

# Federation Focus

Summer 2022

Vol.12 Issue 3

Federation Focus is published four times a year by the Jewish Federation of Central California.  
"All Jews are responsible for one another." (Talmud:Shavuot 39a)

## Shavuoth begins on June 4

### What is Shavuot?

Shavuot, the feast of weeks, is celebrated seven weeks after the second Passover seder. Although Shavuot began as an ancient grain harvest festival, the holiday has been identified since biblical times with the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

The Book of Ruth is read and traditionally dairy foods are eaten.

See *blintz recipe*, page 8.

In order to mark the agricultural history of Shavuot, some people decorate their house and temple with a floral theme.

How appropriate for our Central Valley!



Synagogue in Odessa

**In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, The Jewish Federations of North America have launched a \$27 million emergency campaign to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Jewish populations living in Ukraine.**

Funds will be allocated through Jewish Federations core partners: The Jewish Agency for Israel, The Joint Distribution Committee and World ORT, and others who are on the ground in Ukraine, and will provide critical welfare where it is needed most and support to protect and safeguard Ukraine's Jewish community as well as Jews in neighboring countries.

Our Federation has sent \$15,000 to help with this and will send more funds at the end of the year from the additional pledges that we receive.

The FOCUS

is on

Jack Benninga

See Page 5



## Message from the Director

It was so nice to see many of you in person at our recent events. A special thanks to Hilary Levine for organizing the Yom Ha'Shoah event at TBI. We also had a wonderful celebration

for Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's 75th Birthday) at Clovis Botanical Gardens led by Vardit Lichtenstein. Please visit our Facebook page for event photos:

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/JewishFederationCentralCalifornia)

**JewishFederationCentralCalifornia**

We are once again offering "Gae's Exercise Class" and in June we will be hosting the Vi Cherin Luncheon (see page 6) Both these events are provided by the generous gifts that were left to our community by Gae Werfel and Vi.

Our 2022 campaign is in progress and we will have a new pledge list in our September Focus. While we have always supported the Jewish Federation of North America, worldwide Jewry, and Israel, this year we have earmarked our overseas funds for the Ukraine crisis. We encourage you to increase your pledge this year; any amount over your regular pledge will be added to the \$15,000 already allocated to support Ukrainian Jews. Many thanks to those that have made their pledges already; we are counting on the rest of our community.

We will continue to support needy Jewish families in our area, annual Israel Independence Day Celebration, Cemetery Maintenance and provide camperships to Jewish kids. The budget allocations and explanation are on page 9.

To make a pledge,

- ◆ call the office at 559 432-2162
- ◆ email me at [fedfresno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fedfresno@sbcglobal.net)
- ◆ click on link from our emails you receive on Fridays
- ◆ send in back cover

We gratefully accept donations in honor of, or in remembrance and notify the associates or family of those being honored or remembered.

We also accept advertisements that will be included in our Focus publications. The cost is \$100 annually. We hope you will consider placing an ad; we encourage all of our community to support our advertisers.

We have two additional ways to help with our fundraising. The next time you order from Amazon please go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Jewish Federation of Central California under the supporting icon at top of page. The other is through Car Donations; if you have a vehicle to donate, please use the information below and select Jewish Federation of Central California to receive your donation. <http://www.cardonatingiseasy.org/> 866-985-GIVE (866-985-4483)

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at 432-2162 or email me at [fedfresno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fedfresno@sbcglobal.net). Our address is; JFCC, 406 W Shields, Fresno, CA, 93705.

*Stay safe and healthy,*  
*Phyllis*

## Our Mission

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Central California is to build and strengthen the Jewish community locally, overseas and in Israel, by

- ◆ *Raising funds and allocating them to identified Jewish community needs and priorities at home and abroad*
- ◆ *Providing education and cultural programs to promote community awareness of the Federation and its mission*
- ◆ *Listening to a broad spectrum of opinions from throughout the community to assure all Jewish voices are heard*
- ◆ *Evaluating efforts to ensure that Federation human and fiscal resources are used most effectively.*

## Summer Donations

### General Donation

Amazon Smiles (2)

### Jewish Family Services

Sharon Smith

Maria Vargas

Bill and Karen Podolsky

Bettylee Wapner

### Ukraine Donations

Bill and Karen Podolsky

Mike and Mara Hocker

Lesia Schwartz

Maria Vargas

Laurie Hart

Louise Feinberg

### In memory of my great grandmother,

Feige Nechama Jacobs

Nancy Abrams

### In memory of Gary Greenberg

Peter Nagel and Suzanne Karp

Cookie Fritz

Roger and Ivonne Litman

### In memory of Marianne Weil

Stan and Fran Ziegler

Roger and Ivonne Litman

### In memory of Paul Smith

Frances Folio

Abby Goldberg

Roger and Ivonne Litman

### In memory of Stan Ziegler

Roger and Ivonne Litman

Jim and Judy Ganulin

### In memory of Paul Schechter

## Faces

### from the Ukraine



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## TRANSITIONS

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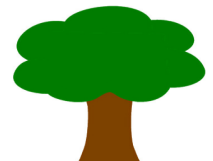
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Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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Fresno, CA 93701

(559) 233-7250





The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights

## **Cultivating Social Responsibility: Lessons from the Holocaust and the Rich Soil of the Central Valley of California**

### **An Interdisciplinary Inquiry on Teaching the Holocaust**

**Fresno, CA**

**July 25 – 29, 2022**



Educators will assume the roles of student and teacher as they consider best teaching practices and deepen their knowledge of the Holocaust, Jewish culture, and the Central Valley's role during Japanese Internment and the Farmworkers movement. **Highlights include:**

- Day trip to Simonian Farms and the Japanese American Memorial at the Fresno Fairgrounds
- Guest Scholars and Survivor Testimony
- Consideration of best pedagogical practices using inquiry-based learning, reflective writing, and project-based learning to examine social justice and human rights in the classroom
- Exploration of the history of the Japanese American experience during WWII
- Understanding of the Armenian Genocide

The seminar is facilitated by Hilary Levine, MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies and Tosha Tillotson, MA in Education. Both are classroom teachers, administrators and founders of Avenues for Change: Holocaust and Genocide Education

#### **Register Here!**

<https://www.toli.us/satellite-program/fresno/>

Please contact Tosha Tillotson at [ToshaTillotson@gmail.com](mailto:ToshaTillotson@gmail.com) or Hilary Levine at [HilaryLev@gmail.com](mailto:HilaryLev@gmail.com)

This professional development seminar is offered at no cost to educators through the generous support of TOLI and our partners. All participants will receive:

- Professional Development hours
- Opportunity to earn units from CSU Fresno
- A small stipend
- Selected books and teaching resources
- Breakfast and lunch daily
- Transportation to and entry fee for field trips
- Intimate conversation with Holocaust survivor
- Mini-grant availability of up to \$1,000
- Access to a large, involved, heavily-resourced network of Human Rights educators

## Federation Profiles: Jack Benninga

**W**ith “no fears and no plans to change the world,” Jack Benninga retired last month from 39 years at Fresno State as a professor, program developer and researcher in the departments of Literature and Early Education and Curriculum and Instruction.

The new vice president of the Jewish Federation was only six when he arrived from Holland, his birthplace, to Asheville, North Carolina where his father had a job as chief chemist in a large chemical corporation. Speaking no English, by the end of a year in first grade Jack was fairly fluent, as were his older siblings.

His family’s roots in Holland have been traced to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sadly, much of the family was eradicated during World War II. After fleeing Holland, Jack’s parents and infant sister escaped to England, then Australia and Indonesia, and eventually were interned in Japanese concentration camps for 30 months. In

1946 they were able to return to Holland; in 1954, after the birth of Jack and his two brothers, the family moved to America. Jack attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but after a few years left to join his brother in Michigan.



**Jack Benninga**

Contemplating joining some of his siblings in their move to Israel, Jack changed his mind after meeting Suzanne, his future wife. Eventually he completed a Masters Degree and PhD in Educational Psychology and Early Childhood Education at the Peabody School of Education at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee.

Jack recalls that even though he lived in the distinctly southern states of North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky, he never experienced a personal anti-Semitic incident. “I was very open about my Jewishness, and I knew there were plenty of people who didn’t like Jews. There were residential restrictions, and you couldn’t join a country club, but nobody ever said anything to me in all those years,” he remembers.

As soon as he moved his family to Fresno in 1983 he joined TBI and also Congregation Bnai Jacob. When Rabbi Robert Siegel of TBI became ill, Jack and his brothers frequently conducted Friday night services before and after the Torah reading. He also conducted 30 funerals and many weddings during that period. He still attends both TBI and CBJ.

*(continued on page 6)*

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Hello from the Fresno Jewish Day School. We have spaces available for enrollment for our summer preschool as well as room for fall care. We are a primarily outdoor, play-based Jewish preschool for those who are looking for a wonderful and unique experience for your child or someone you know.

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phone (559-447-1984),  
or visit our website ([www.fresnojewishdayschool.org](http://www.fresnojewishdayschool.org))

*Sarah Page/Teacher/Director*



## Chassidus Corner

Is there a legal obligation to be a mensch? Most legal systems prohibit actions that are hurtful to society but do not compel citizens to do what is good or honorable. Humanity is built into the code of law. Torah law does not only seek social order, it mandates values that are the foundation of a virtuous society.

Holy means to be separate and follow the Torah commands as specified by Hashem. Not so easy but here are some daily life examples. When you get married you separate yourself from being available and when you stand under the chuppah you complete the ceremony. So we have a contract with Hashem. Second, as Jews, we keep Shabbos.

Third, Jews have holy souls, and as such we aggressively reject the dark side, including idol worship. In fact there is complete Torah parshah – Kedoshim - that deals with holy requirement. Be brave and stand tall as a Jew, for the world is watching us, knowing that we were chosen to be leaders.

## Federation Profile

*(continued from page 5)*

Jack has a concern about the Jewish people both in Israel and in this country. He finds it regrettable that many Jews are not connected to the Jewish community. When he completed a survey of Jewish professors at Fresno State, he was surprised that most were not affiliated with any congregation. He would like to see TBI and the Federation join in a welcoming event with Fresno State faculty and staff, as well as others in the community who are potential members, to show the cultural and social benefits of affiliation.

*Francine Farber, Editor*

*David ben Hirsch HaCohen*

## JFS at Temple Beth Israel

### Gae's Exercise Class

Tuesdays & Thursdays at 11 a.m.



## Vi Cherin Luncheon

Tuesday, June 26 at 11:30

*No charge, but reservation required*

**RSVP 432-0529 or [jfsfederation@gmail.com](mailto:jfsfederation@gmail.com)**

**Proof of Vaccinations Required**



**JFS** is continuing to support our community by connecting people to needed services. If you have any suggestions/information to add to our referrals and resources manuals, we would love to hear from you.

Thanks to your generous donations, many needy recipients are extremely appreciative that we provide them with \$50 SaveMart/FoodMax gift cards. JFS invited our clients to join us at Temple Beth Israel's Passover Seder which they thoroughly enjoyed.

I would like to remind everyone about the **MEASURE C SENIOR SCRIP PROGRAM**. This provides alternative, reliable, and affordable transportation to Fresno County residents who are 70 years of age and older. Eligible seniors receive a 75% discount on fares by purchasing paper scrip for qualifying taxi companies, or by using electronic credit for access to Uber or Lyft through a company called GoGoGrandparents. We can help you get started with the program and will pay your first \$25, which buys you \$100 worth of scrip.

JFS has once again started up our **TOOLS FOR LIFE** exercise classes. See page 6. Our caring instructor structures our classes to all levels of need and participation. We use exercise bands, hand weights, exercise balls, and chairs. We are so happy to meet once again in person and get back into shape.

JFS is so excited to be hosting the Vi Cherin Luncheon once again. Growing up in Fresno, I have many loving and comforting memories of Vi. She was caring, respected, and very generous.....so having this luncheon is a beautiful way to honor her memory. See page 6.

JFS is very blessed and grateful to have two new volunteers who help us with various tasks. We can always use more volunteers for our **FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM**.

We are here for you. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [jfsfederation@gmail.com](mailto:jfsfederation@gmail.com) or 559-432-0529 or 559-281-1104. BE WELL. BE HAPPY.

*Jeri Michner Horwitz*

*JFS Community Outreach Coordinator*

*Federation*

**Join Caring Calls!**



**Have a Conversation  
Create a New Friendship  
& Change a Life!**

If you're interested and want more information, please send an email to Jeri Horwitz [jfsfederation@gmail.com](mailto:jfsfederation@gmail.com) or call her directly at (559) 281-1104. **You can change a life!**

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The Fresno State Jewish Studies Graduation Reception was held on May 12 for the first time since 2019 due to the pandemic. The event was held outdoors at the College of Social Sciences Quad. In addition to remarks by Rabbi Laura Winer, Associate Dean Sergio La Porta, Rabbi Rick Winer and Jewish Studies Founding Coordinator Jill Fields, the program included a local jazz trio tribute to Jewish American composer Harold Arlen, best known for writing "Over the Rainbow."

Three outstanding Jewish Studies Minor graduates, all of whom are pursuing master's degrees in their majors next fall, shared thoughts about their experiences. Jennifer

Garcia, a business major, spoke with enthusiasm about her study abroad in Israel, which included visits to historic sites, learning Hebrew, and enjoying Israeli cuisine. Psychology major Tanner O'Brien talked about how much he learned during his internship with the JFCC and from his Jewish Studies courses, from his first encounter with Jewish Studies in a course on Jewish

American Popular Culture to the class he took on the Holocaust. He was the recipient of this year's JFCC Jewish Studies scholarship award.

English major Alea Droker spoke movingly about her isolation as a young Jewish girl growing up in the San Joaquin Valley and how the Fresno State Jewish Studies Program gave her a welcoming place on campus and opportunities for student activism on behalf of the Jewish campus and wider community. Also honored were Janae Herrera, Minor; Jesus Hernandez, Pricila Hernandez, Breanne Perales-Neves, Certificate with Honors; Austin Brumley, Ryan Krahn, Certificate.

*Jill Fields*

## BLINTZ RECIPE FOR SHAVUOTH

### Ingredients for blintz "leaf"

- 1 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tsp oil (any kind except olive)
- 1 tsp white sugar

### Directions

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Put batter in the fridge for an hour to set. (If you're in a rush, skip this step.)

Pour 1-2 Tbsp of oil into a non-stick frying pan.

When the oil is heated, pour in just enough batter so the floor of the pan is covered.

Tilt the pan slightly to make a circle. Fry until the edges of the blintz leaf begin to curl up.



Flip and let the blintz cook briefly on the other side.

### Filling Ingredients

- 1 1/3 cup farmer or ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice

### Filling Directions

Blend filling ingredients together until smooth.

Spoon 2 tablespoons of cheese filling into the center of a blintz leaf.

Roll the blintzes in the same way you would roll a wrap.

Refry the rolled blintzes in a small amount of oil, butter or margarine.

Serve plain or sprinkled with confectioners sugar

Blintzes can be made ahead of time and refried just before serving.

**Enjoy!**

## JFCC ALLOCATIONS 2022

## ALLOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

### Israel Overseas

Jewish Federation North America	\$5,000
Jewish Distribution Committee	\$10,000
Magen David Adom	\$2,000
Akim Israel	\$2,000

### Local

Jewish Family Services	\$20,000
Israel Independence Day	\$3,500
Interest Free Loans	\$3,000
TBI Yom HaShoah	\$1,000
Jewish Community Relations Committee	\$10,000
Camperships	\$2,500
TBI Cemetery	\$9,000
TBI Cemetery Water Project	\$12,400
Jewish Studies Program, Fresno State	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 85,400</b>

**Jewish Federation of North America** Umbrella organization to help support and sustain worldwide Jewry

**Jewish Distribution Committee** The world's leading Jewish humanitarian organization that works to lift lives and strengthen communities, by providing life-saving care to those in desperate need.

**Magen David Adom** With Israel under attack, MDA provides first responders, vehicles, and training, as well as transportation to hospitals to save lives.

**Akim Israel** The Israeli national organization to help people with intellectual disabilities and their families, using legal, community, and self-advocacy.

**Jewish Family Services** Provides services and support for the Central Valley Jewish Community (Visalia to Merced) regardless of age, income, or synagogue affiliation, and to strengthen Jewish identity, build community, and fortify family life.

**Israel Independence Day** Yearly Yom Ha'atzmaut community celebration, marking the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948.

**Interest Free Loans** Promotes financial assistance to Jewish families in need by offering them a NO interest loan.

**Yom HaShoah** A day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust.

**Jewish Community Relations Council** Liaison between the Jewish community and our non-Jewish neighbors, engaging in dialogue and clarifying misunderstandings, as well as sponsoring pro-Israel speakers and arts events.

**Camperships** Provides financial assistance to Jewish students wishing to attend a Jewish camp.

**TBI Cemetery** Pays part of annual maintenance costs.

**TBI Cemetery Water Project** Pays part of the new water pump and pipes.

**Future Cemetery** Help start a fund to purchase a new cemetery for the Jewish community as TBI is running out of plots.

**Jewish Studies** Endows a Jewish studies scholarship fund for Fresno State students in the Jewish Studies Program who have completed at least two courses toward earning either the Jewish Studies Certificate or the Jewish Studies Minor.

## Visalia Voices

### Congregation B'nai David

[www.congregationbnaidavid.com](http://www.congregationbnaidavid.com)

559.732.3139

Our Sunday School will resume in the fall with a new director of education and a new principal. Thanks to our outgoing director/principal for all the years of leadership. Our new Board of Directors will begin in July; we thank those board members who are leaving for their hard work and volunteer efforts.

We ended the year with a cake auction and spring picnic. Every auction has been a success, with people having a great time outbidding each other on delicious and unique desserts.

Our Student Rabbi is ending her time with us and is going on to a new internship in her fourth year. We will be getting a new second year student rabbi who is also musically inclined.

Slowly we are coming back together, holding services in person and on ZOOM. We are happy to welcome three new members who have completed their conversion program; we look forward to having them in our Jewish community. Anyone interested in learning about Judaism and interested in our services, please call our office.

*Marsha Brooks-Smith*

## HAVE YOU MADE AND FULFILLED YOUR 2022 PLEDGE?

*“When a person’s good deeds exceed his wisdom,  
his wisdom will be enduring.”*

*For the annual campaign, I pledge and promise to pay the Jewish Federation of Central California:*

*\$54 \_\_\_ \$126 \_\_\_ \$180 \_\_\_ \$396 \_\_\_ \$613 \_\_\_  
\$1242 \_\_\_ \$1800 \_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

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## Federation Focus

The publication of the  
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**Jewish Federations of North America** protects and enhances the well-being of Jews and Jewish communities in North America, Israel and around the world. We strive to realize our core values of *chesed* (caring and compassion), *Torah* (Jewish Learning), *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and *tzedakah* (social justice). As the focus of the federations, JFNA acts upon these values through philanthropy, strategic initiatives, and collective leadership—in partnership with local communities, national and international agencies.