

# CONNECTIONS

News and information for a Jewish community that includes individuals with disabilities and special needs

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## Agency Spotlight: New Home for Friendship Circle on Horizon for This Year



By Rachael Shockey

A major expansion project is on the horizon for The Friendship Circle of Pittsburgh. Founded by Rabbi Mordy and Rivkee Rudolph in 2006, the organization provides programming that pairs teen volunteers with youth with special needs. More than 100 programs are offered each year, including holiday celebrations, physical fitness activities, a cooking club, outings for older youth, Friends At Home visits, and volunteer opportunities for young adults. The goals of these programs are to promote inclusion, cultivate social skills, teach teens the value of community involvement, and strengthen the Jewish and greater communities by creating lasting friendships.

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## Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Grant to ELI Supports Meaningful Child Protection Efforts in Israel

By Ilene Rinn



Lately it seems that news of child abuse is splashed across the headlines. We've all heard horror stories about children abused by a trusted and loved family member. What about the stories that are not reported? What can we do if a child can't speak for themselves or has a disability that prevents them from speaking out?

In Israel, the Israel Association for Child Protection—known as ELI—provides much needed services for this population.



**Dr. Hanita Zimrin**, its founder and chairperson, recently traveled here from Israel to meet with Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh planning professionals to discuss the impact of an overseas block grant from the federation to help fund a mobile clinical unit that treated close to 4,000 abused children and their families last year. The unit allows ELI to respond immediately to emergency situations, and provide treatment and services in remote, underserved areas.

Studies show that the risk of abuse for children with special needs is nine to ten times higher than for typical children. At the same time, children in the special needs population are less equipped to report abuse, and when they do, no one believes them. The first child ELI treated, Dr. Zimrin said, had significant hearing impairment. Her father sexually assaulted her. She told her teacher, who didn't listen. She told her mother, who didn't listen, either. When she met with the ELI social worker, she said, "And they say that I'm the deaf one!"

ELI focuses specifically and solely on the prevention, protection, and treatment of children who are abused or at risk, and on prevention of abuse through public awareness and training. The organization has touched the lives of thousands since its inception in 1979. Last year alone, ELI received 7,800 calls from abused children, provided therapy for 4,000 abused children and thousands more parents, siblings, and other family members. ELI houses 15 children per day in an emergency shelter.

More than 90,000 school children in Israel have participated in one or more of ELI's 1,000 outreach and abuse prevention programs. From these programs, 1,200 cases of abuse were disclosed that no one knew about. New prevention programs address the threats and dangers of online sexual predators, and educate parents on prevention measures.

"The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Overseas Funding Committee is committed to supporting such impactful organizations," said Laurie Moser, who cochairs the Federation's Israel and World Jewry Commission.

"Dr. Zimrin and her staff continue to do innovative work to transform the lives of these children and bring much needed attention to this issue in Israel."

To learn more about ELI, visit [www.eli-usa.org/about-eli/](http://www.eli-usa.org/about-eli/).



*Ilene Rinn is the senior manager of planning and allocations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh.*

## About Connections

**Connections** newsletter is published by a consortium of six agencies with the mission of encouraging, supporting and recognizing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of Jewish life in the Pittsburgh community. **Connections** also provides information about a wide range of resources for individuals with disabilities and their families.

## CONNECTIONS

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## Rabbi's Message: A Little Light Dispels a Lot of Darkness

By Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel



Our Rabbis teach us: As each day we are required to observe many commandments, never to transgress. So, too, is it important and necessary to set aside time to think of our children and close friends, to infuse them also with yiddishkeit, that they should appreciate the light of Torah, observe another mitzvah, and grow and be pillars of light in the community.

The winter months are a great time to bring warmth to our children. As it is cold and dark outside, our homes, therefore, have to be beacons of light, and be bright and warm. The same applies spiritually. The world is a cold and dark place. Evil things happen everywhere, terrorist attacks on our brethren in France, evil in the Mideast, etc. We have the tools to combat that evil, by dispelling the darkness with light. We do that by learning Torah and doing mitzvahs with joy and enthusiasm.

A little light dispels a lot of darkness. By bringing light into the darkest places, G-d is enabling us to overpower and win the battle of good over evil. Women lighting Shabbos candles, men putting on tefillin, dispel negative forces and darkness, and we win the battle of good over evil.

*Best wishes for a warm and bright winter.*

*Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel is executive director of the Aleph Institute.*

## Focus on the Family:

## Strategies for Coping with Mental Illness

By Linda Marino

I am sitting in my office. A parent is relating her story while choking back tears. Her son, in his early 20s, has a mental illness. He cannot look for work or live on his own so he fills his time playing games on his computer. Sometimes, because of his mental illness, he is verbally abusive. In my role at Jewish Family & Children's Service, I often meet people like his mom. Someone they love has a mental illness and family doesn't know what to do.

Due to the complexity of this particular family's situation, I consulted with Wendy Levin-Shaw, a therapist at JF&CS. She has many years of experience working with clients and their families. During our discussion, it became clear that there are universal positive steps families can take to remedy such situations. Keep in mind, there is no "right road" for every family. Here is a summary of our conversation regarding this issue.

### Reality check

Before you do anything, explore what is possible. Some questions to consider:

- How is the individual with mental health issues functioning? Has there been a recent change or are the difficulties long-standing?

- Is the individual seeing a health care/ mental health professional? How are the relationships between the professional and the individual, and between the professional and family members?
- Are potentially beneficial therapies (including psychotherapy and medication) available? Is the individual using them?
- If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, what barriers are preventing the individual from accessing appropriate services?

### Medication

Sometimes individuals who take medications choose to stop taking them for a variety of reasons, often creating tension between the individual and family members. When this happens, it is important for everyone to communicate openly and respectfully so they can find needed support and decide how to move forward. Be sure to include the person's strengths *and* challenges in the conversation. The next steps depend on what they're capable of, with or without medication. Consider, too, whether they may benefit from a medication change.

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# It's Never Just Another Day at JCC's Dynamic Afternoon Teen Center

By Patti Murphy

People of all ages, backgrounds and life-styles look forward to whatever it is they do to unwind after a day at school or work. The same goes for the dozen or so young folks from across the city who go to the Teen Center After-School Program at Squirrel Hill's Jewish Community Center—some from their high schools, others from vocational training sites or jobs. In the midst of their transition to adult life, they all face daily hurdles related to physical, intellectual, vision, hearing, or mild emotional and behavioral challenges.

But their unique personalities, talents and zest for life outshine their disabilities. About two-thirds of the current group members are male. While participants represent a spectrum of cultural backgrounds, they celebrate Jewish holidays and learn Hebrew customs that are integrated into the program.



*Dancing at the JCC's Teen Center keeps the day moving at a pace everyone likes. Jarrett Williams, Michael Lobel, Milana Panic, Pedro Pereira-Nascimento and Clifford McClung join in the fun.*

Every day is different. The mood is casual. Participants arrive at various times and the crowd varies slightly each day. Program coordinator Lynne Carvell noticed a big gap in the lives of older teens and young adults with disabilities when she started the program almost ten years ago.

"There are so few opportunities to do what teens usually do... hang out and enjoy each other," she said. "It's so important to have those social interactions because the world is not always so kind."

On a recent Tuesday when the weather forecast called for freezing rain, a warm glow flooded the Teen Room that serves as the program's headquarters. A visitor was

treated like an old friend as participants and staff plunged into the full yet unhurried stream of social and recreational activities planned for the next few hours. It started with Buddy Time for doing puzzles and playing board games to increase cognitive skills. Such activities are interspersed with conversations about work, pop music and friends they hoped would come later. Then it was off to the track and dance room for a solid hour of movement and song complete with lively renditions of "Zippity Doo-Dah," "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and other timeless standards. No one in the room sat still for long.



*Activity-filled afternoons at the Jewish Community Center's Teen Center After-School Program offer a nice mix of new and familiar experiences for participants.*

Participants provided impromptu coaching for those who didn't know the words.

After their workout, the group gathered in the Teen Room, and said bracha (a Hebrew blessing) before enjoying a healthy snack. Some went for a swim until the group met as a whole for Sofa Time—about 15 minutes of stories, singing and socializing. It ended with a memory game where the nearly 20 people present told the group their favorite foods and ice cream flavors, then gave their best shot at reciting them all in order.

Before participants met up with their rides home, they shared good-byes and hugs with Rachel Gordon, a University of Pittsburgh student who had been volunteering with the program. She was off to Israel for the next semester.

The program is "after school" only in name. It runs through the summer, when the list of activities reads like a Pittsburgh travelogue

with day trips to the aviary, the zoo, Carnegie Science Center, the Heinz History Center, Frick Art and Historical Center and such.



*William Blatz, Pedro Pereira-Nascimento, Milana Panic, David Wilf and Michael Lobel at The Carnegie Museum. It is one of many summertime destinations that the JCC's Teen Center participants enjoy together.*

"We want to keep things fresh," Mrs. Carvell said. "They love familiar songs and games, but we want to expand their experiences. This keeps us on our toes."

The Teen Center After-School Program is held Monday-Friday from 2-6 PM. Individuals may visit a few times before joining. JCC membership is required and there is a fee to join. Scholarships are available.

For more information, contact Mrs. Baron at [LBaron@jccpgh.org](mailto:LBaron@jccpgh.org) or 412-697-3537.



*While socializing at the JCC's Teen Center, Frankie Principe sketched this vibrant art for others to enjoy.*



# Teen Center Is All About the People

By Patti Murphy



**Lynne Carvell** probably won't tell you this, but the Teen Center After-School Program at the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill is her baby. While she has led the program

since its inception more than nine years ago, she likes to share credit for its success with the others who keep it going. Those "others" are her immediate coworkers and the larger JCC staff, college students who volunteer at the program and families of the participants. Most important are the participants themselves, young people with special needs. Most are in their teens and 20s. "Teen Center"—as they affectionately call the popular hangout—is like their second home. It gives them the option of forming new friendships, trying new activities and discovering parts of our community they may not have seen before. Otherwise, they might be spending late afternoons in less fulfilling ways—at a computer or in front of a TV, for instance.

"They really are a family," said Liza Baron, director of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh's children, teen and family division. The manageable number of participants is one of its many attributes, she said. "I would love to see the size of the program grow beyond its typical 12 or 13 annual participants, but the truth is that part of its success comes from the size of the group."

Mrs. Carvell started the program while pursuing a career change. She had worked as a domestic relations officer in the family courts system, and taught children and adolescents with special needs in public school settings. Wanting to return to working with that population, she accepted a job on the therapeutic staff support team at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic's intensive wraparound program. Several clients, including two she worked with personally, went to the JCC for a clubhouse program for younger children as a way to experience inclusive community activities. Mrs. Carvell saw that the TSS clients, who appeared older than the other kids in the program, tended to stick together. She thought they could benefit from a social program of their own, and decided to ask the JCC for space and staff. The JCC granted her wish.

After working for another year as a TSS in the schools, Mrs. Carvell came to work for the JCC in 2007 as coordinator of the program. She loves her work. Three assistants extraordinaire join her on most afternoons. One is her son, Jonathan, who has a catchy positive energy that participants love. He came on board in 2013, bringing 20 years of work experience in the private and public sectors. At Teen Center, Jonathan provides music for all to enjoy, takes care of the pretty plants in the Teen Room and delights in keeping the activity fresh and flowing. Another assistant is Iris Pirchesky,

whose career as a disability advocate, counselor and teacher spans more than 25 years. Participants love when she brings her dogs, birds, and rabbits to Teen Center for pet therapy. Iris is always finding creative ways to nurture their appreciation for art and is the driving force behind the Jewish holiday celebrations they enjoy. Vocational educator Suzanne Kuban also helps with the program, her unique sense of humor a perfect complement to the fun. The Teen Center folks are lucky to have Jeannie Grossman come on a weekly basis as a peer volunteer.

Mrs. Baron, meanwhile, probably has a hundred stories of how Mrs. Carvell spreads the spirit of community inclusion on a regular basis in her low-key, endearing manner, whether nurturing relationships with participants' families or reaching out to families of prospective participants. Mrs. Carvell gives free hours to the program, Mrs. Baron said, and keeps it stocked with a generous amount of supplies. "Lynne constantly goes out of her way. She is amazing."

To Mrs. Carvell, it's all about the young participants. "I believe strongly that they are in so many ways much like their typical peers. They are entitled to and deserve the same good things in life that all of us hope for ourselves. I love them very much."



*Patti Murphy is the editor of Connections.*

## Jewish Residential Services' 2014 Annual Hanukkah Open House



*Guests at the JRS Hanukkah open house enjoy an array of festive food.*



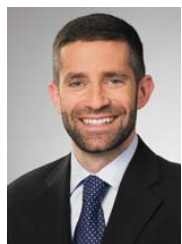
*The festivities included wonderful entertainment by Klezlectic, a local band with a traditional Eastern European Jewish sound.*

# AIM Event on Employment Supports a Huge Success

By Jenny Wolsk Bain

A program on employment supports for individuals with disabilities brought 86 people out on a cold November night. Jewish Residential Services (JRS) and Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS) presented the program at the Children's Institute in Squirrel Hill as part of the AIM series, which offers a forum where those with disabilities and their families can connect with others and learn about resources that might help them better care for their loved ones and themselves.

Former JRS board president Nancy Elman welcomed guests and introduced keynote speaker **Jeremy Shapira**, senior director and HR business partner for Giant Eagle Market District and GetGo. Mr. Shapira noted that the local supermarket chain has a 30-year history of employing individuals with disabilities. Up until now, however, the hiring process has been largely decentralized. "If you walk into a Giant Eagle store and see someone with a disability working there, it's probably because an agency [that provides services to that individual] has built a relationship with that store," he said.



What Giant Eagle is testing now is the revolutionary concept of embedding career transition liaisons who work directly with human resources personnel, trainers, supervisors and others to enhance the company's supportive culture and identify new opportunities for job candidates. The company launched a pilot project in 2013, in partnership with Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services (BVRS), under the auspices of 21 and Able, an initiative of the United Way of Allegheny County. Through a more recent collaboration with ACHIEVA, the project has expanded.

Giant Eagle has two embedded career transition liaisons. Each went through an extensive "onboarding" process to give them a good understanding of how the company works, Mr. Shapira said. They applied for positions, went through the screening process, met with hiring managers, and even spent time working in the stores.

In addition to helping candidates complete the online application and prepare for interviews, the liaisons work with Giant Eagle's team leaders and member relations staff so everyone is ready when the new employee comes on board. The position is a "hub of information between schools, parents, the candidates themselves and the company," Mr. Shapira said.

After Mr. Shapira's remarks, attendees participated in a resource fair where they had opportunities to ask questions and collect information specific to their employment and training needs. Vendors and organizations that sent representatives to staff tables at the fair included ACHIEVA, AHEDD, BVRS, EmployAble (a JF&CS program), Giant Eagle, Goodwill, Howard Levin Clubhouse (a JRS program), Milestone, NHS Schools, PA Connecting Communities, PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Partners for Quality Citizens Care, Peoples Oakland, Pittsburgh Mercy Intellectual Disabilities Services, the United Way's 21 and Able program, UPMC Training/Supported Employment Program and Volunteers of America. A resource guide from the event is available online at [www.jrspgh.org/programs/young-adults-in-transition](http://www.jrspgh.org/programs/young-adults-in-transition).

The Children's Institute's Vice President of Operations Tim Bittner, along with his facilities and security staff, were wonderful partners in hosting this very successful event.



*Jenny Wolsk Bain, MSW, MPA, is a former program manager at Jewish Residential Services.*

*Mental Illness continued from page 2*

## Support

Seek guidance with family conversations and decision making. A neutral third party without a personal agenda (perhaps a rabbi or therapist) can help family members stay on task during the process.

While it is sometimes hard to ask relatives for help, they can be a good source of support. The key is often knowing how and when to ask. Holding an extended family meeting may help resolve issues from transportation for the person with disabilities to respite for their primary caregivers.

## Professional resources

These are not always easy to find or access in the post-school adult world, but it is important to seek them out. Often the best bet is to start with the Department of Human Services in the county where the individual lives. Family members can spend time checking out the department website together. Such sites usually link to a variety of helpful resources.

## Planning

Mental illness sometimes makes a person feel stuck. It is often tough to set and work toward goals. Planning is important. Progress demands patience from the person and his/her family.

It helps to establish goals with immediate (and interested) family members in mind. Each can contribute in a small way to help a son, daughter, brother or sister move toward a bigger goal. Maybe one person can help them to explore resources that will help them reach the goal while another can remind them of tasks that need to be accomplished that day. Make sure each goal has a deadline. Start with a few simple goals that must be accomplished by the end of that week.

## Cooperation

What do you do if the individual refuses to participate? This is tricky. Before you do anything, try to understand what obstacles may be preventing them from moving forward. A neutral third party or someone who has had a similar experience may be a good sounding board.

If the individual remains uncooperative, boundaries may need to be set, particularly if he/she lives with family. He/she also needs to understand the consequences of refusing to honor those boundaries.

Last and not least, remember to schedule enjoyable activities with the individual regularly. Having something pleasant to look forward to can take the edge off the situation and help everyone in the family to keep their sense of humor.

Learn more at: [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/mhservices.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/mhservices.aspx)



*Linda Marino is the critical/special needs coordinator at Jewish Family & Children's Service of Pittsburgh.*

The Friendship Circle has grown tremendously in a relatively short period of time. On average, we host between 60 and 70 participants per activity, renting activity space all over Pittsburgh each week to accommodate these large groups.

To maximize efficiency and further our commitment to a mission rooted in community. The Friendship Circle is in the midst of a \$6 million renovation project to transform 1922 Murray Avenue into its permanent home. Design plans by Perfido Weiskopf Wagstaff + Goettel for the two-floor facility include multipurpose and common areas, a kosher kitchen, a performance stage, administrative offices, a rooftop garden, and a teen lounge. The addition of lounge-style spaces where members and volunteers can meet outside of formal programming will allow youth and parents to spend more time with their Friendship Circle friends. Program staff envisions using the new building for approximately 80% of all programming, which will increase financial sustainability and allow staff to develop new programs more easily.

By relocating, The Friendship Circle hopes to increase organizational visibility and accessibility. Situated in the heart of Squirrel Hill, the new, fully ADA-compliant building will yield easier commutes by public transportation than The Friendship Circle's current storefront office on Northumberland Street. The entryway to the building will tentatively be laid out as a gallery space to draw in visitors in the neighborhood who may not yet be familiar with The Friendship Circle.

The Friendship Circle will extend its hours of operation in the new building, allowing youth to come by after school to do homework or just hang out together.

We anticipate that this move will mean stronger community connections for participants. Inspired by similar Friendship Circle projects in other cities and by Squirrel Hill's rich array of local businesses, our staff members plan to take advantage of the building's central location by facilitating interactions between participants and surrounding establishments. Mini-outings in the community would allow members with special needs to meet more neighbors, learn practical skills and overcome social anxieties in a supportive environment. The Friendship Circle expects to move into the new building this fall. Demolition of the old building is complete and construction is beginning in January.



In the spirit of social responsibility, The Friendship Circle's board of directors and staff are working to ensure that the environmental impact of the renovation project is minimal. We are seeking LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification for the facility and hope to set a standard for future renovations in our neighborhood.

*Rachael Shockey is the development associate at The Friendship Circle.*



*At left, an architect's rendering of the new Friendship Circle site on Murray Avenue.*

### **The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Volunteer Center's Toy and Toiletry Drive**

Runs through Thursday, March 12. For a list of suggested items to donate, visit [www.jfedvolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Mitzvah-Day-Toy-and-Toiletry-Drive-Suggested-Items.pdf](http://www.jfedvolunteer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Mitzvah-Day-Toy-and-Toiletry-Drive-Suggested-Items.pdf).

#### **Drop-off locations:**

The Jewish Community Center/Squirrel Hill, 5738 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
The Jewish Community Center/South Hills, 345 Kane Boulevard Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 234 McKee Place Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For more information, email [mcohen@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mcohen@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5229.

## January 2015



### **Volunteer Opportunity of the Month**

**Friday, January 23**

12 noon – 3 PM

Shabbat dinner preparation at Hillel Jewish University Center (JUC), Oakland

Sponsors: The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Volunteer Center and Hillel JUC

For more information, visit

[www.jfedvolunteer.org/voom/](http://www.jfedvolunteer.org/voom/), email [mcohen@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mcohen@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5229.

### **The AIM Educational Series presents**

**Working While on Disability:**

**The Impact of Wages on Benefits**

**Monday, January 26**

6 – 8 PM

Location: Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS), Squirrel Hill

Sponsors: Jewish Residential Services and JF&CS Anthony Bibbo, community work incentive co-

ordinator at AHEDD, will share information and answer questions. A light kosher meal will be

provided at no charge. Metered parking will be available in the lot across the street. This event

is free and open to the public but registration is required. To register,

email [info@jrspgh.org](mailto:info@jrspgh.org) or call 412.325.0039.

### **The Main Event**

**Saturday, January 31 – 7 – 10 PM**

Location: Circuit Center and Ballroom, South Side

Sponsor: Shalom Pittsburgh/Young Adult Div.

For more information visit [www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or

call 412.992.5204.

## February 2015

### **Teen Volunteer Opportunity of the Month**

**Sunday, February 15**

1:30 – 3 PM

Location: Weinburg Terrace, Squirrel Hill

Sponsors: Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Volunteer Center & the Jewish Association on Aging's G2G Program

For more information, visit [www.jfedvolunteer.org/voom/](http://www.jfedvolunteer.org/voom/) email [mcohen@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mcohen@jfedpgh.org) or call

412.992.5229.

### **Shalom Pittsburgh Happy Hour**

**Thursday, February 19**

6-8 PM

Location: Allegheny Wine Mixer Inc. Lawrenceville

Sponsor: Shalom Pittsburgh

For more information visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.



# Calendar

## South Hills Suburban Outreach PJ Library Purim Party

**Sunday, February 22**

10:30 AM – 12 noon

South Hills Jewish Community Center

Sponsors: Shalom Pittsburgh, PJ Library and JCC Pittsburgh

For more information, visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

## Ladies Night Out

**Tuesday, February 24**

7-9 PM

Location to be announced.

Sponsor: Shalom Pittsburgh

For more information, visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

## March 2015

### Purim Party

**Thursday, March 5**

Time and location to be announced.

For more information, please visit [www.fcpgh.org](http://www.fcpgh.org)

closer to the date of the event.

An RSVP is required. To register, email [info@fcpgh.org](mailto:info@fcpgh.org)

or call (412) 244-4440.

### I-Volunteer with Repair the World

**Sunday, March 8** (time to be announced)

Location: Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Sponsors: Friendship Circle, Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Volunteer Center, and Repair the World

For more information, visit

[www.jfedvolunteer.org/i-volunteer/](http://www.jfedvolunteer.org/i-volunteer/), email [mcohen@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mcohen@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5229.

### North Hills Suburban Outreach

#### Ladies Night Out

**Wednesday, March 11**

7 – 9 PM

Location to be announced

Sponsor: Shalom Pittsburgh

For more information, visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

### Good Deeds Day

**Sunday, March 15**

(All day...all over town!)

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Volunteer Center is coordinating the local efforts of this annual international event. Community members will have the opportunity to come together and support various organizations in a day dedicated to volunteerism. For

more information, visit [www.jfedvolunteer.org/good-deeds-day-2015/](http://www.jfedvolunteer.org/good-deeds-day-2015/)

email [mcohen@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mcohen@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5229.

### Drafts and Crafts

**Wednesday, March 18**

7-9 PM

Location: Society for Contemporary Craft, Strip District

Sponsor: Shalom Pittsburgh

For more information visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

### Pancakes Before Passover

**Sunday, March 22**

10-11:30 AM

Location: Jewish Community Center, Squirrel Hill

Sponsors: Shalom Pittsburgh, PJ Library, JCC Pittsburgh, Community Day School, Agency for Jewish Learning

For more information visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

### Bread Bash

**Wednesday, March 25**

6-8 PM

Location: Mineo's Pizza House, Squirrel Hill

Sponsors: Shalom Pittsburgh and J'Burgh

For more information, visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or call 412.992.5204.

### Fruit of the Vine Festival: Vintage 2015

**Sunday, March 29**

5-8 PM Wine tasting and auction.

Location: Pittsburgh Opera

(2425 Liberty Avenue, Downtown)

To register, visit [www.ajlpittsburgh.org](http://www.ajlpittsburgh.org) or call 412.521.1101.

## April 2015

### Mitzvah Project with I-Volunteer

**Sunday, April 26**

10 AM – 12 noon

Location: Ronald McDonald House

Sponsors: Shalom Pittsburgh and I-Volunteer

For more information visit [www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org)

email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or 412.992.5204

### Friends All Around event

**Sunday, April 19**

5:30 PM

Location: The Westin Convention Center, Downtown Pittsburgh

Sponsor: The Friendship Circle

For more information, please visit

[www.fcpgh.org](http://www.fcpgh.org), email [info@fcpgh.org](mailto:info@fcpgh.org) or call (412) 244-4440.

### The AIM Educational Series presents Housing Choice Vouchers for Adults with Disabilities

**Monday, April 20**

6-8 PM

Location: Jewish Residential Services (JRS) at Rodef Shalom Synagogue, Shadyside  
Charles Keenan, housing coordinator at Allegheny County Department of Human Services, will share information and answer questions. A light kosher meal will be provided at no charge and free parking will be available in the lot behind the synagogue. This event is free and open to the public but registration is required. To register, send an email to [info@jrspgh.org](mailto:info@jrspgh.org) or call 412.325.0039.

## May 2015

### Spring BBQ

**Thursday, May 14, 6:30 PM – dusk**

Location: TBD

Sponsors: Shalom Pittsburgh

For more information visit

[www.shalompittsburgh.org](http://www.shalompittsburgh.org), email [mfranzos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:mfranzos@jfedpgh.org) or 412.992.5204

**It's not too early to think about summer camp for children of all ages and abilities. As you begin your research, you'll find a wealth of information on the Jewish Community Center's recently updated camp websites.**

**For day camps, visit**

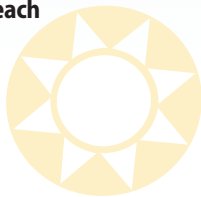
[www.jccpghdaycamps.com](http://www.jccpghdaycamps.com)

**For James and Rachel Levinson**

[www.jccpgh.org/camp/jr\\_day\\_camp](http://www.jccpgh.org/camp/jr_day_camp)

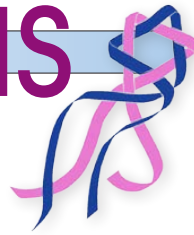
**For JCC Pittsburgh Emma Kaufmann Camp, visit**

[www.emmakaufmanncamp.com](http://www.emmakaufmanncamp.com)



# CONNECTIONS

News and information for a Jewish community that includes individuals with disabilities and special needs



Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh  
234 McKee Place  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

*"Welcome everyone... with joy."*  
— Pirkei Avot 1:15

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### GOT AN EVENT COMING UP?

Please send the event name, host organization, date, time, a brief description of the event and contact information (email/phone) to [connections pittsburgh@gmail.com](mailto:connections pittsburgh@gmail.com). Events considered for listing must be pertinent to Pittsburgh's Jewish and disability communities, and will be placed in the newsletter as space allows.