A STRONGER COMMUNITY WHEN
WE ARE WELCOMING, DIVERSE, AND
RESPECT ONE ANOTHER.”
– RESPECTABILITY

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As Jewish Disability Action & Inclusion Month Begins, Texas Study Shows Progress



By Linda Lait Burger

As Jewish Disability Action & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) begins, a recent survey by RespectAbility in partnership with Jewish Family Service (JFS) Houston and other organizations shows that Jews in Texas overwhelmingly believe that “We are a stronger community when we are welcoming, diverse, and respect one another. Everyone should feel that their presence and participation is welcome and meaningful. We want our children, parents, grandparents and friends with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to fully participate in our community.”

According to the U.S. Census, a disability can be a physical, cognitive, sensory, mental health, chronic pain or another condition that is a barrier to everyday living. Approximately one-in-five people in America have a disability. The survey of Jews showed that common disabilities in our community include mental health, hearing loss, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic pain, and other issues.

The study showed that there are very good intentions on inclusion of people with disabilities in Jewish organizations and life, and real growth in progress on that front. At the same time, there are still challenges. Many in the Jewish community cited that “There is prejudice and unacknowledged stigma against people with disabilities.” Both RespectAbility,

which works with Disney, Netflix, Sony, WarnerMedia and others to enable entertainment media productions to be inclusive of people with disabilities, and Houston JFS which annually hosts ReelAbilities Houston a film, art and music festival showcasing inclusive films, are working on that front. Serious progress is being made as hundreds of productions are adding inclusive characters, actors, and storylines.

At the same time, religious leaders and activists want to be inclusive, but the study showed that they don’t know how. Free tools and training on that topic can be found at www.respectability.org/faith-inclusion.

The pandemic, which has harmed so many, does have some silver linings for people with disabilities as the surge in the use of virtual formats in response to the COVID-19 pandemic increased the ability of 69 percent of Houston’s Jewish respondents to access their faith community. This likely resulted from a combination of the relative ease with which more people could be included. For example, live captioning and remote ASL interpreters made it easier for those who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate. Furthermore, the lack of a need for transportation, which remains a major barrier for many with physical, visual, intellectual and/or psychiatric disabilities, enabled additional individuals to participate from home.

Jewish respondents from Texas in the study found that “increasing inclusion of people with disabilities in faith-based organizations and institutions,” as well as “enabling people with disabilities to get the education, skills, and jobs they need to succeed” is “extremely important”.

The survey was administered online from October 5 – October 19, 2021 and included members of the El Paso Jewish community. Linda is currently CEO of JFS Houston and Treasurer of RespectAbility. She is the daughter of Mimi and Robert Lait both of blessed memory.



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IZZY SPEAKS

Join us for a Community Conversation
with guest speaker Izzy Ezagui

Losing his arm in battle did not
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Wednesday, February 9 | 6 - 7PM

Streaming on Zoom and Facebook Live
www.jewishelpaso.org/calendar-event/izzy-speaks
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Jewish Disability Advocacy Day

Feb 23-24
2022

FBI, Jewish El Paso Come Together to Urge Public to Report Threats, Suspicious Activity

The FBI has reaffirmed its commitment to protect the Jewish community in El Paso and West Texas from any potential threats after the Texas synagogue attack.

Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey R. Downey of the FBI El Paso Field Office joined Mr. Robert French, Executive Director of Jewish El Paso and the Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso, in urging the public to report any threats or suspicious activity.

“The FBI El Paso Field Office has a very close and enduring relationship

with the Jewish community in El Paso,” SAC Downey said. “I have personally reached out to several Jewish leaders to assure them we will never lose sight of the threat extremists pose to the Jewish community and to other religious, racial, and ethnic groups. We continue to work with Jewish El Paso, the Anti-Defamation League, and others to protect members of the Jewish community from all potential threats. Additionally, we will continue to establish and build trusted relationships across West Texas, maintain open

dialogue, and share critical information. We ask that you reach out to us if you see something suspicious or threatening.”

“We have always maintained a strong and open connection with the FBI El Paso Field Office. Not just Jewish El Paso, but our local Jewish schools and places of worship, too,” Mr. French said. “They have always made themselves fully available in terms of safety, training and consultation. This act of terror in Colleyville, has only strengthened our resolve to work together to combat

hatred, bigotry, anti-Semitism and intolerance towards us and other religious, ethnic and racial groups. As International Holocaust Remembrance Day approaches next week (January 27th) - it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the lessons learned during the darkest stain on humanity are not forgotten.”

Anyone who is aware of threats or other suspicious activity should contact the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI or go to tips.fbi.gov.



Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg

In 1968 Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm made headlines as the first African-American woman elected to Congress. However, the House’s leadership assigned her to the Agriculture Committee, a place where it was assumed she could have little influence. She represented New York’s 12th District and the media joked about her appointment saying “Does a tree grow in Brooklyn?”

Understandably, she was very frustrated with this development. How could she advocate for her constituents who had nothing to do with agriculture? Lubavitch World Headquarters is located in Chisholm’s district, and shortly before her term began she received an invitation to meet with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

At the meeting she admitted she was disappointed with her treatment in congress and her inability to make a difference at home. “What a blessing G-d has given you!” the Rebbe told her. “This country has so much surplus food, and there are so many hungry people. You can use this gift that G-d gave you to feed hungry people. Find a creative way to do it.”

On her first day in Washington Chisholm met Senator Bob Dole from Kansas who shared with her that farmers in his state had a surplus of food and not enough customers. Inspired by the Rebbe’s idea, and representing a district with high poverty, Chisholm, from her perch in the Agriculture Committee, partnered with Dole to expand the national Food Stamp Program - ultimately mandating that Food Stamps be available in every jurisdiction in the United States - and created the WIC Program.

At her retirement party years later Chisholm said, “If poor babies have milk, and poor children have food, it’s because this Rabbi in Crown Heights had vision.”

Aside from turning a political

gut punch into the catalyst for her greatest legacy, the Rebbe illustrated a fundamental truth about our world. G-d provides enough food in the world to feed everyone. Our mandate is to ensure that the food reaches every person. It takes a feeling of compassion, responsibility and a willingness to cooperate with others to make it happen.

The famous Rabbi Akiva was once asked by a Roman governor the following question. “If your G-d loves the poor, why doesn’t He feed them?” “So that we should have the opportunity to give charity,” Rabbi Akiva replied.

The Roman countered, “On the contrary: for this you deserve to be punished. This is like a king who got angry at his slave and locked him away in a dungeon, and commanded that he not be given to eat or to drink—and a person came along and gave him to eat and to drink. When the king hears of this, is he not angry at that person?”

Said Rabbi Akiva to him: “I’ll give you an analogy. This is like a king who got angry at his child and locked him away in a dungeon, and commanded

that he not be given to eat or to drink—and a person came along and gave him to eat and to drink. When the king hears of this, does he not reward that person?”

When we view humanity as G-d’s children and make the effort to provide food for them all, we will usher in an era of global peace and tranquility with the arrival of Moshiah, when hunger will be a problem of the past.

We Can Conquer Hunger

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JEWISHEL PASO
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Borderland's
Café Europa
FOR SENIORS 65+
It's Just Lunch
Wednesday, February 23, 2022 | 11:30 am – 1pm | P.F. Chang's
Guest Speaker: Ross Marks
Shalom Shuttle available for El Paso Residents
Shuttle Bus available for Las Cruces Residents
For Registration Assistance Call: 915-842-9554
www.jewishelpaso.org
Borderland's Café Europa is funded by a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso

The Jewish VOICE
A publication of Jewish 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 Jewish El Paso and have relevance and appeal our 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@jewishelpaso.org

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

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Finding A Place by 1LT Scott (Shalom) Klein - Jewish DRGL at Fort Bliss, White Sands Missile Range, and Holloman AFB

Fort Bliss, in El Paso, had a COVID-19 outbreak. The Army base locked down knowing many lives were at stake.

But truly living is about more than just survival; the Jewish community craved religious revival.

We dusted off small Chapel 3, on one Shabbat night, holding two white candles, and filling all with light.

Each Shabbat we returned, making safety a task: streaming services on Facebook and praying through masks.

The connection was strong throughout

the Jewish community, from young Army recruits to military retirees.

2021 began with a three-month renovation, concluding with many causes for celebration.

Outside the chapel stood a tall, shiny menorah, While in the ark we placed a brand new torah.

April's torah dedication became a huge event, the Army's senior leaders spoke and the message was sent.

A critical element of our great nation's birth, was the founding principle that every faith has worth.



So each spiritual soldier on any Army base will be treated as equals; everyone has a place.

And for the Jews, Chapel 3 will always find a way

to light the candles on Shabbat and celebrate high holidays.

Each sweet new year, the shofar will sound, raising a noise across the Fort Bliss Army grounds.

Temple Mount Sinai Present: Scholar in Residence:

Jane Larkin on February 25-27, 2022

FRIDAY: Services 6:15pm Followed by Shabbat Dinner & Discussion

“It’s Not Who Stands Under the Chuppah, But What Goes on Behind the Mezuzah”

RSVP by Feb. 21 required, \$10.00 per person

RSVP link: <https://form.jotform.com/220027248871151>

SATURDAY: 6:15pm Havdalah, Dessert & Discussion

“Intermarriage & The Jewish Future: Optimism & Opportunity”

RSVP by Feb. 21 required, no charge RSVP link: <https://form.jotform.com/220027078614147>

SUNDAY: 10:00am Coffee, Bagels & Kibbitz

“The Oys & Joys of Being the Parent or Grandparent of a Child in an Interfaith Relationship”

RSVP by Feb. 21 required, no charge RSVP link: <https://form.jotform.com/220027037232138>



Book Signing Events-
\$14.00 per book



For More Information: Noelle Meyer nmeyer@templemountsinai.com

This weekend is made possible, in part, by a generous grant from The Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso.

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Sunday, February 2022 @ Don Haskins PK - 8 School







*Help us send 20,000 meals globally
Help end local food insecurity by
supporting El Pasoans Fighting
Hunger - bring non-perishable
items you on the day.*

*Join this fun, high-energy - masked and distanced - social action event
appropriate for all ages from pre-school to adults to Seniors.*

Meal Packing Shifts:
Shift 1 : 9 - 10:30am
OR
Shift 2 : 11am - 12pm


**General Admission is \$5 per person
OR purchase a
\$36 Ticket which covers 109 meals
\$50 Ticket which covers 151 meals**

Sponsorships:
starting at \$180 which covers 545 meals
Visit www.jewishelpaso.org to register or to sponsor

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El Paso Connect

For those of us in our 20s and 30s



Relax @ RELAXE

February 27 | 4- 6 pm
Food, drinks, axe throwing.
Join the fun and escape reality.
Registration required.

Funded by a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso

*Contact Rebecca Mendez 915-995-0514 or
rmendez@jewishelpaso.org to get updated on bi-monthly
invitation only Shabbat Dinners and upcoming events.
Visit www.jewishelpaso.org*




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Campfire & S'mores, Ice Cream Social & Karaoke, Hiking, and More!!!

Kallah Room and Meal Weekend Package:
\$225 per adult (Shared Occupancy); \$325 per adult (Single Occupancy)
\$150 for teens(12-17); \$50 for youth (4-11); Children 3 and under - Free
Price includes hotel accommodations, all meals and Temple Sponsored activities!!
Bus Transportation will only be available if 15 or more people sign up at additional—cost to be determined.

Registration and non-refundable payment **MUST** be received in full by March 21, 2022.

For Registration Forms or Questions about the Kallah Retreat please contact:
Noelle Meyer ph. 915-532-5959, email: nmeyer@templamountsinai.com

This event is made possible in part by a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation,
The Blaugrund Fund, and the Temple Mount Sinai Sisterhood.

Join us for Congregation B'nai Zion's
122nd Anniversary

Gala Dinner

Sunday, April 3, 2022

El Paso Country Club



Up Close: Robert (Bob) Kimball

What value do we need most in our world today?

This question forces me to select only one value, and that is a challenge. By the time a person reaches 77 years of age, they usually have an organized set of values that define them as a person. At the top of my list at this moment is caring for the poor and less fortunate. In December, I became a cultural mentor for a relocated Afghan family. The husband worked with the U.S. Army for 12 years and lost both legs in the process. It is incredibly fulfilling to “work the system” to get them the resources they need to begin anew.

What do you value most in your friends?

Monika has profoundly influenced my definition of the word “friend”. Friends aren’t somebody you meet once at a baseball game. Friends are people you have spent months or years getting to know. Friends share common values and care about each other. I have a small group of friends. Almost all of them connect with my hobbies and interests.

Who’s your favorite Jewish hero (living or not/fictional or not) and why?

When I first saw this question, the name Richard Feynman immediately came to mind. Dr. Feynman authored many of the textbooks I used as a Physics major at the University of Michigan. I looked up Dr. Feynman on Wikipedia and decided to describe my second hero. I spent most of my university career teaching in Catholic

institutions. But, my first “boss” at Mercy College of Detroit, MI was Dr. Phyllis Hodes a dynamic Jew who started every day with a 10-minute standup Jewish comedy act. She mentored me for nine years and it was her training that established the core of my professional beliefs. I attended my first Seder meal with Phyllis and Isidore Hodes back in the early 70’s.

What does it take to be a good leader?

I have always been interested in leadership, especially during the years I was an academic dean. A good leader must delegate responsibilities and praise those who are successful. A good leader must evaluate outcomes and strive constantly to improve.

What’s the best thing about being part of our Jewish community?

The thing I enjoy most about being part of our Jewish community is the comradery with smart people that enjoy a good laugh, sharing of life stories, and of course sharing good food.



How is it being a First Husband? What is it about the role that you enjoy most?

Monika and I have always enjoy debating issues, brainstorming ideas, and working together to solve problems. Both of us are formidable devil’s advocates. Talking with another person helps you hone your ideas and arguments. I enjoy being Monika’s most fervent fan.

How have you seen the integration of Las Cruces enhance

the relationship between our communities?

I have been a firsthand witness to the growing relationship between the Jewish communities in Las Cruces and El Paso. Monika, during her presidency at Temple Beth-El arranged this marriage. I am so proud of her vision and persistence. Being a First Husband you get all the perks of being a leader without any of the stress that comes with leadership.

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Keeping Jewish El Paso
— Jewish —

The Sylvia Cohen Café Europa Fund

Sylvia’s strong belief and love for our Jewish community and her long-time commitment to seniors in El Paso and Las Cruces is evident in the establishment of the Sylvia Cohen Café Europa Fund.

Borderland’s Café Europa was modeled after a program members of our community visited in Israel in 2014. It was so inspiring that Jewish Family and Children’s Services, with a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso, headed up this new venture, with Sylvia as the head of this initiative.

Sylvia’s tireless commitment brought the dream to reality and, after 7 years it is stronger than ever. Jewish El Paso took over sponsorship when JFCS closed its doors.

Sylvia’s vision is to see our Jewish community and institutions continue to thrive and reach out to all members of our Jewish community

For information on how you can start your own fund with us, please contact Robert French at 915-842-9554.

The Jewish Community
FOUNDATION
of El Paso

FACES & Places

AROUND OUR COMMUNITY

Borderland's Cafe Europa Shabbat Lunch



PJ Library - Little Planters



Jewish Film Festival



L'Chaim - To Living

Sunday, March 27, 2022 • El Paso Zoo from 2:30 - 8pm

Come celebrate our return to living

Join Jewish El Paso and our entire community in celebration that will ignite the senses!

Indoor and Outdoor Activities:

- See all the activities (including access to all zoo exhibits)!
- Hear the sounds of Live Entertainment!
- Smell the aroma of sumptuous food!
- Taste the refreshing libations!
- Feel the energy as we all gather and celebrate in-person again!

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