

Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey Journal

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Rabbi's Message

Dear Friends,

A remarkable thing happened to me a few days ago when I met up for dinner with my dad and step-mom. It was nice, of course, to catch up with them, and the food was great, but it wasn't until the meal was over, until after I had walked them home from the restaurant, that the grandeur of the moment truly hit me. It was the moment I leaned to kiss my dad goodnight – the instant I felt the scraggly, scratchy, stubble of my dad's unshaven cheek – that it all hit me. This was the very first time since Covid-19 came around that I had actually touched my father's skin. To be honest, I had become so accustomed to not being able to touch him over the past 15 months, that I was grateful just to have the chance to be in the same room with him, so I was entirely accustomed to avoiding touch with my dad and step-mom. Because touchless communication had become our natural default, I was *hardly* prepared for the rush of emotion that ensued.

The scientific community tells us that we benefit from friendly touch not only emotionally, which should be entirely expected, but physiologically as well. Researchers have shown appropriate touch to increase our levels of oxytocin,

(continued on next page)

Calendar of Events

All Events are on Zoom until further notice due to the continuing COVID-19 Pandemic

Weekly Events

Tuesday, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

6:00pm: Mindful Meditation

Friday, June 4, 11, 18, 25

7:30pm: Shabbat Service

Saturday, June 5, 12, 19, 26

6:30pm: Havdalah

Sunday, June 6, 13, 20, 27

10:15am: Sunday School

Special Events

Monday, June 14

7:00pm: Board of Trustees

Saturday, June 26

10:30am: Torah Study

Please Note: Calendar events are subject to change, which will be announced by email.

Rabbi's Message (continued)

which produces a number of physiological benefits, among which are reduced blood pressure, reduced levels of stress hormone, an increased threshold for pain, improved sleep, and the promotion of growth and healing. It's clear. People need people. We at the JCNWJ need people. We need each other.

Fortunately, though I cannot say exactly when hugs will again be safe and appropriate, or even *if* hugs will ever again be safe and appropriate, I do see the glimmers of light at the end of what has been a very long and dark 15-month tunnel. With New Jersey rates of immunization climbing day by day, and with therapeutic treatment for those already infected becoming more and more effective, we are now in the process of preparing for the day (sooner, we hope, rather than later) when our temple family will finally come back together in person. The plan is to have a small number of outdoor gatherings this summer, and then, God willing, in-person services for Rosh HaShanah.

I wish I could say for sure right here and now how *Yamim Noraim*, the High Holidays, will look, but at this point I cannot, because we always have – and always will – rely on the then-current “facts on the ground” to direct all decisions pertaining to the physical wellbeing of our congregation. That said, the Ritual Committee is optimistic that when it comes time for the New Year, we will likely be able to have – at the very least – an outdoor service with reduced seating capacity for members. And if current Covid trends continue through the summer, I expect we will be able to welcome congregants – and possibly even guests of members as well – into our air conditioned sanctuary. Also, no matter how or where services are conducted, one thing is for sure: we will make all services accessible live over the web as well.

We've been physically distanced from each other so long now that we really can't know exactly what will happen when we come back together. But if the emotions I experienced when kissing my dad and step-mom a few days ago are any predictor, I imagine there will be at least as many unexpected joys as there will be as expected ones. And I, for one, can't wait.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Dubin

President's Message

Ain't No Cure for the Summertime Blues

I heard Pete Townshend of The Who describing this line from an Eddie Cochran song a long time ago, and I thought that I would expound upon it today. Pete basically said that you don't get the blues in the summertime, which is why there is no cure.

For many people, this can be a true statement. While for others who struggle with depression, it is a complete lie.

Before the pandemic hit, we had shown a documentary called "This Way Madness Lies", which was created by Rabbi Dubin's neighbor Sandra Luckow. I think of how fortunate I am that I do not have to directly deal with some aspects of mental illness, and the ones that I do have to deal with are minor compared to what other people are going through.

As a people of conscience, we need to be concerned about the people who are in most need of help, especially those who don't want to admit they need help.

I hope that as we get back together soon, we can put together some more programming on mental illness, as well as other programs to help us understand where there are needs in Warren and Hunterdon Counties, and what we can do as a community to offer our assistance.

I wish for you a wonderful summer, and I look forward to SEEING you at the High Holidays beginning in VERY EARLY SEPTEMBER. I have a lot of hugs stored up for those of you who will attend.

Keep a lookout for the emails over the summer to see when we will begin to have services in our Hamish sanctuary once more.

Howie

Updates & Events

DONATIONS

In Memory of Mary Primrose Sayler Kalb
- Gerald Kalb

In Memory of Arthur Hertzmark
- Bernie Robins

On the Yahrzeit of Saul Schutzbank
- Ruth and Howard Shutzbank

In Memory of Esther Herson
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

In Memory of Anna Flekles
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

In Memory of Carol White
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

In Memory of Demitri Belser
- Sharon Herson and Daniel Fleckles

In Memory of Michael S. Lewis
- Rabbi Ellen Lewis

TORAH STUDY

Torah Study will complete Deuteronomy within the next couple of meetings. The next meeting will be on June 26 at 10:30 a.m. Please join us via Zoom.

-Sharon

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sunday School continues online. Check the WhatsApp for the latest updates and schedule.

FOOD DRIVE

During this time when our building is closed, we encourage members to donate to relief organizations and food pantries online. We will resume collecting food at the JCNWJ after we reopen.

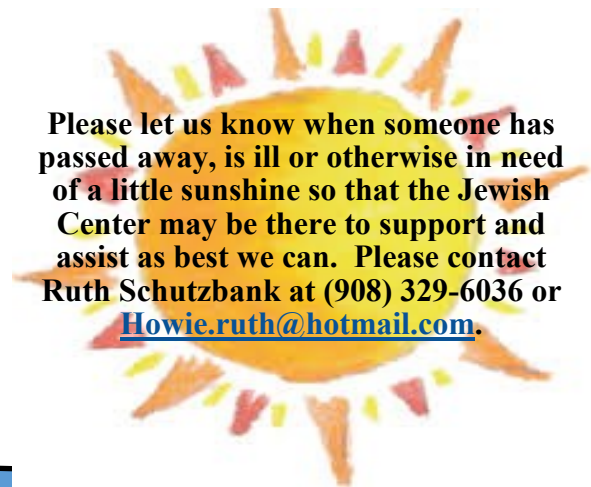
The food pantries are in dire need of supplies to fill their shelves as more and more people are in need and your generosity will help fill that need.

Thank you for your continued support!

-Iris

A Reminder from the Sunshine Committee

Please let us know when someone has passed away, is ill or otherwise in need of a little sunshine so that the Jewish Center may be there to support and assist as best we can. Please contact Ruth Schutzbank at (908) 329-6036 or Howie.ruth@hotmail.com.



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