

Garden State Region News - June 19, 2026



**STAND
WITH
ISRAEL**



**STAND UP
TO JEWISH
HATE**

WL Week

Visit GSR Website

This is the last newsletter issued by the GSR Board 2024-2026 with Sheila Kaufman, GSR President. The GSR Board 2026-2029 with GSR President Sindy Manas will assume leadership effective July 1, 2026. Lynette Seader will become the Newsletter Editor in the new administration. I hope you enjoyed our Newsletter and our Bees. It's BEE-n much fun in preparing it for you.

Shabbat Shalom,
Ilene Rothman, GSR Newsletter Editor
gsrcommunications@wlcj.org

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MESSAGE FROM SHEILA KAUFMAN, GSR PRESIDENT

Dear Affiliate,

Shalom!

In two weeks, I will step down from being President of the Garden State Region. I honestly cannot believe two years have passed by so quickly. It seems like a couple of months ago I was in New York meeting up with my fellow Region Presidents learning the ins and outs of being a Region President. Those three days were just a stepping stone of where I am now.



This has been such a rewarding experience. Sure, like any marriage there were highs as well as the lows. And like giving birth, you forget the pain. But seriously, visiting and speaking with you, getting to know you and what makes each of your sisterhoods tick was the best. You are the heart and soul of your sisterhoods and your commitment for success are your main thoughts. The frustrations make you better and stronger as you navigate the challenges. With all of that, the support you give the Region and Women's League does not go unnoticed. I am grateful for all that you do. And I am also proud of my Executive Committee and Board for all that they have done for the Region and the support that they have given me as well as each of you and your affiliates.

Every other week I write to you expressing my thoughts and where we are as a region. I hope I was able to connect and resonate with you. I am proud of how successful our four major Region programs and the lesser ones were and impressed with the support that you gave. I will continue to be around, but in a different capacity as an Immediate Past President and support Sindy Manas, the incoming President, and her Board. They will continue to build upon what we have done and bring new ideas to the table.

For those of you going to the WL Convention 2026 in Alexandria, VA, we have 23 region women attending throughout the week. Whether they are coming for the Shabbaton, the full megillah or one day. I look forward to celebrating with you on Sunday night at the Region Party and being with all of you during the week. We will celebrate everyone, including our region's 3 B'not Mitzvah women, 6 Jewels in the Crown awardees, 13 women on the WL Board, and thanking 3 women for serving on the WL Board.

For those attending Convention, we will have a zoom meeting next week to get to know each other and answer any questions. Those registered will be notified. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to [Teresa Samtur](#), our Madricha, or [myself](#) with any questions.

The Convention has a Social Action project called [Comfort Cases](#). This initiative supports youth in the Virginia, Washington DC region entering foster care providing essential needs in a backpack. You do not need to go to the Convention to participate, [Amazon](#) can help you out! During checkout, please select "Gift Receipt" and include WLCJ, your Region name, Sisterhood Affiliate name, or Individual Member name so we can track our impact.

If I missed speaking with you, please do not hesitate to contact me. May we all go from strength-to-strength.

Shabbat Shalom and thank you from the bottom of my heart ❤️,

Sheila

Sheila Kaufman
President, Garden State Region WLCJ
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"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 AND WL CONVENTION 2026 DEADLINES

Torah Fund Deadlines

- June 26, 2026: All *online donations* for Oseh Shalom Campaign need to be made no later than June 26, 2026.
- June 27 - 30, 2026: Torah Fund Office is closed. No donations will be accepted during that time.
- July 1, 2026: New Torah Fund 2026-27 Campaign kicks off "Shema Koleinu - Hear our Voice".

WL Convention 2026

- July 7, 2026: Virtual Ad deadline!

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

Consider placing a [Virtual Ad](#)

JEWELS IN THE CROWN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mazel Tov to the GSR Region recipients of the Jewels in the Crown Award to be presented at the WL Convention 2026



- ❖ 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

Consider placing a [Virtual Ad](#)



Monday, June 22, 2026

NJPAC, Newark, NJ

4:30PM: Come early for a food preparation demonstration + local vendors

6:00PM Program begins

FREE EVENT- Just bring food donation

Imagine having to choose between paying for gas or buying milk? Or not

having access to fresh fruits and vegetables? This is how nearly one million residents in New Jersey live.

Join us for a *PSEG Social Impact Film Series* film screening of *Starved: Our Food Insecurity Crisis* followed by a panel conversation on building food security in New Jersey. The program is preceded by a cooking demonstration led by Chef Alexandra Charles who uses unprocessed ingredients commonly found in food pantries. Enjoy yummy samples and new recipes!

For those who struggle to obtain healthy food, the program will also include resources from partner organizations including Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, Mosaic — from **NJ.com**, Newark Water Coalition and hunger relief groups MEND, Toni's Kitchen and Tree House Cares.

Following the screening, **Jasmyne Beckford**, Manager in Inclusive Solutions at Prudential Financial, will moderate a panel conversation on grassroots efforts to nourish New Jersey neighborhoods.

Panel

Dr. Joshua Ardise, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

Hend El-Buri, Director, Nutrition & Food at Rutgers University–Newark

Balpreet Grewal-Virk, PhD, Senior Vice President of Community Health for RWJBarnabas Health

Elizabeth McCarthy, President and CEO of The Community FoodBank of New Jersey

Tanya Veltz, Co-Founder of Tree House Cares, a non-profit that provides essential resources to Newark's most vulnerable populations.

Participate in a food drive to benefit **MEND, Toni's Kitchen and Tree House Cares**.

Attendees are encouraged to bring donations of the following items: boxes of shelf-stable milk, mayonnaise, boxes of pasta (including macaroni and cheese), canned tuna and chicken, rice, canned or dried beans, oatmeal, dried fruit, breakfast bars and ketchup and mustard (bottled or individually packaged). In addition, DoorDash is contributing gift cards to the participating food banks and pantries.

This free event is part of the third annual **Prudential North to Shore Festival** running June 14 – 29 in Newark and Asbury Park, and throughout the year in Atlantic City. A portion of all ticket sales will directly benefit **Growing Healthy Pantries** — a partnership between Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, Community FoodBank of New Jersey, FoodBank of South Jersey, Fulfill, Mercer Street Friends, Norwescap and Feeding America, which addresses food security statewide and supports 1,000 food pantries across the state's 21 counties.

REGISTER

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.



Women's League for Conservative Judaism is proud to announce that, effective July 1, 2026, we will assume administration of the Torah Fund Campaign, ushering in a new chapter in its 84-year history of supporting Conservative/Masorti Jewish education and leadership.

The 2026–2027 campaign, **Shema Koleinu – שמע קולנו – Hear Our Voice**, launches July 1, with the Torah Fund office now located at 3080 Broadway, Suite K900, New York, NY 10027. U.S. donors will continue to make checks payable to Torah Fund, and Canadian donors will continue to make cheques payable to the Jewish Theological Society (Toronto); online giving will be briefly paused for all donors June 27–30 during the transition. Join us in welcoming Morgan Long, Torah Fund Manager, and stay tuned for campaign updates!

If you have questions, please email mlong@wlcj.org.

Torah Fund

Announcing our 5787 Torah Fund Campaign

Shema Koleinu

שמע קולנו

Hear Our Voice



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.

TORAH  FUND
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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 Binromav, "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 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.

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

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 June anniversaries and birthdays, **Yom Huledet Sameach!**

Refuah Shlema

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

Shabbat Message

June 20, 2026 | 5 of Tammuz, 5786

It Takes a Village

Fran Hildebrandt

WLCJ Vice President and Kehilah-Education Chair



"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." —Marcel Proust

In another month, Julia Loeb, our International President of Women's League for Conservative Judaism, will present her report of her tenure at Convention. In order to be as accurate and inclusive as possible, she requested a triennial report from those of us who have served on her Executive Committee. I am one of them, as Vice President and Chair of Kehilah-Education. It was a labor of love to fulfill her request. It has been a tumultuous three years filled with *simchas* and sorrows, successes and setbacks, hopes and disappointments.

[Read more](#)

WLCJ CONVENTION 2026

LEAVE YOUR MARK IN THE VIRTUAL JOURNAL: TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

Convention 2026 is just around the corner, and the Virtual Journal is filling up fast! Have you secured your spot yet?

Not only is the Virtual Journal live, so you will be able to see your ads soon after submitting, but it will also be displayed during all of Convention 2026, and available on our website until December 2028, making it the ultimate platform to elevate the women who make our community shine. Every single ad is a direct investment in the future of WLCJ and a beautiful tribute to your fellow sisters.

The deadline is rapidly approaching. Ensure your message submitted for all your sisters to see at Convention!

[BUY A VIRTUAL JOURNAL AD TODAY](#)

**PIN COLLECTORS' CORNER
PIN IT FORWARD:
BUILDING COLLECTIONS,
SUPPORTING TORAH FUND**

We are delighted to invite our Torah Fund donors to bring their surplus pins to Convention to donate to Torah Fund. All pin donations will be gratefully accepted on Friday, July 10, and Sunday, July 12. Please note that we will not be able to accept any pins after **1:30 pm** on Sunday.

To help complete your collections—or simply enjoy pins from past years—we will be offering these vintage Torah Fund pins for a small donation to Torah Fund. A donation of \$10 per individual pin, or \$100 for unlimited pins (one per year from the years selected), will help you find the pins you need while supporting Torah Fund. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted.



TORAH FUND
WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



Special arrangements will also be available for those interested in receiving batches of pins from a specific year.

The pins will be available at a special table at Convention and organized by year. Now is the perfect opportunity to finish that shadow box of pins! All proceeds will benefit Torah Fund. In addition, instructions will be available on how to create beautiful tallit clips from Torah Fund pins. This could be a wonderful project for you or your affiliate! These clips are not only beautiful, but also serve as meaningful Torah Fund keepsakes.

Email jkirschner@wlcj.org with any questions.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO REACH OUR COMFORT CASES GOAL!

Convention 2026 is almost here, and our WLCJ Social Action Project needs a final push!

We have partnered with Comfort Cases to ensure no child enters foster care carrying their belongings in a trash bag. Instead, we are providing them with dedicated backpacks filled with daily essentials, hygiene kits, and more.

We cannot cross the finish line without you. Every dollar brings us closer to ensuring another child feels safe and valued. Please step up with your sisters today and make an immediate, deeply human impact.

DONATE HERE

SUPPORT THE AMAZON WISHLIST

WOMEN RABBIS

AS
CHANGE
AGENTS



[ACCESS THE SERIES HERE](#)

ENTIRE SERIES NOW AVAILABLE TO WATCH ONLINE

Did you miss the inspiring Women Rabbis as Change Agents series last year? Catch up on this powerful joint project from WLCJ, the Rabbinical Assembly, and JTS by watching the newly released session recordings online! From **JTS Chancellor Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz** exploring the reimagining of American Judaism, to a panel of trailblazing *Halutzot* hosted by **WLCJ's own Executive Director Rabbi Ellen Wolintz-Fields**, to a deep dive into how women have reshaped halakhah over the last 40 years, these sessions are a must-watch celebration of HerStory.

NEW: WL CALENDAR DIARY 5787/2026-2027

PRE-ORDER YOUR 2026- 2027 / 5787 CALENDAR DIARIES TODAY!

It's time to get organized for the upcoming year! The Women's League 2026-2027 (5787) Calendar Diaries are officially available for pre-order. Every diary includes essential daily resources: Shabbat and holiday listings, Torah readings, candle lighting times for the US, Canada, and Israel, prayers, *berakhot*, and the Mourner's Kaddish, and much more!

Secure your copies for 5787! Place your order online or call 405-870-1260 for assistance or additional shipping inquiries.

NEW! Condensed Planner (8.5"x11"): A streamlined 49-page comb-bound desk planner that includes all the essential features and reference guides, designed efficiently without the weekly pages. Available for \$20.00.

ORDER YOURS TODAY!

WL CALENDAR DIARY
5787 | 2026-2027



Pocket Size (4"x6"): The classic 72-page spiral-bound companion with ample room for notes, perfect for taking on the go. Available for \$13.00, with bulk discounts starting at 11 copies.

Full Planner Size (8.5"x11"): Our comprehensive 72-page comb-bound planner featuring everything above, plus dedicated weekly planning pages. Available for \$28.00.

[ORDER YOUR CALENDAR DIARIES](#)

KOTEL LEGISLATION UPDATE

Despite the ceasefire, political maneuvering continues. The Kotel Legislation—threatening egalitarian worshippers with a seven-year prison sentence—has passed a preliminary reading and faces a Constitution, Law and Justice Committee hearing on May 20th. MERCAZ and our Conservative/Masorti partners in Israel are fighting to halt this bill before the upcoming elections. Our communities have steadfastly stood by Israel through trying times, and this legislation threatens that crucial global bond.



To increase your impact, we ask that you sign onto this urgent petition <https://lp6.me/6NN2S?i=213> and forward the link to your family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Thank you for your continued support. Together, we'll continue to stand up for a Jewish and democratic Israel that's safe and a welcoming home for every Jew.

SIGN THE PETITION



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 Sh'lach

After ten of the twelve spies delivered a terrifying report about the Promised Land, the panicked Israelites faced total annihilation from an angry God. While Moses's desperate plea saved the nation, the true lesson of this near-disaster echoes in the prayers we say every day. Read Rabbi Margie Cella's insights on this week's Torah portion to discover how the Shema reminds us that God freed us from Egypt not for destruction, but to forge an eternal relationship built on love.

READ WEEKLY WORDS OF TORAH

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

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.



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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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