

# THE JEWISH VOICE

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FEATURING JEWISH NEWS AND EVENTS

VOL. 12 NO. 7

www.seabreezerepublications.com

JULY 2022

## Local Leader Accompanies New Olim from Ethiopia to Israel

Melissa Arden, VP of community strategy and planning at Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, recently joined nearly 70 Jewish leaders from around the world on a three-day mission trip to Ethiopia to learn about the struggles of the country's Jewish community and dreams to be reconnected with family. The special mission concluded as participants, including Arden, accompanied an airlift of 180 Ethiopian olim (immigrants) to Israel as part of Operation Zur Israel (Rock of Israel).

The Jewish Agency for Israel, Jewish Federations of North America, and Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County are supporting a series of airlifts over the next six months to bring a total of 3,000 olim by plane to Israel to reunite with family, many of whom previously arrived in Israel during Operation Moses in 1984 and Operation Solomon in 1991.

"I returned home from this transformative experience with immense pride for our community, and the collective power

of global Jewry, having seen the extraordinary humanitarian efforts to care for the community there," shared Arden. "I am humbled to have had the life-changing opportunity to witness the magnitude of our community's impact in action."

During the mission, the leaders met with community members awaiting aliyah in cities Gondar and Addis Ababa, and visited sites of historical significance for Ethiopian

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Melissa Arden on the plane with Ethiopian girls emigrating to Israel



Women singing at services (Maxim Dinshtein Photography)



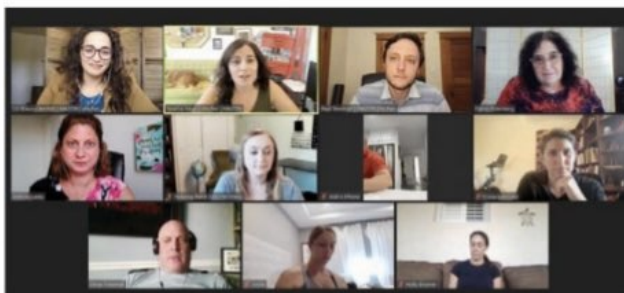
A street in Gondar, Ethiopia

## JFS Partners with MAZON to End Hunger Among People of All Faiths

Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service has announced a new partnership with MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, a national organization fighting to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel. Through the partnership, Alpert JFS' Satell Ending Food Insecurity Emerging Leadership Initiative members will have the opportunity to learn from the experts at MAZON.

The partnership kicked off in May with a session featuring conversations on hunger in the U.S., recognizing food insecurity, forging relationships, facilitating programs in the local community, and more. MAZON's leadership team – including Naama Haviv, Vice President of Community Engagement; Liz Braun-Lilenfeld, Deputy Director of Outreach; and Paul Sherman, Outreach Manager – guided the interactive discussion with Satell participants.

Alpert JFS desires to end food insecurity in Jewish households within its catchment area among a particular



segment of the food insecure population known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). To accomplish this ambitious goal, Alpert JFS engages with emerging Jewish leaders in order to educate, empower, and activate. These emerging Jewish leaders are responsible for doing community outreach to locate Jewish ALICE households. They are also responsible for securing donations of food to the Alpert JFS Kosher Food Pantry from the community.

According to the United Way of Palm Beach County's 2020 ALICE Report for Palm Beach County, 46 percent of Palm Beach County households struggle to make ends meet, and 12 percent of households are living below the Federal poverty level. Alpert JFS, which serves Palm Beach County

households – Boynton Beach and north – currently has two kosher food pantries, offering non-perishable kosher food, household necessities, and personal hygiene products, in addition to assisting with holiday meal deliveries for Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving, and Passover.

"Alpert JFS is committed to ending food insecurity and hunger in our Jewish community in a respectful and dignified way," said Marc Hopin, CEO of Alpert JFS. "For years, we have provided kosher food to vulnerable Jewish individuals and families in our area who face food insecurity, embodying the value of tikkun olam by supporting the most basic of human needs. Now with the support of MAZON, our efforts will go much further."

"Our outreach and education work centers around capacity building, to hone and direct the powerful voice of our Jewish communities to support the anti-hunger movement, building the necessary political will to make change," added Haviv. "This partnership with Alpert JFS is such a perfect encapsulation of that. We are energized by their Ending Food Insecurity Emerging Leadership Initiative. Our colleagues are nurturing a cohort of leaders ready to engage deeply on hunger in their communities."

Haviv continues, "Together, we see this as a model that could be replicated nationally, creating potential for exponential impact. Coupled with MAZON's grants program, which seeks to empower and grow state-based capacity building efforts within the anti-hunger movement and has new beneficiaries in Florida, this shidduch between MAZON and the Alpert JFS also allows us to bolster the advocacy goals of our grantee partners while continuing to grow MAZON's network in the deep, flourishing Jewish community across Florida."

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*Local Leader Accompanies from page 1*

Jewry. The leaders were joined by officials from the Jewish Agency for Israel, Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund, World Zionist Organization, and International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

Also on the airlift to Israel were Minister of Aliyah and Integration Pnina Tamano-Shata, the first Ethiopian-born woman to enter the Knesset; Chairman of the WZO and Acting Chairman of The Jewish Agency Yaakov Hagoel; and Jeffrey A. Schoenfeld, Chair of the Israel and Overseas Committee of the Jewish Federations of North America. A

second flight of 160 olim arrived in Ben Gurion airport in Israel a few days later.

Federations in North America have launched a special \$7 million campaign to fund both ongoing aliyah from Ethiopia and humanitarian assistance for those awaiting aliyah, in addition to the \$100 million raised annually for partner organizations such as the Jewish Agency to carry out their core efforts while preparing for extraordinary moments such as this.

"Jewish Federations are proud of our decades-long work side by side with The Jewish Agency for Israel and the Israeli government to help over 97,000 Ethiopian Jews realize their dream of making aliyah and to support their absorption into Israeli society," said Mark Wilf, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Jewish Federations of North America. "This sacred effort is the highest expression of the dedication of Jewish Federations to help Jews wherever they live, and we will continue to work with our partners to support the first steps in Israel of Ethiopian olim and to assist those still waiting to make aliyah."

"The North American Jewish community is proud of the way our community is stepping up once again to support Ethiopian aliyah," said Jewish Federations President and CEO Eric Fingerhut. "These inspiring



*A young man waves the Israeli flag (Maxim Dinshtein Photography)*

moments are a reminder of how important it is to invest in the infrastructure of Jewish support organizations, which Federations do year in and year out to ensure we are prepared to act when the need arises."

Jewish Federations are awaiting final approval from the government of Israel to enable those still remaining in Ethiopia to make aliyah and reunite with their families in Israel, as thousands still remain behind.

For more details about the mission, daily experiences, and Arden's insights, you can read her blog post at [jewishpb.org/ethiopiablog](http://jewishpb.org/ethiopiablog).

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