



THE JEWISH VOICE

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FEATURING JEWISH NEWS AND EVENTS

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Back-to-School Supply Drive Supports Local Families with Essentials, Books, Masks

Even with most schools going virtual this year and students attending class from home, thousands of children are still in critical need of supplies to support their academic success. Families in Palm Beach County's western communities received incredible support thanks to Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County's Jewish Volunteer Center (JVC) and its network of interfaith and community partners, as well as its partnership with Education Foundation of Palm Beach County. Through the partnership, more than 100 JVC volunteers packed nearly 750 backpacks as well as nearly 1,000 pencil boxes filled with school supplies, books, and protective face masks for all students at four Title 1 schools: Belle Glade Elementary, Gove Elementary, Gladeview Elementary, and Pahokee Elementary Schools. Education Foundation and FPL volunteers assembled the additional, for a total of 2,400 backpacks.

Federation and additional donors also raised more than \$67,000 to purchase school essentials for local teachers

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Local students Jesse Berg and his sister, Blake, along with family friend Phoebe Denenberg assemble backpacks at home in Palm Beach Gardens.



Teachers at Gove Elementary received a shipment of books.



Gemma, 6, and her brother Sonny, 7, helped pack pencil boxes for local students.

Rosh Hashanah Meals Distributed to Local Community Members in Need

Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (JFS) worked to distribute Rosh Hashanah meals to those in need throughout Palm Beach County, through a coordinated effort with the Jewish Volunteer Center of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, The Kind Kitchen of Palm Beach, as well as its annual Kosher Food Pantry's distribution of Rosh Hashanah holiday food baskets.

The three non-profits teamed up with more than 150 volunteers packaging meals, greeting and welcoming drivers, loading meals into cars, and making contactless deliveries. A total 230 holiday meals from The Kind Kitchen were delivered to 173 households in Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Palm Beach Gardens, Royal Palm Beach, Wellington, and West Palm Beach.

"What a mitzvah it was to usher in the new year by providing a bountiful, home-cooked meal for adults and families for Rosh Hashanah," said Alpert JFS Director of Volunteer Leadership Belinda Lasky. "We are grateful to the large number of volunteers who offered their time to prepare the packages and deliver them to households in need throughout our community."

"It is always fulfilling to know that the work we do in the community brings joy to the volunteers and the recipients we serve," said Melissa Hudson, Director, Jewish

Volunteer Center, Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County. "The outpouring of volunteer support we received to deliver meals to homebound members of the community is a hopeful reminder that there is good and kindness the world."

"It was really heartwarming to see everyone's support for the community-wide Rosh Hashanah meal distribution. The overwhelming response, both physically and financially, was tremendous," said Chana Ezagui, who runs The Kind Kitchen of Palm Beach. "The desire to help others, especially during difficult times, is incredible, showing me that every person is filled with good deeds, like the seeds of a pomegranate, which is a traditional holiday food. G-d surely sees and will bless everyone for a sweet and healthy New Year."



Alpert JFS' Kosher Food Pantry provided Rosh Hashanah holiday baskets to 35 families under age 65, consisting of 85 individuals. A frozen kosher turkey for those able to cook their own meals,

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Women Gather for Virtual Challah Bake

The annual Chabad of Palm Beach Gardens Challah Bake is always an exciting start to the New Year. With entertainment, speakers, and a buffet, the women leave with much more than just a round challah for the holidays.

This year the event took on new meaning as participants embarked upon a year like never before. Innovative planning allowed for women to partake in this special evening from the comfort of their own homes.

While the annual event involves lots of socializing and a gourmet spread, this year the virtual event was more intimate, food for thought.

The featured speaker, author and challah expert Rochie Pinson, offered guidance to the meaning of each step of



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From the Rabbis from page 3

Why Dead People Get More Flowers Than the Living

By Rabbi Dovid Vigler

Isn't it odd that we tend to appreciate our loved ones far more when we no longer have them?

It reminds me of the wife who had a long list of her husband's shortcomings, and a very short list of his qualities. When he died suddenly, an amazing thing happened: Her short list of



his qualities suddenly became very long as she gushed about what a stellar husband he was and her long list of shortcomings was all but forgotten!

Wouldn't it be nice if we had the courage to switch these lists around: to have long lists of qualities for the people we love while they are alive, and to save the shortcomings for when they are gone?

This powerful idea is shared with us in the Torah recently as we learn about the declarations of gratitude that the Jews would recite as they brought their "first fruits" to G-d in the Temple in Jerusalem. They would recite a beautiful affirmation (similar to the narrative at the Passover seder) gushing with appreciation for all the good that G-d had done for them to allow them to reach this milestone of reaping the fruits of their labor. Specifically, they would thank G-d for having saved them from Lavan, the wicked father-in-law of Jacob, and from Pharaoh in the Egyptian bondage.

Though there are many other events and enemies for which we could have praised G-d, these two were specifically selected because they enhance the joy of the moment: Our goal isn't to emphasize the greatest miracles we experienced, but rather those that help us feel grateful for growing our own fruits on our land. In both cases we were settled comfortably in the land, only to have it snatched from us at the last minute, by a cunning Lavan and an evil Pharaoh.

When we realize what we lost then, we're able to better appreciate what we have now.

As human beings, we don't appreciate what we have until it's taken from us.

This is the reason why G-d denies us certain luxuries or privileges from time to time. The Baal Shem Tov explains that habit becomes second nature and we therefore take for granted the blessings that recur in our lives and we no longer appreciate them. When Hashem sometimes takes blessings away from us, we tend to appreciate them more and not take them for granted.

We take the blessings in our lives for granted; but when we encounter the curses, we indignantly ask, "Why me?"

Appreciating what we have only when we don't have it is a truth that we all have come to painfully learn over the past six months of this pandemic.

How many grandparents used to complain about the grandkids coming over and making such a mess: What wouldn't they pay to have them come now for a visit?

How many parents who complained about their kids' schooling would do anything to send them for a full day at school again?

How many employees who would complain about their salary or workplace would do anything to be able to go back and have their job security again?

We have just begun a New Year. Not all our loved ones made it. Never take for granted the people you love. We appreciate our loved ones when they're dead; the challenge is doing so while they are still alive!

Don't show them how much you care by showing up at their funeral; show them how much you care by calling to say hi!

We are surrounded with blessings, but sometimes we need to lose some of them in order to realize how fortunate we really are.

Appreciate what you have while you have it: Don't dwell on the past and don't fret over the future, just live in the present and savor the moment!

May we all learn to give flowers while our loved ones are still living.

Rabbi Dovid Vigler is spiritual leader at Chabad of Palm Beach Gardens and host of the Jewish Schmooze Radio Show. Email him at rabbi@jewishgardens.com

A Window to the World

By Rabbi Paul Arberman

God says to Noah: Build an ark — with very specific requirements, including the length, the height, the building materials, and how to construct the ark. Noah is also commanded to create some kind of a light, "a tzohar," perhaps a window, at the top of the ark. No reason for this commandment is given, but we assume it was so Noah and the people and the animals on the ark would be able to know the difference between day and night, and so they could tell when the waters were pouring down, and when the flood had ceased. And then the Torah tells us that Noah did as God commanded.

After 40 days and 40 nights of constant rain; after 40 days and 40 nights in which every house, every tree, and every person on the earth was swept away by the flood, the waters began to dry up on the earth, we are told: "Vayasar Noach et michse hateyva, vayar, vihiney charvu piney ha-adamah," Noah removed the covering of the ark, and he saw that the surface of the earth was beginning to dry.

What covering? Where does it say that God commanded Noah to put a covering over the ark? It says the opposite. Noah was commanded to put a window on the ark, so he could see what was going on outside. And instead, on his own, with no instruction to do so, Noah put a covering over the ark. Why? One possibility is that Noah could not bear to see the world go under. He could not bear to watch every house, every street, every person, and every animal, everything he knew from infancy on, go floating out to sea. And so what did he do? He put up a covering so he would not have to watch it happen. He put up a screen or a curtain so he would not have to see the whole world he knew go under.

We are all a little bit like Noah. We would all rather put a covering over our ark or over our eyes than confront the fact that there are so many people around us who have significant needs. Noah turned the ark into some kind of a cocoon, into some kind of a shelter where he could be oblivious to the suffering that was going on outside. And yet we are meant to see the needs of others. The tzohar, window, is not just to let the light in — it's to see what is happening in the world around us.

Rabbi Paul Arberman is spiritual leader at Temple Beth David in Palm Beach Gardens



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gefilte fish, matzo ball soup, carrots, potatoes, string beans, honey cake, honey, and apples were in the baskets, which were picked up at the agency's West Palm Beach and Lake Worth offices. Alpert JFS case managers and volunteers, following established safety protocols, made deliveries to recipients unable to drive. The baskets were assembled and decorated by residents of the agency's Melvin J. & Claire Levine Jewish Residential & Family Service (Levine JRFS) group homes and apartments.

Clients receiving Rosh Hashanah baskets from the Alpert JFS Kosher Food Pantry were very appreciative. As Olivia Tartakow, Alpert JFS Director of Community Directions, shared, "As a client received her basket, tears in her eyes, she said, 'You don't know how much this means to me and my family. Without this, we wouldn't have been able to have our family Rosh Hashanah meal. Thank you so much.'"



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