

Garden State Region News - May 8, 2026



STAND WITH ISRAEL

Ole!



STAND UP TO JEWISH HATE

WL Week

Visit GSR Website



IN THIS ISSUE

- Message from Sheila Kaufman, GSR President
- Conference Photo Highlights
- 2025-2026 Executive Officers
- Message from Teresa Samtur, GSR Madricha
- WL Convention Dates
- Sisterhood Affiliate Programs
- Torah Fund Update
- Good & Welfare
- Donation Opportunities
- WLCJ Programs and Messages

MESSAGE FROM SHEILA KAUFMAN, GSR PRESIDENT

Dear Affiliate,

Shalom and Buenas Dias!

I am still in our Spring Conference mode. If you missed the Conference, I am sorry. It was one that will go down as fun, enjoyable and a learning experience. I was so proud to be a part of this fabulous day. Congregation B'nai Israel and their Sisterhood in Millburn, NJ were accommodating and welcomed us.



The Conference theme, **Latino Jews - Coming to America**, carried through from the Save The Date all the way to the Installation Dessert Reception. The opening plenary and business meeting were efficient and finished in record breaking time. The Latino Jews Panelists and Moderator were marvelous, and we all learned so much. Lunch was good and the workshops blended the theme in the Crafts, Latino Music & Dance, Genealogy, and the Jewish Jeopardy. Region Installation was well done and had an OLE! to thank each group. Then, the flan and dessert topped it all off. The Social Action project received a huge amount of baby diapers, wipes, formula, and socks a plenty! Thank you for donating.

Thank you to the Conference Chairs and Committee on making a successful event. Mazel Tov to Sindy Manas and the Incoming GSR Board for 2026-29. Wishing you all the best for a successful term.

But you know what...the best part was being with all of you.

The **Women's League Convention** is July 12-15 in Alexandria, VA. Registration is open. There is a Shabbaton that is a separate add-on from Friday to Sunday. The Convention is Sunday to Tuesday where we will celebrate the B'not Mitzvah class, installation of the WLCJ International Board, daven, shop, listen to speakers, celebrate the Jewels in the Crown Awards, and a whole lot more. Another add-on, from Tuesday night to Wednesday is a social program and ends with the WLCJ Open Board Meeting Wednesday morning. Check out the [Convention Website](#). [Teresa Samtur](#), our region Madricha, can answer any questions. Please see her article below with more information.

The Convention also has a Social Action project called **Comfort Cases**. This initiative supports youth entering foster care in the Virginia, Washington DC region, providing them with essential needs in a backpack. You do not need to go to the Convention to participate. Amazon can help you out!

I am excited to announce that six of our Sisterhood Affiliates will be receiving the **Jewels in the Crown Awards** at Convention this summer. Mazel Tov to the recipients!

Deadlines:

- Convention Early Bird registration was extended to May 14.
- Hotel registration guaranteed rates are until June 7 and they are booked directly with the hotel.

Just a reminder, that you should plan on getting any Torah Fund donations for 2025-2026 into the Torah Fund office by June 15.

Only 7 weeks and 2 days left for me to visit your sisterhoods. If I have not been to yours, please let me know and let's make it happen!

Wishing all our "Mothers" a very Happy Mothers' Day!

Shabbat Shalom,

Sheila

Sheila Kaufman
President, Garden State Region WLCJ
gsrcpresident24@wlcj.org

GSR SPRING CONFERENCE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

More pictures will be posted on the [GSR website](#).



Sheila Kaufman, President 2024-2026



Sindy Manas, President 2026-2029



Social Action Project



The Panelists



Genealogy Workshop



Latino Music and Dance Workshop



Craft Workshop



Jewish Jeopardy Workshop



GSR Board 2024-2026



GSR Board 2026-2029



Song for Outgoing "Discharged" GSR Officers.

Sung to the tune of KOKOMO.

Written by Lynette Seader and Ilene Rothman

We're the Garden State Region, not Jamaica
Ooh, we want to take ya.
Sephardic, Ashkenazi
Meet our pretty Mamas.
Spring Conference is where we want to go.
We talk real fast, and we drive so far
Jersey's the place to be, to Buzz with the GSR.

Social Action, Conversation,
Get some education.
Kehillot, Masorti, connect with U.S. mamas.
Sisterhood Support reaches out to our community
While Torah Fund is our philanthropy.
Jersey is our heart, Israel is our soul
We zoom in fast, we drink our coffee slow.
We come from near and far
To Buzz with the GSR.

Directories, Registration
Your skills are a sensation!
Behind the scenes, you keep your profiles low
You help us strive and you help us grow.
That's why you are the quiet stars in the GSR.

Secretaries, Money Collectors
Pay your per capita, cause it matters.
Budgets, sending Cards and taking Minutes
too
We follow Robert's Rules.
Our Advisors help us reach a high bar
Happy Chai Birthday to the GSR.

Our VP's, they guide us,
As they always inspire us.
They work to make their goals,
Dependable they always show.
Working hard and aim to please
Fulfilling all our Region needs.
Our VPs are the shining stars of the GSR.

Our Queen Bee, our leader
You can bet she won't forget us.
Committed, pragmatic, talented at graphics.
She works so hard, her dedication shows
Sheila took us where we needed to go.
Because of YOU, we went really far
Thank you from the GSR.



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](#)

*The Garden State Region Heads to WLCJ Convention 2026
Sunday, July 12 - Tuesday, July 14, 2026 | Hilton Alexandria
Mark Center | Alexandria, VA*



Shalom,

The Garden State Region is gearing up for Women's League Convention 2026. This is our once-every-three-years chance to learn, celebrate, and connect with our Conservative/Masorti sisters from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Israel and around the world. [Register by May 14th](#), to take advantage of the early-bird pricing. Come to learn, connect, celebrate and bring fresh energy back to your sisterhood affiliate and the Garden State Region.

What to look forward to:

- **Connect** with women from around the globe while sharing ideas, networking and making friends. This is the heart of WL Convention 2026.
- **Learn** from leading scholars, speakers and workshops with content you can bring back to your sisterhood.
- Meet Conservative movement **leadership** and hear first-hand what's happening across Conservative/Masorti Judaism.
- **Celebrate** on Sunday night (July 12th) as we party with our sisters and celebrate our Region's incoming and outgoing WLCJ Officers and Board members.
- Be **inspired** by meaningful moments, including the B'not Mitzvah service on Monday morning (July 13th), in which GSR women *Betty Needleman (Temple Beth O'r/Beth Torah, Clark)*, *Ilene Rothman (EBJC, East Brunswick)* and *Janice Saferstein (EBJC, East Brunswick)* will become a Bat Mitzvah.
- **Cheer** our Garden State Region sisterhood affiliates at the luncheon on Tuesday, July 14th, honoring the *Jewels in the Crown* award recipients.
- Do **Tzedakah** by supporting the WLCJ Convention project, *Comfort Cases*. This social action project helps children who are new to the foster care system and provides them with backpacks filled with essentials for their first few days in foster care. The backpacks include new pajamas, a warm blanket, toiletries, a stuffed animal or a book. If you're attending - or even if you can't make the trip - please consider contributing. To learn more about *Comfort Cases*, go to <https://www.wizevents.com/wlcj2026/?id=10477>.

Registration and logistics:

- **The early-bird discount has been extended to May 14th**, so now is the time to register! Registration is through the WLCJ Convention website (<https://www.wizevents.com/wlcj2026/>). If you can't attend the full convention, consider coming as a day tripper - drive down with a friend for a single day - but be sure to register in advance.
- Need a roommate or want to carpool? Reach out to me, Teresa Samtur, Garden State Region Madricha, by email, tsamtur@wlcj.org or phone, 732-221-6366.

Be with us in Alexandria, VA, for three inspiring days of study, skill-building and community!

Shabbat Shalom,

Teresa Samtur
Madricha Garden State Region
tsamtur@wlcj.org

WLCJ CONVENTION DATES

- **July 10-15, 2026 - WLCJ Convention 2026; Alexandria, Va**

REGISTRATION OPEN

- Fri.-Sat. July 10-11 - Shabbaton (add-on)
 - Sun.-Tues. July 12-14 - Convention
 - Tues.-Wed. July 14-15 - Evening Program & WLCJ Board Meeting (add-on)
- **Convention Deadlines**
 - **EXTENDED to May 14 - Early Bird Registration**
 - After May 14 - Regular Registration

B'not Mitzvah Women from GSR

Mazel Tov to our Region Women who will become a Bat Mitzvah at the WL Convention 2026!



- ❖ Betty Needleman - Torah Beth O'r/Beth Torah, Clark
- ❖ Ilene Rothman - EBJC, East Brunswick
- ❖ Janice Saferstein - EBJC, East Brunswick

JEWELS IN THE CROWN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mazel Tov to the GSR Region recipients of the Jewels in the Crown Award!



- ❖ Congregation Agudath Israel, Caldwell
- ❖ East Brunswick Jewish Center, East Brunswick
- ❖ Highland Park Conservative Temple-
Congregation Anshe Emeth, Highland Park
- ❖ Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael, Morristown
- ❖ Congregation Torat El, Oakhurst
- ❖ B'nai Shalom, West Orange

REGISTER FOR WLCJ CONVENTION 2026 TODAY



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

WLCJ SHABBATON & CONVENTION 2026

Friday–Wednesday, July 10–15, 2026

Registration is now open!

Take advantage of our \$1,150 Early-Bird special through May 14, 2026!
Regular registration is \$1,295 beginning May 15.

Hotel room rates are guaranteed through **June 7, 2026**, so be sure to make your reservations early.

Click [here](#) to register and learn more. We look forward to seeing you there!

GET YOUR VIRTUAL JOURNAL AD TODAY

Whether you want to honor a trailblazing President, past or present, celebrate a major Sisterhood Affiliate milestone, or simply share a heartfelt message of gratitude, a virtual ad ensures your tribute will be seen and celebrated by attendees far and wide.

[PLACE A VIRTUAL AD](#)

COMFORT CASES

No child's suitcase should be a trash bag. Join us in supporting **Comfort Cases**. Help us bring dignity to youth entering foster care by replacing trash bags with backpacks filled with pajamas, fresh toiletries, and comforting blankets.

There is a critical need for teen items! Teenagers are often the most underserved group in the foster system. Your donations of adult-sized pajamas, full-size hygiene products, and journals will make a massive difference to an older child navigating a difficult transition.



[DONATE](#)

[SUPPORT THE AMAZON WISHLIST](#)

SISTERHOOD AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Sisterhood Affiliates,

Do you have any programs that you would like others to know about? Either to publicize your event in advance or to share your affiliate program afterwards.

- To publicize your event in advance, send a flyer in jpg or pdf format with Registration link.
- To showcase your affiliate programs post event, submit up to 3 photos with captions and a few sentences to describe your program. (We will shorten if necessary.)

Please e-mail your programs that you would like posted in this newsletter to both [Ilene Rothman](#) AND [Sheila Kaufman](#).



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





May 2026

Women's League for Conservative Judaism is pleased to announce that we will assume the administration of the **Torah Fund Campaign of Women's League for Conservative Judaism**, effective July 1st, 2026, marking a new chapter in the program's proud 84-year history of supporting Conservative/Masorti Jewish education and leadership. This transition will streamline operations and enable WLCJ to enhance engagement and efficiency while continuing to ensure robust support for all beneficiary institutions.

As of July 1, 2026, the new Torah Fund office will be located in the WLCJ offices:

Torah Fund
3080 Broadway, Suite K900
New York, NY 10027

We proudly announce that the 2026-2027 Torah Fund Campaign theme is:

Shema Koleinu

שמע קולנו

Hear our Voice

This year's campaign launches on July 1. Checks will continue to be made payable to Torah Fund. The donor button on the JTS website will directly connect to our new donation page on the WLCJ website. *From June 27 until June 30, 2026, the link for on-line donations will not be operational due to the transition.*

Please join us in welcoming Morgan Long, Torah Fund Manager, to our Torah Fund team.

As the transition goes forward, we will continue to provide Torah Fund Campaign updates.

Julia Loeb
President
jloeb@wlcj.org

Lori Snow
Torah Fund Vice President
lsnow@wlcj.org

Pam Schlosberg
Incoming President
pschlosberg@wlcj.org

Janet Kirschner
Incoming Torah Fund Vice President
jkirschner@wlcj.org

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.

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 Rabinico 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.

[Click HERE](#) to send a Torah Fund E-Card **including Mother's Day Cards**
[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

Any questions please e-mail Sindy Manas at smanas750e@gmail.com.

GOOD & WELFARE - GARDEN STATE REGION
Share your news and nachas with us!

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

Birthday Wishes

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

Mazel Tov

- **Sebley Hausler**, GSR Board member, on the engagement of her grandson Kyle Hausler to Jessica Katz. Kyle is the son of Richard and Alison Hausler and Jessica's parents are Nancy and Alan Katz of Newton, MA.
- **Ilene Rothman**, GSR Communications Secretary, and her husband, Philip, on the engagement of their son, Adam Rothman to Karyl Kopaskie.

Baruch Dayan HaEmet

- **Owen Hass z"l**, beloved husband of Mona Hass, Incoming WLCJ International Communications Chair. Messages of condolence may be sent to Mona at 1508 Whitehall Drive #203, Davie, FL 33324 or by email to mhass@wlcj.org.

DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

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

WLCJ PROGRAMS AND MESSAGES

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS: WHY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL ACCEPTANCE AND KINDNESS DEFINE WLCJ

What defines the Women's League experience? For **Elaine B. Smith**, it comes down to two essential pillars: total acceptance and kindness. Discover the profound impact of finding a space where every woman is welcomed and valued, and how these principles continue to strengthen the bonds of our global sisterhood.

READ

HIGHLIGHTING JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

THE REVOLUTIONARY AND FOUNDING PERIOD

As we celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month and look ahead to America 250, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations continues its inspiring initiative to highlight the rich history and enduring contributions of Jewish Americans. This week, they explore the Revolutionary and Founding Period (1776-1825). From key patriots like Francis Salvador, the first Jewish person to hold public office in America, and Haym Salomon, who crucially financed the Revolutionary War, to trailblazing women like Abigail Minis and Rebecca Gratz, who supplied rebel troops and pioneered the modern Jewish Sunday school respectively, the stories of these individuals highlight the vital role Jewish Americans played in the fight for independence and the founding of the nation.

[READ THE FULL NEWSLETTER](#)

PREPARE FOR WL CONVENTION 2026



[REGISTER](#)

DRESS AS YOUR BEST SELF!

Thurs | May 28 | 12:00 pm ET | Online

In preparation for Convention, join us for an exclusive webinar on mastering your Convention wardrobe. Learn from **travel expert Alexandra Jimenez** (*Travel Fashion Girl*) on how to "Dress as Your Best Self," and get creative tips from **WLCJ Creative Judaic Arts Chairperson Jody Glass** on perfecting your look for our "Midnight at the Masquerade" gala. From capsule wardrobes to masquerade masks, we've got you covered.

WL KEHILAT/EDUCATION

STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM SUCCESS

Thurs | May 28 | 7:30 pm ET | Online

Ready to add some serious zest and zing to your sisterhood events? Join Kehilah-Education for an energizing workshop dedicated entirely to strategic programming and fresh ideas. You'll learn proven best practices directly from **Region Vice Presidents Gilda Schwartz, Rona Walters, and Susan Winter**. Additionally, **WLCJ Vice President Anise Parnes** will show you exactly how to unlock available program materials on the WLCJ website.



[REGISTER](#)

WEEKLY WORDS OF TORAH



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](#).

Parashat Behar-Bechukotai

What lessons can be learned from the obligation to allow not just ourselves to rest, but also our planet? Rabbi Margie Cella reminds us who the earth truly belongs to, inspiring us to practice environmental renewal and sustainability. She also explores how the double parashah inspires not only the betterment of our natural environment, but also the cognizance to treat others with the same dignity and respect that we are to afford nature.

READ WEEKLY WORDS OF TORAH

OTHER WLCJ PROGRAM REMINDERS

Click the image to explore each program series and to register.



MATHILDE'S
MASTER CLASS

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

MAKOM B'YACHAD



Makom
B'Yachad

Makom

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

SHARE YOUR SISTERHOOD HAPPENINGS WITH US!

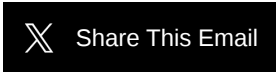
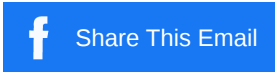
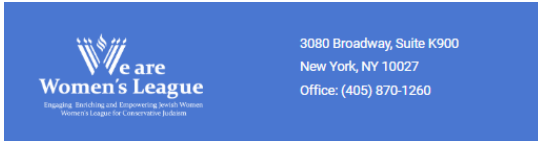
Look for all the info both here and on our Website & Facebook pages.

Follow the Garden State Region!

If you would like to contribute a flyer or picture to our newsletter 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.



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

Garden State Region Women's League for Conservative Judaism | 3080 Broadway Suite K900 | New York, NY 10027 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!