CONGREGATION KOL AMI
CONNECTIONS
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026 Cheshvan/Kislev/Tevet 5787 www.kolaminj.org

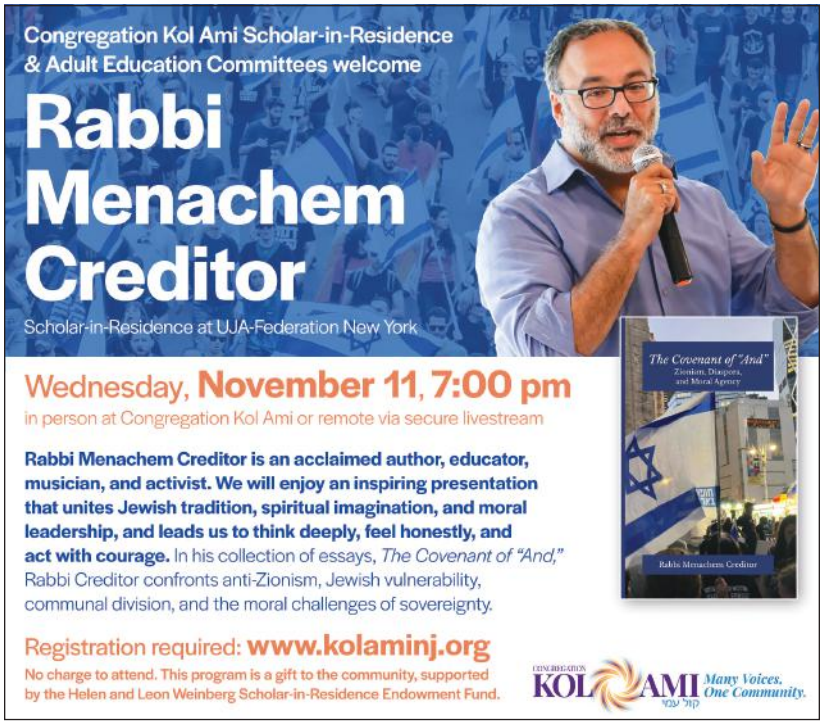


THE RABBI TEACHES

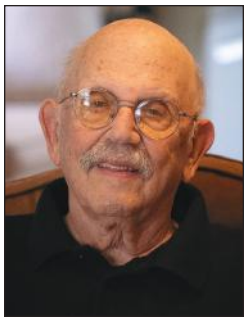
By Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar

A student once asked his teacher, Rav Dessler, for permission to attend a flea market. Rav Dessler agreed, and what's more, said that he would attend the flea market with his student. They arrived at the flea market and began to walk around the stalls together. The student, after some time, found a lamp that he loved. He haggled with the seller and agreed on a price. However, before the deal was done, Rav Dessler said that he would actually like to have the lamp for himself. The student was disappointed, but of course allowed his rebbe to purchase it. A little later, he saw a silver goblet that he was interested in. Again, he negotiated a price, and again, Rav Dessler asked if he could have it for himself and the student agreed. This went on a few more times until the young man suggested that perhaps it was time to return to the yeshiva. When they were back, Rav Dessler summoned his student to come speak to him. He took out all of the purchases and handed them to the boy, explaining, "I didn't really want these things for myself. It's just that I saw how excited you got about them. I felt you needed to be cooled down. Now that you are settled, you can have them."

Jewish tradition teaches that we are supposed to be happy with what we have, implying that envying what others have, or being overcome by desire for material items is a futile game. As we know all too well, the grass is always greener. It is easy for us to assume that what others have is better than our own lot in life, when we actually have absolutely no idea if this is correct. True gratitude is about being able to feel happy with what we have, even and especially, when it is hard to do so. Who among us hasn't looked at someone else's piece of clothing, pair of shoes, or even their home, and wished it was our own? It's actually not the coveting itself that is the problem. It's that the coveting prevents us from feeling full gratitude for what we have, which is a key component to being a whole and holy person. *(continued; See "Rabbi" on page 3)*







FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Richard Harris, Controller

Just Say Yes

My wife and I have been members of Kol Ami for almost 25 years but it was only about eight years ago that I reached a crossroads in my Jewish life. I found myself asking whether I wanted to become more deeply involved in this community or quietly drift away in search of something else. For many years, I was what some lovingly call a "High Holy Day Jew"—present on the Days of Awe, moved by the melodies, but not fully rooted in the rhythm of Jewish life the rest of the year. What changed everything was one simple decision: I said yes. Yes, to joining the Finance Committee. Yes, to taking one small step toward involvement, even though I had no idea where it would lead.

That first yes opened a door I didn't even realize was waiting for me. At first, it was just a meeting here and there, a chance to contribute in a modest way. As I got to know the people around the table and appreciated their commitment to Kol Ami, I found myself wanting to do more. One step led naturally to the next. Committee member became board member. Board member became Controller and Executive Committee member. These were roles I never would have imagined back when I considered myself a once or twice a year participant.

The real transformation wasn't about titles, it was about spirit. As I became more involved, I found myself showing up more fully—not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. I began attending services more regularly, not out of obligation but out of genuine desire. I discovered joy in community events, from Scotch & Steak nights to holiday gatherings. Some of my most meaningful moments came from sharing these experiences with my family—like watching my granddaughter go booth to booth at the Purim carnival, her excitement reminding me of the warmth and belonging I had grown into.

What I've learned is that spiritual growth doesn't require a dramatic leap. It begins with one small yes. One moment of stepping forward. From there, connection, purpose, and community grow naturally—until one day you look back and realize you've become part of something bigger than you ever expected.

Your path doesn't need to be perfect—just begin. What's your next step?

FROM THE EDITOR

Marlene Dworkin



This is my favorite issue—the one about gratitude. I love seeing what everyone is thankful for and how they express it. I enjoy creating my annual "Gratitude List," considering what should be included, what makes the final edit. My list always includes my family, our good health, and of course, diet coke and peanut M&M's.

This year, I want to express my gratitude to you, my synagogue family. There are so many for whom I am thankful, too many to name, so I have grouped them together. I hope you know who you are…

1. **Newsletter Editors and Staff Members.**

2. **Synagogue Theater Performers.** We've had so much fun with book shows, original shows, and cabarets; entertaining and raising some money for our congregation. There might be some incriminating photos out there somewhere!

3. **Executive Directors.** I have worked with four women who held this position. All of them brought different skills at different times and they made things happen! Not everyone gets to see what goes on "behind the curtain" but they all made my life easier and helped me get things done.

4. **Executive Committee/Board of Trustees Members.** For all of the people with whom I served, thank you for your time and commitment to our congregation. Thank you for sometimes making the hard decisions. Thank you for giving up your Wednesday nights!

5. **Solicitors.** They handle any legal issues that synagogues might encounter. Our solicitors have been members who volunteer their time and expertise. Hopefully, it is as simple as applying for a raffle license, but it could be as involved as merging two synagogues or selling properties. To all the solicitors I have worked with over the years, thank you for all you have done to keep our synagogue robust, safe, and worry-free.

6. **Clergy.** They are the heart and soul of our community and I can't imagine my life without their guidance. For sharing family lifecycles (happy and sad), for education, for music, every holiday, any question; our clergy can always be relied upon. Thank you for always being there. Your support has meant everything.

7. **Past Presidents.** There isn't another group in our synagogue who care more deeply or are more willing to step up and help whenever asked. With a rich knowledge and skill set, their counsel is extremely valuable, which I utilized often, particularly during Covid. I am so proud to be a member of this club.

8. **Choir.** Every Tuesday night we rehearse. Our love of music brought us together, becoming a family within our congregational family. As our choir co-chair says, "we stand shoulder-to-shoulder" supporting one another.

For every committee meeting, fundraiser, Sisterhood event, Adult Education course, or Shabbat service attended, I learned something new and talked to members of our community. The ECC and Religious School teachers and directors, and the people that I traveled to Israel with on two congregational trips; all of you have impacted my journey. I have such gratitude for the richness that you have added to my life and the life of my family.

Todah Rabah
TO OUR HIGH HOLY DAY HELPERS

Ushers & Greeters
Stuart Alperin
Linda Angstreich
Steve Angstreich
Patti Barasch
Doug Cohen
Erica Fau
Robert Elias
Michael Feist
Sue Fenick
Paul Fishbein
Barry Friedman
Alan Geron
Leslie Greenspan
Rich Harris
Eric Hurwitz
Beth Kern
Susie Marinoff
Brittany Maugeri
Hank Maurer
Ira Miller
Sarah Mitchell
Drew Molotsky
Josh Rothman
Alan Salkowitz
Joel Schwartz
Sam Seltzer
Bob Singer
David Singer
Neal Slutsky
Michele Speier
Mara Steele
Debbie Thomson
Jason Turner
Michelle Weichert
David Weinberg
Lisa Weiser
Rick Weiser
Gail Wolf
Stacy Yulsman
Michele Zeldner
Stephanie Zinn

Physicians On Call
Robert Baron, EMT
Dr. David Gealt
Dr. Chad Felsenstein
Dr. Susan Kaufman
Dr. Irene Mintz
Dr. Randy Mintz
Dr. Adam Skrzynski
Dr. Richard Specter
Dr. Brian Weingart
Dr. Andy Zinn

CONGREGATION KOL AMI קול עמי LIFE CYCLE

Mazal Tov...

Melissa & Christian Bamaca
on the birth of their son, Asher Julian

Amy & Elliot Bodofsky
on the marriage of their daughter, Shari, to Brian Walker

Marlene & Gary Dworkin
on the engagement of their daughter, Casey, to John Martin

Susan Blum and Seth Goldstein
on the naming of their granddaughter, Dara Goodman

Susan Herron
on the birth of her granddaughter, Remi Mae

Carol & Les Hirsch
on the engagement of their daughter, Erica, to Matt Ferreira

Michele & Hal Hirsch
on the birth of their grandson, Asher Julian Bamaca

Judy & Steven Lubetkin
on their 45th wedding anniversary

Michele Meyer
on the marriage of her son, Jonathan, to Melissa Braunstein

Lee Ann Oberman
on the marriage of her daughter, Jennifer, to Austin Wells

Lisa Brody Robzen & Jeff Robzen
on the birth of their son, Jacob Charles

Randi & Alan Salkowitz
on the naming of their granddaughter, Madelyn Rosado

We Mourn...

Mark Edinberg
brother of Liz Levine

M. Barry Faye
brother of David (Debra) Faye

Mark Fields
grandfather of Eva Fields & Ben Fields

Sidney Hamburger
brother of Marjorie Hamburger
uncle of Alexandra (Philip) Langan

Judith Haveson
mother of Natali (Robert Singer) Franzblau

Jane Maugeri
mother of Brittany Maugeri

Rhonda Rulnick
wife of Michael Rulnick

Life Cycle lists are inclusive from the last issue of Connections *through October 16, 2026.*

THE RABBI TEACHES *(continued from page 1)*

As my mom would attest, I have been wanting to be a mom myself since I was 12 years old. I have always loved babies and children, and absolutely could not wait until it was my turn. Since Asher was born, I find myself more deeply understanding the concept of gratitude even and especially when things feel hard. The past several months have been simultaneously the hardest and the most rewarding of my life so far. The rewarding parts make the hard ones more bearable, and the hard ones make me even more grateful for the rewarding parts. As we all work to cultivate gratitude in this season, I hope that instead of looking outward at what we want, we can look inward to what we've been given. That, our tradition teaches, will help us on our path to holiness.

BOOMERS PLUS

By Judy Lubetkin

One of the things that makes Kol Ami so successful is our commitment to working well in groups. From the Executive Board to the many committees, and now including our Small Groups initiative, there is a great collaborative relationship among our volunteers and between our volunteers and staff. This is gratitude in action.

The Boomers Plus Social Group relies on our wonderful planning meetings, where we hatch new ideas, form friendships, and see all of this come alive with our events. We are all thankful to our planning committee, and we are always open to anyone that would like to join us at any time.

We appreciate all of the people that are on our planning committee: Marjie Hamburger (Chair), Sue Bookman, Lynn Branfman, Carol Brightman, Gail Donner, Marlene Dworkin, Bill Fisher, Karen Ginsburg, Marvin Ginsburg, Rosie Hymerling, David Korngruen, Rachelle Lampert, Liz Levine, Debbie Lisker, Judy Lubetkin, Steve Lubetkin, Ira Miller, Judy Nadell, Barbara Snyderman, Stephanie Welder, and Michele Zeldner. Thank you for everything you do!

Our next planning meeting is Sunday, November 1 at 11:00 am, zoom only. If you would like to join us, please email Marjie Hamburger (mah40@comcast.net).

On Monday, December 7 at noon, we will be having our Chanukah lunch. Cantor Callis will entertain us with lots of wonderful music. Get ready to light a candle, eat lunch and a latke (or two), and of course schmooze with friends! Please join us—more information will be coming soon.

Our next book discussion will be Sunday, March 14 at 7:00 pm. The book is *A Sudden Flicker of Light: A Revisionist History of Movies* by David Thompson.

Another future date, Friday, April 9, is for our Boomers Plus Shabbat. Let Lynn Branfman (tensb@aol.com) know if you would like an English or Hebrew part or if you want to chant Torah.

We look forward to seeing everyone at these and the many other events coming up. Enjoy all the great holidays during November and December!



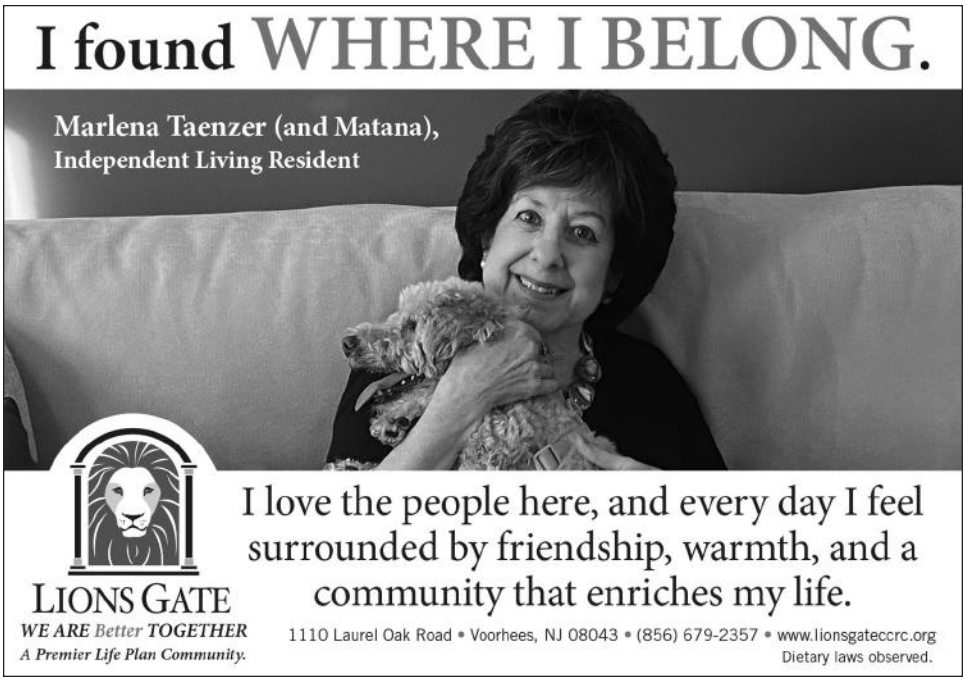
GRATITUDE IS THE BEST MEDICINE

By Adam Skrzynski

These have been difficult years for those of us in the healthcare fields, and there is no better way to cope and even flourish in the chaos of the world than by concentrating on the blessings in our own lives. While we cannot totally blot out the noise, we can continually remind ourselves to find strength in our family, friends, and community that we ourselves have created and been a part of. These things nourish us, and allow us to provide for others, both qualities that can be sustaining when both our Jewish and professional lives and deeply held values seem daily under attack.

After resuming on Wednesday, October 14, following a successful pilot, and now open to physicians, chaplains, nurses, psychologists and therapists; the Maimonides Chavurah will continue to offer professional community and discussion in the context of Jewish text study.

Hinei ma tov u'ma na-im shevet achim gam ya-chad — Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together in unity! The familiar Psalm 131 says it well, and Jewish tradition gets it right. We celebrate our milestones together in community, bear tragedy together in community and confront the vicissitudes of life in community. What a blessing it is that we do not have to bear all of this alone in our professional lives either. I am grateful for our community of the Maimonides Chavurah and Congregation Kol Ami. I am also grateful for the moments of shared experience that give us the strength to live the kind of lives that we have imagined for ourselves.



Upcoming Events

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:
www.kolaminj.org/events

NOVEMBER

Weekly Morning Minyan
Sundays, November 1, 15 & 22, 8:30-9:00 am (No service Nov. 8 or 29)

Healing Service with Elana Arian
Monday, November 2, 6:30 pm (Zoom)

Talmud Talks
Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesdays, November 3, 10, 17 & 24, 11:30 am (Zoom)

Liturgy and Theology of Healing in Jewish Tradition
Led by Rabbi Ariel Milan-Polisar.
Two Wednesdays, November 4 & 18, 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Men's Club Lunches
Wednesdays, November 4 & 18, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com)

Small Groups: CKA Yoga
Wednesday, November 4, 7:00 pm

First Thursdays: Touching God's Face: An Uplifting Exploration of the Human and Divine
Led by David Zinner
Thursday, November 5, 7:30 pm (Hybrid)

First Friday
Friday, November 6, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service
Friday, November 6, 7:00 pm
We celebrate November anniversaries.

Torah Study
Saturdays, November 7 & 28 (Zoom), **November 14 & 21** (Hybrid), **9:00 am**

Spice Up Your Judaism
Saturdays, November 7 (Zoom), **14 & 21** (Hybrid), **10:15 am**
(No session Nov. 28)

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, November 7, 10:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of Lindsey Taylor

Empty Nesters: Autumn in OC
Saturday, November 7, 11:00 am
(Off-site: Scarborough Inn in Ocean City)

Thanksgiving Food Drive
Collection: November 9-20

ECC Scholastic Book Fair
November 9-12

Dine to Donate: Norma's
Tuesday, November 10, 4:00-8:00 pm

Caring Caps Knitting Session
Wednesday, November 11, 10:00 am

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Menachem Creditor
Wednesday, November 11, 7:00 pm
(Hybrid: Kol Ami & secure livestream)

Young Members' Thursday Night Out at Dooney's Pub
Thursday, November 12, 6:30 pm (Off-site)

New Member Shabbat
Friday, November 13
5:15 pm Tot Shabbat Family Dinner
6:00 pm Tot Shabbat Service
6:00 pm New Member Mingle
7:00 pm Shabbat Unplugged

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, November 14, 10:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of Siena Tompkins

Shabbat Havdalah Service
Saturday, November 14, 5:45 pm
Bat Mitzvah of Evyn Butler

Kulanu LGBTQIA+ Torah Study
Monday, November 16, 7:00 pm

Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 7:30 pm

Tikkun Olam at MANNA
Thursday, November 19, 10:00 am (Off-site)

Shabbat Mishpacha Service: Grade 2 Shabbat
Friday, November 20, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, November 21, 10:30 am
Bat Mitzvah of Logan Brotz

Holiday Gift Bazaar
Sunday, November 22, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Shop unique gifts in time for the holidays.

Thanksgiving Turkey Drop-Off
Sunday, November 22, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Latke Fundraiser Order Deadline
Monday, November 23, 5:00 pm

Thanksgiving
Wednesday, November 25
Offices close early, 1:00 pm
Thursday, November 26
Friday, November 27 (Observed)
Offices & Schools closed.

Burkett/ELITE Shabbat Dinner
Friday, November 27, 6:00 pm

Shabbat Evening Service
Friday, November 27, 7:00 pm
We celebrate November birthdays.

DECEMBER

Talmud Talks
Led by Rabbi Lewis John Eron, Ph.D.
Tuesday, December 1, 11:30 am (Zoom)

Religious School: Gelt-A-Grams Order Deadline
Tuesday, December 1, 12:00 pm

Adult Education Program
Led by Rabbi Jennifer Frenkel
Three Wednesdays, December 2, 9 & 16 10:30 am (Hybrid)

Men's Club Lunches
Wednesdays, December 2 & 16, 12:30 pm
(Off-site; contact allanpep@yahoo.com)

Blankets of Hope
Wednesday, December 2, 1:00 pm

Small Groups: CKA Yoga
Wednesday, December 2, 7:00 pm

Upcoming Events

First Thursdays: Nostra Aetate
Led by Rabbi Larry Kotok
Thursday, December 3, 7:30 pm (Zoom)

Chanukah: 1st Candle
Friday, December 4

First Friday
Friday, December 4, 6:15 pm
Enjoy pre-service refreshments.

Shabbat Evening Service with Koleinu
Friday, December 4, 7:00 pm
We celebrate December anniversaries.

Torah Study
Saturdays, December 5, 12, 19 & 26
9:00 am (Zoom)

Spice Up Your Judaism
Saturdays, December 5, 12 & 19
10:15 am (Zoom; No session Dec. 26)

Shabbat Havdalah Service
Saturday, December 5, 5:45 pm
Bat Mitzvah of Tess Pacewic

Weekly Morning Minyan
Sundays, December 6, 13 & 20,
8:30-9:00 am (No service Dec. 27)

Boomers Plus Chanukah Lunch
Monday, December 7, 12:00 pm

The Rosh Chodesh Experience
Monday, December 7, 7:00 pm

Sisterhood Chanukah Party
Wednesday, December 9, 6:30 pm

Cong. Chanukah Dinner
Friday, December 11, 6:00 pm
Delicious Chanukah favorites with your Kol Ami family. Bring your own Chanukiah for a communal lighting.

Shabbat Mishpacha Service: Grade 3 Shabbat
Friday, December 11, 7:00 pm
We celebrate Chanukah and our third grade students.

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, December 12, 10:30 am
B'nai Mitzvah of Julian English and Juniper Wilson

Club K'ton: Chanukah Fun and Games Grades K-2
Sunday, December 13, 11:30 am

Shabbat Unplugged
Friday, December 18, 7:00 pm

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, December 19, 10:30 am
Bar Mitzvah of Jonathan Leverton

Club Noar: Chanukah Party Grades 3-5
Sunday, December 20, 11:30 am

Small Groups: CKA Theater Enthusiasts: Operation Mincemeat
Sunday, December 20, 1:30 pm (Off-site)

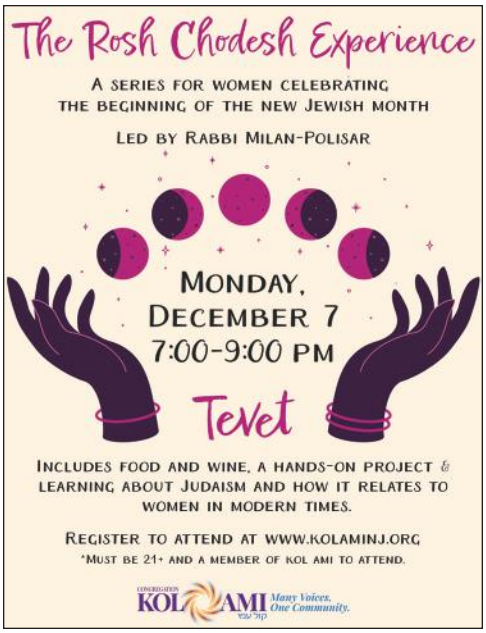
Winter Break
Thursday, December 24
Offices close early, 1:00 pm
Friday, December 25 through Sunday, January 3, 2027
Offices & Schools closed
The building will be closed daily, opening only for Friday Shabbat Evening Services on Jan. 1.

Shabbat Evening Service
Friday, December 25, 7:00 pm (Zoom)

To register, or for more information on these and other programs, visit:
www.kolaminj.org/events

WEEKLY MORNING MINYAN – Sundays, 8:30-9:00 am, *in our Chapel*
This newly-added weekly service (when Religious School is in session) is open to anyone wishing to join community in morning prayers and for those looking for an opportunity to recite Kaddish. Attend in person or www.kolaminj.org/livestream.





MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

Purim Celebration
March 22

Congregational Second Seder
April 22

Annual Meeting
May 19

Watch Connections & your congregational emails for details on these and so many other fabulous Kol Ami happenings.

MEN'S CLUB MUSINGS

By Doug Cohen

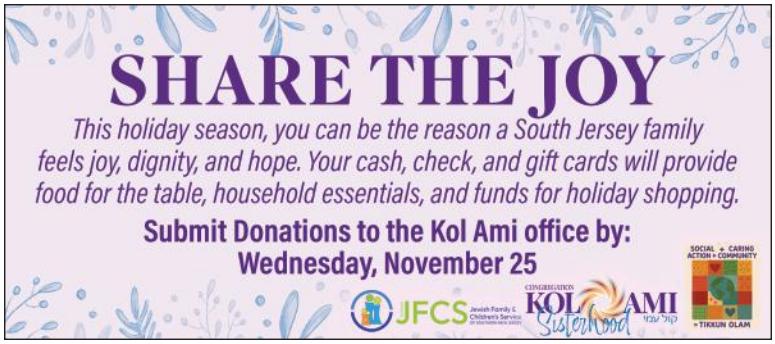
I sing with a local choir for its annual holiday concert (mostly Christmas music with a smattering of Chanukah songs mixed in). We sang one song last year that did not refer to either holiday. Rather, the song just focused on giving thanks. That song has stuck with me, especially now that I am well into the second year of my Men's Club Presidency. I look at all the help that I have received (particularly with regard to the Scotch & Steak evening, as I was away when that took place), and I think about how lucky I am (and how lucky the synagogue is) to have such a wealth of volunteers. I have become fond of saying that if you do not want to work with any of a number of people, do not ask for volunteers, as they will always say yes.

Aside from being thankful for the collective volunteerism, I am more and more thankful every day that I have had this opportunity. Not only have I been able to become more involved with Kol Ami, but I have met so many people through Men's Club. One of my favorite things (aside from raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens) is to see people outside of a Men's Club event (for example, at services) and just have a conversation about one of our events or anything else, like we are old friends.

I am thankful for the incredible staff that we have at Kol Ami. They have, as a group, helped me tremendously, especially during those times when I had no idea what to do (that is, daily). I challenge anybody to find a more helpful and congenial synagogue staff anywhere. While I am at it, I challenge anybody to find a more engaged clergy team.

How lucky are we all to be part of this growing and vibrant community, and how thankful I am that I get to contribute to the continued success, even in a small way.







SHALOM FROM SISTERHOOD

By Bobbie Israelsky, Sisterhood Co-President

Fall is one of my favorite times of the year. I love the cool, brisk weather, the beautiful colors of the leaves on the trees, and the anticipation of two of my favorite holidays, Thanksgiving and Chanukah. These two holidays are filled with joy, hope, family, friends, and yummy foods. Most importantly, these two holidays also include another important component, gratitude! Harvard experts say, "Gratitude is not only beneficial for individual health and happiness, but also for the well-being of society."

At our Thanksgiving family meal, we ask some important questions about gratitude. "How does it make you feel to give to others?" Also, "If you could give something special to one person, who would you choose and what would you give them?" We remind people at our Thanksgiving table that gratitude is more than just saying thank you. Cultivating a habit of gratitude promotes resilience and can lead to a more fulfilling life. Thanksgiving is a perfect time to remember just how being grateful can actually change your life.

The theme of gratitude carries over to our Festival of Lights. Chanukah tells us to never be afraid to stand up for what is right, and be grateful, even if there is only enough oil to light one candle. Chanukah also teaches us to perform mitzvot and to be grateful to our ancestors, so that we can carry on these traditions for our children and grandchildren.

For these many things I am particularly grateful: my family's health, my own health, my extraordinary friends, my amazing Co-President Debbie Thomson, my ability to help others in need in my community and around the world, my passion for being involved in our synagogue, the Arts, and politics. I have a huge amount of gratitude for our Sisterhood members (my "sisters") who work diligently to present amazing events. I also want to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the Kol Ami office staff, Board of Trustees, and maintenance staff for their continued support of our vibrant group. I am so blessed to have a wonderful husband, sister, brother-in-law, daughter, son, son-in-law, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, and I will always be grateful for their love and kindness.

May your gratitude carry on throughout the year!





Sukkah Celebrations... The week of Sukkot was filled with annual festivities and group gatherings. Men's Club constructed our courtyard sukkah, volunteers decorated it, and congregants of all ages enjoyed sharing time and snacks and stories in it.







And We Danced... Kol Ami celebrated Erev Simchat Torah with music, Torah dancing, and, yes, root beer floats! We circled and skipped our way from the usual *hakafah* into enjoying haka-floats, unfurled our Torah scroll for all to view, and experienced first-hand the beautiful and cyclical nature of Jewish life and learning.









Food Glorious Food... Kol Ami congregants once again truly delivered on the call for High Holy Day Food Drive donations. Our volunteers filled cars to the brim and transported the items to the JFCS Betsy & Peter Fischer Food Pantry.

Starting A New Page... Participants of our Rosh Chodesh Experience crafted their way into the start of the year by making "gratitude boards" and new core memories.







In Stride... Kol Ami was proud to join our community for this October's JCRC March of Remembrance which seeks to combat antisemitism, bigotry, and prejudice through Holocaust education.





Bonding Over Brunch... Men's Club and Sisterhood both hosted their kick-off brunches in October with good food, good friends, and good conversation. Steve Lubetkin shared tales of his scandalous family tree with Men's Club (top photo), while special guest author Rachelle Burk shared an inspirational presentation of remarkable Jewish women for Sisterhood's own remarkable membership.





Drum Roll Please... Our GenExtra group found their unique rhythm during a Native American Drum Circle event in October

November B'NAI MITZVAH



Lindsey Taylor

November 7

Daughter of Lisa & Chris Taylor
Brother: Jeremy

My name is Lindsey Taylor. I am a 7th grader at Beck Middle School. One of my favorite hobbies is playing soccer. I play on three soccer teams, one for Beck and two for Cherry Hill. I also enjoy painting, shopping, baking, and reading. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I chose to support the Special Olympics. I helped raise money for the organization and attended the Special Olympics over the summer to support and cheer on the athletes. It was a meaningful experience that allowed me to give back to my community and celebrate the accomplishments of others. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah represents an important step in growing up and becoming more involved in Jewish traditions and celebrations. It also means that I can participate in more aspects of Jewish life beyond Hebrew school and continue to strengthen my connection to my faith and community.



Siena Tompkins

November 14

Daughter of Laurie & Gabriel Tompkins
Sister: Rachel

My name is Siena Tompkins. I am a 7th grader at Haddonfield Middle School. I play field hockey in the fall and swim year round on a club team. At school, I play the trumpet and sing in the chorus. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I am helping to sort and donate books to families and schools in need through the nonprofit BookSmiles. When I become a Bat Mitzvah, I believe I will have more responsibility to give back to the Jewish community. I am looking forward to celebrating this important day with my friends and family.



Evyn Butler

November 14

Daughter of Jeannie Butler and Michael Butler
Sister: Julia
Stepmother: Erin,
Stepsiblings: Lucy, Xavier

My name is Evyn Butler, and I am a 7th grader at Beck Middle School. In my free time, I enjoy swimming, arts and crafts, and spending time with friends and family. I also love animals and have two dogs, Rocky and Archie, and three cats, Hashbrown, Livvy, and Bitsy. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I am making handmade bracelets for cancer patients. I chose this project because I want to make people happy and I hope that each bracelet can bring a little encouragement and remind someone that they are cared about. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah represents becoming an adult in Judaism and taking on new responsibilities. I am excited to celebrate this important milestone.

November/December B'NAI MITZVAH



Logan Brotz

November 21

Daughter of Jamie & Matthew Brotz
Sister: Marley

My name is Logan Sloane Brotz. I'm in 7th grade at Beck Middle School. I love dancing, especially tap, and I play the saxophone. I also enjoy helping younger dancers at my dance studio. I'm participating in Yad Vashem's Twinning Program to remember Ruchama, a Jewish girl who was 13 when she was killed in the Holocaust. I am sponsoring the March of Remembrance and walking with my family and friends to remember Ruchama. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah means taking more responsibility for my choices and finding ways to help others. Sharing this day with Ruchama's memory makes it especially meaningful to me. I'm grateful to celebrate with my family and the Kol Ami community.



Tess Pacewic

December 5

Daughter of Alexis & Ryan Pacewic
Siblings: Nolan & Gemma

My name is Tess Pacewic. I am in 7th grade at Beck Middle School. I love dancing and am a competitive dancer at ZZ Dance. I also love going to sleepaway camp at Camp Saginaw every summer. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I am raising money for breast cancer research because breast cancer has affected several women in my family. I also volunteer as a dance assistant, helping teach and work with dancers who are three and four years old. I love being able to share something I enjoy with younger kids while helping them learn, have fun, and feel confident. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah means becoming a Jewish adult and continuing the Jewish traditions that are important to my family. I hope to carry these traditions with me and pass them on to my own family someday.



Julian English

December 12

Son of Laura & Bill English
Brother: Miles

My name is Julian English and I have a dog Cooper. I play baseball, enjoy fishing, watching sports, and collecting baseball cards. I'm a 7th grader at Bell Oaks Middle School in Bellmawr. For my Bar Mitzvah project, I collected food for the Gift of Life House pantry. This is a special place for my family as my Dad is a kidney transplant recipient and his living donor, Amy, stayed at the house during her recovery. Becoming a Bar Mitzvah means that I am taking on more responsibility for my choices, my actions, and my role in the Jewish community. It also allows me to be a part of a tradition passed down from generation to generation.



Juniper Wilson

December 12

Daughter of Stephanie & Charles Wilson
Brother: Maxwell

My name is Juniper Wilson. I am in 7th grade at Beck Middle School. I enjoy soccer, basketball, competitive Highland dance, playing drums, art, designing costumes, and spending time with friends. For my Bat Mitzvah project, I am making and donating cat toys to the Animal Welfare Association in Voorhees. I chose this project because I enjoy creating art and helping animals, and this project combines those interests. Becoming a Bat Mitzvah means becoming a Jewish adult able to take on more responsibility in my community.

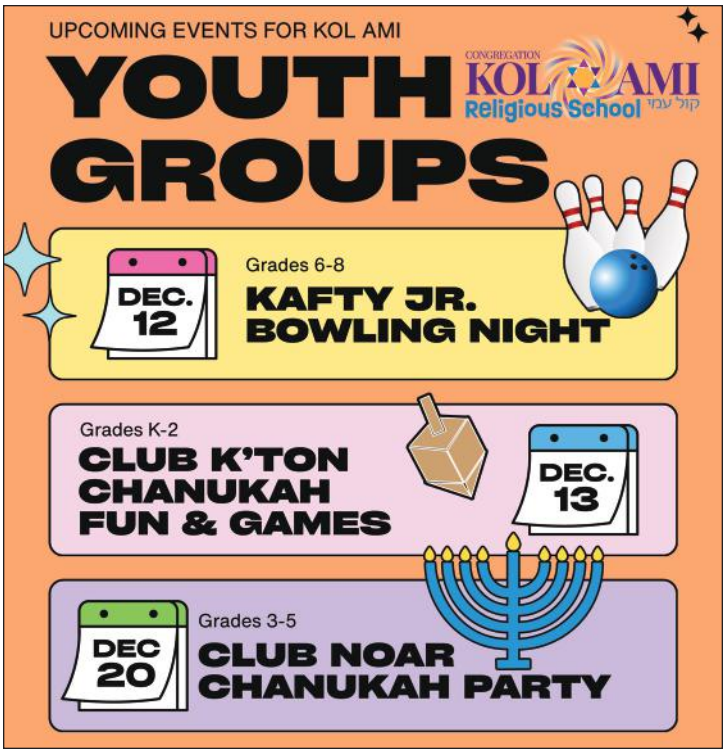


Jonathan Leverton

December 19

Son of Melissa & Eddie Leverton
Siblings: Oliver & Sophie

My name is Jonathan Leverton and I am in 7th grade at Haddonfield Middle School. My hobbies include playing sports and video games and doing Rubik's cubes. I also enjoy biking with my friends, going to professional sporting events and traveling. My Bar Mitzvah project is raising money for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) where my doctors have helped treat my epilepsy over the past three years. My Bar Mitzvah means a lot to me. It is a big achievement that I've been working towards these last few years and I can't wait to celebrate with my family and friends.





RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sheri Greenblatt

Director of Education

When people ask me what I'm grateful for, the first things that come to mind are my family, the beach, and the simple moments that make life feel good. I'm thankful for those times when everyone in my family can all come together despite our busy schedules. I'm grateful for sitting by the ocean, where the sound of the waves make everything else fade away.

Then there are the little things, a full night's sleep, a good roasted chicken, or a warm chocolate brownie after a long day. These aren't life-changing, but they sure can make a day better.

I'll admit, though, that gratitude isn't always easy. The world feels heavy sometimes, and it's easy to get caught up in the bad news or the little things that go wrong. When that happens, I try to remind myself how fortunate I really am.

I love my job at Kol Ami. One of the best parts is watching the relationships that grow between our students, teachers, staff, and families. During family services this past High Holy Day season, I looked around the room and saw parents, grandparents, and children praying together. It wasn't a big, dramatic moment, but it made me smile and reminded me why I love being part of this community.

For me, gratitude isn't about pretending everything is perfect. It's about noticing the good that's already there. Life moves so fast that we often forget to appreciate it. Maybe the real challenge is to slow down occasionally, look around, and enjoy the people and moments that make life meaningful. Sometimes that's enough.





EARLY CHILDHOOD

Laura Hoffman

Director of Early Childhood Education



This is the day God has made; let us exult and rejoice in it. {Psalm 118:24}

There are many days for which we are grateful at Kol Ami Early Childhood Center: days we get to play outside longer, Inflatable Day, Carton Day, and so many more.

The day we are most grateful for is Shabbat. Shabbat at Kol Ami ECC is nothing short of unique!

We start the day (in most classes) making our own small challah to roll, "braid," and bake. The hallway smells wonderful as the little *challot* are baking. Each child who makes a challah gets to bring it home in a paper bag that they have decorated.

On Fridays, parents are encouraged to send in Mitzvah Notes for a kindness the children may have done at home. Children bring in a few coins to put into the tzedakah box, which they understand is for those less fortunate. The coins add up and each class designates where their money will go and who it will help. We are grateful for all we have and can share with others.

Later in the morning everyone gathers in the Sanctuary to sing, dance, and celebrate Shabbat with their teachers, Morah Laura, Morah Jill, the Rabbis, and often the Cantor. The mood is festive and fun and the children come away with a great feeling from a wonderful experience.

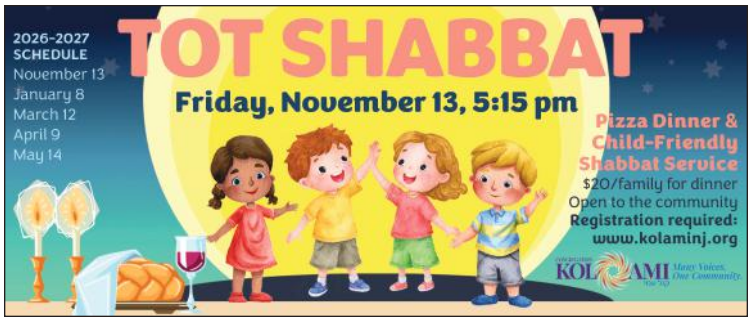
Each class celebrates Shabbat in their classroom, and parents are welcome to sign up to share in their child's "Special Shabbat." Blessings are said over candles and challah, and everyone shares a special snack AND, of course, challah!



Shabbat days are truly amazing and are set apart from the rest of the week as a special day given to us. We are grateful to be here to enjoy this special day each week.







BRANFMAN CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

By Lynn Branfman, Co-Chair

My trip to Minneapolis with my family during Rosh Hashanah was the first time in eight years since I had returned to my native city. It was also the first time that we had celebrated the New Year with my two best friends and their families. What special times these were; welcoming the New Year together, reminiscing, updating each other, and meeting some of my friends' grandchildren for the first time!

I especially wanted to return to Temple Israel Memorial Park, to honor my very special parents. I'm grateful that I could do that with my family.

We attended Rosh Hashanah services at Temple Israel, the largest congregation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. It is the place where I was confirmed. The sanctuary's large, classical architecture was as beautiful as I remembered it.

Our family connected with other friends as well, including Joanne, a 97-year-old dear friend of my parents. In talking with Joanne at her home, I so appreciated her connection to my parents, feeling as if they were present for our conversation.

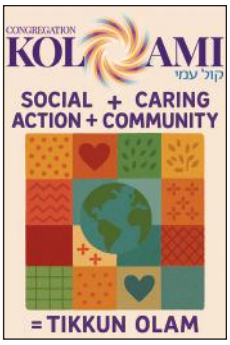
While on our trip, we met up with Dr. Mary Ann Yang, a family friend who worked in Parkinson's research. This visit meant a great deal to our family, as my husband Alan had Parkinson's disease for 25 years. Dr. Yang, a professor at Concordia University in St. Paul, brought two students with her. Concordia University is a Lutheran university, whose students are mostly Christian and are from less well-educated and/or rural families. I am sure that these students had never met Jewish people. They were very surprised when I said that our family is Jewish, and that on the day that we were meeting with them, it was the Jewish New Year. I felt that these students had a very positive experience meeting and talking with us.

Here at Kol Ami, my wonderful co-chair, Karen Marinoff, and I, are grateful to be working with our giving, caring, and enthusiastic volunteer librarians. They read to our Sunday School classes discussing Jewish values, Jewish history, and holidays. This year, the volunteers' reading schedule allows time to present mini-lessons after their reading, expanding on the material that they have covered.

Gratitude for my family, for being able to spend time with friends from my childhood, and for working with very special volunteers at Kol Ami—all these blessings made for a special holiday for me.

TIKKUN OLAM

By Michele Zeldner



As Thanksgiving approaches, I've been reflecting on all the ways our Kol Ami community shows up for others. Whether it's donating, volunteering, organizing, cooking, packing, driving, or simply saying "yes" when help is needed, Kol Ami members have a way of turning good intentions into action.

Right now, the Tikkun Olam Committee is partnering with Sisterhood on the Jewish Family & Children's Service Holocaust Survivor Gift Card Program. We will collect donations through early December so JFCS can distribute gift cards to survivors before the holiday season. It's a small gesture, but one that lets families of Holocaust survivors know our community is thinking of them.

We're also beginning our annual Thanksgiving collection. Through monetary donations, gift cards, and food contributions, we will assemble Thanksgiving baskets for members of our synagogue family and others in the surrounding community. This is truly a synagogue-wide effort, bringing together our cohort groups, Religious School families, and congregants of all ages. After several years on the Tikkun Olam Committee, I'm still amazed by how quickly people step forward to help. Every Tikkun Olam project seems to start with a simple idea and somehow ends up with a mountain of donations that are sorted, packed, counted, and loaded into someone's car.

I'm especially thankful for all of the volunteers who participated in this year's Mini-Mitzvah projects. Whether you spent the morning serving at MANNA, helped prepare a meal for families staying at Howie's House, sorted books for BookSmiles, or delivered food to the JFCS Food Bank, you made us proud to be part of Kol Ami. The projects were different, but they all had the same goal: helping people who needed a hand.

Another group of people to appreciate this Thanksgiving season are the many congregants who have supported the immigrant families we have welcomed over the years. Some have donated money or household items. Others have helped with transportation, appointments, paperwork, job searches, or simply their friendship. Often, it is those personal connections that make the greatest impact. What started as a way to help has become something much more meaningful. Many of us have formed genuine friendships with these families and have been enriched by getting to know them.

When I look back on all that has been accomplished, I realize that none of it happens because of one committee. It happens because so many people choose to get involved. Every donation, every volunteer shift, every bag of groceries, and every gift card represents someone who decided to help.

Thank you for your generosity, your dedication, and your willingness to care for others. Wishing you and your families a happy and meaningful Thanksgiving season.

EMPTY NESTERS *By Donna Synder and Elissa Geron, Co-Chairs*



The busy High Holy Day season is over, and as we enjoy the cooler, brisk weather of fall and the anticipation of the secular holiday season, we are reminded to pause and reflect with gratitude and appreciation all that we have to be thankful for at this time of year. The Empty Nesters Social Group is still in its infancy and yes, sometimes feeling the growing pains of a newer group trying to "find ourselves." As the co-chairs of this group, we are so thankful for the amazing congregants who have stepped up to work with us in planning events and getting this group established.

We started our year with a successful dinner at Dolsot House Korean BBQ. Everyone who attended enjoyed delicious food, a fun ice-breaker game and most importantly, time spent with old and new friends. In October, we pulled out our cowboy hats and boots and enjoyed a night of country line dancing at Prospector's Restaurant in Mount Laurel (pictured). We are now looking forward to several upcoming events which include an "Autumn in OC" weekend in Ocean City, NJ, November 7-8, Game Night on January 30, and a visit to the "Chocolatrium" chocolate museum in Berlin, NJ, on February 14. If any of these events are of interest, please don't hesitate to reach out to us for more information as we would love to have you. More fun events are also in the works.

The Empty Nesters Social Group is for all individuals transitioning to a new chapter of life marked with greater independence, changing family dynamics and more time to focus on their relationships, their interests, and themselves. Reach out to Elissa (egeron@verizon.net) or Donna (donnafsnyder@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to our membership list. For now, enjoy the fall season.

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

In times of happiness or sadness, Congregation Kol Ami offers a variety of ways to share your wishes and thoughts with others. Contributions may be sent to the synagogue office as well as completed online. For a complete list of funds and tzedakah opportunities, visit ***www.kolaminj.org****.*

Abraham & Sylvia Angstreich Beautification Fund*

Linda & Steven Angstreich *speedy recovery to Norman Rednik*

Ahavat Limud

Kol Ami Sisterhood
in honor of Stephanie Zinn
in memory of Anthony Puleo

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in memory of Samuel Meyerson
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Donna & Stuart Friedman *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
Liz Greenberg
in honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Mia Ernenwein
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Koleinu *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
Teri & Neal Nover *in memory of Beverly Solomon*
Sidney Schnall *in appreciation of Eileen Winter*
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Lynne Adler *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
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Susan Bookman *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
Lynne Branfman *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
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in memory of Mark Edinberg
Karen & Marvin Ginsburg *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
Jo Anne & Phillip Glass *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
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Tula Kurtz *in memory of Mark Edinberg*
Liz Levine *in appreciation of Steve Lubetkin*
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Shirley Malitz *in memory of Anthony Puleo*
Jessica & Alexsandr Manelis *in memory of Anthony Puleo*
Eileen Winter *in memory of Anthony Puleo*
Gail Wolf *in memory of Anthony Puleo*

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Gary Goldberg *in honor of the birth of Asher Samuel Quint*
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Linda Hershman *in memory of Alan Hershman*
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in memory of Laura Widman
in memory of Louis Widman
Laurie & Russell Waring
in honor of the birth of Asher Samuel Quint
Michelle & Stephen Weichert *in memory of Jane Maugeri*
Jack Weinberg *in honor of the birth of Asher Samuel Quint*
Nathan Weiner *in honor of the birth of Asher Samuel Quint*
Pauline & Jacob Weiner *in appreciation of Cantor Callis*
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Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein *in memory of Jane Maugeri*



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Sarah & David Zalcmann
in appreciation of Susan & Marc Witte
in honor of David Weinberg's special birthday
in memory of Anthony Puleo
Michele Zeldner & Ian Wachstein *in memory of Ravi Bloom*

Refugee Assistance Fund*
Jonathan Berger
in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world
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in honor of the special anniversary of Judy & Steve Lubetkin
in memory of Mark Edinberg
Sharon Cooper *in honor of refugees seeking safety around the world*
Marlene & Gary Dworkin *in memory of Jane Maugeri*
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Judy & Stephen Stern
in honor of the marriage of Ilyse & Steve Janove's son
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in memory of Bernard Zeldner
in memory of Emanuel (Manny) Wachstein
in memory of Mark Edinberg

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CONGREGATION KOL AMI קול עמי

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Celebrate Chanukah

Dec.

- **7** — 12:00 pm Boomers Plus Chanukah Lunch
- **9** — 6:30 pm Sisterhood Lights, Latkes & Chanukah Gift Swap Party
- **11** — 6:00 pm Congregational Chanukah Dinner
7:00 pm Shabbat Mishpacha Service
- **13** — 11:30 am-Club K'ton Chanukah Fun & Games
- **20** — 11:30 am-Club Noar Chanukah Party

For a complete list of all programs, meetings and events, please visit our website at www.kolaminj.org



CONGREGATION KOL AMI קול עמי MLK 2027

MITZVAH DAY

JOIN US!



MONDAY **JANUARY 18**

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by participating in service projects at Kol Ami and other locations in our community.

FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS OF ALL AGES ARE INVITED.



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