



## FEATURING

Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz

Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz, a well-known activist for Jewish social justice, will speak on Thursday, November 8 at 7:30 pm at the Ferguson Library in Stamford. The lecture is a gift, offered free to the community through the generosity of Mimi and Saul Cohen.

Prior to the Lecture at the Library,

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## THE 7TH ANNUAL SAUL COHEN-SCHOKE JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE LECTURE *Spiritual Transformation: Changing the World from the Inside Out*

a Patrons' Reception will be held for a select group of generous donors to thank them for their support of Schoke JFS. A book signing and dessert buffet will follow the main lecture. For details or to learn how to become a Schoke JFS Patron, please contact Lisa Rich, Donor Relations Coordinator at 203-921-4161 or lrich@ctjfs.org.

Rabbi Yanklowitz will also speak separately to the young professionals Jewish Twenties and Thirties group and conduct a workshop for Jewish professionals at the Schoke JFS Bridgeport office. For details about this program, please contact Jonathan Fass at 203-921-4161 or email at jfass@ctjfs.org.

Rabbi Yanklowitz's writings have appeared in outlets as diverse as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, and *The Atlantic*. Rabbi Yanklowitz is a sought-after educator, social justice activist, and motivational speaker as well as the author of thirteen books on Jewish spirituality, social justice, and ethics. Rabbi Yanklowitz is the President and Dean of Valley Beit Midrash, Founder and President of Uri L'Tzedek, Founder and CEO of The Shamayim V'Aretz Institute, and Founder and President of YATOM: The Jewish Foster & Adoption Network.

The *Schoke JFS Reporter* asked Rabbi Yanklowitz to answer a few questions to better understand the topic for his lecture.

### Personally, how do you approach repairing the world? Do you start at the local level or broader?

There is no one way to repair the world. For all the talk there is about big social movements and the desire to create global change for the better, the truth is that repairing the world is an incremental pursuit. It starts with seeing a problem that must be fixed and then doing all you can do to help solve that problem. Let me give you two examples of this from my personal perspective.

Several years ago, the city of Glendale

(which is a suburb of Phoenix, where I live) was going to host the Super Bowl. To make the city ready for the influx of tourists, the city started a campaign to push out the homeless population in certain neighborhoods. This troubled me greatly. As I started to delve deeper into the issue, I began to see that the homeless in the Greater Phoenix area were not only being pushed out but their inherent dignity was also being trampled upon. I couldn't just sit in my house and see this happen. I knew that something had to be done. In the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl, I tried to learn as much as I could about what life is like on the streets of Phoenix. I visited a homeless shelter that, often due to space or funding issues, had to use its parking lot for overflow space; this often meant that people were sleeping on concrete that had been baking in the 115-degree Phoenix sun. To put it bluntly, it was terrible. I resolved to do something about remedying this situation. The first action was to purchase mats that, while not ideal, could provide a modicum of comfort to the homeless population.

We started raising money and purchasing these mats, and in a few weeks, our small office was filled to the brim with these things. We then passed them out—free of charge—to those who wanted them. It felt great to give back in this way and these actions presaged the creation of *Arizona Jews for Justice*, a hub for social justice discussion and action that is now quite active.

The other example is when I was privileged to donate a kidney. The Talmud says that if one saves the life of another, then it is as if the entire world is saved. For several years before my procedure, I consulted with rabbis, read many Jewish texts, and pondered con-

stantly if organ donation was the right thing to do. I knew in my gut that it was right, but my heart and mind weren't in alignment yet. One of the most influential views on my final decision actually came from Peter Singer, a Princeton professor of philosophy. Some of his ideas are definitely radical, but the way that he passionately articulated his view that keeping

two healthy kidneys within our bodies when we only need one spoke to me. I thought that by actualizing this philosophical and spiritual ideal, that something worthwhile might be accomplished. So, in the end, I decided to donate my kidney. With the help of a wonderful organization called Renewal, we found

that my kidney was the perfect match for an orphaned Israeli man who had spent years on dialysis. This donation was his last hope for a normal life. So, on a grey day in New York, we were wheeled next to each other and one of my kidneys soon became his. And from what I understand now, he is thriving and realizing his dreams of an active life. Since then I have been an educator

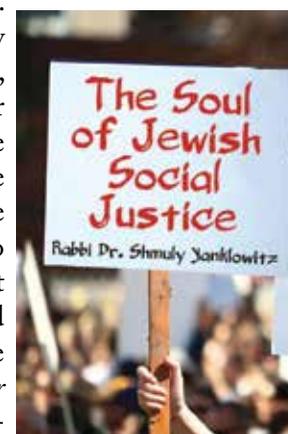
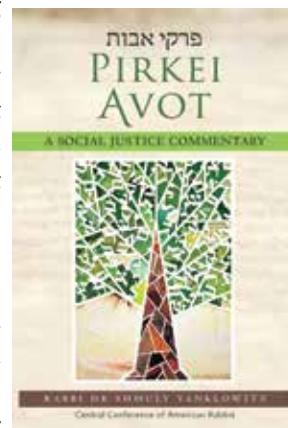
and advocate on the issue of organ donation.

What I'm trying to get at is that people get too concerned with the macro effect of their *tikkun olam* work. Think small, think about what you can do in your own community first, then go out and change the world. That's how progress truly works.

### As a writer, what motivates you to write and speak about Jewish social justice?

Social justice is a call to action, an ethos, and a reflective phrase. In all that we do during the short time we are on this planet, we must do all we

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

### All who are Hungry Come and Eat!

**C**onfused? I know Rosh HaShanah has passed, and the title of this article is more fitting for Passover, when we invite anyone in the community that is hungry to join us for our Passover Seder. However, during the High Holiday Season, many synagogues run food drives for local pantries, so I thought it fitting to share a little Schoke JFS history, and some exciting news.

Almost 20 years ago, a wide-eyed boy nearing his bar mitzvah asked to create a kosher food pantry at Schoke Jewish Family Service. There was no history of anyone coming to us to ask for food but I did not want to discourage this young man, so I gladly accepted his offer. He gathered two of his friends and collected boxes of cereal, cans of soup, and bags of pasta. They brought the grocery bags of food to our office, and we cleared out space in a closet, and took pictures of smiling young men putting food in a closet ... where it remained for the next two years, virtually untouched. In 2008, as you may have read in the President's report, everything changed. We went from one or two food distributions a month, to one or two per day, ultimately reaching hundreds of families during the year. We expected that to decrease once the recession ebbed but also to our surprise, not only did it not decrease; in fact, we have seen increasing numbers every year since then. Last year, we provided more than 25,000 meals to families. These meals consist of items like tuna fish, pasta and soups, canned salmon, and frozen kosher meats

and chicken. This supplements our twice-monthly fresh produce distributions, where families come to our office and receive fresh fruits, vegetables, breads and desserts.

We have fabulous community partners who have stepped in to help us. Restaurant 613 donates Shabbat meals each Friday for several families; Soosh donates gift cards for families to either use in the restaurant or for Shabbat meals; the JCC has created a vegetable garden dedicated to providing produce for our families, and Congregation Agudath Sholom provides assistance with some produce from their organic community garden. In addition, we would not be able to provide food on an ongoing basis without the help of the many synagogues and individuals who donate food to our pantry each month.

But here is the exciting news. Beginning in 2019 (perhaps late 2018) Schoke JFS will begin a Kosher home delivered meal program. Aimed primarily at those who have difficulty getting out to the store, or need meal preparation assistance, it will be open to anyone who wants to subscribe. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will see an advertisement about signing up. Registration for this program is required by October 31.

Wishing all of our friends a happy, healthy New Year, and a year when no families will go hungry.

Matt Greenberg, CEO

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**F**riends ask me all the time why I am so involved in Schoke JFS. I tell them that Schoke JFS is the "911" of the Jewish community. It is the place where people turn to when things get tough. A caring community must be an accessible and responsive community. Based on traditional Jewish values of social responsibility and concern for others, Schoke JFS serves those in need without regard to their ability to pay.

Over the years, I have had the privilege to hear clients tell their stories. Each one touches my heart, but I would like to share one in particular. Jenny was married with one child living a very comfortable life. She and her husband decided that she should cut her work down to part time so she could spend more time with their daughter. Everything looked good.

Then the recession of 2008 hit. Her husband lost his job and things began to fall apart. Meeting their monthly expenses became very difficult. Jenny turned to Schoke JFS where, according to her, she was met with acts of kindness such as a gift bag during the Passover Holiday, groceries from the food pantry and family intervention. Her husband received counseling referrals, job placement and resume assistance. Her daughter received a camp scholarship providing her with an opportunity to attend a Jewish day camp where she flourished. Jenny has put her life back together. She and her husband divorced due to the stress but with counseling have developed a working relationship centered on their daughter. Jenny is working and enjoying her life. I ran into her at her work. She greeted me with smiles and reminded me that we knew each other from Schoke JFS. We talked about her life, her daughter and my granddaughter. It struck me that we could have been neighbors or friends having coffee. It was wonderful to see her happy, working and proud. Jenny is why I am involved at Schoke JFS. When someone is in trouble, we are there to help. You too can help the Jenny's of our community.

Thank you to our friends who have volunteered their time and donated to Schoke JFS. Volunteers are always needed and I urge you to find a way to become involved. We rely on the generosity of our Friends to make our programs possible. When you receive our Annual Friends Campaign appeal, please give generously. Your gift truly makes a difference!

I wish you a Happy and Healthy New Year,

Beverly A. Stein, President

### Schoke Jewish Family Service

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**Schoke JFS THANKS**

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## The 7th Annual Saul Cohen - Schoke Jewish Family Service Lecture: *Spiritual Transformation: Changing the World from the Inside Out* continued from page 1

can to ensure that the next generation thrives because of our actions. It is difficult work; it is frustrating work. But the challenge of the work is what is most inspiring about it. What motivates me most of all is that I look out in the world and see that there are people struggling every day to make sense of the randomness and chaos that permeates society. The social justice tradition looks at this chaos and says, "The world can be improved, the world must be improved, but we have to strive for this improvement." This is a point that the sages bring up repeatedly: The day is short; the task is abundant (Pirkei Avot 2:2). Jewish social justice is almost a redundant phrase. To be Jewish means to pursue social justice through prayer, through service, through giving the next generation the tools to succeed and thrive; this is only the theological side of the equation. Indeed, Jewish history guides us. Jewish history is riddled with injustice. Now that we have power, we should wield it justly and with a fervor for changing the world for the better. That is our birthright and our never-ending task.

### What practical suggestions do you suggest for *tikkun atzmi* (repair of self)?

*Tikkun atzmi* could be as simple as giving a smile to someone who needs it or donating money to a worthy cause. In its essence, the repair of the self means realizing that God created the human being to be imperfect, but that every day creates a new opportunity for growth. There are only so many seconds or minutes or hours in a day, and if we aren't maximizing our tasks, then we are wasting our soul's potential. If we aren't thinking about how to create a more verdant world, then we are disregarding our purpose. There is no one way to repair our inner selves. Rather, everything is a process; everything has its own rhythm. It only takes one movement for everything to click. In general, I advocate for adopting a *mussar* practice and developing a spiritual curriculum for one's inner growth and for the development of one's *middot* (character traits). There are many other important tools such as spiritual writing, certain types of therapy or coaching, and a spiritual *chavruta* practice, to name a few.

### Would it be helpful for a guest at the upcoming lecture to review certain texts or books? If so, which one(s) would you recommend?

The works of Abraham Joshua Heschel are always inspiring and so many of his books have been translated into English. All are essential, but for a general overview of his philosophy and life's work, I would recommend the compilation *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, edited by his daughter, Professor Susannah Heschel of Dartmouth University. It is a fantastic book, highly readable, and to glean any amount of insight from it would allow people to go far in their activism work.

*Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl is also an inspiring, essential tome.

I've always found Rabbi Joseph Telushkin's books on Jewish ethics and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' books to be helpful as guides to navigate a complex messy world.

As for the other texts, Pirkei Avot is quintessential text for seeking out the social justice tradition from a Jewish perspective. Unlike most of the ancient Jewish wisdom books, Pirkei Avot is not a theological text in a strict sense. Instead, it's a collection of aphorisms and anecdotes that describe how one achieves a moral existence. There are many, many translations and commentaries on this, and in fact, my commentary was just released from CCAR Press. I encourage everyone who is serious about seeking how they can make a difference in the world pick up a version of Pirkei Avot and internalize it.

### What do you see as the most damaging problem in our communities which require our help?

One of the most damaging problems facing the engaged Jewish community today may be the acquiescence to rabbinical authority and the centralization of rabbinical and institutional power in people's lives. I know it may seem ironic that I, a Modern Orthodox rabbi, would think this, but I feel it's absolutely true. Because of community pressure, or politics, or the desire to show a fealty to strictness of religious tradition, the flourishing of Jewish life in many areas is faltering because many aren't taking the time to think for themselves. They rely almost fully on rabbis and communal leaders with authorial power, but never stop to ask "Why? Why does the person have power over my destiny?" The problem of conformity is a major problem and one that can only be staved off with courage of soul and heart. Each of us must take moral and spiritual responsibility in our lives and no one can do that on our behalf. On the other end, among the disengaged, the problem is more of apathy and indifference and the inability to invest in our eternal holy pursuit and to see the Jewish tradition's wisdom as transformative.

## The Loss of Community and the Loneliness Epidemic

By Eve Moskowitz, LCSW, Director of Clinical Services

In February of this past year, *The New York Times* published an article on the loneliness epidemic plaguing the nation. The article indicated that increased loneliness is largely due to a growing aging population. As further proof of the increasing incidence of loneliness in the American population, the American Psychological Association reported that according to AARP's Loneliness Study, "Approximately 42.6 million adults over age 45 in the United States are estimated to be suffering from chronic loneliness..." Schoke JFS counselors see this problem in the families we serve.

For the increased number of elderly who find they are living alone and feeling lonely, there are more alternatives to combat this situation than ever before. Senior residences and communities for those over the age of 55 are being developed at staggering rates. They offer common areas for community building and social activities. Travel and resort companies are offering more trips for seniors, and internet dating sites and other caring communities offer a variety of senior support or social groups.

Although those over the age of 60 appear to be a larger portion of those 42 million adults, several other factors add to this epidemic. An increased divorce rate has affected the nuclear family unit as well, leaving more single adults in the US than any other time in history. In addition, as women prosper in the work force, the socio-economic relationship between partners no longer necessitates choosing to stay in an unhappy relationship. Of course, the increase in women's independence and their concurrent feelings of worth and value has also facilitated many positive shifts in our society.

Even in families that do not divorce, the landscape of today's nuclear unit appears different than in years past. As young adults often move away from their primary families for college, frequently not returning, or relocating for work, the idea of extended family support has changed tremendously. In the early part of the 20th century, most families lived in close proximity to their parents, siblings, and grandparents. This type of closeness created a foundation for people to rely on; it created an in-home support system that cared for the young and the elderly, through all the life cycles. Young people turned to their elders for guidance and then the elders turned to their children for care in the later years.

Today many families and friends stay connected through technology, and an email, text message, or even FaceTime is a poor replacement for a touch of support or a hug.

Schoke Jewish Family Service facilitates several socialization groups for seniors, entitled "Let's Talk". In addition, Schoke Jewish Family Service provides one-on-one counseling services with experienced therapists. Insurance is accepted and reduced-fees may be available. For more information, contact Eve Moskowitz at 203-921-4161 or by e-mail at [emoskowitz@ctjfs.org](mailto:emoskowitz@ctjfs.org).

## Send a Schoke JFS Tribute Card



Tribute cards are a meaningful way to celebrate with friends and family members on their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, graduation, wedding, birthday or any other *simcha* or special event. They can also be sent to family or friends in honor or commemoration of a loved one. There is no fixed amount for a donation and the card will be sent on your behalf. The inscription notes the purpose of your donation.

**To make a tribute card donation,  
go online to [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) or call 203-921-4161.**

# An Evening with Schoke JFS

## A Mind-Expanding Event: COCKTAILS, DINNER, HONORS, and a MENTALIST



With over 250 people in attendance, the annual gala of the Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service, *An Evening with Schoke JFS*, was held on Sunday, April 29th at the Hilton Stamford Hotel. The event was co-chaired by Liz Kitay and Ronnie Sichel and Sandy Speter chaired the auction. Stamford's own Alan Kalter served as the evening's Master of Ceremonies.

The live auction segment, preceded by cocktails, provided a few suspense-filled moments when many items received rapid-fire bids. The silent auction items provided lively conversation around the offerings. With a successful auction and paddle raise, the evening raised \$130,000 to support the core services of the agency. This was a fifteen percent increase over last year's event.

In keeping with a long-standing tradition, Schoke JFS presented the 39th Annual Mitzvah Award to **Jeri Appel** and **Gail G. and Stephen Trell** and the 12th Annual Young Leadership Award to **F. Robb Caster**. The Honorable Mayor of Stamford, David Martin, praised the good work of Schoke JFS and offered the gratitude of the city to our award recipients.

**Jeri Appel**, a lifelong resident of Stamford, accepted her honor and lovingly told of her dedication to volunteering in all areas of the community. Her particular focus was how stepping up to volunteer for Schoke Jewish Family Service has been a source of pride for herself and her family. She hopes her dedication provides a model for future generations to do the same.

**Gail G. and Stephen Trell** adorably played off each other in their acceptance speech for the Mitzvah Award. Their back and forth repartee encouraged others to support the essential programs and services that Schoke JFS offers to so many across Fairfield County.

**F. Robb Caster**, the recipient of the Young Leadership Award, humbly thanked Schoke JFS for the opportunity to give back to the community.

This year's celebration welcomed Jon Stetson, the inspiration for the popular CBS series *The Mentalist*. From the very start of his performance, the audience was amazed at his mind games and were spellbound! Even his volunteers relished their reluctant participation after the performance!

*The board and staff thank all those who served on the An Evening with Schoke JFS committee. Your commitment to this event helped to ensure its success. Thank you to all who support Schoke JFS to successfully assist your friends and neighbors when they turn to us for help.*





Photo Credit: Aviva Mailer Photography

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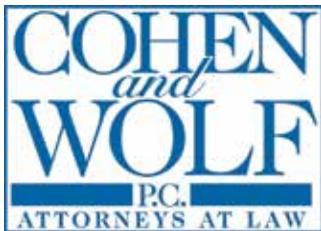


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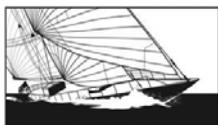


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- Stamford Symphony
- Stew Leonard's
- Teddy's Transportation
- The Palace Theatre
- The Schipani Group
- trap't Escape Room Adventures
- Vincent Mancuso and the Sound Shore Group at Morgan Stanley
- Westport Country Playhouse
- Winvian Farm
- Yoga in Waves

## SCHOKE JFS WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



### Bruce Blasnik

A Stamford resident for over forty years, Bruce is a practicing CPA and regional managing partner for a top 30 CPA firm, with over thirty-five years of experience serving commercial and nonprofit organizations as an auditor, advisor and board member. As a volunteer, Bruce is a current member of the board of Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County. He has held leadership positions in professional organizations such as Connecticut Society of CPAs, American Institute of CPAs and the Institute of Management Accountants. Bruce was the former Treasurer and Director at Temple Sinai in Stamford.

The Stamford Yacht Club, Halloween Yacht Club, Stamford Sailing Foundation and the Stamford Youth Hockey Association have all benefitted from Bruce's time and attention.

Married with three grown daughters, Bruce's interests include health and fitness, sailing, bicycling and hiking.



### Sally Kleinman

A Westport resident for twenty-five years, Sally spent most of her professional career as a Wall Street economist. Sally's volunteering started at The Conservative Synagogue and Westport public schools but quickly moved on to Hadassah, serving on the local chapter board in a number of positions before becoming President of the Westport Hadassah chapter. In 2014, Sally transitioned to retirement and served as the Connecticut Region president for the next three years, overseeing eighteen chapters across the state. Currently, Sally advises several Northeast regions of

Hadassah in budgeting and planning. When not spending time with her husband, Larry, and her two grown daughters, she is volunteering, hiking, playing golf, vegetable gardening, cooking, and travelling.



### Chris Maroc

After attending Syracuse University, Chris launched a professional career in various management positions in hospital administration. The bulk of his career was spent at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (JBFCS) in NY, initially, as a shift supervisor at a licensed residential treatment facility for adolescents. When Chris was promoted to Director of Performance Improvement, he developed data collection systems to evidence performance through outcomes. As Associate Director and Director of

New Initiatives, Chris was responsible for writing RFP's to incorporate new services at JBFCS. As a congregant at Temple Beth El in Stamford, Chris also sits on their Board of Trustees, participates on several committees, including fundraising and membership, and has been an Ambassador for three years, mentoring new members and engaging the LGBTQ community. Currently, Chris sells real estate in NY and CT and was honored as an International Sterling Society agent at Coldwell Banker in 2017.



### Cynthia Steckel

For over thirty years, Cynthia Steckel has lived in Westport and has long been involved in Jewish causes and charities in Fairfield County.

Cynthia grew up in Manhattan. After obtaining a B.A. degree from Brown University, she worked in the video production field for five years before becoming a freelance writer. Starting with magazines, she eventually moved on to writing books and has published a total of thirteen to date, both novels and non-fiction.

Cynthia participated in the Hadassah Leadership Academy training and then went on to serve on Westport's Hadassah board for several years. She also served on the board of Federation for Jewish Philanthropy and continues to be a member of its Allocation Committee. In addition, she is a member of the Education Committee for ADL.

Cynthia and her husband, ophthalmologist Mark Steckel, have two grown daughters.

## CCFSA FAMILY CHAMPIONS



(left to right): CT State Representative Jay Case, Edith Samers, Vanessa Butler, Matt Greenberg, CEO of Schoke JFS, Barry Simon, President and CEO of Oak Hill.

Congratulations to Edith Samers, Immediate Past President of the Schoke JFS Board and Vanessa Butler, Administrative Assistant for Senior Services, for receiving the Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies Family Champion awards. Family Champions demonstrate a commitment to empowering families and building strong communities across Connecticut.

## Congrats to the newest graduating class of the Schoke JFS Home Companion Training Program!



First row seated (left to right): Bobbie Jackson, Kemeisha Gordon-Richards, Phyllis Johnson. Second row standing: Mary Linn Castillo, Juliet Hazel, Mary Ford. Back row standing: Sandra Adomaa, Sasha Reid and Isrella Knopf, Director, Schoke JFS Senior Services

After almost two months of training, the graduates of the Spring 2018 class of the Schoke JFS Home Companion Training Program celebrated their accomplishment.

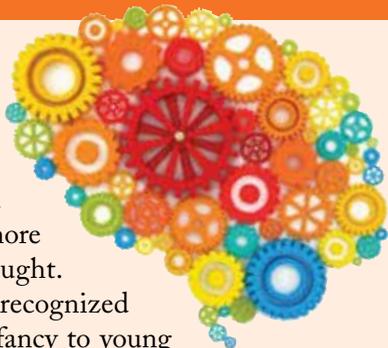
The Home Companion Training Program provides forty hours of class work and testing over a seven-week period. Taught by Isrella Knopf, MSW, and the Schoke JFS Home Companion team, the program covers issues such as nutrition, socialization, and medical situations encountered by the home companion. Classes include guest lecturers addressing specific situations such as hearing and visual impairments. Completion of the coursework and testing will result in a trainee joining the Schoke JFS registry and eligibility for placement as a home companion.

If you need a home companion for a family member or yourself, please contact Isrella Knopf at 203-921-4161 or isrellak@ctjfs.org.

# Keep Up Brain Fitness with Exercises from Schoke JFS

By Dr. Toby Lazarus,  
Brain Fitness Program Coordinator

The brain was once thought of as a static organ that did not change much once adulthood was reached. Recent research suggests that the brain is much more elastic than was previously thought. That is, scientists have always recognized that the brain develops from infancy to young adulthood, but more recent studies suggest that the brain continues to change throughout adulthood and even into old age. Neuroplasticity is the process by which our brain continues to make new connections between neurons throughout our lives. If the brain is injured, it can generate new cells and repair itself or create new neural pathways to take over the functions of the injured area. In addition, the brain can create new neural connections within our brain in response to new stimulus and changing environments. The more we are exposed to new stimuli, the more neural connections our brains make. In particular, the hippocampus (the area responsible for long-term and spatial memory) and the cerebellum (the area responsible for coordination and muscle memory) are the regions of the brain that have been implicated in neuronal regrowth. Neuroplasticity is an exciting concept because it means our brain is continuously growing and we can attempt to keep it functioning optimally by engaging in new activities.



Schoke JFS offers a Brain Fitness program that targets a variety of cognitive areas to help stimulate the brain. Memory skills, visual spatial skills, organizational skills, and attention are some of the cognitive areas that the program addresses with the goal of providing a mental workout for the brain. Facilitated by Dr. Toby Lazarus, group sessions are offered at the JCC and individual sessions are available in your home. These interactive programs engage the mind in thoughtful ways. Word play, puzzles, memory games, and problem-solving activities can enhance your brainpower and are fun ways to challenge yourself. Strategies for improving your skills are also discussed during these sessions, and participants share which techniques they find most effective. Being able to find multiple ways to problem solve and approach tasks improves mental flexibility as well. The sessions are designed for a range of ages and abilities which can be adjusted based on the participants. You are never too old or too young to stimulate your brain.

The next sessions of Brain Fitness will take place at the Stamford JCC. You can sign up for a three-session set or for an individual class:

**Mondays, 10:30 AM – 12 PM:**

## Session #1:

- October 15 ..... Organization and Planning
- October 22 ..... Memory-Word Finding
- October 29 ..... Visual Spatial Skills

## Session #2:

- November 26 ..... Logic
- December 3 ..... Language and Memory
- December 10 ..... Perception

JCC Members \$20/Non-members \$25 for a 3 session set  
JCC Members \$8/Non-members \$10 for each individual session.

For more information, contact Toby Lazarus, Ph.D. at 203-921-4161 or by e-mail at tlazarus@ctjfs.org.

# Do a Mitzvah – Volunteer!

Even an hour a week will change the life of someone who needs a little support.

Schoke Jewish Family Service provides a variety of flexible and gratifying opportunities for volunteering in our community. Please contact Jonathan Fass at 203-921-4161 or email [jfass@ctjfs.org](mailto:jfass@ctjfs.org) to help match you to the right opportunity.



Volunteers from across the community helped over sixty families receive a Thanksgiving turkey dinner with fresh and canned fixings. Clients also “shopped” for winter outerwear. Tracey Alston (center), Community Relations Specialist from Eversource Energy, coordinated a \$1000 donation to help provide the food and volunteered helping clients with their food and clothing items.



Westport volunteers Jaime Katz, Cindy Saul, Susan Hersh, Shelly Kassen, and Sheri Warshaw hugging Adele, the birthday girl and Schoke JFS client, during a visit.



Thank you to the tweens from Young Israel of Stamford! Left to right: Erez Fass, Yael Hochman, Lyla and Ela Dynner volunteered to wrap Chanukkah gifts for Schoke JFS clients.



Schoke JFS board member Greta Solomon volunteers with Rebekah Kanefsky, Director of Case Management, at the A Taste of Israel Jewish Food Festival sponsored by the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy.



Thank you to all the Temple Beth El Hebrew School Fourth Graders who withstood the wind and rain to help collect donations for the Schoke JFS Kosher Food Drive.



Schoke JFS Kosher Food Pantry clients enjoyed tours of Fairgate Farm and received help selecting their fresh produce at this special food pantry event. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers and staff, (left to right) Lois Meyer (Case Manager), Liz Kitay, Cathy Sacks, Jodi Hadge, Peter Novajosky (Farm Manager), Gail G. Trell, Jeri Appel and Rebekah Kanefsky (Director of Case Management).



Beverly Stein recognizes Jill Knopoff for her volunteer service at our annual volunteer appreciation luncheon.

# Fall 2018

## Schoke Jewish Family Service Programs and Activities

**SAVE THE DATE: 7th Annual Saul Cohen-Schoke JFS Lecture, Thursday, November 8th at 7:30 PM, Ferguson Library, Stamford**

**Spiritual Transformation: *Changing the World from the Inside Out***

Featuring Rabbi Dr. Shmuly Yanklowitz, author and editor of thirteen books on spirituality, social justice and ethics including *The Soul of Jewish Social Justice* and *Pirkei Avot: A Social Justice Commentary*. For more details, visit [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org). Free and open to the community.

**Living with Loss: Schoke JFS Bereavement Support Group - Mondays, 2:30 - 3:30 PM at Temple Israel, 14 Coleytown Road, Westport** Find the healing which comes of being with others who know first-hand what you are going through. Learn how Jewish ritual, prayer and tradition can support the grieving process. For more information, contact Amanda Geffner at 203-921-4161 or by email at [ageffner@ctjfs.org](mailto:ageffner@ctjfs.org).

**Employment and Life Transitions Support Group, Wednesdays, 1st and 3rd of every month, 3:00 PM at Stamford office of Schoke JFS.** Looking for emotional support while searching for employment? Need practical help during the job search? Join the support group, facilitated by Lois Meyer, LMSW, Case Manager, to help you through this transition. No cost. For registration, please contact Lois Meyer at 203-921-4161 or email [lmeyer@ctjfs.org](mailto:lmeyer@ctjfs.org).

**Financial Fitness Coaching - Meeting twice a month at 10:00 AM - 12 Noon at Schoke JFS Stamford office.** In partnership with LifeBridge and UJF, Financial Coach, Chris Giralmo, will help clients manage their income, expenses and debt, create a household budget, estab-

lish short and long-term financial goals, and make positive financial changes. Register for a two-hour coaching spot with Liz Krebs at [ekrebs@lifebridgect.org](mailto:ekrebs@lifebridgect.org) or call 203-368-5537. For more information, contact Rebekah Kanefsky at 203-921-4161 or email at [rkanefsky@ctjfs.org](mailto:rkanefsky@ctjfs.org).

### Let's Talk

Seniors talk about common interests and concerns, facilitated by a Schoke Jewish Family Service counselor.

**Bridgeport: Thursdays, every other week, 10:30 AM, Free at Jewish Senior Services, 4200 Park Avenue, Bridgeport**

Contact Rebekah Kanefsky, at 203-921-4161 or email at [rkanefsky@ctjfs.org](mailto:rkanefsky@ctjfs.org)

**Stamford: Tuesdays, 11:00 AM, Free at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue**

Contact Eve Moskowitz at 203-921-4161 or [emoskowitz@ctjfs.org](mailto:emoskowitz@ctjfs.org).

**Westport: Thursdays, 1:00 PM, Free at the Westport Senior Center, 21 Imperial Avenue, Westport.**

Contact Eve Moskowitz at 203-921-4161 or [emoskowitz@ctjfs.org](mailto:emoskowitz@ctjfs.org).

### Schoke JFS Spousal Bereavement Group

Gather to share feelings and exchange ideas in a non-judgmental environment that provides emotional, practical, and spiritual support for grieving the loss of a spouse or significant other. Contact Amanda Geffner, Schoke JFS Therapist at 203-921-4161 or [ageffner@ctjfs.org](mailto:ageffner@ctjfs.org).

**Bridgeport: Mondays at 10:30 AM at Congregation B'nai Israel, 2710 Park Avenue, Bridgeport**

**Stamford: Fridays at 10:30 AM at Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Road, Stamford**

## Be a Friend to Schoke JFS!



With the Annual Friends Campaign starting in September, now more than ever Schoke JFS is counting on our generous donors to continue their support.

Your gift allows us to continue providing programs and services to thousands of people in our community who turn to us in need each year.

To make your tax-deductible donation, please fill in the enclosed reply card, call our office at 203-921-4161 or donate online at [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org).

*Thank you for being part of the Schoke JFS Family!*



Schoke JFS has expanded its reach across the Greater Bridgeport community, providing the same critical services it offers in Stamford from our Bridgeport Office:

- ✓ Home Companion Aides and CNAs for Stay-at-Home Care
- ✓ Individual and Group Counseling
- ✓ Case Management and Emergency Assistance
- ✓ Jewish Family Life Education Programs

BRIDGEPORT OFFICE LOCATED AT:

**Jewish Senior Services  
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus  
4200 Park Avenue, Third Floor  
Bridgeport, CT**

For more information about how to receive services through our Bridgeport office, please call **203.921.4161** or e-mail [info@ctjfs.org](mailto:info@ctjfs.org).

**Schoke JFS  
intends to offer  
kosher meals  
delivered weekly  
to your home.**



**This is a weekly subscription service.**

*Reduced costs will be available for families that qualify.*

**Registration required by Wednesday, October 31 to participate.**

For more information or to register, contact Matt Greenberg at 203-921-4161 or by e-mail at [mgreenberg@ctjfs.org](mailto:mgreenberg@ctjfs.org)

# Tikkun Olam and Chesed – Built into Each Jewish Holiday

Rebekah Kanefsky, LPC, Director of Case Management

One of the greatest features of our Jewish tradition is the responsibility to give *tzedakah* and practice *chesed* (kindness) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). This responsibility is weaved into the fabric of each holiday. The High Holy Days emphasize the power of *tzedakah* and often involve donating to an appeal. For Sukkot, the preferred charitable act is welcoming strangers to your sukkah for a traditional feast. Many have taken on the tradition to dedicate one night of Chanukah to *tzedakah* and donate gifts to charity. Giving *matanot levyonim* (gifts to the poor) is one of the major *mitzvot* of Purim. During Passover, we welcome strangers to our *seder* table and provide them an opportunity to celebrate the holiday with a traditional meal.

Schoke JFS helps our community make the values of *tzedakah*, *chesed*, and *tikkun olam* come alive throughout the year. In honor of Rosh Hashanah, gift baskets with traditional food items, including challah, honey, apples and grape juice, are delivered to clients' homes with items generously donated by local

kosher restaurants, 613 and Soosh, partner agencies such as Chabad of Stamford, and individual donors from across the community. Handmade cards from children at the local Hebrew schools are included to add a personal touch. In the Bridgeport area, a team of dedicated students and adult volunteers package and deliver holiday foods to clients' doorsteps.

Hebrew schools and community members participate in our Chanukah adopt-a-family program to provide gifts to clients who cannot afford anything extra. During Purim, Rabbis at our partner synagogues provide us with *matanot levyonim* that we distribute to our neediest clients. For the past two years, *bonei mitzvot* (bar and bat mitzvah) students have led a gift bag delivery that offered clients a special treat on this joyous holiday. Pesach is our largest *chesed* project, with over 250 gift bags delivered in one incredible day of service, through both our Stamford and Bridgeport offices. This is our longest standing tradition and the clients have come to look forward to receiving their Passover food items year after year.

Synagogues run food drives for weeks leading up to the holiday in preparation for our distribution. A group of dedicated community members come together to package and deliver these care packages across Fairfield County.

These programs span the fifteen towns we serve and help us create a caring community. For those volunteering, the opportunity to perform a meaningful mitzvah during our most important holiday celebrations is a wonderful way to fulfill a mission of *tikkun olam*. For those receiving the gifts, knowing that the community has remembered them is a moment of connection that reinforces what is special about being part of our Fairfield County Jewish community.

These events are coordinated through the Schoke JFS Kosher Food Pantry. If you are interested in volunteering for one of our holiday programs, know someone who would benefit from our services, or you feel that you are in need of assistance, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky at 203-921-4161 or by e-mail at rkanefsky@ctjfs.org for a confidential consultation.

## SENIOR SERVICES

# STAYING HEALTHY ALL YEAR ROUND

By Isrella Knopf, LMSW, Director of Senior Services



When it comes to staying healthy, knowing your enemy is half the battle. The other half is knowing how to defend yourself.

A tiny unseen germ can cause a great deal of destruction. Every year people can be afflicted with infections that can make them very sick and may even kill them. This is especially true for the senior population.

Antibiotics are effective against bacterial infections, such as strep throat, some types of pneumonia, diarrheal diseases, and ear infections. However, antibiotics are not always the answer. There are "superbugs" which are strains of bacteria that are resistant to several types of antibiotics:

**MRSA** – Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aurea is one such bacterial infection. It can live harmlessly on the skin but when it gets into the body it can wreak havoc. It can enter the body through a cut, sore, catheter or breathing tube. Those who have a weakened immune system, recovering from illness, or who have been hospitalized are at a risk for a serious infection often involving the heart, blood or bone.

**C. Diff** – Clostridium Difficile bacterium is also a threatening bug. This germ can also live harmlessly in the body staying in check by other bacteria in the intestine. C. Diff spores may proliferate when required antibiotics strip the intestine of the good "flora". The main symptom is severe diarrhea, leading to dehydration, inflammation of the colon and even death. This bug is highly contagious as it is very hardy and will contaminate every surface.

Antibiotics also don't work against viruses, such as those that cause colds or flu. The typical flu season occurs from the fall to early spring. The flu is a con-

tagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. The flu affects people differently but symptoms may include: coughing, fever, headache, fatigue, lack of appetite, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea and runny nose. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu. Those with a compromised immune-system, older people, people with a chronic disease, and babies are at more risk for acquiring the virus leading to complications. It is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and death.

A common denominator with these germs is that they are spread by person to person contact. Prevention is key. Good hygiene remains a primary defense against contagious illnesses. One way to control the spread of these illnesses is as simple as soap and water. People should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with warm soapy water.

However, **the best way** to prevent seasonal flu is to get a flu vaccination. The flu viruses change and adapt every year and health experts try to predict which strains are likely to be more prevalent. The shot works because it prompts your immune system to produce antibodies. It does take about two weeks to fully develop antibodies to fight off the virus. Regardless of the vaccine's composition and its match to circulating virus strains, the CDC and other organizations always recommend a flu shot to protect against spreading influenza and to help a person's immune system better fight off illness if they contract the virus. Since the immune system response weakens with age, a high dose flu vaccine may be recommended. Check with your doctor.

Shots are not only available to protect against the flu but shingles as well. Shingles cause painful rash and blisters and it can lead to serious complications. You contract shingles when the virus that may have

given you chickenpox when you were young becomes active again. Doctors don't know why this happens. When the virus wakes up, it causes itching and tingling feelings in your skin that can last up to 5 days. Then blisters appear on your body or face, often in a strip on one side of your body. You also may have a fever, an upset stomach, headaches, and chills. The rashes tend to go away within a month, but shingles can lead to long-term nerve damage and pain, especially in people over 50. The older you are when you get shingles, the more likely you are to develop post-herpetic neuralgia, a condition that causes burning pain.

Shingles are extremely common and Americans have one in three chances of developing the virus. Thankfully, shingles are fairly easy to prevent with a vaccination. Doctors started using the first shingles vaccine, called Zostavax, in 2006. It was recommended for people over 60. It uses a weak form of the chickenpox virus to send your body's immune system into action to fight the disease. It lowers your chances of getting shingles by about 50% and your odds of long-term nerve damage by about 67%. In 2017, a second vaccine, known as Shingrix, was approved. Doctors recommend it for people over 50. It also uses a form of the chickenpox virus, but it cuts your chances of getting shingles by 90%. You can get Shingrix if you had the Zostavax vaccine before, as long as it's been at least 8 weeks since you had it.

Please consult your doctor to discuss these vaccines or your risk of contracting any of the diseases mentioned. Shots are also now widely available at pharmacies and grocery stores with no appointment necessary. In the meantime, keep washing your hands.

## EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

# INDEED... more than just a job search engine... on-site at Schoke JFS

Ilene Kweskin Locker, *Director of Employment and Training*

If you are looking for work or thinking about changing jobs or careers, are you considering the following:

- Are you having problems with employment web sites?
- Have you decided what type of work you want and how to identify it online?
- Are you wondering how to distinguish yourself from other applicants?
- Do you know how to upload your resume?
- Are you wondering about the necessity of providing a profile picture?

Many of our clients gained valuable insight on how to grapple with these issues when Indeed's *JOBSQUAD* team, comprised of staff volunteers, conducted a recent workshop here at Schoke JFS.

Initially, the presenters provided an overview and tips on how to best maneuver through Indeed's online site, as well as addressing precautions to ensure site security. Aside from the actual jobs available aspect, Indeed offers a wealth of information in regards to career advice; tools for organizing a career search; research on companies; salary comparisons and job market analysis and trends.

One on one consultations followed this, where participants had the opportunity to create or update existing Indeed accounts and learn the correct way to search, upload, and forward a resume to companies of choice. Those with established accounts could work with the *JOBSQUAD* to fine tune their profiles and learn how to maximize the site's effectiveness.

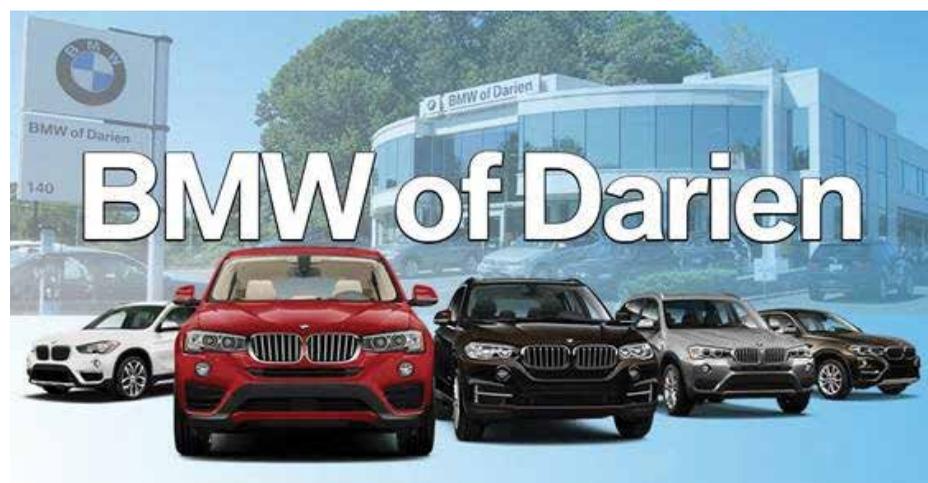
Regardless of whether you are re-entering the workforce, seeking to change jobs, or merely "testing the waters", remember, in addition to job sites, there are many factors that influence successful outcomes. First and foremost, it's vital that you cultivate and maintain your networks. Why? Since 75-80% of jobs are filled from within or by word of mouth, it follows that a majority of positions never even appear on job boards! Logic dictates that a fair proportion of your time needs to be devoted to relationship building; take a deep breath and step away from the electronic devices. Likewise, in today's dynamic workplace:

- Stay abreast of new trends and technology in your field;
- Continue to learn - attend seminars, take courses, and keep any relevant certifications and licenses current;
- Affiliate with appropriate professional organizations.

We are fortunate to have Indeed, the world's #1 job site, with 200 million unique visitors every month and 9.8 jobs added globally per second, in our area. The company's generosity, exemplified by their *JOBSQUAD* outreach, enables our clients to benefit from their extensive experience connecting millions of people to new opportunities each day. If you would like to attend a similar workshop, contact Ilene K. Locker at 203-921-4161 or by e-mail at [iklocker@ctjfs.org](mailto:iklocker@ctjfs.org). Providing there is sufficient demand, Indeed has agreed to an encore engagement.

1 comScore Total Visits, March 2017 (from Indeed website)

2 Google Analytics, Unique Visitors, September 2016 (from Indeed website)



Schoke JFS welcomes  
**Ashley Mail**  
as our new Jewish Twenties  
and Thirties Coordinator

Ashley Mail recently joined the Schoke JFS staff as the new Jewish Twenties and Thirties (JTT) Coordinator. A Westport resident, Ashley has been an active member of JTT for the past few years.

JTT connects local Jews in their 20s and 30s through social, educational, cultural and volunteer events to meet others, be inspired and get involved.

To connect with Ashley and the JTT program, e-mail [amail@ctjfs.org](mailto:amail@ctjfs.org). For up to date information, please join our Jewish Twenties & Thirties group on Facebook!

## LEGACY DONATIONS

*Schoke JFS extends our deepest appreciation to the following people and their families for their support of JFS through a legacy gift:*

ADRIENNE AND MICHAEL  
ALEXANDER  
THE ESTATE OF  
SHEILA CARMINE☆  
MIMI COHEN  
SAUL COHEN  
THE ESTATE OF  
THOMAS GILMARTIN☆  
MERYL AND RON JAPHA  
NAN AND PAUL GORDON  
GRECIA AND RON☆ GROSS

JUDY AND ADAM RIN  
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JESSICA AND LAURENCE  
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RENEE ZINN

☆ *Of blessed memory*

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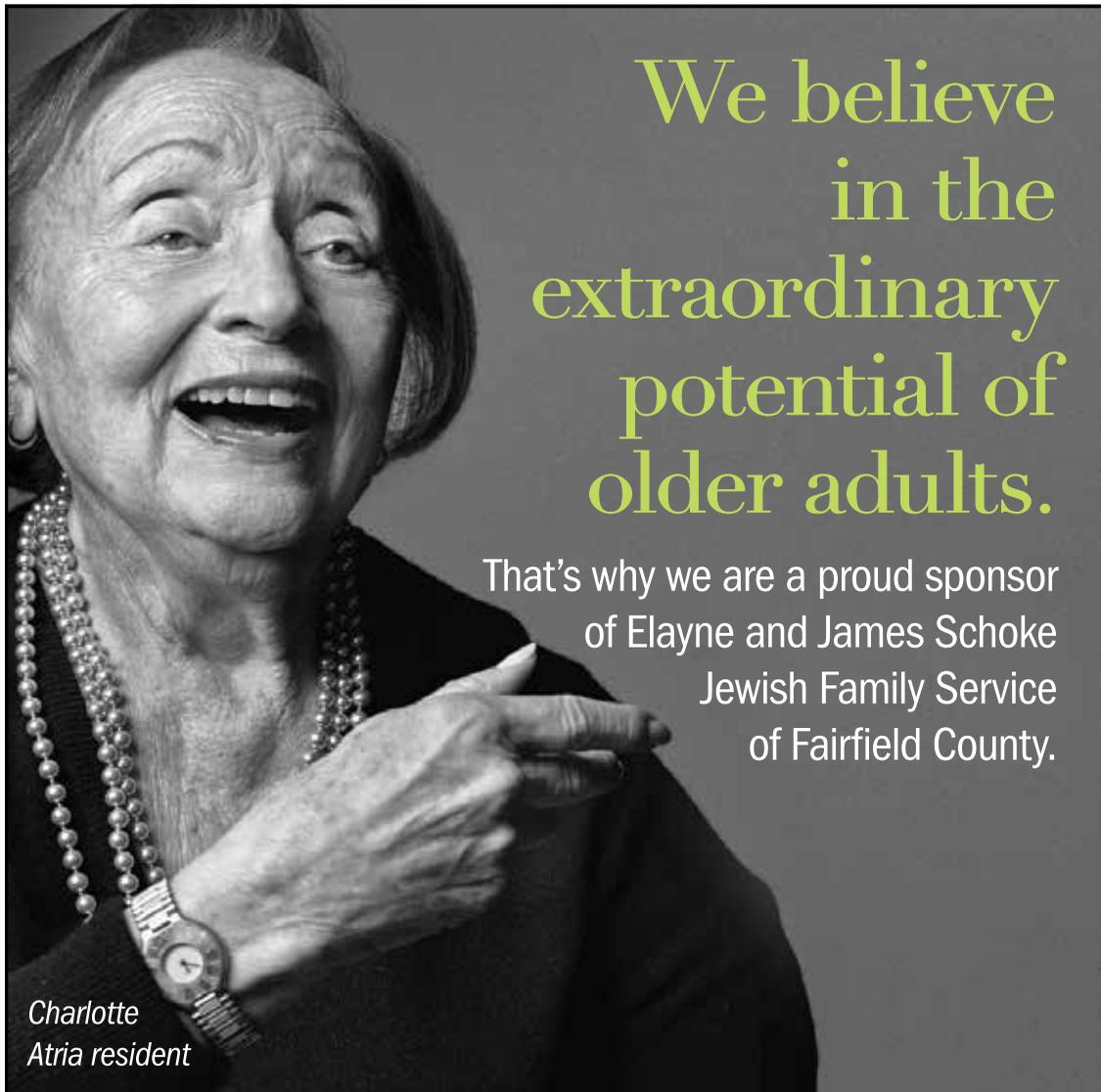


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## Mitzvah Baskets Add Tzedakah to Every Occasion!

When you order a beautifully designed Mitzvah Basket for your celebration, the proceeds go directly to the Schoke JFS Kosher Food Pantry which provides food to thousands of individuals and families in our community.

Mitzvah Baskets and centerpieces are uniquely designed and custom ribbon colors can be used to fit the décor of your event. The decorative baskets are filled with "faux food," symbolic of the food that is donated to the kosher food pantry.

**To order a Mitzvah Basket for your next event, go to [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) or call 203-921-4161.**



## Let us help you make your home sparkle!

Schoke JFS' Residential Cleaning Service can help you get the job done. Trained and supervised cleaners provide regularly scheduled and seasonal cleaning.

Prices are competitive or slightly lower than the competition.

Revenues generated help us provide quality social services to those in need, in addition to offering employment to unemployed individuals in our community.

**For additional information, please call Jodi at 203-921-4161 or email [residential\\_cleaning@ctjfs.org](mailto:residential_cleaning@ctjfs.org)**

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Director's Council



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