

Garden State Region News - July 24, 2026



**STAND
WITH
ISRAEL**



WL Week

Visit GSR Website

2026-27 Calendar

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Message from Sindy Manas, GSR President

Dear Lynette,

Welcome to our first newsletter for our new GSR administration. I am honored to assume the position as President of the Garden State Region of WLCJ for the next three years. We have a wonderful GSR Board and together we can do great things to enrich the lives of Jewish Conservative Women. I look forward to visiting all Sisterhood/Affiliates in person over the next three years.

Our WLCJ Convention ended last week in Alexandria, VA. Over 300 Jewish Conservative Women in one location in attendance! The Convention was very engaging, enriching and empowering, which is what WLCJ is all about. The speakers were inspirational, and the programs gave us great ideas to bring back to our Sisterhood/Affiliates. We networked with other Jewish Conservative Women across the US and Canada and made many personal connections.

Mazel Tov to Betty Needleman, Ilene Rothman, and Janice Saferstein for attaining their Adult Bat Mitzvah at Convention.



Congratulations to our six Sisterhood/Affiliates who earned 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; and B'nai Shalom, West Orange. They all inspire us.

The Garden State Region is here to support you in all aspects with your Sisterhood/Affiliate. If you are a Sisterhood President, you can join [WLCJ Preznet](#), open to Sisterhood presidents only. You can ask questions, voice opinions, and ask for suggestions from other Sisterhood/Affiliate presidents to find commonalities. Sisterhood/Affiliates can also utilize [WLCJ Consulting Services](#) for assistance and support for your specific needs. This includes guidance regarding membership, programming, fundraising etc.

Our new Torah Fund Campaign, **Shema Koleinu "Hear our Voices"** began on July 1st. Ilene Weber, our Torah Fund VP will have a training session on Torah Fund on August 24, 2026 on Zoom at 7:30 pm. Please read Ilene's article below and click the links below.

To publicize your events in our Region, please send your Programming event flyers to GSR Communications Secretary, Lynette Seader lynetteseader59@gmail.com and myself gsrpresident26@wlcj.org.

Mark your calendars and please don't schedule any programs for these Calendar dates.

Save the Dates

Torah Fund Training on Zoom - August 24, 2026, 7:30 PM

Torah Fund Event - November 15, 2026

GSR Spring Conference - May 2, 2027

Shabbat Shalom,

Sindy

Sindy Manas

President, Garden State Region WLCJ

gsrpresident26@wlcj.org

"Networking to engage, enrich and empower Conservative Jewish women"

2026-2029 Executive Officers

Welcome Our New GSR Administration

President - [Sindy Manas](#)

VP, Programming - [Bonnie Isaacson](#)

VP, Sisterhood/Affiliate Support - [Cheryl Sessler](#)

VP, Torah Fund - [Ilene Weber](#)

Secretary, Communications - [Lynette Seader](#)

Secretary, Corresponding - [Barbara Leveene](#)

Secretary, Financial - [Lisa Katz](#)

Secretary, Recording - [Ilene Rothman](#)

Treasurer - [Donna Franklin](#)

Parliamentarian - [Dorothy Cohen](#)

Immediate Past President - [Sheila Kaufman](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Meryl Balaban](#)
Advisor to the Board - [Heddy Belman](#)

Message from Ilene Weber, VP Torah Fund

Meet Ilene Weber, VP Torah Fund

Shalom,

I'm thrilled and grateful to write my first Torah Fund article for our Garden State Region newsletter! I was first introduced to Torah Fund about thirty years ago, shortly before I began my term as Sisterhood President. Since then, my love and respect of Torah Fund and what it stands for has exponentially grown. Torah Fund supports scholarships, programs, and special projects in the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutions of higher Jewish learning that will train the next generation of Jewish leaders.



As supporters of Torah Fund, we have the opportunity to see the perpetuation of Conservative/Masorti Judaism in our lifetime and for future generations! What a priceless gift!

In May 2025 Rabbi Nicholas Losorelli graduated from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. He soon stepped into a leadership role at Ziegler as an assistant dean, becoming part of the Jewish journey for many students. While a rabbinical student, Rabbi Losorelli benefited from the support of Torah Fund, and now he sees how Torah Fund is benefiting new students. "While it takes a lot of inspiration, hard work, and learning to make a rabbi, it also takes resources, and how lucky have I been, and how lucky are our students, to be the beneficiaries of Torah Fund, an organization made up of people who put their money where their values are in the interest of a thriving Jewish future and Conservative Movement? I'd say we're pretty lucky."

It is my sincere hope that we continue to carry the message of Torah Fund throughout our Region and find much success in our endeavors! As the Region Torah Fund VP, I look forward to working with all our Torah Fund chairs and affiliates.

As you plan your Torah Fund events this year, please send me an invitation! I would love to come and meet you!

Our Torah Fund summer training workshop is Monday, August 24th at 7:30pm on Zoom. Details will be forthcoming!

Please donate generously and thank you for all you do - together we can make a difference! *Let's show our students that we care about them and the continuation of our movement!*

With appreciation,

Ilene Weber
Torah Fund VP Garden State Region
ileneweber22@gmail.com

Click [CLICK HERE](#) to donate to this year's 2026-27 Torah Fund Campaign

[Click HERE](#) to donate to the Torah Fund Legacy Society

[Click HERE](#) to send a Torah Fund E-Card

[Click HERE](#) for the latest Torah Fund Chadashot Newsletter

[Click Here](#) for FAQs about Torah Fund

Any questions please e-mail [Ilene Weber](#). **GSR VP Torah Fund**



Announcing Our 2026-2027 Campaign Theme:

Shema Koleinu

שמע קולנו

Hear Our Voice

We strive to make a significant impact through scholarships and programs to benefit students at the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher Jewish learning in New York, Los Angeles, Israel, South America and Europe.

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 align with those who value learning, and knowledge. You also provide future generations with the relevant skills needed to fortify the Jewish people and support the continuation of the Conservative/Masorti Movement.

Visit www.wlcj.org/about/torah-fund

Shema Koleinu, Hear our voice, marks 40 years since the first female cantor was invested. This year's Torah Fund pin with its joyful women and musical symbolism expresses the right of every woman's voice to be heard as we celebrate this anniversary. We help foster Jewish unity by our support of the 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 wlcj.org or send your check to the Torah Fund office
3080 Broadway, Suite K900, New York, NY 10027

FOR OUR CANADIAN SUPPORTERS

please send a cheque to
The Jewish Theological Society
100 Elder Street, Toronto, Ontario, M3H 5G7

The dedicated philanthropy of 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, Suite K900, New York, NY 10027
(405) 870-2159
Morgan Long, Torah Fund Manager, TFManager@wlcj.org

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 - Temple Beth O'r Beth Torah, Clark
- ❖ Ilene Rothman - East Brunswick Jewish Center, East Brunswick
- ❖ Janice Saferstein - East Brunswick Jewish Center, East Brunswick



Betty Needleman, Temple Beth O'r/Beth Torah, Clark



Janice Saferstein and Ilene Rothman with Rabbi Margie Cella, EBJC, East Brunswick

WLCJ 2026 Convention Highlights



GSR Delegates: Row 1 (L-R): Robin Bauer, Rabbi Ellen Wolintz-Fields, Sindy Manas, Julia Loeb, Outgoing WLCJ International President, Sheila Kaufman, Lynette Seader, Janice Saferstein, Marlene Oslick

Row 2 (L-R): Cory Schneider, Teresa Samtur, Susan Sferas, Ilene Rothman, Susan Winter, Ilene Weber, Ivy Rubin, Barbara Ezring, Helene Knee, Betty Needleman, Heddy Belman, Bonnie Isaacson, Jackie Walzer, Diane Resnick



Row 1: Janet Tobin, Past Int'l President (PIP) congratulating Sindy Manas, Ilene Weber, VP TF, Bonnie Isaacson VP Prog, Murder Mystery Costume Party -Sheila, Ilene W., Sindy, Teresa

Row 2: Ilene Rothman and Lynette Seader with new WLCJ International President -Pam Schlossberg (center), Delegates:Jackie Walzer, Lynette, Sindy, Susan Winter, Helene Knee. Bonnie, Rebecca Glass

Row 3: Region President' 2024-2026 skit, Sheila Kaufman addressing Convention, Lynette Seader, Ilene Rothman, Sheila Kaufman and Sindy Manas

Row 4: Sindy Manas, President and Teresa Samtur, Madricha at Region Party, Margie Miller and Janet Tobin WLCJ Past International Presidents, Lisa Kogen, Educator, Corey Schneider and Carol Simon, WLCJ Past International Presidents

Garden State Region - Jewels in the Crown Award Recipients



- ❖ 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



Robin Bauer- Cong. Torat El, Ivy Rubin- Morristown JC Beit Yisrael, Lynette Seader- HPCT-CAE, Rebecca Glass-Cong. Agudath Israel, Bonnie Isaacson- B'nai Shalom, Helene Knee, Susan Winter- HPCT-CAE with Sheila Kaufman, Outgoing GSR President. Missing EBJC

MY EXPERIENCE AT CONVENTION **"A Whirlwind of Inspiration"**

by Rebecca Glass, Convention Delegate and Programming VP, Agudath Israel, Caldwell

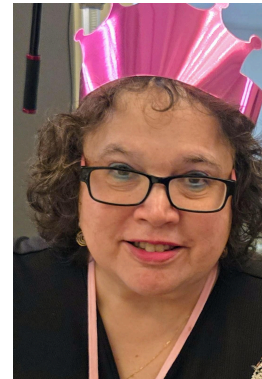
Hear Our Voices was not just the theme of the recent Women's League for Conservative Judaism conference—it was a rallying cry, and I was honored to be part of it.

"Our Voices" rang out boldly, joyfully, and unmistakably. Together, we declared that we are powerful, thoughtful, deeply committed Jewish women who honor tradition while shaping it with our own hands and hearts.

The conference was a whirlwind of inspiration. I met extraordinary women, listened to motivational and thought-provoking speakers, and soaked up wisdom everywhere I turned. My "Jewish Geography" skills were in top form—I made meaningful connections both locally and across the country with women whose dedication and brilliance left me in awe.

One of the most unforgettable moments was the Jewels in the Crown Luncheon, where our Sisterhood at Congregation Agudath Israel was honored for outstanding programming in *nine* categories—two programs in each. Receiving this prestigious recognition on behalf of our Sisterhood was a true privilege and a moment of immense pride.

I left the conference energized, uplifted, and already counting down to the next Women's League event. My involvement and participation will only continue to grow, because when women come together with purpose and passion, incredible things happen.



Good & Welfare - Garden State Region

Share your simchas and sorrows with us!

Let us know if you have any simchas, special birthdays/anniversaries, well wishes, and sorrows to pass on to [Sindy Manas](#) or [Lynette Seader](#)

Birthday Wishes

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

Refuah Shlema

- **Meryl Balaban**, Past GSR Region President, back surgery
- **Fran Katz**, GSR Programming Team, knee surgery

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 mumzynj@gmail.com and specify 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.

WLCJ Programs and Messages

Programming with Panache- Volume 3



**ACCESS PROGRAMMING
WITH PANACHE VOLUME
III HERE**

PROGRAMMING WITH PANACHE VOLUME III IS AVAILABLE NOW

Elevate your next event with *Programming with Panache*, which is Volume III of Programming! This comprehensive resource features 82 unique programs that have been submitted by WLCJ members, alongside a dedicated guidebook section on how to program and toolkit tips to enhance the programming that Sisterhood Affiliates are presenting. For additional information, contact **Fran Hildebrandt** (fhildebrandt@wlcj.org) or **Jeanette Brownstein** (jbrownstein@wlcj.org).

Tzedek, USCJ, and the Rabbinical Assembly Sustainability Bootcamp

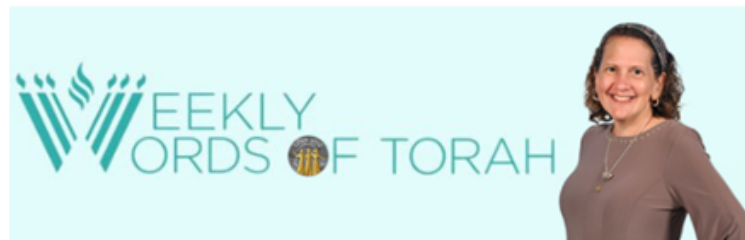


REGISTER

YISHUV OLAM: SUSTAINABILITY BOOTCAMP Sun | Aug 2 & 9 | 7:00 pm ET

Join Tzedek, USCJ, and the Rabbinical Assembly for a bootcamp to advance environmental sustainability in your community. This program will teach you community organizing, how to advance environmental projects at your synagogue, and how to navigate the energy transition to solar at your organization, with micro grants available.

Weekly Words of Torah



Vaetchanan – Shabbat Nachamu 5786 (July 25, 2026)

By Rabbi Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields

Parashat Vaetchanan and *Shabbat Nachamu* meet at a powerful emotional crossroads. After the devastation recalled on *Tisha B'Av*, we hear the prophetic call, "*Nachamu, nachamu ami* – comfort, comfort My people." At the same time, Moses opens *Parashat Vaetchanan* with a deeply personal prayer, pleading to enter the Land of Israel. His request is not granted, yet the Torah preserves his voice, his longing, and his faith.

This moment resonates with *Shema Koleinu*—"hear our voice." Moses embodies that plea. He prays with sincerity and vulnerability, even knowing the answer may not be what he hopes. *Shema Koleinu* teaches that prayer is not defined by outcomes alone, but by the act of turning toward God with honesty. Like Moses, we bring our deepest yearnings, into relationship with the Divine.

[Read more](#)

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

Find additional WLCJ resources and shortcuts [here](#).

SHARE YOUR SISTERHOOD HAPPENINGS WITH US!

Follow the Garden State Region!

If you would like to contribute a flyer or picture to our newsletter please forward to [Lynette Seader](#).

[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.



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Garden State Region
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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