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INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE CASE

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the Court's ruling







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# In this issue FEBRUARY 2024

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CLICK HERE to read about the decision of the International Court of Justice	
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	Regular Contributors		Features and Opinions		
	3	Bonny's Beat	12	New horizons in teaching	
		Shabbat and Yom Tov Times	17	Julian Resnick writes from Israel	
	4	Upcoming Community Events	18	Volunteering to help Israelis in need	
	6 – 7	Herzlia	10	inneed	
	8	Temple Israel	19	Book review: Fraud by Nikki Munitz	
	9 – 11	Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies	20	Legal Matters – Anti-Israel protests: Legal issues and responses	
	12	Melton	21	Drumstruck at Silvermist wine farm	
	13 – 14	SA Zionist Federation (Cape Council)	24	Celebration of Muizenberg shul centenary	
	15	Cape Jewish Seniors Association	25	Health Focus – A step in the right direction	
	23	Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	26 - 27	City of Cape Town Civic Awards	
l		Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute	29	Entrepreneurs' Hotspot –	
	24	Patrons panel		Founders of Yenza committed to changing lives	
	28	Telfed	30	Erin Dodo – Comfort in memory	
	32	Chronic Ads	31	Simcha Snaps	

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### An inconvenient truth

n recent weeks, the phrase 'an inconvenient truth' has popped into my mind on a number of occasions. It's wording that many of us recognise from that important 2006 documentary film by former Vice-President of the United States. Al Gore, when he drew attention to the reality of the impact of climate change on our world. The inconvenient truth he referred to concerned the fact that, in order to make the changes needed to stop the negative impact of climate change, the whole structure of the US economy would have to be relooked - clearly something that those with vested interests in business would not be keen to do.

It appears to me that there are a number of inconvenient truths about the current conflict in Gaza – and, because they are so inconvenient to those driving a particular narrative, these truths are simply being ignored.

Take, for instance, the overwhelming evidence of sexual assaults by Hamas on Israeli women and girls on October 7th. These attacks must surely constitute crimes against humanity and against these civilians' human rights. However, have you heard any of those who identify as crimes against humanity the conflict affecting Palestinians also calling Hamas out for these atrocious sexual attacks?

As for Israel being portrayed by so many people as the aggressor in this current conflict, no-one seems to be willing to recognise the spark that set it all off. After all, if the Hamas attacks on the 7th October had not happened, the thousands who perished would still be alive. Again, too inconvenient a truth to acknowledge since it may dilute the strength of the anti-Israel argument?

Then there are those who regard Israel as a colonial authority – as if there were no presence of Jews in the area today called Israel/ Palestine. Clearly, it would be an inconvenient truth to acknowledge the reality of centuries of Jewish settlement in the area since that would weaken their argument.

Finally, where are the thousands, if not millions, of people who should be calling for a return of the hostages taken by Hamas? Surely, this is an absolutely horrendous infringement of human rights. Surely people all around the world – and certainly within our own country – should be demonstrating against what Hamas did. Or is it too inconvenient a truth that Jews are human beings and deserve to have their human rights protected?

One thing is for sure: the biggest victim of all these inconvenient truths is truth itself.

The Chronicle took a break during January after a bumper issue for December/ January. In the new year we will continue to bring you information about the Israel/Hamas conflict.

We're excited to have our regular columnist, Julian Resnick, visiting Cape Town. Julian has kindly offered us an hour or two of his time to talk about life in Israel right now, and the issues that the country is having to address. If you'd like to join in for the meet up and hear more from Julian, please RSVP to editor@ctjc.co.za or see the invitation on Page 17.

This month we also carry some lighter and happier news: the outstanding results of the matriculants in our community, including one particular huge achievement by a Herzlia learner.

We're also thrilled to be able to share photographs from the summer wedding season, as well as other simcha pictures. Mazal Tov to everyone! Building resilience

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# **SHABBAT AND YOM TOV TIMES**

DATE		PORTION	CANDLE LI	GHTING	ENDS
			earliest	latest	
2/3 February	23/24 Shevat	Yisro	18:26	19:15	20:27
9/10 February	30 Shevat/ 1 Adar	Mishpatim	18:22	19:15	20:20
16/17 February	7/8 Adar	Terumah	18:16	19:15	20:12
23/24 February	14/15 Adar	Tetzaveh	18:10	19:13	20:04

Save the date

# UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

<b>COMMUNITY ORGANISATION</b>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>FOR MORE INFO</u>
ORT Jet Cape Town	LinkedIn Training Workshop	13 February	Register <u>here</u>
ORT Jet Cape Town	Mentorship Programme Introductory Workshop	19 February	TBC
ORT Jet Cape Town	Business Networking	21 February	TBC
SAADA Cape Fair 2024 – Franschhoek	Antique, Art & Design Fair — including John Henry Amshewitz Art Exhibition	10 & 11 February 2024 10h00 – 18h00	Page 4 https://www.saada.co.za/
SAZF Cape Council	Film Club: Apples from the Desert	11 February 18h30	RSVP: sazfevents@ctjc.co.za 021 464 6714
WIZO Cape Town	Annual General Meeting (AGM)	25 February 10h30	Further details TBC
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Screening of 'Facing Windows'	4 February 18h00 – 19h30	RSVP by emailing admin@holocaust.org.za
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Public lecture: Nazi Concentration Camps in the South African Media	8 February 18h00	RSVP by emailing admin@holocaust.org.za
Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre	Webinar: Trip to Poland – report back by Foundation staff	15 February 17h00	RSVP by emailing admin@holocaust.org.za



as the payment reference. NOTE: Use YOCO for international payments.

### Works by Amschewitz on show in Franschhoek

Cape Town art lovers have a unique opportunity to view works by the English Jewish artist, John Henry Amshewitz, at The Old Corkscrew in Franschhoek on 10 and 11 February, during the South African Antique, Art & Design Association Fair. Works on show include a self-portrait and a number of cherished family paintings.

Starting his career in England in the early 1900s, Amschewitz moved to South Africa during World War I. Settling in Johannesburg, his work reflected scenes of local life.

Recognised internationally, exhibitions of his work were held in Europe, and some paintings were acquired by various important private collections in Europe.

Visit us at The Old Corkscrew and discover the beauty and depth of his work – a testament to the enduring power of creativity and expression.

**For more information** about the SAADA Antique, Art & Design Fair, visit www.saada.co.za.



John Henry Amshewitz



J. H. Amshewitz "The Pledge"

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# Herzlia Matric class of 2023!

The results of Herzlia's Matric Class of 2023 are phenomenal in light of the turbulent times that pupils faced. This tight-knit group has an incredible spirit and a love for Herzlia – especially Herzlia pride and embracing the values of Jewish life.

Mazal Tov to Ethan Myers for being the "2023 NSC National Top Candidate in South Africa for Independent Schools" with 9 distinctions out of 9 subjects, including Further Studies English and Mathematics.

#### General Statistics for Herzlia High School Matric Class of 2023:

- 72 Matric candidates
- 100% Matric pass rate in an academically inclusive school
- 252 Individual subject distinctions, with 9 of these distinctions being achieved in Further Studies Mathematics and English
- Average of 3.5 distinctions per candidate, including Further Studies Mathematics and English.
- 2023 NSC National Top Candidate in South Africa for Independent Schools, with a total of 9 distinctions out of 9 subjects, including Further Studies English and Mathematics
- 9 subject distinctions: 1 pupil
- 8 subject distinctions: 4 pupils
- 7 subject distinctions: 9 pupils
- 6 subject distinctions: 7 pupils
- 5 subject distinctions: 4 pupils
- 4 subject distinctions: 13 pupils
- 3 subject distinctions: 5 pupils
- 2 subject distinctions: 5 pupils
- 1 subject distinction: 9 pupils



Kudos must be given to Herzlia teachers who supported matric pupils on their academic journey. Their commitment to always going the extra mile has been instrumental in their success. The work of Herzlia's Counselling and **Educational Support Department** (SEED) has also provided invaluable support, care and guidance to pupils and their parents, as well as to the teaching staff. Their contribution is a significant part of what makes Herzlia's educational experience so powerful. The fact that Herzlia is an academically inclusive school makes the matric results even more impressive. This also includes 11 pupils who chose to extend themselves through writing IEB **Further Studies Mathematics** and English.

Herzlia offers a truly holistic education, which is not only resultsoriented, but focuses on the values, skills and relationships that pupils develop during their time as part of the close, caring school community. Support, encouragement and guidance from Herzlia's parents, the Jewish community and the UHS Board keeps the school running smoothly.

The 2023 Matric results are not just about academic scores: they reflect the broader values, skills, and relationships that Herzlia pupils develop during their school years.











**Ethan Myers** 9 DISTINCTIONS



Taya Allardice 8 DISTINCTIONS



Leo Bachmann 7 DISTINCTIONS





Layla Chait 7 DISTINCTIONS



Jenna Zetler 7 DISTINCTIONS



Amy Gluckman 6 DISTINCTIONS



Jordan Osrin **5 DISTINCTIONS** 



Gemma Cohn 8 DISTINCTIONS



Erin Baruch 7 DISTINCTIONS



Daniel Gad 7 DISTINCTIONS



Matthew Carrol 6 DISTINCTIONS



Geena Joffe **6 DISTINCTIONS** 



Sienna Radowsky **5 DISTINCTIONS** 



Top Learner in South Africa (NSC) Independent Schools with 9/9 subject distinctions including Further Studies

**Mathematics & English** 

**Ashlee Deats** 8 DISTINCTIONS





7 DISTINCTIONS



Jade Gershowitz 6 DISTINCTIONS



Meg Levy 6 DISTINCTIONS



**Keren Schiff 5 DISTINCTIONS** 



8 DISTINCTIONS



**Zachary Castro** 7 DISTINCTIONS



Isabella Sherman 7 DISTINCTIONS



Shay-Lee Geva 6 DISTINCTIONS



Jonathan Querido 6 DISTINCTIONS



Isaac Showell **5 DISTINCTIONS** 





100%	MATRIC PASS RATE IN AN ACADEMICALLY INCLUSIVE SCHOOL
252	INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT DISTINCTIONS
3.5	AVERAGE SUBJECT DISTINCTIONS PER PUPIL
72	MATRIC

MATRIC **CANDIDATES** 

**MAZALTOV TO THE CLASS OF 2023!** 

www.herzlia.com

















#### **CONSIDER THIS**

# **THE POWER OF THE WORD**

#### By RABBI MALCOLM MATITIANI



Every morning we Jews recite the following blessing: "Blessed is the One who spoke and the world came to be, blessed is the One, blessed be the One who maintains creation, blessed is the One who speaks and does, blessed is the One who decrees and establishes..."

This blessing acknowledges the power of the spoken word. Referring to the first chapter of Genesis which portrays God as articulating the divine intention of creating each stage of the world through speech, the blessing praises the Almighty whose words and decrees become reality. This ability of creating realities through verbal communication was bestowed on human beings who, like God, can articulate the abstract and thereby transform ideas and thoughts into concrete reality.

It is no accident that Judaism is a text-based religion and culture. The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE led to the transformation of Judaism from a religion based on animal sacrifices to one based on Torah study, prayer and the performance of *mitzvoth*; from a faith dependent on a fixed sacred space to one based on the portable "sanctuary" of books. The reliance on text rather than a Temple enabled the Jews to survive persecution and expulsion and allowed them to set up communities and live meaningful, God-fearing lives wherever they relocated. Unlike material wealth and possessions, knowledge and the ability to express ideas and debate opinions can never be taken away by the persecutor as is illustrated by the examples of Rabbis Akiva (Berachot 61b) and Yehudah ben Bava (Sanhedrin 14a).

While language has the potential to create and promote life, it also has the potential to create negativity, hatred and destruction. Torah and rabbinic teaching counsel care in the use of language and especially the spoken word which is often used in anger and impetuously. *Lashon ha-ra*, "evil speech" or slander is considered by the sages as a transgression akin to murder (Bava Metzia 58b) and punishable by the loss of a share in the world to come (Avot 3:12).

Jewish history teaches the danger of hate speech and slander. Thousands of Jews were murdered as a direct result of false accusations about Jewish practice and behaviour. The blood libels of mediaeval and even twentieth century Europe testify to the destructive capabilities of language. Of course the most tragic and evil result of the misuse of language was the Shoah which led to the physical murder of six million Jews and the destruction of Jewish European culture, a loss that has not been regained more than seventy years after the end of World War II. This mass genocide was the direct result of the anti-Semitism and paranoia of ruthless madmen who used the power of language to express their noxious ideas.

Today the State of Israel and Jews around the world face a similar propaganda campaign calling for the eradication of the Jewish State and a second genocide of the Jews. These examples from history point to the profundity of the Talmudic statement that there is not much of a leap from hate speech and slander to physical murder.

The dangers of misusing language are not always as dramatic Speaking about another in their absence can lead to dire social consequences by destroying that person's standing in the community as well as diminishing their spiritual and emotional self-worth. While a physical wound eventually heals, an emotional scarring caused by the written or spoken word can often fester through generations. The Talmud (Ta'anit 20a-b) relates a teaching of Rabbi Eleazar ben Rabbi Shimeon: "A person should always be gentle as the reed and never be unyielding as the cedar. And for this reason the reed merited that of it should be made a pen for the writing of the Torah, Tefillin and Mezuzot." It is the gentle and forgiving reed that is used to write the very symbols of our covenant with God. May all that we say and write be gentle and yielding as the reed, thereby creating positive realities that promote the sanctity of life, thus using the power of language as God intended.





#### CONNECT, COLLABORATE, COMMUNITY By Daniel Bloch, Executive Director, Cape SAJBD WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?



t seems as though everyone went on holiday towards the end of December and that, for the first time in a long time, there was relative peace and quiet in the Cape. Perhaps my idea of quiet and your idea of quiet may differ, however, I spent less time on my mobile and more time enjoying the break. Nevertheless, I did come crashing back down to earth during the first week of January and, since then, it has been all systems go.

The International Court of Justice case has come and gone and we now await a decision (by the time you read this, we may have a decision). Protests have started up again, social media is once more on fire, and we have continued writing letters and articles either condemning actions against our community or providing information on specific topics.

I was asked recently by a member of our community, "But what can we do to help?"

It is a very good question and one that does not have a simple answer. Over the past few months, I have met with many concerned members of the community who have offered their support, skills and experience – desperately wanting to offer the Board any and all assistance in fighting the anti-Israel narrative and combating antisemtisim wherever it rears its ugly head. The offers are greatly appreciated and it is incredible to see how united we are as a community and the concern for one another's safety.

Whilst the Board may be the voice of the community and is engaging with a host of key stakeholders both Jewish and non-Jewish alike, the reality is that many people are providing assistance in a variety of ways. People share relevant local and international articles, give various legal interpretations on specific topics, provide PR and marketing ideas, suggest important contacts to meet with - and more. Whilst all these are extremely important, one of the most valuable contributions coming from our community are those who support us on social media, liking articles, sharing relevant and safe information and, most importantly, trusting that the Board is representing the community and doing everything possible to safeguard and protect

Over the past few months, I have received countless messages and phone calls thanking the Board for all the work that we do. As I wrote in a previous article last year, words matter, and the power emanating from the voices within our community inspire me to give 120% each and every day and inspire our entire Council to work around the clock.

Now that may not be the strategic answer some were hoping for, however, for many of you, it should provide enough comfort knowing that we are on top of things. I certainly do not know everything and, as the Board, we do not always have the correct answer which is why our door is always open. We invite members of our community to get in contact to ask as many questions as possible.

What I do know is that it is a long and challenging road ahead and the only way we will get through this is by being a united community, supporting one another, sharing experience and knowledge and always communicating. When it comes to information sharing, there is no reason for anyone to be in the dark – unless of course it's load shedding and you don't have an inverter!

# What happened at the Board in December 2023

#### **Muizenberg Shul centenary**



he Cape Board attended the Muizenberg Shul's centenary celebration events which were held in December 2023. Muizenberg, the 'Shtetl by the Sea', holds great significance and nostalgia for many Cape Town, Johannesburg and expat Jewry who either lived, visited grandparents, or holidayed in Muizenberg. Executive Director, Daniel Bloch, attended the Friday night Shabbat dinner following the Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv Service. The dinner was attended by the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Dr Warren Goldstein, and the distinguished guest, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations

of the Commonwealth, Sir Ephraim Mirvis (an ex-Capetonian himself). Josh Friedman, Programme and Development Manager, attended the Closing Ceremony of the Centenary and international reunion. This event comprised one of the largest international Muizenberg reunions in history. The official centenary video was screened with messages sent from expats from all over the world. Ex-Muizenbergers gave special presentations, and musical entertainment was provided by Ivor Joffe. You can read a full review of the centenary celebrations further on page 24.

#### Youth movements machanot visits

xecutive Director, Daniel Bloch, took to the road to visit each of the Youth Movements - Habonim, Bnei Akiva, and Netzer's flagship end-of-year Machanot (camps). The camps accommodate young children and young adults from Grade 3 through to Grade 11 for a period of three weeks. They even have a special 2-3-day camp for the younger grades allowing them to acclimatise to life without mom and dad. Daniel was taken on tours of each of the sites by the leadership, shown the facilities and given an overview of what content is discussed and taught during their three weeks of camp. Each youth movement has their own set of unique principles and values, and parents and students alike can choose which camp best suits their requirements.

What is clear is the importance of the Machanot. It's a great place to make new friends, meet different people, share common interests and spend the holiday with other Jewish children and young adults. Daniel spoke with several of the campers to get their views on the respective camp sites. There was a common theme running throughout - togetherness, fun and no parents! Despite some hairy chicken on the menu, those attending Machaneh all seem to enjoy themselves immensely and cannot wait until the next December holidays. Each of the youth movements runs a variety of activities throughout the year and we encourage you to make contact with each organisation. Email SAJBD2@ctjc.co.za for more information.

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# **Message FROM THE CHAIR**

By Adrienne Jacobson



am listening right now to Ly-Golan's catchy song Am Yisrael am listening right now to Eyal Chai as I write this article. Right now this song is trending in Israel and also in Jewish communities throughout the diaspora, as it sustains, uplifts and connects us to each other and the nation of Israel.

Halev Nilcham Bedeagot, the heart is fighting worry, sings Eyal Golan, as we wait for everyone to return, nodah besarot tovot, hopefully with good

news. His melody and poignant lyrics waft through my AirPods and touch me deeply as I write.

In South Africa our Jewish community has faced wave after wave of hostility not only from the outpouring of hate and bias in the media, boycotts, protests, academics and even sport, but particularly from the words and actions of the ANC government. I write this on the eve of the ICJ judgement, over the preposterous genocide accusation and the ruling on Provisional Measures.

I cannot reiterate enough that while we may feel betrayed and deeply hurt by the actions of the ANC government and the deterioration of our relationship with them. South Africa remains a constitutional democracy with enshrined rights and constitutionally protected freedoms that overrule the government of the day.

While we at the SAJBD continue to fight on behalf of our Jewish South African Citizens for our constitutionally protected rights, to live a full Jewish life in a safe environment free from discrimination and hate, we also need to make sure

we are fulfilling our responsibilities as active citizens in a South Africa poised on the brink of election and political change. Of active political engagement, of participating in the democratic process by registering to vote and encouraging others to do so too. And to elect a government that reflects our values and aspirations, one that ensures a future for all South Africans.

Ki Am hanetzach leolam Lo mephached, wafts the song through my AirPods. We are an eternal nation and we should never fear, afilu she kasheh lirot, even when it's so hard to see.

We are facing challenging times as pro-Hamas supporters are using everything at their disposal to make us feel insecure and unwelcome in South Africa. It's called psychological warfare, and it's an unbelievably strong tactic and one we are staunchly fighting against at the Board. We urge our community to recognize it for what it is and to be resilient, and caution against being drawn into the cesspool that is designed to hurt and offend us by responding to the clickbait. Choose carefully what you engage with on

social media and as a community draw together and find strength in each other.

Dr Tracy Farber, clinical psychologist and trauma expert says that "social support is an important cornerstone in the development of resilient communities" And Dr Judith Herman says "no one can face trauma alone."

Eyal Golan's chorus continues, the melody and words filling me with hope... am yisrael chai ...baaliyot, bayiridot gam bashaot hachi kashot ... during ascents, declines and even in the hardest hours. Ki Lo ovdah haemunah... Because we haven't lost faith. Hatikvah bat shnat alpayim ... the hope of 2000 years...

Dr Tracy Faber says of Holocaust Survivors, in her book Catastrophic grief, trauma and resilience in child concentration camp survivors -(Farber, Eagle and Smith 2023)

"The capacity to find hope is essential in being able to survive and thrive. Resilience is the ability walk forward and adapt and hope is a creative force that helps us to do this.

We as a South African Jewish community know how to harness hope; we will never lose it, no matter how challenging times may be. We pray together for the return of our hostages and for an end to the tragic loss of life and this war. We are strong, we are united and we are a vibrant community and we care for one another. We at the SAJBD together with the SAZF and leadership across the community are working together, around the clock, committed, strong and steadfast to ensure that Jews in South Africa are safe and that our religious and civil rights are protected and that we have a place in this beautiful country despite our differences with the present government.

A final refrain from Eyal Golan...give the song a listen, it will lift your spirits.

I promise the dove will spread her wings... and we'll go out and sing in the streets again.

In a world of peace, Amen.

Kind Regards Adrienne Jacobson

CAPE SAJBD

### **REPORT ANTISEMITISM & HATRED**

The Cape SAJBD closely monitors and investigates all acts of antisemi-tism in South Africa — but **we stand against all forms of hatred.** 

Our 'No Place for Hate' campaign fights hatred directed against anyone to combat a culture of racism, antisemitism and prejudice in our country.

Report incidents of antisemitism and hate by sending a Whatsapp message to the Antisemitism Hotline on 079 994 5573.



### COMMUNITY WELLNESS HELPLINE

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious and would like access to a trained counsellor, please contact our Cape SAJBD's Community Helpline to support your emotional wellbeing

Send a WhatsApp message, voice note or call the Emotional Wellness Helpline on 079 875 3902



# **REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**



CapeSAJBD

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# The Western Cape Jewish community

# welcomes you!

# The Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies welcomes you to the Western Cape!

If you or your family have moved to the Western Cape in the past few years, or if you know of anyone who has joined our community, then please connect with us. We would like to assist you as best we can to ensure your transition is as smooth as possible. Find out more about this incredible community and how we can work together!

### Let's continue to grow and strengthen our Jewish community!



For more information, please email sajbd2@ctjc.co.za



#### A back to contents

# **NEW HORIZONS IN TEACHING: MTEI's Professional Development Programme at work at Herzlia**



Shimpa (Chaim) Moch

erzlia teacher Shimpa (Chaim) Moch recently completed the two-year programme offered by the Mandel Teacher Educator Institute (MTEI) in the United States. Not only is he the first South African to graduate from this course, he was also the only foreign student in his cohort.

"There is so much I will now be able to bring to teaching and learning within the Jewish day school system in South Africa after this course," Shimpa says, enthusing about the opportunity he has had to expand his approach to professional development among educators here. In essence, the MTEI approach aims to deeply honour the professionals that teachers are while insisting that teaching improvements are both necessary and attainable. It does this through a series of professional development practices that are broadly termed 'relational pedagogies'. In each of these practices, attention is given to the way that the interaction can build relationships among teachers in the context of a razor sharp focus on quality teaching and quality learning.

Shimpa explains: "For example, when it comes to observing teachers during a lesson, one of the key changes in my thinking was to move from a 'fix it' model to a 'learning conversation' model. Rather than a one-way street of feedback after a lesson observation, I learned ways to set up a collaborative inquiry into the teaching so that I can work together with the teacher to investigate the problems that they are working on in their classroom practice. Such an approach discards the usual evaluative

**66** There is so much I will now be able to bring to teaching and learning within the Jewish day school system in South Africa after this course. **99** 

tenor of lesson observations in

favour of a descriptive approach to

observational data. It also favours

deep inquiry over conclusions and

therefore questions are way more

important than assertions of best

practice." Ultimately, the approach

a teacher can improve through his/

her own understanding of where

Leadership Institute, Shimpa, who

grew up in Johannesburg, headed

department at Highlands Primary

School before moving to Herzlia

included valuable practice-based

geared to assist one to apply the

theoretical learning gained during

the six sessions held in Chicago

in the USA to one's own context.

opportunities to roll out a different

about how to improve the quality of teaching within the Herzlia

The interaction with others in the

work at educational institutions in

America - brought many benefits.

Shimpa explains, "I had hoped to

be able to take part in it virtually via

Zoom sessions but the organisers

of the course would not accept me

for the course on this basis. They

interaction with others is a crucial

element of the learning experience.

education field - almost all of whom

environment," he explains.

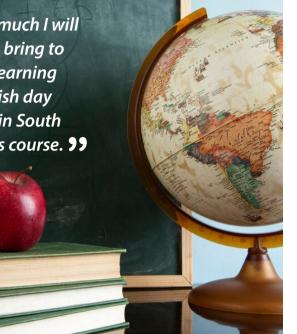
way of thinking about teaching and

I thus used the assignments as

enhancements can be made.

A graduate of the Eliot Osrin

up the Jewish Life & Learning



So, it was guite a commitment for me to travel to America three times a year during 2022 and 2023 for about a week each time. But, ultimately, the effort paid off since I gained so much from each of these visits," he says.

Since his move to Herzlia High School, Shimpa has begun implementing a programme that he calls TRAIN (Teaching, Reflecting, Analysis, Integration and INnovation) which is geared to enhance professional development among teachers at the school. In addition to the practical implementation of the programme, he hopes to see more leaders within the school system take part in the course so that he will not be the lone voice regarding the MTEI approach to professional development.

Shimpa's personal enthusiasm for professional development reflects in his enthusiasm for ongoing learning. He is currently studying towards a PhD in Education at the University of Cape Town's School of Education, and focuses on the sociology of education.

No doubt. Herzlia will benefit from the knowledge that Shimpa has gained from the MTEI – which, by the way, has yet another Cape Town connection: the Programme Director is former Cape Town resident and past Principal of Weizmann Primary School, Seymour Kopelowitz.





Cape Town's Connection to Israel

# ADVOCATE EDUCATE CELEBRATE

## **KFIR TURNS 1**





Capetonians came together to celebrate Kfir's birthday On the 18th January 2024, we celebrated Kfir Bibas's 1st birthday for, and with him. Kfir was taken hostage by Hamas on October 7th and, instead of being able to celebrate his birthday, surrounded by his beautiful family and friends, he is being held hostage.

The number 18 represents CHAI – LIFE. On his 1st birthday, we came together as a community to celebrate the life of Kfir and we prayed for him, his family and all the hostages to be released immediately. Our hearts are with Kfir and we are waiting for him to blow out his own candles and for him to be able to celebrate life together with his family!

Click here to view the video

# Tu B'Shvat

Tu B'shvat, a much-loved Jewish holiday, celebrates the 'New Year of the Trees'. Traditionally the day is seen as an ecological awareness day, and trees are planted in celebration and as a long-term investment in the future.

The SAZF Cape Council, in collaboration with the Cape SAJBD, celebrated Tu B'shvat together at Glendale home. The residents participated enthusiastically in the planting

The group involved in the Tu B'shvat activities

of new fruit trees in the Magen David Garden.

Each tree was planted in honour of the hostages and those lives lost during the October 7th massacre. This year we focused on regrowth and renewal, as we rebuild Am Yisrael.

Thanks to the JNF and Ben Getz from Urban Harvest, who generously donated beautiful fruit trees and seedlings. Glendale is a home that provides services for Jewish adults and aged persons with profound intellectual disabilities. The residents are an integral part of every community event; so, it gives us great pleasure to be able to give back, and continue creating a space they can enjoy.

We hope that these trees will continue to stand tall and provide much pleasure to the residents of Glendale home.



Planting a tree for Tu B'shvat

### Solidarity trip to Israel

By DAVID COHEN, CHAIRMAN OF SAZF CAPE COUNCIL



The smell of evil

was fortunate to be included in a solidarity mission to Israel in December. As the chairman of the South African Zionist Federation in Cape Town, it was critical that I see for myself what our friends and family in Israel have had to live through for what is now over one hundred days.

While we have all been inundated with photographs, videos and words around October 7th and the carnage that took place, what the solidarity mission allowed me to do was experience this tragedy with all of my senses.

For me, like many others, the most evocative sense that we have is smell. While it may not be able to give us the most information in isolation, in context it is a gateway to memory and emotion. Smelling a particular recipe can transport you back to childhood. It can also evoke darker memories.

Walking into the burnt shell of one of the houses in Be"eri, still blackened on the walls and ceiling like the inside of a well-used braai. But the smell... the pungent, foul, burnt smell of plastic and rubbish did not make me think of a fun evening at friends or a fire pit at summer camp, but what evil smells like. I searched through the collective memory of the Jewish people and smelled the crematorium at Auschwitz.

The difference is that, while we were touring the destruction, artillery shells from the IDF flew overhead towards Gaza, reminding me that, while we were severely wounded on October 7th, a Holocaust will never happen again.

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Cape Town's Connection to Israel

# ADVOCATE EDUCATE CELEBRATE

### Starting 2024 with a bang: Diller Teen Fellows embrace growth and leadership



Cohort 9 Jewish Identity Shabbaton

#### By EYTAN LABE

The Diller Teen Fellows Programme kicks off 2024 with a vibrant start, reflecting on a December filled with virtual community building activities. Reunited for a Jewish Identity Shabbaton in Langebaan, the Fellows explored their Jewish identity and the unique context of being South African Jews. This introspective journey deepened their bonds, setting the tone for a year of self-discovery. Now, the focus shifts to the Leadership pillar, marked by an eagerly anticipated Leadership Shabbaton crafted entirely by the teens. Their recent HintHunt outing emphasised effective communication in leadership, and the introduction of a Leadership Toolbox highlighted crucial skills, emphasising a growth mindset. As they approach 2024 with purpose and enthusiasm, the Diller Teen Fellows are poised for a transformative year of growth, leadership, and positive community impact.

## Machaneh 2023/24 Shalom Cape Town!



Chanichim and madrichim at Machaneh Idan Ha'Plia

#### By BRAD GOTTSCHALK

A lthough school holidays are over, the leftover buzz from Machaneh can still be felt! Whether chilling on the beach, winning the soccer tournament, beading in the Zula, or engaging in peulot, It's clear that Machaneh Idan Ha'Plia is one for the books.

The world of kids and teenagers is more complex than ever. On Machaneh, we are given the space to safely engage with the issues we face. In a new Israel, hurt deeply by

Find us

ply by to see you all again! **f** SA Zionist Federation - Cape Council

agency for change.

war and a hostage crisis. It is more

important than ever for Jewish kids to

come together. And more so, to have

an informal space to speak about and

We are excited for the upcoming year

activities in Cape Town... we can't wait

- planning with full speed all of our

awesome year-round programmes.

Mini Machanot on the campsite.

Shorashim in Israel, and insane

engage with these topics and take

### Happy (Gregorian) new year!



Cape Town madrichim and chanichim on machaneh Hayinu K'Cholmim

#### By JESSICA CONNÉ

B2023 with a year-long awaited bang: Machaneh Hayinu K'Cholmim.

Feigie Shaman, Rephael channie, said, "You're always told that your last year of camp is the best, and you never can actually understand that until you go through it, and it truly was life-changing."

Talia Zolty, a channie of our newest shichva (Re'im), said, "It felt

incredible to feel like we were a part of something bigger than ourselves. Getting our name, made camp feel like I had one big family."

Mazal Tov to Leah Hepple, newly appointed Cape Town Chair of Bnei Akiva South Africa for 2024! And to our matric madrichim embarking on gap years, mazal tov and behatzlacha! We will miss you but are excited to hear all about your adventures!

Kadimah Bnei Akiva!

## Summer Machaneh Chevrah, oh yeah!



Ma'amad on the grass, led by our songleaders from Israel and the UK

#### By DANIELLA BESWICK

Our summer machaneh, Machaneh Chevra, started on 14 December 2023. With all our maddies ready, with their best ruach and energies, the channies were welcomed and we left for Glencairn!

The 10 days started with some getto-know-yous and introductions, and moved into Shabbat with Rabbi Greg. The real start of Machaneh included a Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by our incredible song leaders, Shacharit service and



seuda shlishit at Silvermine Dam.

The week was filled with peulot about our four pillars, which ignited passion in our channies.

Unfortunately, our machaneh was interrupted by the Simon's Town fires. We evacuated smoothly, with the incredible services of CSO Cape Town, with protectors arriving on site to escort us to Temple Israel Wynberg. We ran another full day of machaneh and managed to end on a positive note.





# **Cape Jewish Seniors Association**

DIRECTOR: Diana Sochen 021 434 9691 director@cjsa.org.za ADMIN: Amanda 021 434 9691 admin@cjsa.org.za search CJSA on Facebook

# **A WISH FOR A GOOD YEAR**

Welcome to 2024 with wishes of a happy and healthy one for everyone. The changing of years is always a time for reflection on the past year and looking forward to the coming one. While for some this can be a time of joy and excitement, for those who are grieving or going through a difficult time, it can be a time of heightened emotions and sadness. My wish is that in 2024 you find peace, comfort, good health, meaning and supportive connections.

Through the CJSA our members are able to reconnect and enjoy socialising, visiting interesting places on outings, experiencing a variety of fabulous restaurants, and being in the company of others, as well as finding support from other members and our caring social workers.

There is much to look forward to. Our newest activity, Gyrokinetics, is offered at Milnerton and Southern Suburbs, and members are enjoying the sessions and feeling the benefits of exercising.

We are hosting our first art exhibition since we reopened after COVID, and our artists are so excited to be able to show their talents. We will be exhibiting paintings, mosaics and any other form of craftsmanship that people wish to showcase. Whether you are a member or not, there is an opportunity for you to show your talent on Tuesday 5th March at 7 Albany Road. This will also be an opportunity for you to view our Sea Point home which we now share with the Union of Jewish Women. Light snacks will be on sale so it will also be a day where you can spend time relaxing, reviewing and shmoozing with friends. We look forward to seeing you there.

Recently a group enjoyed a threenight stay at Goudini. We have booked again as the experience was so good. Choosing a date for the break can be a challenge but this year we have managed to secure the 9th – 12th April. Bookings are already open. Please contact the office or your social worker if you are interested in joining the group for the three-night break.

The last few months have not been easy for the Jewish community and there is heightened tension and stress in many of our homes. We are extremely fortunate that there are so many committed people taking care of the Cape Town Jewish community – whether health-care professionals, CSO, or our incredible Cape SAJBD members who work tirelessly to ensure that we are informed and safe at all times. It is so important for us to continue with our daily lives but at times it is only normal to feel overburdened or overwhelmed. That is why **self-care** is so important and even more so that we practise it without feeling selfish about doing so. Until recently, if you spoke of self-care, it was often thought that you were selfindulgent, spoilt or lazy, and so you thought long and hard about expressing the fact that you were looking after yourself in an 'indulgent' way.

But we acknowledge that self-care is important. If you do not look after yourself, the chances are that you become burnt out. We should not be expected to be excessively or exclusively concerned with others, without giving time to ourselves. How important it is to take a few minutes out of your day to focus solely on yourself, giving yourself time to breathe and refocus. It certainly does not help anyone if you push yourself constantly – even when your body is resting, your mind will continue to race, which negates the rest period.

To invest in self-care, you need to listen to your body, mind and spirit - take time to rest if you need a break. There is nothing wrong with being still for a while, even if nothing is achieved during this time. Stop thinking that you are lazy or selfish when you take time out and attend to your own well-being. Instead of feeling selfish, begin to feel Self-Full as you give yourself permission to be compassionate to yourself. By doing this, you will find that you will be more in control of both your mental and physical health - it's necessary to be selfish and lazy in order to preserve yourself and cope with daily issues.

We look forward to welcoming each of you to our centres throughout the year. We hope that you will enjoy the in-house programmes on offer as well as the great selection of weekly YouTube programmes that we distribute. We welcome any suggestions, offers of assistance and ideas you might have so that we all continue to stretch, revitalise and grow ourselves in every way possible.

Lastly, and most importantly, we are so proud that both our Chairman, Robyn Black, and Social Worker, Stacey Melmed, have been chosen to join the Eliot Osrin Leadership Programme for 2024. We wish them joy as they travel this journey, knowing that the course will give both of them an opportunity to upskill and grow, and that CJSA and the community will certainly benefit from the knowledge they gain.

Diana Sochen, Executive Director





Annual Volunteer Thank You brunch



Social Workers Jamie-Lee, Hajiera and Monique serving our volunteers



Gail Shorkend at

Lace Cafe

Sea Point art

morning: Shirley, Pearl and Liz

Diana Glass at the Lace Cafe



Birthday cards made by our Sea Point members



Sea Point's Tuesday Art Class members

#### **SOCIAL AND PERSONAL**

#### BIRTHS:

Marlene Lyons – Great-granddaughter, Ella Blumenthal – Great-granddaughter, Ernest and Estelle Kaplan – Great-granddaughter

#### ENGAGEMENT:

Marcia Orlin – Granddaughter

#### SPECIAL BIRTHDAY:

Dorothy Woolf – 80th Mary De Beer – 70th

ANNIVERSARY: Liz and Selwyn Kantor – 59 years



Volunteers enjoying the brunch



Gabriel Shai entertains at the Thank You brunch



Sea Point Members at Lace Cafe in Mowbray



Doreen Fiansky & Shirley Greenstein at Lace Cafe



Milnerton members visited Green Point Urban Park

#### WELCOME to new members:

Charlene Lipshitz, Derek Lurie, May Sher, Peter Tuchten

WELL WISHES to those who have been under the weather: Collette Levin

# Our wishes of strength to those who have recently lost loved ones:

Fay Ruttenberg — Sister, Miriam Dick Martin Bronks — Mother, Reisa Bronks Esme Jacobson — Sister, Reisa Bronks Our dedicated team is committed to making your life easier. We take immense pride in delivering customer service excellence and premium products. Established in 2001 the Botha family & Team has fostered great expertise in customer service and logistics within our beloved Cape Town.

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**" # b r i n g t h e m h o m e** have a blessed 2024 Shalom aleichem







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# Hurt

JULIAN RESNICK writes from Israel



JULIAN RESNICK was born in Somerset West and grew up in Habonim Dror. He studied at UCT, and made Aliyah in 1976. He's conducted numerous shlichuyot and educational missions on behalf of Israel, to Jewish communities in England and the USA. He works as a guide in Israel and around the world (wherever there is a Jewish story). He's married to Orly, and they have three children and seven grandchildren and is a member of Kibbutz Tzora.

So much has been written about the war in Gaza, and I am talking only about the people writing here in Israel.

Some of it has been filled with anger, some with pain, some with regret – and none of these are mutually exclusive. Writing can be filled with more than one of these.

Some has been filled with hyperbole, some with pathos and some with bathos (yes, I am a UCT English Literature graduate – thank you, Dr John Coetzee). Some has been very aggressive, some has been gentle poetry, and some has been beautiful music.

Some has preached unity, some has been biting in its barely veiled attack on those whose political views are different. Very little has been written, with honesty, about the most difficult conversations right now in Israel, you know, what is likely to be the outcomes of the war in terms of the total defeat of Hamas and the return of the hostages.

And then, there are those, not too many, whose writing is filled with nuance, depth, searching and honesty. In short, thoughtful. I can name a few for you to read (and listen to, of course, as we are living in a podcast world, all of us): Danny Gordis, Matti Friedman, Yossi Klein Halevy, Micha Goodman, Yonit Levy.

Very soon I will be travelling out of Israel for the first time since the

war began, and my destination will be South Africa. I will be guiding a group of North American Jews on a two-week Jewish Journey through South Africa (FYI, my notion of what a Jewish Journey looks like might not be the same as yours, so be prepared for some surprises if I ever write about it). Some of them are extremely anxious about visiting South Africa especially after the performance of the SA legal team at the International Court of Justice at The Hague. I have told them all that I am confident that it is no more dangerous for travellers in South Africa today than it was before the war in Gaza

I will be back in what for me was my home until I made a decision, just under 50 years ago, that I wanted to live the rest of my life in Israel and not in the Diaspora. And here I want to join two strands.

About three weeks ago Danny Gordis was in NYC to receive the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Book Prize awarded at Yeshiva University. A number of other wonderful Jewish Institutions in NY used Danny's presence in the city to run events. One of these took place at the 92nd St Y, one of the most impressive venues in the intellectual life of NY Jews. Danny was in conversation with Rabbi David Ingber, the senior rabbi at Romemu Renewal Congregation in NY. (Read about Romemu on their website romemu.org and prepare yourself for something a little different from what you might be used to).

It was a stunning Jewish conversation and, of course, as Danny Gordis lives in Israel and writes and talks a great deal about Israel, much of it dealt with Israel and particularly the impact of the war on Jews outside of Israel; in this case the focus was naturally mainly on NY Jews.

Rabbi Ingber shared a stunning remark made by someone he described as a wonderful, thoughtful young Jewish woman, which has stayed in my mind ever since I listened to the conversation between them. She said to him in his study, not in a public forum, "Rabbi, I prefer to be hurt than to hurt others."

I want to say it again so it sinks in, "Rabbi, I prefer to be hurt than to hurt others."

I am not going to write about this sentence now, as I do not want your reading of this sentence, and hopefully your thoughts about this sentence, and, if you will allow me some optimistic moments, your discussions about this sentence, to, in any way whatsoever, be influenced by my responses to this sentence. If I get the message that my responses might be useful, my next piece will be partly about my responses to this sentence and partly about being in South Africa.





# **Volunteering to help Israelis in need**

Since the brutal attacks on Israel on October 7th last year, many people from all backgrounds have felt compelled to help the country and its people at a time of such great need. And while many have donated money, clothing and other items, for some it's about doing something meaningful on the ground and 'getting their hands dirty'.

As Capetonian Gayle Saxe explains, "I really felt the need to do something tangible to help out." And so she decided to travel to Israel to volunteer her services in whatever way would help. Together with her 25-year-old son, Gayle visited the country for three weeks, spending the first two weeks as part of an organised group of volunteers from around the world. After that, the two Capetonians worked in an orchard within 5km of Gaza, helping to harvest crops that would otherwise go to waste because the usual residents of the area were either killed or taken hostage, or have been evacuated in the wake of the October attacks.

"We went with no expectations but just a willingness to help however

we could. We helped with all sorts of things," Gayle explains. "From packing thousands of food parcels alongside other volunteers, to ironing and sorting clothing and folding towels, we were certainly kept busy with whatever the needs were." And, after that work, Gayle and her son made their way to the south of the country where they spent a week working on Moshav Yesha, where the orchards were dripping with unharvested fruit. "It was a truly moving experience for us there because the orchard we worked on belonged to the sister of Shiri Bibas. who was taken hostage by Hamas together with her husband and two red-haired babies. Knowing we could support someone who has lost so much for all the wrong reasons was really meaningful," she comments.

Gayle encourages others to volunteer. "The need is huge right now," she says. And, while many of her friends were concerned about safety issues, she felt very safe wherever she went. "There are many security measures in place that it wasn't an issue for us at all," she explains. "Despite the trauma of October 7th, the Israeli spirit remains resilient, and there is a noticeable sense of determination as people continue with their daily lives. Our experience was truly inspiring and instilled in us a significant boost of confidence in the enduring strength of the Jewish nation — a sentiment that wasn't as readily apparent when relying solely on devastating news reports and social media updates from outside the country," Gayle concludes.

#### If you're keen to get involved in this way, here is some useful information for you:

• Take a look at the programmes on offer at https://www.sar-el.org

• To volunteer in the agricultural sector, contact Guy on +972 54-700-9369



Gayle packing boxes with food supplies



Gayle (2nd from the left) with a group of volunteers at Moshav Yesha on the Gaza border. The volunteers worked in the orchard belonging to the sister of Hamas hostage Shiri Bibas.

### SA JEWS OF LITHUANIAN & POLISH HERITAGE ARE ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP & EU PASSPORT

A common misconception people have is that European citizenship and an EU passport can only be obtained if one has documents proving lineage The fact is that not having documents proving lineage, does not lead to your disqualification of eligibility.

In many cases the required documents can be obtained in the European country of origin!



Having European citizenship offers more than one benefit, besides the fact that it makes traveling far easier than with a South African passport...

We are all fully aware of the current situation in South Africa where we face many uncertainties not just for today but for our children's future too.

While we are still having it relatively good here, we know that the time will come where as Jews we will look for alternative options.

The most important thing to take into consideration is understanding that prior to the end of WWII, the European map was very different from the one we know today.

Countries like Poland and Lithuania did not exist as independent countries, and till 1918 these territories were only known as Lithuanian or Polish regions/countries of the Great Russia Empire who ruled all of north eastern Europe.

Until 1918 residents of these territories were of Russian citizenship – as Polish and Lithuanian citizenships did not exist. Therefore applications Then having European citizenship will be that tool we are looking for.

As we know, the majority of South African Jews are descendants of Jews whose European citizenship was illegally deprived, and therefore you are now entitled to reinstate it and obtain your EU passport.

for reinstatement of these citizenships can only be based on if one's ancestor was a Polish or Lithuanian citizen.

However, a descendant of an ancestor who left Europe prior to 1918, will not be eligible.

In addition, since borders in Europe were shifted during and after WWII, one's eligibility for Polish or Lithuanian citizenship depends on the City from which his/her ancestor lived in. Where borders shifted and cities changed nationalities Jews who left Vilnus and its region will be declined whereas a similar application for reinstatement of Polish citizenship could be approved.



#### I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

With only a 4-hour flight to Warsaw and Vilnius this enables me to arrive quickly and safely in Poland and Lithuania, where I closely collaborate with local professionals in assisting me to trace the required documents for your successful applications to reinstate you as an European citizen.

Having lived in Poland for 7 years I have great in-depth understanding of European immigration laws.

I have been operating in the South African market with our Jewish communities since March 2018, and visit every 3-4 months which will allow us to meet in-person.

I will be in Cape Town from the 10th until the 14th of February 2024.

YOU CAN REACH ME ON: ↓ +48 783 953 223,
★ adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com



## **BOOK REVIEW FRAUD by Nikki Munitz**

his is a story about the power one has to change one's life. In Fraud – How prison set me free, author Elka Schaimberg has collaborated with publisher Melinda Ferguston to tell Nikki Munitz's story.

It is a stark reminder that, no matter where you come from, there is no guarantee that you won't hit rock bottom or be dragged into a life that is humiliating, destructive and abusive. It is a tough read, but the authenticity of the story shines through.

This is a book about self-esteem. or lack of it, and how Munitz's experience of a life out of control and prison led her to find herself and her true calling. The upshot is that today she is a global expert on self-esteem and addiction.

For Nikki Munitz, hers was a toxic family environment from the very beginning. Dysfunctional doesn't even begin to describe it. Born into a middle-class Jewish family, her mother was harsh

and uncaring and her brothers became extremely negative forces in her life.

Compensation for her 'deep sense of lack' leads her to excel in school, and gain a university place - but it is her desperate need to be loved, seen and to belong that drives her to up her game. From drinking to a love affair with heroin she reaches the edge of the precipice and tips over.

It's a sad story, told with honesty and complete lack of self-pity. It will make you ask many questions - of yourself, society, family and friends, of the many contradictions in one's make-up that can make a person plunge to the bottom and finally claw their way back to make a meaningful contribution in the world. Tough as it is, it lands with selfrevelation, strength and taking control of one's life and that in itself is inspirational.

**Review by Beryl Eichenberger** 

The book is available at the Gitlin Library, and can be purchased from leading book stores.

# MEDICAL DOCTOR IN CAPE TOWN CITY BOWL

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LEGAL MATTERS

# **ANTI-ISRAEL PROTESTS: Legal issues and responses**

By EDITOR



Daniel Bloch

To many of us, the anti-Israel protests and messaging we are seeing in Cape Town come as something of a shock. But the fact is that the sentiment currently being expressed is nothing new. Since the October 7 attacks on Israel, it's certainly become more aggressive, and the displays of anti-Israel feelings are expressed more openly and with a far louder voice, but the views are not something new.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) nationally and in the Western Cape makes sure that they keep abreast of things happening and that they respond accordingly to particular events and statements that are made in the public domain, including on social media.

The Cape Jewish Chronicle spoke to the Executive Director of the Cape SAJBD, Daniel Bloch, and Simone Sulcas, the Cape Board's Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the Antisemitism and Legal subcommittee, about recent anti-Israel events.

Simone and Daniel share some of the comments they have heard from members of our community and have provided us with responses regarding these:

"It's shocking that Palestinian and Hamas flags are being displayed. Why aren't they banned?"

Firstly, one needs to understand that whilst Hamas has been



Simone Sulcas

designated as a terrorist organisation by many countries including the US, UK, Germany and others, here in South Africa, this is not the case. Therefore, displaying the Hamas flag is not illegal. It is no secret that the South African government has a relationship with Hamas and has endorsed their support of this terrorist organisation. Hence the flags and other paraphernalia are not banned.

"All these protests against Israel are just antisemitism. Surely they are all just hate speech, and we should go after the people involved."

It is important to appreciate that the right to protest is entrenched in our constitution, and all protests must be viewed through this lens. If an anti-Israel protest is lawful and peaceful in terms of the Constitution of South Africa and the Gathering Act, then the protest is protected. That being said, should the protest include the use of antisemitic rhetoric and written material then legal remedies are available. The protests are focused on Israel as a result of the war in the Middle East and, as such, most of the statements made against Israel at these protests are protected by freedom of expression provisions in the constitution. Whilst much of the rhetoric is deeply offensive and aggressive, many statements would not be defined as "hate speech" in terms of the legislation and the leading cases on this issue.

There is a fine line between anti-Zionism and antisemitism and since October 7th. these lines have become increasingly blurred. In many instances antisemitism has found new life as "opposition to the State of Israel" and, as such, a successful hate speech case will need to prove that the anti-Israel rhetoric crosses the line into antisemitism. We do know that many of the anti-Israel supporters are simply against Israel and not necessarily against Jews therefore it would be challenging to single out individuals for being antisemitic. Our core mandate as the Cape SAJBD is to assess each and every case and pursue the most viable option, which may include legal action, education, political lobbying and media activism.

"I was horrified to see that yet another anti-Israel protest took place on the Sea Point beachfront. Why do we allow these protests to take place? The protesters should be arrested!"

The Sea Point promenade is a public space and, as South African citizens, all are allowed to enjoy these open areas. As long as the group gathering to protest acts within the laws, they have a right to be there and express themselves. The City of Cape Town has strict laws in place to both govern the protest as well as protect each and every citizen before, during and after the protest action. The Cape SAJBD carefully monitors and documents every protest and engages with the relevant stakeholders to ensure these protests are in accordance with the law.

"There's a Muslim who is posting such hateful stuff on Twitter and Facebook. We should lay criminal charges against him."

Social media is a challenging space, as are the laws associated with governing these platforms. The advice given to us by legal experts in this field would be to report the individuals to the relevant platforms and then block them accordingly. It is also important to capture the "evidence" by taking a screenshot or screen recording in case it is needed down the line. It is not recommended to engage with these particular individuals. Where there is clear incitement of violence or antisemitism, this should then be reported to the Cape SAJBD and we will investigate the matter further and take the appropriate action.

"There's so much antisemitism around these days. We need to prosecute more people, and we should sue them for defamation."

The war against Hamas has manifested in a sharp rise in antisemitism globally and at home. However, despite the increase, our numbers are low compared with Jewish communities abroad. This is despite our government's pro-Palestinian stance, culminating in South Africa instituting legal action against Israel at the International Court of Justice in the Hague recently. Any potential incident of antisemitism, once reported, will be assessed by our antisemitism and legal subcommittee. This committee will collaborate with our executive and other board members, as well as the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). There are various legal remedies available depending on the facts of the case. An action of defamation may be one of these remedies, where the legal requirements of defamation are satisfied.

"My daughter is at UCT, and she's so frightened these days because of the pro-Palestine demonstrations on campus. Can't the community get UCT to ban these events?"

The protest action at UCT is loud, offensive and intimidating, and to date has been non-violent. Whilst Jewish students may feel unsettled on campus, their safety is a primary concern for UCT leadership, and students should feel safe within the campus environment. UCT provides a safe space for students to express themselves, which is why they allow the protests, both anti-Israel as well as pro-Israel. The Cape SAJBD engages regularly with UCT leadership to ensure that students are protected on campus and that all parties conform to the UCT code of conduct. If any students feel frightened, they should make contact with either a SAUJS representative or the Cape SAJBD. They will receive counselling, advice and support.

# DRUMSTRUCK at Silvermist wine farm

he Cape Jewish Chronicle was privileged to receive a set of tickets from Warren Lieberman, the producer and co-creator of the African music show, Drumstruck, currently on at Silvermist Organic Wine Estate in Constantia. The tickets were won by Miranda Bloch in a competition on our social media pages.

Miranda invited Di Dos Santos to join her at the show. Here's what Di had to say about their memorable experience of the show:

We had a wonderful experience during a visit to the Silvermist Wine Estate for wine tasting and Drumstruck! The African-themed setting and the warm welcome from the staff in African garb created a unique and immersive atmosphere.

Enjoying wine tasting on a patio with a mountain backdrop and scenic landscape was a delightful experience. The natural beauty of the surroundings enhanced the overall enjoyment of the wines.

Meeting Winemaker/Owner Gregory Louw and hearing about his passion for winemaking was an added bonus. It's always a great experience when you can interact with someone who is not only knowledgeable but also enthusiastic about their craft.

Overall, we had a memorable and enjoyable outing, combining the pleasures of wine tasting with the cultural richness of the Drumstruck performance. It's a great way to appreciate both the local wine and the arts in a beautiful setting.

Drumstruck is indeed associated with Drum Cafe. a company that specialises in interactive drumming experiences and entertainment. Drum Cafe was founded in South Africa by Warren Lieberman in the 1990s and has since grown to become a global phenomenon.

The performances are not only entertaining but also educational, as they often include explanations of the background and cultural significance of African percussion instruments like drums, as well as string and wind instruments.

Drum Cafe's professional local

Silvermist Organic Wine Estate

artists, who are typically skilled drummers and percussionists, have travelled around the world to bring the joy of drumming and African music to diverse audiences. They engage participants in drumming sessions, teaching them basic rhythms and providing an immersive experience that promotes teamwork, unity, and cultural appreciation.

Drum Cafe and its associated

programmes like Drumstruck offer a unique blend of entertainment and education, using the power of rhythm and music to connect people and create memorable experiences.

s welcome guests

A fabulous variety of wines, teas and entertainment equals a super evenina.

A braai is also on offer after the show with Marimba drumming.



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In the same way that the recollection of apartheid's inhumanities is helping to heal and reconcile the South African people, so the memory of the Holocaust will strengthen the foundations upon which we are building a nation. ??

Nelson Mandela, at the opening of the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre, 1999.

#### Dear Friends and Partners of the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre,

Twenty-five years ago, with the unwavering work, dedication, and support of many individuals, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre opened its doors, becoming the very first Holocaust Centre in all of Africa. Since its inception, the Centre's mission has been to provide accessible and free education about the Holocaust and other genocides while actively combating homophobia, xenophobia, racism, and bigotry.

Over the years, the Centre has welcomed more than 500,000 visitors, including over 200,000 learners and over 15,000 teachers from South African schools. Its diligent efforts led to the inclusion of Holocaust studies in the curriculum of all South African schools, paving the way for the establishment of Holocaust & Genocide Centres in Durban and Johannesburg.

### Thank you for being part of our journey.

As we begin celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre in the coming months, we will also recognize the 30th anniversaries of two pivotal events. In 1994, the collapse of the apartheid government marked the birth of a new democratic South Africa, while in Rwanda the mass killing of Tutsi began, resulting in over 800,000 deaths within a



Jakub Nowakowski

harrowing 100-day period.

In 2024, it is crucial to acknowledge changing realities, including the imminent departure of the last Holocaust survivors and the arrival of new generations carrying their own traumas. Whether related to the genocide in Rwanda, Apartheid, the wars in Ukraine or Israel, or a palpable sense of fear associated with being an immigrant or a member of a religious or sexual minority, our world is increasingly facing hostility, homophobia, antisemitism, and xenophobia.

Holocaust and Genocide museums worldwide play a vital role in this context — deconstructing myths and processes that led to past acts of persecution and mass violence while



School learners visit the CTHGC

fostering resilience and instilling a sense of responsibility for the future.

Join us at the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre as we commemorate and celebrate these significant anniversaries. Please stay tuned for information about our special programming for this year and consider supporting the Centre to ensure we can sustain our mission of providing free education about the Holocaust and Genocide to individuals across all of Africa.

Join us in making a difference.

Jakub Nowakowski

Director, Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre



Or do you have a family member or friend who moved house or immigrated?

Please email subscriptions@ctjc.co.za to advise us of the correct contact details, including postal address, so that we can make sure that you receive all future print editions.



**The Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute Announces Cohort IV for 2024** Ashley Hurwitz, Benjamin Nivison, Bevan Buck, Caryn Querido, Hayley Cohen, Jacqueline Zacks, Liesa Jossel, Melissa Hack, Miriam Leichtling, Monique Peer, Nathan Bearman, Neil Bernberg, Nicole Merdjan, Rachael Bootkov, Robyn Black,

**ELIOT OSRIN** 

Russel Berman, Samantha Reznik, Sheona Balikaran, Stacey Melmed, Tessa Plen, Tracy Frank, Ziv Okun.



Investing in People who Invest in Community

# **CELEBRATION** of Muizenberg shul centenary

#### By DAVID LAZARUS

Following eight months of planning and preparation, members of the Muizenberg Hebrew Congregation launched 8 days of festivities with a cheese-and-wine and musical concert event at the Masque Theatre on Thursday 28 December. The show was attended by guest of honour and former Capetonian Sir Ephraim Mirvis, KBE, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, and Lady Valerie Mirvis, who were specially invited to the Centenary opening.

This was followed by a formal Friday night Shabbat dinner, Saturday Shabbat lunch and a third meal which included a *siyum* on brachot. Amazingly, this was the same section of the Talmud discussed at the last *siyum* in Muizenberg Shul 63 years ago in 1961! The Shabbat events, which concluded with a Havdalah and music concert, were also attended by South African Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein and Rebbetzin Gina Goldstein.

The architect of the centenary events was Muizenberg's Rabbi Ryan Newfield who has revitalised and significantly expanded the community since his appointment in March 2020. Amongst other digitally savvy projects, he initiated a highly popular monthly *Muizies Megillah* which was circulated to all Muizenberg congregants past and present as well as to past visitors to Muizenberg, evoking nostalgic memories worldwide and keeping the congregation fully involved throughout the stressful Covid pandemic.

Managed by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, the Centenary comprised the launch concert; the Shabbat activities; a "Respecting our Roots" visit to the Muizenberg and Pinelands Jewish

cemeteries, followed by a tour of Cape Town's South African Jewish Museum; a walk around Muizenberg's historical old village led by Hedy Davis, historian and author of the iconic book MUIZENBERG the story of THE SHTETL BY THE SEA; surfing lessons with local Jewish surfers; laying tefillin and davening in a cave on Muizenberg mountain; and the Centenary closing ceremony comprising a high tea and cocktail dinner, together with a live streamed International Reunion. Entertainment was provided by Ivor Joffe, Chazzan at Sea Point's Marais Road shul: short personal anecdotes by local Muizenberg luminaries Gerald Musikanth and Colin Shapiro; gift presentations to the shul by Shirley Rabin (a painting) and the Berman family of Sea Point (a kiddush wine set, on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary); the granting of Honorary Life Membership to Jean Tockar, Joan Sarembock and Cecile Buirski who comprise the Ladies Guild; and a video on the history of the shul and the congregation.

Commenting on the Centenary, President Gerald Seftel said, "Muizenberg Shul stands as a working memorial to the dreams of immigrants who arrived here with so little yet contributed so much to our development through grit and determination, keeping a light burning through some of the darkest periods in our history".

100 years after its construction, the Muizenberg synagogue remains a historic heritage building, unaltered, but alive with activity as a place of holy worship for the Jewish community of Cape Town's southern suburbs as well as for celebrations and social events.



Centenary plaque



Davening in a cave on Muizenberg mountain



Chief Rabbis Mirvis and Goldstein unveiling the Centenary plaque



# HEALTH FOCUS

# A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

By ANDY BLECHER



Andy Blecher



Six-week-old baby with an ingrown toenail



Total contact cast for treatment of diabetic ulcers and pathological fractures

Our feet are absolutely crucial to our daily lives: we walk with them, stand with them, run with them, rely on them when we play sports – in fact, they are pretty much in constant use during at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of every day.

Local podiatrist, Andy Blecher, is passionate about the care of our feet and lower limbs. She shared some valuable information with the Cape Jewish Chronicle about foot health.

As regards different life stages and foot health, Andy explains that there are various conditions that tend to arise at different ages. "Podiatrists treat patients of all ages," she says, "but different conditions will be more prevalent at particular ages."

#### Children and young adults

The most common ailments are warts and ingrown toenails. In addition, "Growing pains can be indicative of joint and bony pathologies, and these may require prescription orthotics and footwear advice," Andy says.

As regards good practices for parents to help their children's foot health, Andy advises that children should not be allowed to walk barefoot in public places, such as on pavements and in shopping malls. There is a great deal of dirt around, and children may pick up bad infections on their feet.

Important, too, is that a parent should not cut a child's toenails very short. "Leaving the nails a bit longer helps guard against ingrown toenails," she explains.

As for the shoes a child should wear, a supportive shoe with a flexible outer sole is best.



Nail fungal infection

Another point to bear in mind is that growing pains in the feet and legs should never be dismissed. They can be indicative of a condition that may need treatment, and so a child who complains of these sorts of pains, or who limps or walks on their toes, should be taken to a podiatrist for an assessment.

#### Middle aged and older people

In this age cohort, Andy sees patients struggling with calluses and corns; heel fissures; infected nails, in particular fungal infections; septic corns and wounds; and ingrown toenails. It's also common for her to see patients with arthritis and other conditions that require advice about footwear and prescription orthotics. Important, too, is that interventions should help prevent further joint and skin deterioration.

#### Diabetics

"I am particularly interested in the field of the diabetic foot and limb salvage," Andy says. "These patients require regular specialised care geared to prevent diabetic foot complications and amputations. In these cases, I work with a highly dedicated team of specialists from other disciplines – among them, endocrinologists, vascular surgeons, advanced wound care practitioners, orthopaedic surgeons, and diabetic educators. The focus of a team like this is to save the person's life and their feet and limbs."

And some advice for anyone who suffers from diabetes: Visit a podiatrist regularly to allow for preventative care, rather than having reactive care when something has gone wrong.

## Andy has a few points of guidance that all of us should practise:

- Wash and dry your feet thoroughly every day
- Never walk in public places barefoot
- Use a recommended foot cream every day, especially in summer
- Always wear flip flops when using a public shower or other public ablution facility
- Your shoes should fit well do not choose pointy, tight fitting shoes
- Be aware when visiting a salon and be mindful of what kind of sterilisation techniques they use. This will minimise the spread of fungal infections

- Do not try to sort out an ingrown toenail yourself – you may end up requiring a more complicated procedure as a result
- Do not use acid corn and callus plasters. They can cause unnecessary complications.

#### ANDY BLECHER is a trained podiatrist, and is registered as a podiatrist with the Health Professionals Council of South Africa and with the Board of Health Funders, which means that the cost of treatment is covered

Treatment by a podiatrist may be done via surgical and non-surgical means, as well as via biomechanical examinations and the prescription of orthotics.

by medical aids.

Andy has practised as a podiatrist since 1997, with private practices in Plumstead and Sea Point. Taking the best interests of her patients into account, she values the importance of working with a wider team of professionals so that patients can access the best care and treatment available. She is part of the Cape Advanced Wound Care Group (CAWC) and was one of the first in Cape Town to join a diabetic foot working group.

# **CITY OF CAPE TOWN CIVIC AWARDS** acknowledging volunteer projects

Many people have a passion project – something they really enjoy doing that falls outside their usual daily work. And when that project makes a real difference in the lives of their community, it becomes something truly meaningful.

It's against this backdrop that the City of Cape Town acknowledges the work of individuals that has resulted in meaningful positive results for the citizens of the city. And, during December last year, three members of the local Jewish community were recognised for their passion projects.

Congratulations to Patsy Bagraim, Gary Anstey and Shani Judes – you have all given of your time and your energy to take actions that have provided significant benefits to your fellow citizens.



Patsy Bagraim

# **The Breakfast Club**

Patsy Bagraim, co-founder of The Breakfast Club at Good Hope Seminary Junior School in Gardens, which she has run since 2016 says, "We realised that, among the children coming to the school, many leave very early from their township homes to get to school and there isn't time or money for their parents to provide them with a healthy meal to start off the day. And, as we know, a person needs good nutrition to be able to learn, so the provision of food before the start of lessons is

crucial for these children."

Patsy and her team provide an E'Pap and fruit breakfast to up to 350 Grade R to Grade 7 children every day during term time at the school. (E'Pap is a highly nutritious food that's of great benefit to those unable to afford the cost of nutritious foods.)

The feeding project has grown substantially in the years since Patsy initiated it, and it's a core part of the children's school day. And, in addition to the feeding of the children, the project is also helping to develop leadership skills among other children. As Patsy explains, "The breakfasts are prepared, served and cleared by teams of Grade 6 and 7 girls. As these girls develop a sense of commitment, responsibility and leadership, we believe that The Breakfast Club is developing leaders of the future."

In recognition of her dedication and work, Councillor Francine Higham awarded her a Certification of Recognition Civics Award.



Children praying before they receive their daily meal

# **Friends of Van Riebeeck Park**

Another project receiving recognition from the City is the Friends of Van Riebeeck Park. Founder and current Chair of the Friends is Gary Anstey, a resident of Highlands Estate, which is where the Park is situated.

Gary explains that, "The Friends organisation was started in 2015, with a view to rehabilitate the open public space in order to protect and conserve the flora, fauna and heritage of the unique ecosystem. A vision was created in association with landscape and heritage architects to restore the link between Table Mountain and Table Bay, and to establish the park as a natural link along green belts between the harbour and Platteklip Gorge."

While Gary comments on the difficulties associated with the project, such as trying to satisfy all parties and the onerous task of meeting the City of Cape Town's many requirements to ensure accountability and transparency, the efforts have clearly paid off: the City's award speaks to the dedication and service to the community and to the service delivery evidenced by the project.

"Today," says Gary, "the intervention has proved enormously successful. The area is utilised by walkers, runners, cyclists, dog walkers, and for celebrations, picnics and film shoots. The Park's popularity is enhanced by its magnificent views of Table Mountain and its distinct ecosystems."

In association with a church outreach programme caretakers are deployed in the park seven days a week, and their presence results in a cleaner, well-maintained area that draws in more visitors each day.

The majority of the funding for the fence, the attractive pedestrian gateways, and vehicle entrances was provided by residents in the immediate vicinity of the park, a few businesses, schools, and the City of Cape Town. In 2019 Suma De Bruyn conceptualised the Platteklip Trust and put the resources of her law firm behind the vision and negotiations with the City. The Trust is a registered s18A and this facilitated fundraising for the first stage of securing the Park.

Looking to the future, there are various ideas for how to expand on the use of the park. These include: the development of interpretive displays and guided walks up to Tafelberg Road, the development of informal working spaces in the less windy areas of the park, the establishment of steps and bridges to descend river banks and crossings, tree ID signage, and the renaming of the park.



# **CITY OF CAPE TOWN CIVIC AWARDS** acknowledging volunteer projects

# **Public Art in Cape Town**

A key driver in the field of public art in Cape Town, Shani Judes, received a Civic Award - Certificate of Recognition from Councillor Nicola Jowell in December last year.

Shani explains: "The award was for my contribution to the city with regards to over a decade of public art. I have had the privilege to put together a number of amazing pieces through the city and often in Ward 54 (Atlantic Seaboard). This includes murals, sculpture work and the photographic exhibitions you see on the Sea Point Promenade." She has been involved in 24 of the current public-facing murals citywide, three current photographic exhibitions on the Sea Point Promenade and some of the sculpture works there.

Most of the work has a conservation message attached to it, especially ocean conservation. Shani has a deep passion for the ocean and art. "Bringing the two together is my contribution towards spreading the message in an easily accessible way for the public."

According to Councillor Jowell, "Shani has been the inspiration, hard worker, driver and implementer behind so much of our beautiful public art that graces some of our public spaces. Shani really does leave a legacy with this public art. Not only creating a special place for people and to enhance their experience of public spaces, but a legacy in public art.

"Shani is passionate about public art. In the last few years we have had stunning murals painted on the Milton Play Park toilet blocks. And also three sets of changing photographic art exhibitions on the Promenade wall. Most recently Shani has been the South African project director for the international Sea Walls Project which has rolled out 500 murals in 19 countries. all with a conservation focus. Shani had the mammoth task of installing 17 murals across our citv.'

Shani is very appreciative of the effort that the ward councils put in to keep their wards running smoothly. "Projects like mine wouldn't be possible without their support," she says. "Receiving this award is important because it confirms that the work in this space is meaningful. It's also great to be recognised in my home town of Cape Town which I love."



Shani Judes



Hatfield Street, Cape Town. The mural is about coastal mining. Artist: Marti Lund. Part of the Sea Walls project



Michael, Shani's son, admires the latest photographic exhibition on the Sea Point Promenade. The focus of the exhibition is movement. Done in collaboration with Canon and Orms



Keep it Clean: A recent mural by Amy-Lee Tak, part of the Sea Walls project

The public projects we've highlighted in this article all offer opportunities for you and the wider public to get involved. So, if you'd like to join in, see below for what help is needed and maybe you'll identify something you'd really like to work in.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB	FRIENDS OF VAN RIEBEECK PARK	PUBLIC ART
<ul> <li>Volunteers needed to assist with washing up and drying dishes, spoons and bowls</li> <li>Monetary donations needed A Section 18A certificate for tax can be issued</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Assistance with public relations and social media</li> <li>Volunteers who are creative thinkers and can come up with ideas for how to maximise the utilisation of the Park</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>identify public spaces for use for public art</li> <li>Help to raise funds for projects</li> <li>Assist with education at schools about ocean conservation, water safety and art</li> </ul>
Contact Patsy – patsy.bagraim@gmail.com	Contact Gary – garymanstey@gmail.com	Contact Shani – shani@shanijudes.co.za

# **Telfed** Chairman visits victims of Hamas terror

n the wake of the tragic events of October 7th, Telfed Chairman, Maish Isaacson, showed solidarity with those affected by the massacre and terror on that day and subsequently. He visited evacuees who had to leave their homes – the survivors and the families of those who lost loved ones, and those waiting anxiously for news of family members or friends taken hostage by Hamas.

In line with Telfed's mission, the focus of his visits was on Southern African olim. Among the thousands evacuated from their homes near the Gaza border are over a hundred former South African families. Maish visited some of the moshavim that were the site of attacks. He was totally shocked by what he witnessed: "When one sees the destruction of what really happened there, it makes one break down and cry. The total destruction of some of the places cannot be comprehended when you see it on TV – you don't get the full understanding like you do when you see it in real life.

"I heard about people who, when being evacuated, had to pass by dead bodies of friends and neighbours strewn across the area. These were extremely emotional conversations." Maish also heard about the bravery of many who fought the attackers on the day. He heard from women whose husbands – the fathers of their children – lost their lives in order to save the lives of others. "I ended up crying – crying with real tears – with some of these people as they recounted the heroism of their husbands, brothers, sons and members of their kibbutzim and moshavim."

Despite limited financial resources, Telfed undertook to assist these people financially to get through this extremely difficult time, and to provide love and emotional support. In addition to providing financial relief, Telfed put together beautiful gifts for the families. Maish explains that, "We continue to do this, but we would love to do more for these survivors, and hope to have the finances to do so in the future. I hope to eventually get to see every single one of those evacuated from their homes and dispersed across the country."

He concludes: "Despite being extremely emotional, it was also a most uplifting experience for me in being able to console people and show them love, warmth and care from the Telfed family."



### **REBUILDING AND MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Telfed's community service scholarship programmes commence in the midst of war



Cynthia Field from Moshav Sde Nitzan, originally from Cape Town, received a care package from Telfed. Sde Nitzan is less than 8km from the Gaza border.

Since 7 October, like all Israelis, we've been dealing with uncertainty and have had to make adjustments according to the needs of our community. In December, Telfed's community service scholarship programmes began with an opening event for students. Our decision to launch our scholarship year was contingent upon public universities' decision to open the academic year. Israelis are a remarkably resilient people and, despite the ongoing conflict, it's mostly 'business as usual'. Students serving in reserve duty will join our scholarship programmes with full support from Telfed once they return to university.

It was an emotional opening event, as we paid tribute to Yaron Chitiz z"I who fell in battle in Gaza. In her address to the students, Shely Cohen (Chairman of Telfed's Scholarship Committee) shared the following message:

**G** The Chitiz family is part of the Telfed family – his mom, Debbie, started the PRAS programme at Telfed, and his siblings are all part of our family. And I thought, honestly, I have no words. But then I reminded myself, we have a responsibility to Yaroni and all our brave and special soldiers to make this place a country worth living in and not only dying for; for a country in which we love each other, support each other, and help each other, and it is our responsibility and that of our parents, our brothers and sisters, our children, our teachers and our leaders to live up to the legacy that Yaron and his fellow soldiers have left for us. The **PRAS and SASI programmes are** part of this responsibility – to give and not only to receive, to create a society of mutual goals and ideals. In their memory, and in honour of all our precious soldiers, we will work together to build up our precious Israel. 🤊

**Reflecting our South African** roots, Telfed's three-pronged scholarship programme embodies the values of empowerment, education and volunteerism. In addition to a scholarship to ensure students can complete their studies despite financial need, two volunteer-based scholarship programmes give students the opportunity to give back by performing two hours of community service a week for both the South African Olim community and Israeli society: PRAS, a programme for Israeli students of South African origin, and SASI (South Africans Studying in Israel). Thanks to the generous support of the Samson family, as well as other benefactors, including Philip and Michele Krawitz, through SASI dozens of South African students have opted to complete their university education in Israel, volunteer, and experience the beauty of life in Israel.

lared

Farrel

Strul



# **ENTREPRENEURS' HOTSPOT**

## **FOUNDERS OF YENZA COMMITTED TO CHANGING LIVES**

lexibility has been core to the survival of a business that had the misfortune to launch just as Covid-19 hit South Africa - and now the business is not only surviving, it's thriving! The brainchild of three dynamic Cape Town Jewish entrepreneurs, Yenza fills a significant gap in the educational landscape with its innovative edtech solution to a range of needs relating to career guidance, study choices and funding for studies. Nathan Former Burstein Johannesburgers, Farrel Strul and Jared Molko, joined forces with ex-Herzlian. Nathan Burstein, to create an

app that is certainly making its

mark in the world of edtech.

With Jared, a former Google staffer, having had an interest in the recruitment industry, joining forces with Farrel, who has decades of experience in the world of education, there was certainly a great deal of useful thinking and knowledge. "As for Nathan," explains Farrel, the CFO of Yenza, "he is the tech brain." And the technology side of their business is crucial. What they have developed allows young people to access a significant amount of information about studies, careers, financial aid for studies, and provides an assessment tool that helps to guide a person in the direction that they are most suited for.

According to Farrel, there is a huge need in our country and beyond our borders for meaningful careers guidance. In fact, he says, "The majority of youth have no access to formal career services, and those services that do exist are mostly outdated or not useful. Also, it's costly to access valuable career guidance, and so thousands of young people in South Africa are excluded from the guidance that they need. After all, what does one know about the world of work when you're 18?"

It's against this background that Yenza was born. The company states its mission to be: "To guide young people to reach their full career potential, fast tracking their employability and linking them to opportunities."

The app that has been delivered caters for a range of services, including:

- Assessments
- Career matches
- Study choices
- Skills courses
- A CV builder
- Sources of funding for studies
- Speaking to experts.

When the team launched the Yenza app in March 2020, "...the plan was a B2B model targeting schools. Covid resulted in almost all schools closing for most of the year. In addition.the plan was to target individuals to sign up as users. But, it soon became evident that it made better business sense to develop a B2B model. Also, approaching schools proved to be problematic because schools operate on shoestring budgets and lack funds. "We started seeing the benefits of a different approach once we brought in the big corporates like ABSA and Standard Bank," Farrel explains. "Companies like this use the app to identify potential staff members to bring onto their leadership programmes. The various assessment tools included

in the app are particularly useful for them to get a good idea of a person's potential and their strengths."

Another popular use case for corporates is a B2B2C model that focuses on customer acquisition and value added services to the youth market segment.

Beyond the corporate sector, the app has also been adopted by some of the major private school organisations, such as South Africa's largest school group, Curro, which gives Yenza access to 10 000 learners, and ADvTECH. Redhill, Yeshiva College and The King David Schools in Johannesburg are also clients of Yenza. "Because of the numbers of learners in these educational sites," Farrel explains, "this sort of arrangement means that we have been able to monetise our solution and generate the sort of revenue that we need to grow."

While the business started in South Africa - and has worked extensively with agencies like Wesgro to help expand the local economy of our province - the founders have their eyes very clearly set on expansion into a number of regions: elsewhere in Africa, the Latam region, India and the Middle East. As Farrel explains, "A big focus for us has been to provide the app in a range of languages, and so the product is now available in a plethora of languages including English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Amharic (which is spoken in Ethiopia), Swahili, Hindi, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Modern Arabic."

Even though the app provides essential tools and information at a very affordable price, there are those who still cannot afford it. And so, with a socially conscious mindset, the founders have made it available for free to learners in 850 Quintile 1-3 schools in South Africa.

Accolades for Yenza come not only from the founders' knowledge that their work has been a huge achievement. It's also seen in the numbers of learners they are reaching, the appeal of the app to their partners, and in the many awards they have received."The most recent of these is being listed on HolonIQ's annual list of the 50 most promising EdTech startups in sub-Saharan Africa. (See https:// www.holoniq.com/notes/2023-africaedtech-50)." Yenza has also been selected as the Inaugural MasterCard Foundation Fellowship winner for 2023. The firm was recognised as the winner of the Future of Work Injini EdTech competition in 2022, and as the winner of the 2022 GESA (Global EdTech Awards) for South Africa.

# COMFORT IN MEMORY

Erin Dodo writes a column reflecting the voice of Jewish youth in Cape Town. A student at the University of Cape Town, she serves as Chairperson of the Western Cape branch of the South African Union of Jewish Students. There are certain days in our lives we all remember. I remember my first day of high school, eight years later. I remember my first day of matric. I remember my first day as a student at the University of Cape Town – even though I was at home, at my desk, with pre-recorded lectures that none of us took very seriously. (Thanks, Covid).

I have a running joke with my mom that every mother knows where they were when Diana died.

Everyone remembers where they were when the first plane hit the North Tower.

October 7th is one of those days – burned into our memories like a fresh wound, always there, never quite healed.

Memory has a weird way of holding onto the senses; the sound of my phone ringing endlessly and my phone buzzing with Red Alert notifications. The taste of sick and salty tears. The feeling of dread, knowing that everything had now changed.

Check on each family member in Israel.

Call them each, often.

Your cousin has been called back in to fight, 15 years after finishing his service. Your best friend's best friends are falling. Your school mates were at the festival. Names are piling and piling and with dread you go through every single name, searching for familiarity. The Boards and Federations have broken Shabbos. The security alert level has risen. Every hour the numbers are updated – growing and growing.

They're calling it a massacre, a terrorist attack. This memory, and the feelings it brings with it, will never leave us.

That's the thing about memory, it's meant to burn like a fire. It's meant to light something in you, fuel you, guide you.

When we say we will always remember, it brings with it the repercussions of never forgetting. Of living with this red hot burn.

The life of a Jew is, from the beginning, the life of caution. From nursery school to high school and beyond the words, 'Never Forget', are etched into our conscience. Certain vocabulary that others may not know - like, 'Pogrom' or 'Shoah', are a part of our collective understanding of our people's survival. Often, the term 'generational trauma' is thrown around. What it refers to is a universal memory of things we may not have even experienced ourselves but that our ancestors did, and that guide our interactions and behaviours.

A part of this universal memory we all carry now includes the day of the 7th of October 2023.

Returning to university after October 7th was an incredibly daunting experience, not because I was afraid of the people around me, many who looked at me only with pity, but because I felt as though I couldn't trust myself. I didn't know who was going to make me remember the reality of our changed lives, I didn't know how I would navigate this new reality. And yet, life went on. Lectures continued, due dates continued to pile up, and we remained stuck in this memory, stuck in what felt like an inescapable quicksand – only swallowing us deeper the more we tried to escape it.

Yet we fought, rather embracing the memory and understanding that this life of ours, and the collage of memories that make up our collective story, is the tale of how we survived – because, even though it felt as though we were submerged in the grief of our families, of our holy land, of our brothers and sisters – we still came together. We still protected each other. We still smiled and held each other.

Whilst memory is often haunting, we can also find comfort in it – comfort in the memory of how we protected each other. We can find gratitude in these memories – gratitude for the community that shelters one another in their own embrace, never waning.

In the enduring echoes of October 7th, 2023, we discovered that, while memory can be an unrelenting flame, it also serves as a guiding light. As we grappled with the aftermath, our collective memory of that day became an integral part of our shared narrative, reinforcing the resilience that defines our community. In the face of grief and uncertainty, we forged a path forward, finding solace in the memories of how we stood together, protected each other, and, ultimately, prevailed.



**SIMCHA SNAPS** 

Weddings



#### Jaryd and Jessica Raizon. Married at Nooitgedacht Estate by Rabbi Malcolm Matitiani of Temple Israel on 8 January 2024.

Dan Osrin, grandson of Myra and the late Eliot Osrin, and Mathilde Monestes, married at Cavalli Estate by Rabbi Greg of Temple Israel on 28 December 2023.

Kelsey Glazer and Bryan Gold, from Toronto, married at Boschendahl by Temple Israel's Rabbi Emma on January 3rd. Kelsey was born in Cape Town and now resides in Canada.







Bar Mitzvah of Levi Zar at the Gardens Shul, January 2024 L to R: Elijah Zar, Simon Zar, Levi Zar, Amanda Borkum Zar and Benjamin Zar Photographer: Guy Lerner



# FREE SIMCHA SNAPS IN OUR MARCH ISSUE!

If you have celebrated the birth of a baby, a bris, birthday, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, anniversary, engagement, wedding or achievement, why not share your good news with our local community!

To get your SIMCHA SNAP published in our March 2024 digital issue at NO CHARGE, simply send us a quality image and caption, the name of the photographer, and a short description of the celebration to chron@ctjc.co.za or call our office on 021 464 6736 between 09h00 to 13h00.

**DEADLINE DATE:** Submit by Friday 16th February



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