



VOICE OF SHAI

SHANA TOVAH 5781



FALL 2020

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(*) indicates past president

Dear SHAI Community:

I write this during the early days of autumn 2020. Over six extraordinary months have passed since an international pandemic upended all our lives. Health, families, Shabbatot, holidays, livelihoods, work, educations, industries, and travel are all impacted. Words fail to capture how much our lives have changed. Still, as Jews, we turn with hope to the approach of Rosh Hashanah's promise of a New Year and a clean slate.

Just as SHAI has during the last three decades, SHAI has served our community over the last several months. SHAI's committed Board of Trustees (whose names appear in the column on the left):

- bags and delivers countless Shabbat meals and grocery supplies twice a week to our homebound elderly;
- administered a safe, spirited, and spiritual Sephardic Summer Day camp for youth;
- fields and funds more need-based scholarship applications for day school, college, and graduate educations than ever before;
- provides masks to food-insecure local families throughout the summer;
- works with the local school district to address anxiety in a parenting seminar as schools re-open;
- plans another coat and clothing drive to clothe the growing economic hardships in the local community;
- works to create safe remote singles and family programming in the fall;
- models Zionism through participation in the virtual Celebrate Israel Parade and the annual program for college students regarding support of Israel on campus;
- records oral histories of *enghelab* (revolution) and immigrant experiences for a video and audio archive for researchers and historians.

Details regarding these initiatives and more can be found in the pages which follow as well as on our newly revamped website www.shaiusa.org. Check out our newest video! <https://vimeo.com/452900340>.

SHAI's Board volunteers because we are committed to serving and preserving the very best aspects of our proud Persian Jewish heritage. We do this from the bottom of our hearts. Today we turn to you - the community we serve - to ask for your support. We rely on your ideas, attendance, and your financial support. You recall that SHAI was forced to cancel our biennial fundraiser in March. Unlike many other not-for-profit organizations with staff and overhead costs, SHAI is lean: Your contributions are spent on scholarships, senior citizens, and valuable programming. Please make a donation to SHAI, whether in celebration of the new year, in honor of a loved one, an occasion, or, in *memorium*. An envelope for your check can be found in the centerfold. You may also donate on our website www.shaiusa.org.

On behalf of myself, my family, the entire SHAI Board of Trustees, and our founders, I wish you a healthy, sweet, prosperous new year in which all our worthiest aspirations will be fulfilled.

Gmar Chatimah tovah, may we all be inscribed for blessing in the book of life.

With affection,

Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni

President



SHAI SEPHARDIC SUMMER DAY CAMP

Once again this summer, despite the pandemic and recession, SHAI's Sephardic Summer Day Camp operated under auspices of Rabbi Yamin Levy and Director Aaron Moradi at Beth Hadassah Synagogue. It is one of the most effective programs for connecting Great Neck Persian youth to their Jewish heritage, and to one another. With a strong daily minyan, delicious kosher breakfast and lunch, an array of sports and fitness activities, and *chesed* activities all delivered at nominal cost due to SHAI's generous subsidies.

The five weeks in the SHAI Sephardic Day Camp quickly flew by in a wave of excitement this summer. Each camper was greeted at the door by Samira Aghajani who took their temperatures each morning. The campers started their day with a soulful daily morning minyan that led the way to a day full of exciting and engaging activities. The campers kept active by playing different sports such as basketball, dodgeball, and spikeball. They learned self defense with Krav Maga classes. They also got an excellent cardio workout while improving their flexibility and coordination with Zumba classes. Throughout the summer, The campers enjoyed oven hot pizza and ice cream parties, and baking delicious treats like cupcakes and challah in honor of Shabbat.



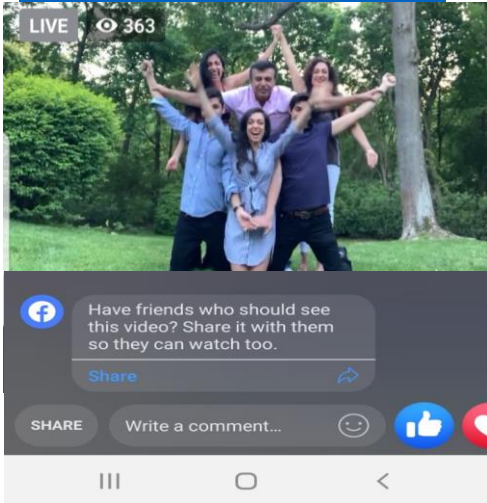
SHAI & ZIONISM

SHAI & CELEBRATE ISRAEL VIRTUAL PARADE

This year SHAI joined the Celebrate Israel Parade virtually together with tens of thousands of people from all around the world. Streaming was available via the Celebrate Israel website, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. SHAI also featured their own link with both New York Eastern time and California Pacific times. This year's theme was "Todah, Thank You."

SHAI Board Member Shahram Delafraz and his family saluted Israel on Facebook Live.

For nearly two decades SHAI has marched proudly in the Celebrate Israel Parade. SHAI has made a quilt out of the T-shirts that we have proudly worn each year up Fifth Avenue. Am Yisrael Chai! Todah Raba! See you on Fifth Avenue in 2021! The link to this year's event may be found at <https://celebrateisraelny.org/>.



Celebrate Israel Parade
"Todah, Thank You Theme"
Virtual Event With Tens of Thousands
At 1:00pm New York Time | 10:00am California Time
SUNDAY JUNE 21, 2020
Click Here Or Visit
www.celebrateisraelny.org & Watch On
YouTube, Facebook, Or Twitter



SHAI & ANNUAL FORUM FOR STUDENTS

SHAI once again partnered with IAJF, Stand With Us, JNF, ADL, Fuel for Truth and Hillel to coordinate a forum on Israel advocacy and combating antisemitism on college campuses. The virtual forum featured speakers from Jewish organizations and campuses across the country who each spoke of incidents of antiZionism but also positive ways to confront them. Speakers offered constructive ideas regarding student government, student newspapers, engagement with campus student organizations and faculty, social media and new reporting, engaging in dialogue, the pitfalls of intersectionality, and remaining strong firm advocates for Zionism and Judaism. Over 200 devices tuned in to watch the panel on Youtube livestream and Facebook live. A recording is available at www.shaiusa.org and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeR8F5WuecI>.

SHAI & ISRAEL BONDS EVENT

On August 18, SHAI and Israel Bonds hosted a spectacular international celebration of heritage and unity for the upcoming New Year. The virtual event featured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Ambassador Ron Dermer. It also included renowned Israeli performers David De'or and Gil Shohat.



IAJF NY
Invites College Students, Recent Grads, and High School Juniors & Seniors
Stand With Israel
Join fellow students from around the country for this virtual event featuring presentations by partner organizations that are training students & young professionals on how to counter Anti-Semitism, Anti-Zionism, and hate online.
Wednesday, September 2nd, 2020 at 6:30pm
Advance RSVP required: www.iajfnyc.org/standwithisrael or contact tara@iajfnyc.org - 516.466.9947
*Zoom link provided day-of

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND | **StandWithUs** | **FUEL FOR TRUTH** | **ADL**

ISRAEL BONDS
PROUDLY INVITES YOU TO A
SPECTACULAR INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE AND UNITY
FEATURING
Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu | **Ambassador Ron Dermer**
With Renowned Israeli Performers
David De'or and Gil Shohat
Global Blessings For the New Year
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18 8:00PM NEW YORK TIME
INVEST IN ISRAEL BONDS FOR THE NEW YEAR
ISRAELBONDS.COM
REGISTER HERE
In Advance of the Israel Bonds Holy Days Appeals 8781 Q2 2020
Information: national.events@israelbonds.com
To purchase an Israel bond, please contact: Arnon Schreiber, Director of Sales & Marketing, 516.226.2307, arnon.schreiber@israelbonds.com
Public: Government Press Office, Embassy of Israel, Chad Hanania, Alan Singal

SHAI & AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

PASSPORT TO PERSIA VIRTUAL EVENT

On Tuesday, July 14 and again on September 8, SHAI, along with American Sephardi Federation, presented an online tour of Jewish sites in ancient and modern Iran. The tour explored sites and stories of 2,700 years of Jewish life in Iran, and featured exclusive information on synagogues, shrines, cemeteries, schools, and other structures. There were over 150 devices tuned in to learn. The program link is available at www.shaiusa.org and <https://youtu.be/W4JnkLJBivM>.



Street in Sarechal neighborhood, Tehran, Iran, c. 1940s.



Main Gate of Imam Riza, Mashhad, Iran, c. 1850. Photo Luigi Pesce (?)/ Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Tomb entrance, interior and exterior, Tomb of Esther and Mordechai, Hamadan, Iran



IRANIAN JEWISH ORAL HISTORY INITIATIVE

SHAI is collaborating with the American Sephardi Federation and NYC Council's oral history project. It is currently underway with interviews being conducted via zoom and by phone by the Oral & Public History Specialist, Professor Lerone Edalati. This collaborative project is an initiative to document the oral histories of Iranian Jews and their exodus from Iran prior to and during the 1979 revolution. It will recount the personal stories and experiences of our community's elders.



SHAI UPTC EDUCATION FORUM



SHAI & UPTC

jointly present an educational forum for parents of teens

The Anxieties of Living Through a Pandemic: Uncertainty and Fear of the Unknown Impact on the Mental Health of Teens and Their Families



Featured Speaker:
Dr. Caryl Oris,
School District Psychiatrist

**Tuesday, September 22, 2020
7 p.m.**

Question and answer session will follow presentation.
Join us via Zoom at: <https://zoom.us/j/98519127272>

PANELISTS:

Dr. Teresa Prendergast, Superintendent, Great Neck Public Schools
Dr. Joseph Hickey, Assistant Superintendent for PPS, GNPS
Dr. Alison Brennan, Executive Director of Special Education, GNPS
Wendy Murad, NMS School Social Worker
Dr. David Cheng, NHS School Psychologist
Dr. Jeanne Rolih, SMS School Psychologist
Lauren Ferguson, SHS School Psychologist

PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Dr. Teresa Prendergast, Superintendent, GNPS
Dr. Joseph Hickey, Assistant Superintendent for PPS, GNPS
Dr. Alison Brennan, Executive Director of Special Education, GNPS
Pargol Khadavi, SHAI Educational Affairs Chair
Lori Beth Schwartz, Past UPTC Total Community Involvement Co-Chair

For over a decade, SHAI has coordinated yearly panel discussions on relevant topics concerning families and education with local schools. This pandemic year the zoom panel livestream concerns anxiety.

On September 22 the SHAI UPTC Education Forum took place via zoom. Psychiatrist Dr. Caryl Oris spoke on anxieties of living through a pandemic, the uncertainty and fear of the unknown, and the impact on the mental health of adolescents and their families. A question and answer session followed the presentation.

Panelists included Great Neck Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Teresa Prendergast, GNPS Assistant Superintendent for PPS Dr. Joseph Hickey, GNPS Executive Director of Special Education Dr. Alison Brennan, NMS School Social Worker Wendy Murad, and HS School Psychologists Dr. David Cheng, Dr. Jeanne Rolih, and Lauren Ferguson.

Past panelist have addressed literacy, college choice, bullying, digital citizenship, and more.

2020 US CENSUS

Fill out your 2020 US Census at:

<https://2020census.gov/>
and shape your future

سرشماری سال 2020 خود را پر کنید و
آینده خود را شکل دهید

<https://2020census.gov/>

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SUPPORT SENIORS, CAMPERS, STUDENTS & SINGLES
AT
SHAIUSA.ORG**

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SHAI DONORS

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Check out SHAI's
newest Video
created by our
Board member
Shawn Rafie and
featuring our
Board and some of
our good works at
www.shaiusa.org

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COMING ATTRACTIONS!

- ❖ Annual Young Families White Post Farms Outing
- ❖ Coat and Clothing Drive
- ❖ Attorney Spotlight
- ❖ Young Professionals Happy Hour
- ❖ Medical Spotlight
- ❖ SHAI has joined **AmazonSmile**, where a percentage of all your Amazon shopping will be donated to SHAI. Select Sephardic Heritage Alliance Inc or click [here](#).
- ❖ Fill out your 2020 US Census at <https://2020census.gov/> or click [here](#).

❖ سرشماری سال 2020 خود را پر کنید و آینده خود را شکل دهید
<https://2020census.gov/>

