

Garden State Region News - December 5, 2025



**STAND
WITH
ISRAEL**



**STAND UP
TO JEWISH
HATE**

WL Week

[Visit GSR Website](#)

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**Click on the Calendar icon for 2025-2026 GSR Calendar
(Revised 9-4-25)**

All times listed are Eastern Time



MESSAGE FROM SHEILA KAUFMAN, GSR PRESIDENT

Dear Affiliate,

Shalom!

I hope everyone enjoyed their time with family and friends this past weekend. Unfortunately, I found out Thanksgiving night that one of my friends' brother who used to hang out with us passed away the day before. We were a group of 20 somethings enjoying ourselves. I had known him for over 40 years. Yesterday was the funeral and it was a time that the few of us that were together reminisced about "the good ole days". But yet his brother did not want to change and he was angry that he died. Why do I bring this up? It is about change and moving forward. Getting outside our comfort zone, trying new things. This should sound familiar with your sisterhoods. How do



we get new young people and keep who we have? Think outside the box. Take risks, it could be a half a step so that the current members feel like they are not left out, but yet you are inviting the new young people. Good luck and give it a try.

Upcoming events for January will be a Coffee and Conversation via Zoom on January 4, with a woman who made aliyah and is now clowning around in hospitals. Check out the flyer and sign up.

We have booked a second slot to volunteer at the Community Food Bank of NJ on January 21, 2026 at 1 pm. Please sign up at [CFBNJ](#) right away or reach out to [Tova Rothschild](#) and give her your name and contact information.

Save the date for February 8, 2026 as we scheduled another Coffee and Conversation via Zoom with our Israeli Kehillot counterparts on Joy in Judaism: Family & Community.

More to come soon.

Shabbat Shalom,

Sheila

Sheila Kaufman
President, Garden State Region WLCJ
gsrpresident24@wlcj.org
"Networking to engage, enrich and empower Conservative Jewish women"

2024-2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President - [Sheila Kaufman](#)
VP, Programming - [Susan Winter](#)
VP, Sisterhood/Affiliate Support - [Cheryl Sessler](#)
VP, Torah Fund - [Sindy Manas](#)
Secretary, Communications - [Ilene Rothman](#)
Secretary, Corresponding - [Susan Sferas](#)
Secretary, Financial - [Lisa Katz](#)
Secretary, Recording - [Carol Kotch](#)
Treasurer - [Donna Franklin](#)
Parliamentarian - [Dorothy Cohen](#)
Immediate Past President - [Lynette Seader](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Meryl Balaban](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Heddy Belman](#)



Torah Fund supports programs and scholarships at the five Conservative/Masorti global institutes of higher education.



If you will be sending in donations to the Torah Fund office for calendar year 2025, please send them in by December 10, 2025. The Torah Fund office will close on December 25 and reopen on January 5, 2026. Please plan accordingly.

Announcing Our 2025-2026 Campaign Theme:

Oseh Shalom

עשה שלום

Maker of Peace

We strive to make a significant impact through scholarships and programs that benefit students at The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Schechter Institutes, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, and The Abraham J. Heschel Seminary.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we help committed Jewish students become the rabbis, cantors, educators, synagogue administrators, social workers, scholars, researchers and lay leaders of tomorrow.

When you support Torah Fund, you help educate students in New York, Los Angeles, Israel, Latin America and Europe—and you align with those who value learning, knowledge and providing the future generation with relevant skills to fortify the Jewish people.

Visit www.jtsa.edu/torah-fund

Oseh Shalom Bimromav, “may the One who makes peace in the heavens, make peace for us and all the people of Israel,” appears at the end of Kaddish and in other prayers, and is also a song. We help foster Jewish unity by our support of the five global Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher education.



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO TORAH FUND!

TORAH FUND GIVING LEVELS

Golden Supporter: \$8,100
Keter Kavod \$5,000
Scholarship Patron \$2,500
Patron \$1,200
Associate Patron \$600
Guardian \$300
Benefactor \$180

FOR OUR U.S. SUPPORTERS, go to inspired.jtsa.edu/torahfund
Or send your check to the Torah Fund office.

FOR OUR CANADIAN SUPPORTERS, go to torahfundecards.jtsa.edu/canadian
Make a donation of any amount with the minimum purchase of one ecard.
Or send a check to The Jewish Theological Society, 100 Elder Street, North York, Ontario, M3H 5G7.

The dedicated philanthropy of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, Torah Fund supports scholarships and programs in the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher Jewish learning.

TORAH FUND

3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-8876
www.jtsa.edu/torah-fund • torahfund@jtsa.edu

We have beautiful new ecards!

Think of Torah Fund for any greeting.

TORAH FUND
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

We're expanding our collection with two new designs by Israeli artist Bracha Lavee—a thank-you card and a mazal tov card.

Show you care by sending a Torah Fund ecard for any occasion. For only \$5 per recipient you can send an attractive ecard—and you can even schedule it for a specific time!

Revenue from ecard purchases benefits the Torah Fund general campaign, and our affiliates receive credit for purchases. Make your selection today at torahfundecards.jtsa.edu

For our Canadian supporters, go to torahfundecards.jtsa.edu/canadian

And for our Canadian donors:
Make your gift to Torah Fund online via our ecards!
For a minimum C\$5 ecard purchase, you can add a contribution of any amount to Torah Fund.

It's easy! Select the card design you'd like to send and follow the user-friendly prompts to complete your transaction.



Torah Fund supports scholarships and programs at the five worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher education:

Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, Schechter Institutes in Jerusalem, Seminario Rabbinico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires, and The Abraham J. Heschel Seminary.

Thanks to our donors, we ensure quality education and diverse opportunities for students to become future Jewish leaders serving the broader Jewish community.

Our Jewish future is in your hands!
Visit torahfundecards.jtsa.edu
and send an ecard today.

TORAH FUND
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

TORAH FUND
The Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

www.jtsa.edu/torah-fund
torahfund@jtsa.edu

[Click HERE](#) to send a Torah Fund E-Card
[Click HERE](#) to donate to this year's 2025-26 Torah Fund Campaign
[Click HERE](#) to donate to the Torah Fund Legacy Society
[Click HERE](#) for the Torah Fund Chadashot Newsletter

Torah Fund pins will be distributed in September.
Any questions please e-mail Cindy Manas at smanas750e@gmail.com.

GSR Region Programs

- **Thurs. Dec. 18, 2025** - GSR helping out at NJ Community Food Bank - Closed
- **Sun. Jan. 4, 2026 12:30 pm** - Coffee & Conversation on Zoom - Volunteer Medical Clowning in Israel
- **Wed. Jan 21, 2026** - GSR helping out at NJ Community Food Bank - [Still accepting volunteers](#)
- **Feb. 8, 2026** - Coffee and Conversation on Zoom - Meet with our Israeli Kehillot counterparts on Joy in Judaism: Family & Community.



GSR Coffee and Conversation on Zoom

Sunday, January 4, 2026 at 12:30 PM ET

**Laughter really is the best medicine:
Volunteer Medical Clowning in Israel**

Presenter – Lynn Kra-Oz

Lynn has been a volunteer medical clown for 18 years. She is a retired speech and language pathologist from Highland Park, NJ who made Aliyah.



What does "medical clowning" mean, anyway? Do medical clowns volunteer only in pediatric wards? What is so special about a red nose? How does one train for this unique volunteer role in Israel? Learn about all of this and more....!

Please Register at

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/s1/MYS0zeo/clowning>

Questions? Susan Winter at winter.susan@gmail.com

Register



**Join the Garden State Region
as We Volunteer
with the Community FoodBank of New Jersey
at their Hillside, NJ location**



**Wednesday, January 21, 2026
1 pm - 3 pm
31 Evans Terminal Road, Hillside, NJ
07205**

**You must individually sign up below for
the above date/time.**

**After you sign up, send an email with
your phone number to Tova Rothschild
at tovacrothschild@gmail.com.**

Spaces are limited.

Sign up

Questions: Tova Rothschild, GSR Social Action Chair, tovacrothschild@gmail.com

SISTERHOOD AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Please send your programs that you would like posted to both [Ilene Rothman](#) AND [Sheila Kaufman](#).

- Do you have any programs that you would like others to know about? Easy way to publicize your event! Let us know. Send a flyer in jpg or pdf format.
- Starting in January, we will also showcase affiliate programs. Submit up to 3 photos with captions and 2 sentences to describe your program. (We will shorten if necessary.)

GOOD & WELFARE - GARDEN STATE REGION

Share your news and nachas with us!

Let us know if you have any simchas, well wishes, and sorrows to pass on to [Sheila Kaufman](#).

Birthday Wishes

Wishing all who have December anniversaries and birthdays, **Yom Huledet Sameach!**

Mazel Tov

- Lisa Katz, GSR Financial Secretary, wedding of her daughter, Rachel to Alex Baum

Baruch Dayan HaEmet

- Helene Schachter, z"l, Past WLCJ Board Member and Past President of the former North Shore Long Island Branch of WLCJ

Make a Donation to the Garden State Region to:

- Honor someone special
- Wish a Mazel Tov to a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family
- Send get well wishes
- Send condolences

Our **Scholarship Fund** helps to send women to WLCJ Convention and Leadership Institute where they learn necessary skills to share with our sisterhoods.

The **Sunshine Fund** supports members of the GSR Board in their time of need.

The **Evelyn Auerbach Education Fund** to sponsor an annual GSR Region educational event.

To make donations, contact Donna Franklin GSR Treasurer, at gstrtreasurer@wlcj.org and include which fund(s) to make the donation to.

Or mail your check payable to "GSR-WLCJ" to
Donna Franklin, 7 Liddy Place, West Caldwell, NJ 07006
Donations can also be made via Credit Card.

[Donate to GSR using Credit Card](#)

PROGRAMS FROM WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Shabbat Message

December 6, 2025 | 16th of Kislev, 5786

Becoming Messengers of Kindness

Joyce Levitas

WLCJ CRM and Member Portal Developer



This week in *Parashat Vayishlach*, we read: *Vayishlach Yaakov mal'achim lefanav* - "And Jacob sent messengers ahead of him." (Genesis 32:4)

Jacob sends *mal'achim*, "messengers"—not of war, but of peace, care, and preparation. His actions remind us that in moments of fear or uncertainty, the Jewish response is often to send forth kindness.



Over these past years since October 7th, I've had the privilege of volunteering in many corners of Israel—harvesting vegetables, picking avocados, oranges, and clementines, and even packaging lettuce and broccoli in a packing plant. Each place moved me and touched my heart.

But *nothing* has made a deeper impression on me than [Shlomi's Food Truck](#) outside Kibbutz Be'eri.

[Read more](#)

Missed Giving Tuesday yesterday? You can still make a meaningful gift to support the Masorti Women's Days of Study campaign!

GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday contributions will be accepted for the full month of December.



Support our Giving Tuesday Campaign

[Donate Now](#)

WLCJ SHABBAT JANUARY 17, 2026 - MATERIALS AVAILABLE



2026/5786 – January 17/28 Tevet
Parashat Vaera

You are invited to tailor the following texts to meet the needs and goals of your Women's League Shabbat committee. We are pleased to offer a collection of poems, songs/music videos, articles, rabbinic excerpts, and readings based on the current Torah Fund theme of *Oseh Shalom*.

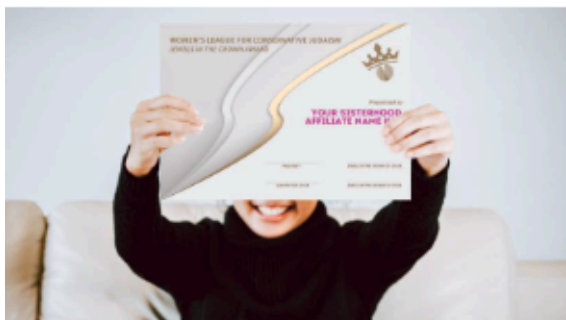
A generic *D'var Torah* is also included for those communities scheduling their Women's League Shabbat on a date other than *Parashat Vaera*.

Please stay tuned for additional materials that may be read at your services: letters of greeting from Women's League International President Julia Loeb, Women's League Torah Fund Chair Lori Snow, and Women's League Executive Director Rabbi Ellen Wolintz-Fields, as well as a dedicated *D'var Torah* for *Parashat Vaera* to be used specifically on January 17, 2026.

[Learn More](#)

WLCJ CONVENTION - JEWELS IN THE CROWN

Applications are open!



We are excited to announce that the next Jewels in the Crown award ceremony will take place during our upcoming **WL Convention in Alexandria, VA in July 2026!**

This signature award recognizes and celebrates Sisterhood Affiliates for their outstanding accomplishments in education, cultural programming, social action, and WL engagement.

WHO MAY APPLY?

Every WLCJ Sisterhood Affiliate is encouraged to complete a Jewels in the Crown 2026 (JIC) application.

HOW TO APPLY?

Please complete the application form linked below.

Although the online application is preferable, Sisterhood Affiliates may print/scan/email an application to jewels@wlcj.org or mail an application to our WLCJ offices at:

Jewish Theological Seminary
Attn: **Women's League for Conservative Judaism**
3080 Broadway, Suite K900
New York, NY 10027



QUESTIONS?

For questions or assistance completing an application, please email jewels@wlcj.org. You may also contact . . .

Anise Parnes, aparnes@wlcj.org
Edna Schrank, eschrank@wlcj.org
Rachel Ferber, rferber@wlcj.org

Sisterhood Affiliates will be honored during WL Convention 2026 in Alexandria, VA!

Online Application

Download PDF Application

NEXT WLCJ LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

IN-PERSON

Sunday, January 25 - Tuesday, January 27, 2026



Women's League for Conservative Judaism – committed to developing skilled and dedicated leaders – invites you to attend an inspiring Leadership Institute that will expand your skills as a leader and enhance your knowledge as a Jewish woman while strengthening your connection to Women's League, your Sisterhood Affiliate, your community, and *Klal Yisrael*.

The next Women's League Leadership Institute is scheduled for **January 25-27, 2026** at **Temple Sinai in Hollywood, FL**.

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE?

A multi-day workshop that will enhance your personal style of communication with interactive exercises and role-playing, and will help you discover tips and techniques for using language that motivates, stimulates and encourages women to volunteer. An opportunity to network with other women, master goal-setting, time management and team-building. Learn the secret of keeping yourself challenged.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT THAN OTHER LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS?

The Leadership Institute's unique format allows participants to build a personal program to expand **Jewish knowledge and leadership skills**.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

\$299 includes materials, programming, and meals. This fee does not include hotel or transportation to Temple Sinai in Hollywood, FL.

Registration for the hotel is \$134/single and \$144/double + tax per night. [Click here](#) to reserve a room in the Leadership Institute room block at the **LaQuinta Suites by Wyndham in Hollywood, FL**. Make sure that your check-in/check-out dates are listed appropriately. According to WLCJ guidelines, please do not travel on Shabbat. These rooms can be accommodated into double occupancy. Before booking, please let us know who you will be sharing the room with for our records and explain how split payment will be handled.

The learning and sense of community created during the Institute comes both from the shared experiences during the formal program and the unstructured time together at the hotel. To facilitate this, we strongly urge local participants to stay with the rest of the group at the hotel.

[Register](#)



QUESTIONS?

Debbie Zimmerman

WLCJ Leadership Institute Logistics Chair
dzimmerman@wlcj.org



The WWOT, the Weekly Words of Torah, each week through the end of June 2026, will connect to the **2025-2026 / 5786** Torah Fund general campaign, *Oseh Shalom – Maker of Peace*. To read more Weekly Words of Torah, [click here](#).

Jacob started preparing to meet Esau. He sent messengers to let Esau know that he was coming. They returned saying that Esau was on his way, accompanied by 400 men. Frightened, Jacob separated his family and flocks into two camps, hoping that at least one would be able to escape Esau's wrath, then prayed to God for protection.

After sending servants ahead with gifts for Esau, Jacob separated himself from his family. A man (or an angel?) came and wrestled with Jacob all night. Before departing in the morning, he changed Jacob's name to Israel . . .

[Continue Reading](#)

PREVIOUSLY PROMOTED - REVISIT THE DETAILS

**Still need
to
register?**

Click the image to explore each program series on Zoom. We'd love to have you join us!



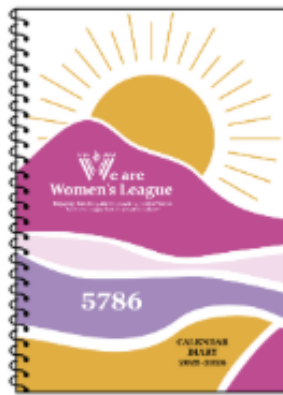
Sessions will meet on a Tuesday night each month over Zoom at 7:30PM ET Nov 11, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9



Thursday, December 11
7:30 pm EST
Authentic communication – an opportunity to discover practical, powerful tools for expressing yourself with clarity and integrity.



Sunday, December 7
12:00 PM ET
Session 3



ORDER TODAY

Calendar Diaries are available.
Order yours today!

Pocket Size = \$12.00
Planner Size = \$26.00

Order Online

Mail-in Order Form

PRAYER FOR HOSTAGES

Prayer for the Return of Slain Hostages

(in English & Hebrew)

☆ **Prayer for the Return of Slain Hostages** ☆

Bareich atah Adonai, sovereign of time and space, the Judge of truth.

Avinu Malkinu, hear our voice, be kind and have compassion for us, willingly and lovingly accept our prayer.

Avinu Malkinu, do this for the sake of those who were martyred for Your holy name and for the sake of those who were slaughtered for their exclusive devotion to You.

Avinu Malkinu, do not turn us away empty-handed, and have compassion for us, our infants and our children.

May it be Your will, *Adonai* our God and God of our ancestors, watch over, safeguard, strengthen and embrace and comfort the families of the slain hostages who were kidnapped and murdered by ruthless enemies and returned for eternal rest in Your holy land after 503 days.

The One who heals the broken-hearted and binds their wounds, encircle their loved ones with Your kindness, alleviate their suffering, dress their wounds and grant them and us comfort and healing for our agonizing bodies and crying souls.

There is no greater mitzvah than the redemption of captives.
Master of mercy, ensure that the rest of our brothers and sisters return swiftly from captivity, those in joy to life and rehabilitation, and those in sadness – to eternal rest.

And may it be fulfilled that
'the sons [and daughters] come back to their place.'
And let us say: Amen.





☆ **תפילה עם שובם של חללי המלחמה** ☆




ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם דין האמת.
אבינו מלכנו, שמע קולנו חוס ורחם עלינו.
ושלל נרשמים ונרצחו את הפלסטי.
אבינו מלכנו, עשה למען הרחמים על עם קדשך
ולמען סבוחים על ידך.
אבינו מלכנו, אל נא תשיבנו ריקם מלפניך.
ונמלל עלינו ועל עוללית וטפט.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו נאלתי אבותינו ואמהותינו,
שחשוקה, ותקצור, ותחזק, ותשטף ותגשם את משפחותיהם של
חללי המלחמה אשר נחטפו ונרצחו בידי בני אלה וחושבו היום
למנוחת עולמים בארץ קדשך לאחר 503 לילות ודמים.

הרפא לעסוקי לב ומחפש לעצבותם,
חכם באברת חסדך את אורחיהם, חבש את יסוריהם, רפא את פצעייהם
ותן להם ולנו נחמה ורפואה למוח הרוחב ולקש המבנה.

ואין לפניך ולמנו נמנה גדולה יותר מפניך שבויות ושבויות.
אנא בעל הרחמים, עשה למען ושובו במהרה
הר אבות ואמהותינו אשר בשבי,
מי בשמחה - לחיים ולשקום, ומי בצער - למנוחת עולמים.

ותתקם בנו 'שובו בנים וקנות לבובלם'
ונאסר אסון

MAKOM B'YACHAD



Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

**12 noon ET, 9am PT, 10am MT, and
11am CT**

A virtual service for our WLCJ Sisters to
recite *Mishaberach* (the Prayer for
Healing) and Psalms, and study *Kaddish*.

<https://zoom.us/j/630830287>

Meeting ID: 630 830 287

Password: 875936



Engaging Enriching and Empowering Jewish Women
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

3080 Broadway Suite K900 | New York, NY
10027 | Phone: 405-870-1260 |
info@wlcj.org

WL WEEK

DONATE TO WLCJ

SHARE YOUR SISTERHOOD HAPPENINGS WITH US!

Look for all the info both here and on our Website & Facebook pages.



Follow the Garden State Region!

If you would like to contribute a flyer or picture to upload please forward to
[Ilene Rothman](#) and [Sheila Kaufman](#).

Click [here](#) to connect with the Garden State Region Facebook page.

Click [here](#) to visit the Garden State Region website.

Make sure to click both **Like** and **Follow**. It's another great way to learn about everything
happening in our Region.



Garden State Region
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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Ilene Rothman
GSR Secretary Communications / Newsletter Editor
gsrcommunications@wlcj.org

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