

MARAIS ROAD SHUL
ROSH HASHANAH MAGAZINE

2026 / 5787

100
YEARS

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FROM 100
YEARS OF THE
GREEN & SEA
POINT HEBREW
CONGREGATION

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Shana Tova



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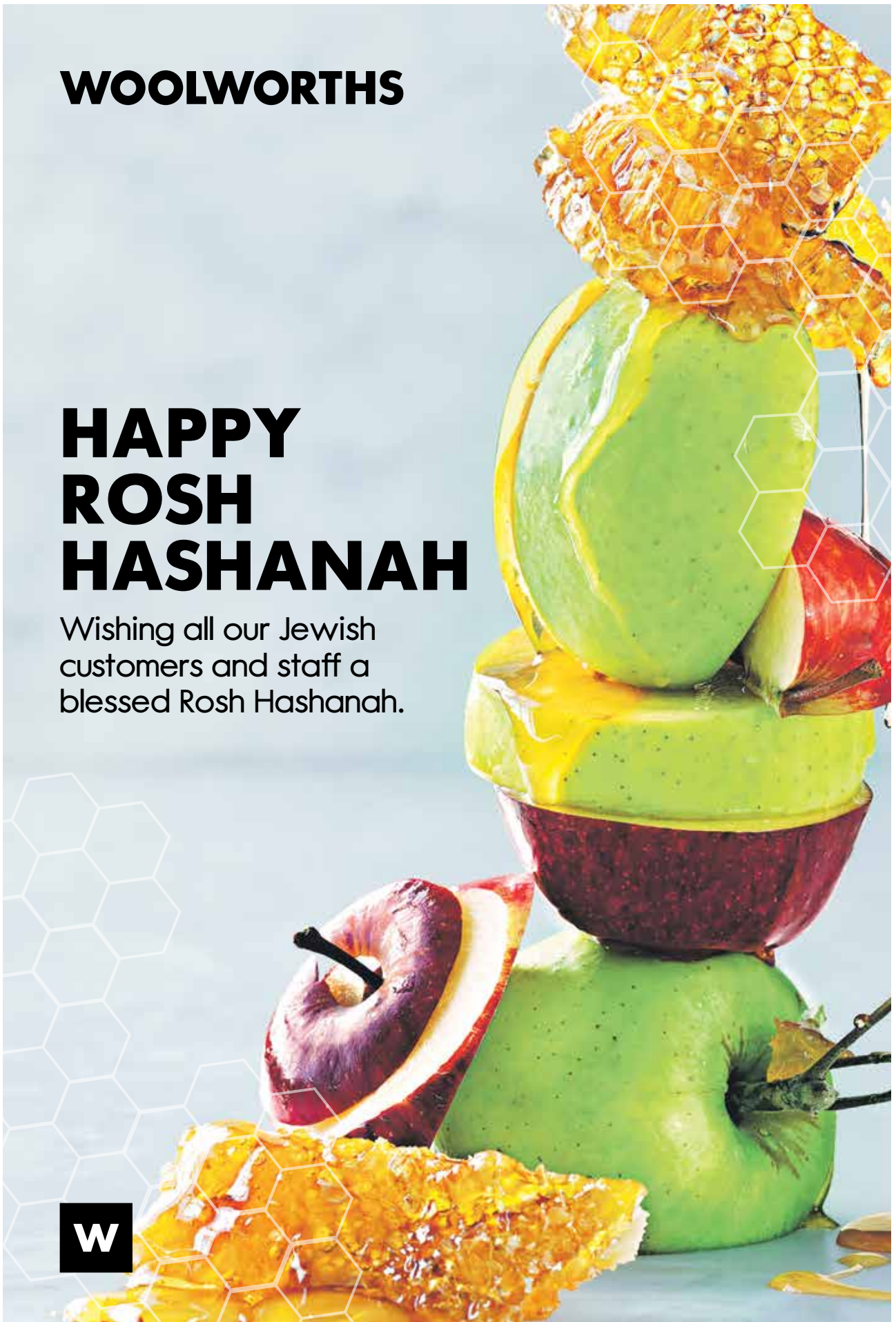
BLESSINGS PHIRI, KINGMAN BLACKWELL,
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WOOLWORTHS

HAPPY ROSH HASHANAH

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customers and staff a
blessed Rosh Hashanah.



A MESSAGE FROM

RABBI PINI HECHT

A Bar Mitzvah at 100

This Rosh Hashanah marks the 13th year since Chani, the children and I joined the Marais Road Shul family.

Looking back, it is remarkable how much life we have shared together. We celebrated the birth of our two youngest children and our older children's Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Along the way, we have formed deep friendships, creating lifelong connections and treasured memories through both simchas and moments of loss.

In this, our family's "Bar Mitzvah year," our beloved congregation is marking an even more remarkable milestone – 100 years since its founding.

These two numbers – 13 and 100 – immediately bring to mind a teaching from the Mishnah. In describing the stages of life, the Mishnah tells us that at 13 one becomes obligated in mitzvot, while at 100 one is considered as though he has passed beyond the concerns of this world.

These two milestones point to a shared message for the year ahead.

The age of 13 represents youth, energy, possibility and, above all, responsibility. A child becomes an "adult" not simply because of age, but because life is no longer only about what they receive. It is about what is expected of them, what they contribute, and the purpose they are called upon to fulfil.

The age of 100 speaks to perspective. Read literally, the Mishnah describes one as having passed from the world, yet it is not suggesting that



life ends at 100. Rather, it recognises that at that age one is able to look beyond the temporary and fleeting, focusing on what truly endures. Perhaps this is the message of our centenary. Over the course of a century, generations have passed through these doors. We have celebrated simchas, mourned losses, and offered prayers of gratitude and hope. We have witnessed the devastation of our people in the Holocaust, the rebirth of the State of Israel, and profound change in South Africa and throughout the world.

Through it all, our shul community has remained an anchor of Jewish life and connection. As history unfolds, it reminds us that our lives are rooted in something deeper and more enduring than the headlines of any particular age. Through prayer, learning, friendship, celebration, support and shared purpose, our community connects us to one another, to our heritage, and ultimately to Hashem – to a covenant and purpose that transcends the passage of time.

As we enter the New Year, may we carry with us the youth, energy and possibility of 13, together with its sense of responsibility, and the wisdom and perspective of 100: building our future with purpose while never losing sight of the enduring values for which that future is being built.

Chani, the children and I wish you and your families a Shanah Tovah U'metukah.

Rabbi Pini Hecht





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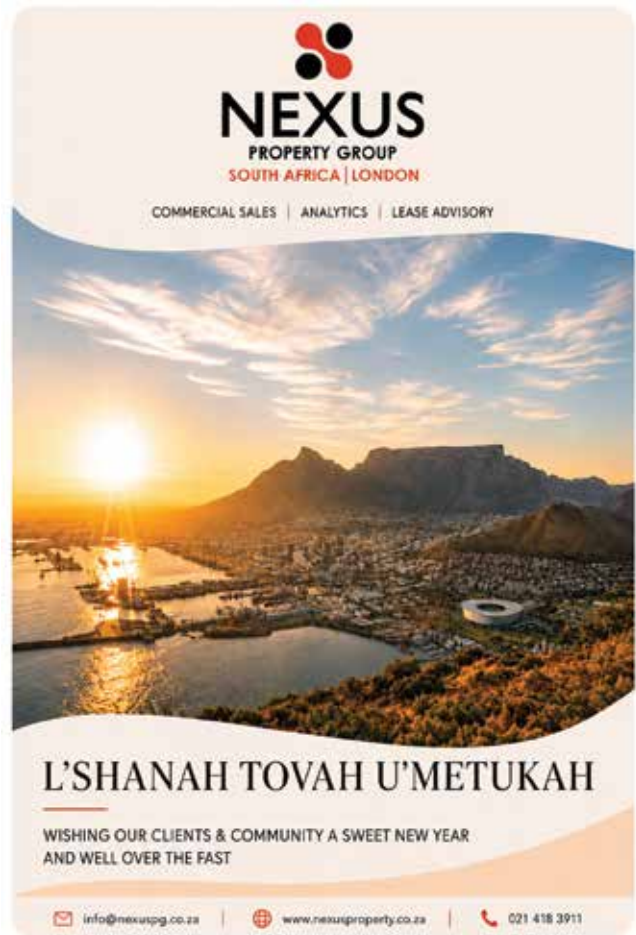




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A MESSAGE FROM

CHIEF RABBI WARREN GOLDSTEIN

The Loudest Silence of the Year

Ask yourself this: what is missing in shul today? The most important part of Rosh Hashanah – the shofar. How is that even possible? Rosh Hashanah without the shofar?

It is the central mitzvah of the day. It awakens us, connects us to Hashem, calls us to personal growth and repentance. And yet, this year, we will not hear it on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Why? Because there is something even more important than the shofar. Our Sages decreed that when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, as it does this year, we don't blow the shofar, in case someone carries it outside an eiruv and thereby breaks Shabbos.

Think about how far this goes. We do not blow the shofar because of a mere possibility that someone, somewhere, might carry it a few steps too far. For that possibility alone, the whole Jewish world sets aside the central mitzvah of the day.

Its absence has a powerful story to tell us. Shabbos is more important than the shofar. More important than Rosh Hashanah. How precious must Shabbos be, that merely protecting it outweighs the central mitzvah of one of the holiest days of the year?

Our Sages were not diminishing the shofar. They were teaching us about the vital importance of Shabbos.

You know me by now. Year after year, I've spoken to our community about Shabbos. I feel compelled to speak about it. It's something I cannot let go of. I feel it deeply in my soul. Shabbos is the foundation of everything. Without it, we have nothing.



It is the gateway to a thriving Jewish community, to a happy and connected Jewish family, to an inspired life. It holds within it our most precious Torah values: family, faith, community, and our connection to Hashem, to our loved ones, and to ourselves.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are a time for New Year's resolutions. Let Shabbos be at the centre of your resolutions. Let this be the year of more Shabbos for you and your family. Then take it week by week, Shabbos by Shabbos, doing something more (even something small) each week to keep more of Shabbos.

And here is the promise the Torah makes. The more you do, the more blessings you bring into your life – because, as our Sages teach, Shabbos is the source of all blessings.

When Hashem finished creating the world, the Torah says that He "blessed the seventh day". It is a day blessed by the Creator. It is the source from which all other blessings flow. To keep more of Shabbos is to open that source – and to let its blessings pour into your family, your faith, your relationships, your life.

On Rosh Hashanah we pray for a year of blessings. Shabbos is your way to make this coming year the most blessed yet.

Let this be the year of Shabbos for you and your family. And in this merit, may Hashem bless all the wonderful people at Marais Road Shul with a good and sweet year.



CHIEF RABBI *Warren Goldstein*



Leo & Joy Turvey & Family

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for a sweet & peaceful
New Year &
well over the Fast



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OUT OF THE ORDINARY

*Shanah
Tovah
U'metukah*

May this Rosh Hashanah and the year ahead
bring peace, health and joy to you and those
you love. As Yom Kippur approaches, may it be
a time for reflection, reconciliation and renewal.



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A MESSAGE FROM

PRESIDENT RONEN JACKSON

100 Years Young



It is a tremendous honour to write my first President's Report in this Rosh Hashanah Centenary Edition, as we celebrate 100 years of Marais Road Shul - a century of faith, tradition, community and leadership.

As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, Jewish communities around the world continue to face significant challenges. Recent events have reminded us of the importance of standing proudly as Jews, supporting Israel and passing our traditions and values to future generations. Our thoughts and prayers remain with Israel and all those defending the Jewish people. Here in South Africa, we belong to a united, resilient community that is deeply proud of its Jewish identity.

The words that best describe our Shul today are excitement, growth, vibrancy, renewal, warmth, youth and simchas. Attendance continues to grow, with a genuine sense of positivity across our campus. This is thanks to Rabbi Pini and Rebbetzin Chani Hecht, Cantor Ivor Joffe, Choirmaster Josh Friedman, Ba'al Koreh Joseph Cohen, and our outstanding senior and youth choirs, who create the warm, uplifting atmosphere that makes Marais Road so special. Through their leadership, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Hecht ensure every member feels part of our Shul family while warmly welcoming newcomers.

I would like to acknowledge our office and ground team. Their dedication and professionalism ensure our shul and campus remain welcoming, well cared for and serving our members with excellence every day.

We are fortunate to have a dynamic Management Committee that combines experience with fresh

ideas and is committed to ensuring Marais Road continues to grow and inspire future generations. Working alongside our Rabbinical Team, we will continue introducing initiatives that encourage youth participation and engagement. During the coming year, we plan to upgrade our campus to better cater for our youth and community events. Our Barmi and Bati Clubs continue to flourish, and we celebrate many special simchas together. Our Centenary theme, "Marais Road Shul – 100 Years Young", perfectly captures who we are today.

For a century, Marais Road has been far more than a building. It has been a spiritual home where generations have celebrated simchas, supported one another and strengthened Jewish identity. As we celebrate this milestone, we honour those whose vision built our community while ensuring it is even stronger for the next hundred years.

On behalf of my wife, Gaby, our children, Matt and Demi, the Management Committee and the Trustees, I wish you and your families a happy, healthy, peaceful and sweet New Year.

May we continue to go from strength to strength, celebrate many more simchas and ensure Marais Road remains a proud beacon of Jewish life for generations to come.

Shanah Tovah and G'mar Chatimah Tovah.

Ronen Jackson - President



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A MESSAGE FROM **CANTOR IVOR JOFFE**

Celebrating 100 Years of Harmony, Tradition, Unity & Community: A Century of Song

Mazal Tov! What an extraordinary milestone we have reached together.

To stand on the bimah in this magnificent centenary year and lead the Shul services for our community that has thrived and maintained its traditions for 100 years is a tremendous honour and privilege for me as your Chazan.

Centenaries are often measured in dates and bricks but the true history of our Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation is written in the voices that have filled our shul, the generations of congregants who have walked through our doors and the collective harmony of our community. When I think about the last century at Marais Road Shul I naturally think of it through the lens of Music and Prayer. Music has a unique power - it bridges the past and the present. When we sing Lecha Dodi on a Friday night or Avinu Malkeinu during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we aren't just singing for ourselves today. We are in fact echoing the melodies and nusach of the chazzanim, choirs and congregants who sang together in Shul decades before us.

Over the past 100 years we have celebrated many simchas together and comforted one another during difficult times as we share in our congregants' life cycle events.

While this centenary is a time for nostalgic reflection and deep gratitude for the founders



and leaders who paved the way for us to reach this magnificent milestone, it is also a launching pad for our future. We are so excited to introduce new melodies into our Shul services as well as the voices of our youth as they ensure continuity with their pure tone and upbeat ruach. It brings great nachas to us all.

We are entering an exciting, new phase for our congregation and I wish to pay tribute to all our congregants who give me the opportunity to serve as their cantor each year. When we sing together, our voices unite in prayer, rise in volume and fuse in harmony.

As we celebrate this historic 100th year, my special prayer for Marais Road Shul is that the next century brings even greater harmony, unity and many more reasons to celebrate and sing together. May our voices continue to rise in song and may our shul always remain a warm, welcoming home for all.

Wishing you all G'mar ve'Chatimah Tovah and Am Yisrael Chai!!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'I. Joffe'.

Cantor Ivor Joffe



A Sweet New Year Starts Around the Table.

This Rosh Hashanah, celebrate with the people who matter most and the flavours that bring everyone together.

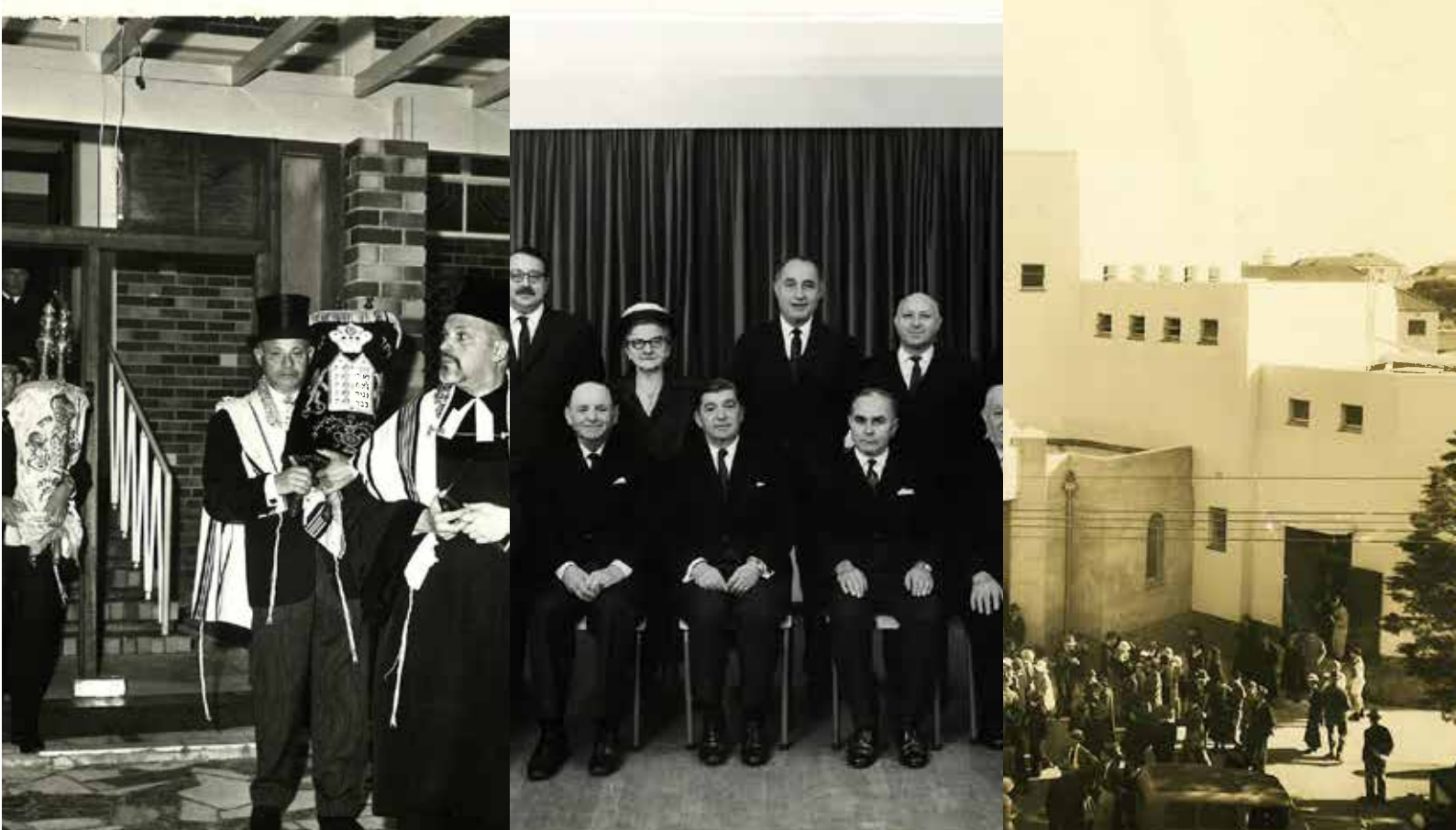
Wishing you a year filled with abundance, joy and countless shared meals.

Shanah Tovah from

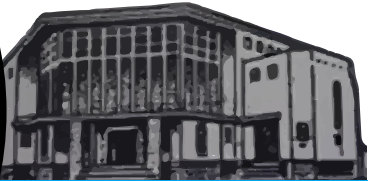


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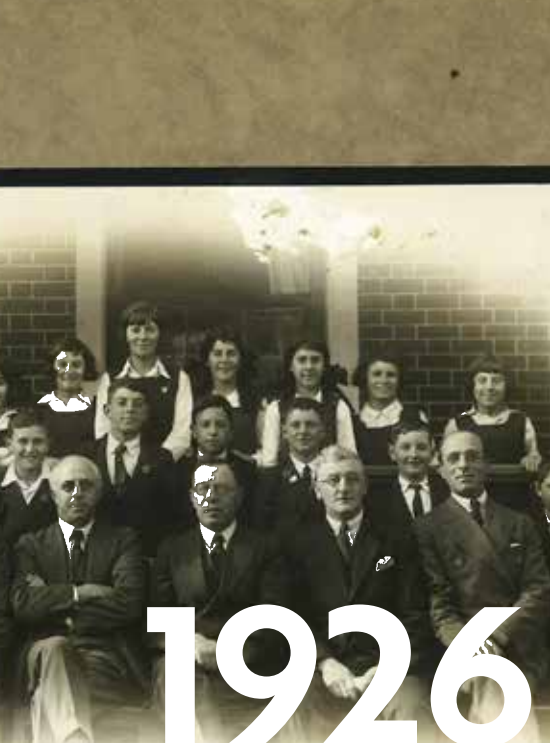


MILESTONES *from*
Mr. M. H. Marks, H. Silver, A. B. H. Marquis, M. Galloin, (President), S. L. Gross, P. Marks, B. Wilder

100 
 YEARS

of the GREEN &
 SEA POINT HEBREW
 CONGREGATION





A CONGREGATION IS BORN

The Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation (G&SPHC), or Marais Road Shul, traces its origins to September 1926, when the Gutmans held a meeting at their home in Sea Point to discuss the establishment of a new synagogue. A committee was elected to advance the project and Arthur E. Abrahams served as chairman. The committee's recommendations were approved at a general meeting the following month, while the earliest religious services were held in the Gutman family home. The congregation defined itself as an Orthodox Hebrew congregation, formally adopting the name Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation. Its constitution reflected the strong influence of British Jewry, affirming loyalty to the traditions of the British Empire and stipulating that services would follow the ritual practices of the United Hebrew Congregations in Britain.



127 FAMILIES

Conducting a census of Sea Point Jewry, the committee identified 127 families willing to join the congregation. To meet the community's religious needs, Rabbi M. Diamond led Passover services free of charge, which were inaugurated in the Sea Point Town Hall in April 1927. As the congregation grew, High Holy Day services were also held in the Sea Point Town Hall, attracting hundreds of worshippers. When the hall was not available, the Stodel family generously offered the Marine Bioscope at the corner of St Johns and Main Road for Rosh Hashanah services.



TALMUD TORAH ESTABLISHED

The congregation responded to concerns about Jewish children's religious education by establishing a Talmud Torah in 1930. A Talmud Torah sub-committee was formed and classes were launched by March 1930 in the Gutman home, with A. Sive as the teacher. The City Council allowed use of the Minor Town Hall for classes twice a week. The school grew quickly and an additional room was hired for classes three times a week. The Hebrew School was therefore an important early development in the congregation's efforts to provide Jewish education to children, eventually becoming associated with the Talmud Torah and later educational facilities established alongside the synagogue.

1931

A NEW SYNAGOGUE

Fighting to remain independent of the Gardens Synagogue, the Sea Point Jewish community resolved on 30 March 1931 to build its own synagogue. Despite the hardships of the Great Depression, restrictive immigration laws, and a growing wave of antisemitism, the congregation persisted with fundraising and planning. Although the project was briefly postponed in 1932, it was revived on a more modest scale, with architect J. Lonstein commissioned to design the building. In October 1933, the antisemitic Greyshirt movement emerged in South Africa, but the community pressed ahead, viewing the synagogue as essential to Jewish continuity and communal life. On 18 April 1934, General Jan C. Smuts laid the cornerstone of the new synagogue before a large gathering. This marked the formal founding of what later became the largest Jewish congregation in the Cape.

1945

THE LADIES GUILD

In 1945 Rebbetzin Milly Shrock formed a Ladies Guild to strengthen community life, support the synagogue, and raise funds for causes such as the Weizmann Hall. The Ladies Guild organised social events, debutante balls, hospital visits, and assistance for the sick, and encouraged greater participation in synagogue activities. Under its leadership, the Guild played an important role in preserving Jewish traditions within the home, publishing Rabbi Newman's booklet *Judaism in the Home* to guide young families in maintaining Jewish practices and values across generations. The Ladies Guild was to continue its work for many decades.

1952

A NEW SYNAGOGUE CENTRE

As the Atlantic Seaboard Jewish community continued to grow, and along with it the shul's membership, the shul's leadership embarked on an ambitious building project to provide facilities for worship, education, and community life. The new Synagogue Centre between Kloof and Regent Streets, whose foundation stones were laid in 1952 by Cecil Hyman and Archie Sacks, included the Weizmann Hall, a Talmud Torah, a nursery school, preparatory school, and space for communal organisations. Named after Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann, the complex quickly became the heart of Jewish life in Sea Point. The Weizmann School and Talmud Torah expanded rapidly, soon serving hundreds of pupils. The Weizmann Hall became the largest Jewish communal hall in the Cape, seating up to 1,300 people for the High Holy Days, weddings, celebrations, conferences, and cultural events.





1960'S & 1970'S

A FLOURISHING COMMUNITY

During the 1960s and 1970s, G&SPHC continued to flourish as one of the largest and most active Jewish congregations in Cape Town. The arrival of Cantor Philip Badash in 1965 strengthened the congregation's religious life, while Rabbi David Rosen's leadership helped shape its spiritual direction. As membership grew, the congregation appointed Rabbi Fogel as Associate Rabbi in 1977 to assist with services, education, pastoral care, and communal activities. Together, the rabbis and cantor served a vibrant congregation centred on worship, learning, and community engagement.

NEW BUILDINGS

The congregation grew beyond the capacity of the original synagogue. In 1975 with 2800 worshippers expected for High Holy Day services - requiring four venues. Thus plans were set in motion to expand. After nearly a decade of preparation, construction began in 1979 on the Peisel and Leah Marks Synagogue Centre, guided by then President, Maish Galoon. The new complex included a permanent succah, the Max and Hannah Stoch Hall, funded largely through the efforts of treasurer Max Stoch, and additional adaptable hall spaces. A youth synagogue, the Samson Youth Synagogue, was also established, named in honour of Dave and Minnie Samson, the parents of Eric Samson. Expanded office facilities were incorporated to support a growing rabbinical and administrative staff and from the late 70s, the space also became home to the Bnei Akiva youth movement.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

In 1983 G&SPHC marked the Golden Jubilee of the shul's construction with an ambitious programme of celebrations. A bumper Rosh Hashanah publication paid homage to the congregation's history through reminiscences by former rabbis, contributions from members, and artwork that captured 50 years of communal life. The celebrations culminated in a formal dinner on 25 April 1983, attended by State President Marais Viljoen.



1993

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SHUL

In 1993, the Ladies Guild celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special tea party. Rabbi Steinhorn spoke and Cantors Aryeh Rand and Ivor Joffe performed. The year also marked the 60th anniversary of the G&SPHC, which was celebrated with a party. Bnei Akiva's Shaun Borstrock expressed gratitude for their longstanding partnership, while Rabbi Prof Jacob Newman reflected on his fulfilling experiences with the community. Additionally, the Chevra Lomdei Torah opened the Gabriel Sacks Torah Resource Centre, and the G&SPHC choir released a tape titled Sounds of Shabbat. To top off the celebrations, a musical farce called New Mock Wedding entertained audiences.



1994

A NEW DEMOCRACY

In 1994, the shul was used as a polling station for the first democratic election. On the first Saturday after his election, South African President-elect Nelson Mandela visited the shul and was met outside by cheering crowds of all races. Some members of the congregation wore yarmulkes in the black, green and gold colours of the newly empowered ANC. Addressing the congregants inside, Mandela thanked the Jewish community for its contributions to the development of South Africa and assured Jews they had nothing to fear from a government of national unity. He made an appeal for Jewish expatriates to return to South Africa. "We want those who left (for other countries) because of insecurity to come back and to help us to build our country." He said he felt an affinity with the Jewish community, since it was a Jewish law firm that gave him an apprenticeship in the early days of his law career, when discrimination was rife.

late 1990's

SOME SECURITY FEARS

In the late 1990s G&SPHC faced an atmosphere of heightened insecurity as PAGAD, an increasingly radicalized Muslim group, turned from anti-gang vigilantism to urban terror, targeting Jewish and other sites in Cape Town. On erev Yom Kippur, some trouble makers allegedly drove past the shul and when they saw all the security outside, they felt it would be too dangerous and drove away. Later they passed the Wynberg synagogue and bombed it instead. In the aftermath both congregations significantly upgraded their security.





2000's

YESHIVA

Under the initiative of Rabbi Jonathan Glass with donor support, the Yeshiva of Cape Town – the very first Torah MiTzion program – was established in 1994. Students who had studied in Yeshivas in Israel came to Cape Town for a year, were embraced by the community and were available to learn with community members in Torah study groups, teach at Jewish schools, and act as a bridge to Israel and the world of Torah in a Religious-Zionist context. In 2015 the Yeshiva of Cape Town shlichim came to teach at Marais Road and the small shul was renovated and expanded for this purpose with some very lively learning sessions occurring there in the afternoons and evenings. During the Covid epidemic the shiurim were sadly stopped.



2013

BELOVED NORMIE

Normie Isaacson, who was shamash at the shul for 46 years, passed away in 2013 and a plaque was unveiled in his memory in 2015. Normie was an amateur wrestler, body builder, and Herzlia's first PhysEd teacher. He could always be seen walking around Shul on Shabbat and Chagim with his cloak and minor top hat, chatting to everyone, welcoming them and making them feel at home. He was also caretaker of the physical facility of the shul, ensured that daily and Sabbath services ran smoothly, helped the Rabbi and Chazan, and acted as gabbai - calling people up for aliyahs. Normie knew everyone's Hebrew names and family particulars which was a great help to successive shul presidents and rabbis. A Torah was dedicated in his honour before his death in 2012.



2025

MARAIS ROAD 2.0

A London-based former shul member, moved by fond childhood memories and concerned that the shul looked tired, quietly initiated and funded a major refurbishment. The shul was renovated with a lighter, more contemporary feel: the main sanctuary was brightened with neutral colours, upgraded lighting, new vinyl and carpet flooring, and reupholstered seating, while the aron kodesh gained striking marble cladding, subtle backlighting, and a restored chandelier overhead. Acoustics were improved and the foyer and ancillary spaces were also refreshed. Further upgrades are planned for the community centre, offices and youth areas.

Much of this information came from Gwynne Schrire's extensive research published by UCT's Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research.

Shana Tova

HAPPY ROSH HASHANAH



Wishing our Jewish staff
clients and friends
a sweet, healthy and
prosperous New Year.

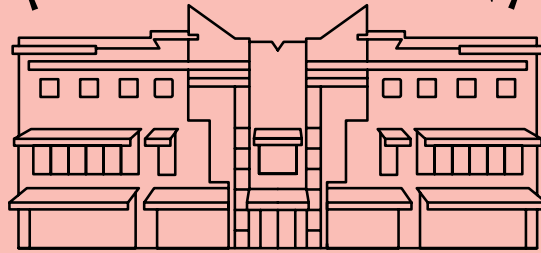
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good health and
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MARAIS ROAD SHUL

Chai Gals

A Post Bat Mitzvah
JOURNEY

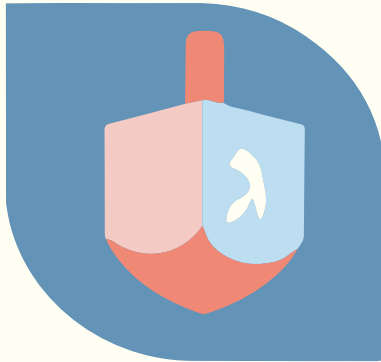
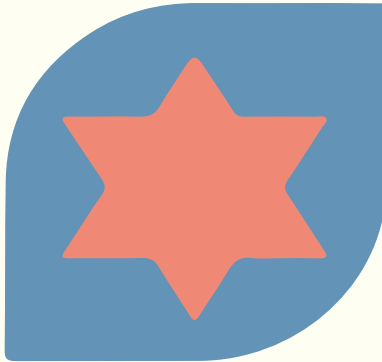
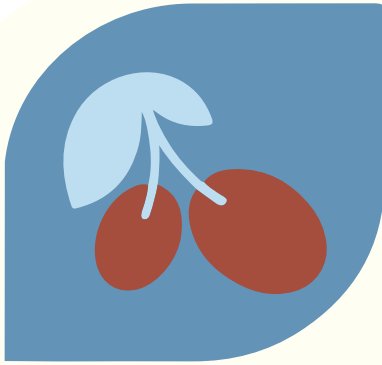


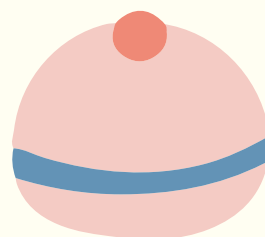
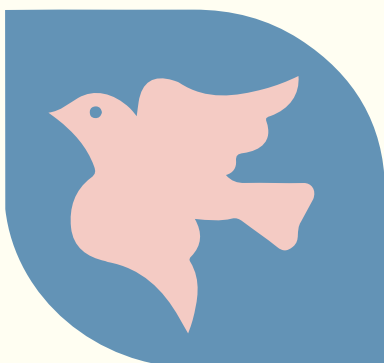
By Rebbetzin Chani Hecht

This year marked the exciting launch of **Chai Gals**, the next stage of the Bat Mitzvah journey. The journey begins in **Bati Club**, where the girls learn from remarkable Jewish women, explore timeless Torah values and build confidence in their Jewish identity. It continues in **Chai Gals**, where these lessons come to life through friendship, personal growth and community involvement.

The programme launched with a special mother-and-daughter afternoon at Clay Café, painting pottery and celebrating this new chapter together. For their first outreach initiative, the girls partnered with Jewish Community Services to provide a chicken for Rosh Hashanah to families receiving Tikvah Foodbank parcels - a special treat the Foodbank cannot ordinarily offer. Chai Gals reminds us that becoming a Bat Mitzvah is not the finish line, but the beginning of a journey of learning, growing, giving and making a difference.







חנוכה





ANTON & MAXINE MARGOLIS GREGORY ALEXANDER (11) & STEVIE GRACE (8)

Who is most likely to make everyone laugh?

That would depend on your humour. Greg is very witty whereas Stevie has a great giggle and a good sense of humour. She is always laughing with Greg.

Which family member is the biggest

chatterbox? When we are out and about Greg is far more chatty. At home Stevie is the chatterbox.

If your family had a motto, what would it be?

Live Brave, Stay Humble, Choose Kindness and always be a mensch.

What's one thing visitors would immediately notice about your home?

Our home is less of a quiet sanctuary and more of a joyful community hub. At any given moment, there are forts being built, dogs greeting you at the door, dinner in the oven and a house full of playing children.

Favourite family holiday destination?

Our children would probably say the Seychelles or Africamps. Our family goes to Africamps often, to reconnect and enjoy being together in nature. We can take Buddy and Rosy, our dogs, on holiday there too.

What is one Jewish value you're hoping your children will always carry with them? To be kind, first and foremost - Chesed & Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World): Teaching children that they have a personal responsibility to leave the world a better, kinder and more just place than they found it.

"...leave the world a better, kinder & more just place than you found it."

Spotlight NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members who joined our Marais Road shul family this past year. We look forward to sharing many joyful & meaningful moments together & hope their time with our community will be long, happy & fulfilling.



RAEL & CANDICE PHILLIPS
JACK (7) & BEN (5)

Who always knows where everything is?
Candice.

What's a typical Sunday morning like in your house?

Pancakes for the boys.

What's something your family can never have too much of? (Coffee? Lego? Hugs? Books? Snacks?)

A braai.

What's one word your friends would use to describe your family?

Entertaining.

Favourite family holiday destination?

Mauritius.

What's your favourite Shabbat food?

Challah (baked by Candice!)

WELCOME
ברוכים
הבאים

Abramowitz, Kelvyn & Hilary
Albert, Philip & Madelene
Berman, Loretta
Biderman-Pam, Jordan & Jaemi
Carroll, Robyn & Family
Casper, Herschel & Marion
Collins, Bronwen & Family
Cunio, David & Marisa & Family
Davis, Barbara
Davis, Les & Wendy
Dobrin, Lisa
Feinberg, Ian & Barbara & Family
Gillis, Daphne
Glass, Mickey & Selma
Gottschalk, Sandy
Hanan, Claude & Samantha & Family
Kaye, Allan & Avis
Krupenia, Anton
Lazarus, Joshua & Jessica
Lessick, Ronald & Family
Margolis, Anton & Maxine & Family
Mayo, Jason & Nicole & Family
Phillips, Rael & Candice & Family
Rabinowitz, Shirli
Surdut, Ben-Zion & Esther
Swartz, Ashley & Lesley & Family
Sweidan, Rhoda
Wingrin, Harold & Hilary
Witkin, Roni



A RARE ALLIANCE

Martine & Greg Nafte

By Vanessa Valkin

When Greg Nafte and his wife Martine discovered that their firstborn Levi (then 3) had a rare genetic condition called SLC1A4 deficiency, it radically altered their lives. Levi had been having seizures and was not reaching the normal developmental milestones. For several years the Nafte family were just given a broad 'diagnosis' of 'delayed development'. After numerous tests did not detect anything, a geneticist suggested the Whole Exome Sequencing test, which led to the diagnosis. SLC1A4 sufferers have a malfunction in the gene responsible for transporting L-serine amino acid to the brain and insufficient amino acid jeopardizes brain development. Sufferers are often unable to walk, talk and experience seizures. They require highly specialized medical care, and life expectancy is reduced.

There are 10,000 rare genetic conditions that collectively affect 100 million people around the world. A mere 5% of these conditions have treatments that change the outcome of these diseases.

"We were told by our doctors that there was nothing that could be done and that we should just continue with therapies," says Martine. "We were left with a feeling of devastation."

Determined not to be defeated or feel helpless, the Nafte family dived deep into the research to fully understand the disease and connected to families with similar challenges and medical specialists around the world.

"In the rare disease space there is no shortage of scientists and doctors that have the tools to create treatments to change the prognosis and to treat them but there is a lack of funding and resources," says Greg. "Creating treatments for small patient populations is not profitable."

To fill this funding gap, Greg and Martine have set up the Rare Alliance Foundation www.rare-alliance.com to raise funds for an SLC1A4 Treatment programme at Boston Children's Hospital (BCH).



"We were told by our doctors that there was nothing that could be done..."

They have raised \$65,000 but need to raise at least \$3 million. They are collaborating with a leading geneticist at BCH, Dr Wendy Chung. She and her team are working on a programme to deliver gene replacement therapy treatment with a blueprint that can be reused across future rare-disease programmes affecting the central nervous system.

'...educators believe it's important for the kids to learn that not everyone is like them in this world, and some have deep challenges and difficulties...'In that way, he is a gift to the other children.'

The goal of the Rare Alliance Foundation is to accelerate treatments by funding shared scientific infrastructure and programmes, instead of building each disease programme from scratch. Martine explains what they hope to be able to offer Levi. "The treatment will be a once off injection that replaces the deficient gene with a functional gene which will allow transport of L-Serine to the brain to function normally."

"Based on what we have seen in other clinical trials, we are very confident that this treatment will change the natural history of this disease and it could mean Levi developing a vocabulary and being able to walk independently," says Greg. "We may not be able to reverse all the physical difficulties but what we can hope for is that Levi can achieve a level of independence and autonomy."

It is estimated that one in four Ashkenazi Jews are carriers of a genetic condition but carriers don't exhibit any symptoms. Although panel tests for rare genetic disorders analyse multiple genes known to cause a specific group of diseases, SLC1A4 is excluded from many genetic testing panels. Thus the Naftes have set up Jewish

Genes, to raise awareness for genetic conditions, lobby for greater screening and for more funding for research. www.jewishgenes.org

While the Naftes are optimistic, life is, in the meantime, very challenging. Levi is dependent on others for his daily needs. He is non-verbal, although his communication is improving with therapy and he can walk with assistance. Levi attends Herzlia Alon Ashel. His parents have found the community at Alon Ashel completely supportive. "Levi is just one of the kids in the younger group class. The kids will push him up and down on the swing and share toys with him and the older kids come and play with him."

Martine says that the educators believe it's important for the kids to learn that not everyone is like them in this world, and some have deep challenges and difficulties with basic skills. "In that way, he is a gift to the other children."

www.jewishgenes.org



GREG, LEVI, ELLA, & MARTINE NAFTE





5787

The Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies wishes the community a happy, healthy and sweet New Year and a meaningful fast. May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life.

לשנה טובה ומתוקה
L'Shanah Tovah U'metukah

גמר חתימה טובה
G'mar Chatimah Tovah



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LEORA HESSEN

Tech Visionary

By Vanessa Valkin



Sitting down in a Sea Point coffee shop with Leora Hessen to talk about Hello AIDA, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered learning platform she has designed for South African pupils, she watches me trying to keep up with her as I type on my laptop. “You should

definitely try Plaud - the AI application that synthesizes conversations into intelligent text.” Warm, energetic and full of ideas, Leora speaks just as passionately about children, education and opportunity as she does about artificial intelligence.

Always entrepreneurial, she co-founded Art Jamming, the popular chain of art studios where patrons could enjoy painting on canvases in a relaxed environment. The first studio was in Wembley Square and it expanded to six franchises nationally. When Covid hit, Art Jamming was forced to close. With time on her hands and concerned that her daughter Eden who was at home, was missing out on Grade R’s educational foundations, Leora built online tutorials for her



based on the Western Cape Education Department’s curriculum.

She then created educational booklets in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa that she distributed at her husband Harold’s discount retail stores so it could reach the wider population. “It meant that kids sitting in shacks during Covid could also learn,” says Leora. Leora also started taking online courses in applied blockchain technology and AI.

“It was becoming a passion,” she says. “I had hated coding during my undergraduate degree but now it all made sense. I could now understand the logic and potential of my coding training.”

(Article continued on page 31)



 **SHANAH TOVAH**

WISHING YOU A SWEET AND BLESSED NEW YEAR

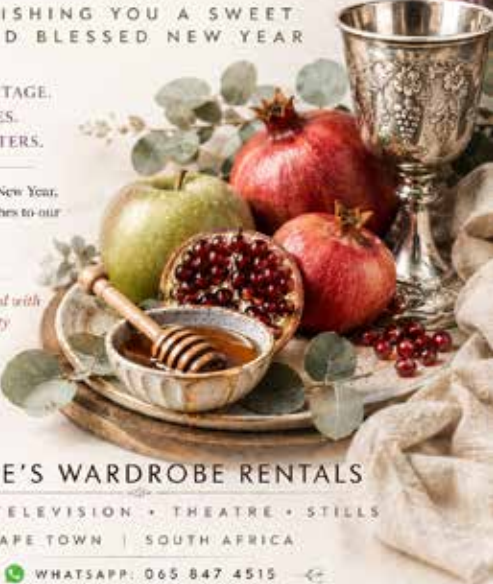
CELEBRATING HERITAGE.
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EATING CHARACTERS.

We welcome the Jewish New Year, extend our warmest wishes to our dear clients, friends and business partners.

May the year ahead be filled with love, happiness, prosperity and many sweet moments.

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well over the Fast



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Witnessing the financial hardships that Covid brought to artists, Leora created virtual galleries so that artists could still exhibit, and founded the African NFT Art Collective, opening a new digital space for African artists. Using blockchain technology, artists could link digital certificates to physical works and explore new forms of digital art and shared ownership. For her innovations, Leora won the Amazon 2023 Women in Tech Arts award in Cape Town and was Global runner up in Dubai.

When ChatGPT was launched, Leora quickly subscribed and was soon teaching AI workshops and consulting to corporates. Eden, who was now 10, had picked up enough knowledge from her mother to know exactly what ChatGPT could do for her.

“... AI has the potential to help bridge this gap by giving learners access to guided support at home.”

“She took my phone one day and instructed it to do her homework. I thought it was hilarious but when she did it on the second day I thought it was less funny and on the third day - it was not funny anymore.”

Leora became worried that Eden and her generation would soon be outsourcing all their work to AI. She embarked on a design for an online tutoring system using Python coding that would encourage her daughter to think and learn critically. When Leora discovered her domestic worker's granddaughter was failing, she adapted the tutor to help her in her home language of Afrikaans.

“I began speaking to teachers and asking, ‘What are you seeing in class and what do you wish you could give your students to help them learn? My research was that educators did not want children to be spoon-fed by AI.’”



Leora built Hello Aida to move away from an easy answer often associated with AI tools. It asks pupils to reason and understand further. She uploaded the curriculums of CAPS, IEB and A-Levels in all languages so that HelloAida is aligned with all the curricula. It encourages independent learning but still guides learners step-by-step. United Herzlia Schools is currently conducting a school-wide trial until December 2026.

Most families cannot afford private tutors or extra academic support and AI has the potential to help bridge this gap by giving learners access to guided support at home, explains Leora.

“We are living at the bottom of Africa with high dropout rates or matric failures. On any given day at a school in Grassy Park, 15 teachers don’t arrive and there are 45-50 kids in a class.”

Leora is hoping to reach a million South African learners in the next two years. Access to HelloAida costs R300 per child per year at schools. What started as a mother’s concern during Covid has grown into a mission to help young South Africans learn in a more considered and supported way.



GRADE 6 TEACHER MR NATHAN, EARLY ADOPTER OF HELLOAIDA





BARN



We strive to make each boy's journey personal,



(L-R) ADAM CASSEL, ARYEH ISRAELE, DANIEL ROZOWSKY, JONAH BULKIN
MATT ALMALEH, DANNY COHEN, ETHAN BLOOM, ZAC ERASMUS

Club

A Bar Mitzvah is a significant milestone in the life of a young boy and his family, marking the beginning of a new stage of Jewish responsibility, identity and belonging. At Marais Road Shul, we strive to make each boy's journey personal, meaningful and memorable. Our Bar Mitzvah Club offers opportunities for boys and their parents to learn, connect and share special experiences together. Father-and-son learning, activities for mothers and sons, social events and engaging Jewish experiences all help bring the journey to life. Through individual lessons with Rabbi Hecht, each boy is guided according to his own background, abilities and interests as he prepares to take his place within the community. Our goal is not simply to prepare each boy and his family for the Bar Mitzvah day, but to help him build a lasting connection to his Jewish heritage, his shul and the wider community - and to know that he will always have a place at Marais Road Shul.

meaningful and memorable.



BATI

Club



AVA MCHELHONE



LEAH BERMAN



JULIA STEIN



ELLIE GOLDBERG



TALIA GEFFROY



OLIVIA CLOSENBERG

By Rebbetzin Chani Hecht

The Marais Road **Bati Club** is a fun, meaningful and interactive journey that celebrates the exciting transition into Jewish womanhood. Throughout the year, the girls explore the lives of inspiring women from the Torah, discovering how their stories, choices and values continue to guide and empower Jewish girls today. From courage and kindness to faith, resilience and inner beauty, each lesson brings timeless Torah values to life in a way that is engaging, relevant and practical.

Throughout the year, the girls enjoy a variety of engaging experiences, including guest speakers, hands-on activities, creative crafts, lively discussions and opportunities to connect with one another while building lasting friendships. The programme also enables the girls to put their learning into action through meaningful community projects, giving them the chance to experience the joy of making a difference in the lives of others.

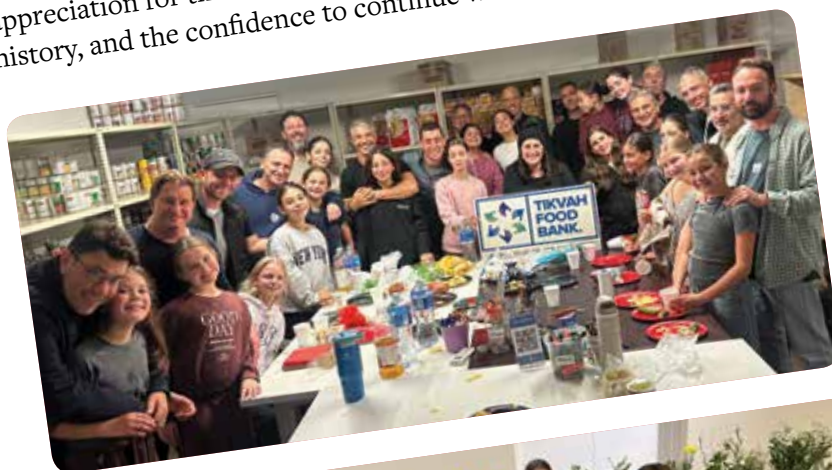
A special highlight of the year is each girl's personalised scrapbook journal. More than just a keepsake, it becomes a record of her Bat Mitzvah journey, filled with reflections, photos, creative activities and personal thoughts from each lesson. By the end of the programme, every girl leaves with not only a beautiful scrapbook of memories and pictures, but also a deeper connection to her Jewish identity, a greater appreciation for the remarkable women who shaped our history, and the confidence to continue writing her own story.



ROSE MILLER



RACHEL SOLOMON



Shanah

Tovah

Wishing our
Jewish community a
**sweet, healthy and
prosperous**
New Year.

May this Rosh Hashanah
bring **happiness, peace** and
many blessings to you
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Shanah Tovah U'Metukah



THE SOUND OF MARAIS ROAD SHUL

Honouring our Cantorial and Choral Legacy

This remarkable milestone of 100 years is a proud achievement for the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation. In preparing this message, we have reviewed and reflected on the annual Rosh Hashanah yearbooks published by the shul over many decades. Within them are extraordinary records of the congregation's history and vibrancy, some stretching back to the 1960s. Alongside messages from rabbis, presidents, committee members and congregants, one constant presence stands out: the cantor and choir who are consistently admired for the beauty and dignity they have brought to the tefillot through their liturgical music. For a century, the walls of our beloved shul have vibrated with the majestic harmonies of world-class cantors, masterful choirmasters and so many dedicated choristers.

When The Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation was first established in 1926, the community quickly recognised that its spiritual home needed to be filled with song. By the time our iconic shul building was completed on Marais Road in 1934 - with its cornerstone laid by General J.C. Smuts - a grand choral tradition was already taking root. As the congregation grew into one of the largest in the southern hemisphere, its musical reputation grew with it. This era became synonymous with legendary figures who elevated synagogue music into an art form while preserving the nusach of Eastern Europe.

In this message, we wish to pay tribute to our choir and the choirmasters who together with the distinguished chazzanim have served this congregation and enriched shul services over the course of its history. From its first choirmaster in 1934, Mr Scher, to Aaron Koorland and Henry Katzen in the 1950s, Syd Kaye in the late 1960s, followed by Raymond Goldstein, Lulu Lutrín, Percy Bruss (who conducted the Second Choir over the Yamim Noraim), Norman Solin, Kevin Derman, David Gordon and our current choirmaster Joshua Friedman, each playing a vital role in shaping our choral tradition.

The revered chazzanim who worked closely with the Choir over the past 100 years and who occupied the bimah for larger periods of time include: Reverend Rosenberg, Cantor Morris Katzin Z'll,





SOME MOMENTS ARE FOR
SITTING WITH YOURSELF.



OTHERS, FOR THE
PEOPLE YOU LOVE MOST.

With you this year, as always.
Shana Tuva U'Metuka

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Cantor Emeritus Philip Badash Z"ll, Cantor Aryeh Rand and currently Cantor Ivor Joffe. These dedicated chazzanim inspired generations of choristers and infused a deep love of synagogue music, sustaining a proud and enduring musical heritage which continues at Marais Road Shul.

We are also proud to note that some of our Marais Road Shul choristers started as young boy sopranos. Norman Katzeff who started at a very young age singing in the Choir with Cantor Badash is a regular tenor soloist to this day. Others have gone on to serve as cantors to prominent congregations locally and abroad. Reverend Alwyn Shulman and Cantor Michael Cohen Z"l went on to serve as successful chazzanim, while Cantors Joel and Ivor Lichterman officiated at Marais Road Shul before taking up cantorial positions in the US. Our choir continues to contribute meaningful and uplifting musical moments together with our Chazzan Ivor Joffe, who next year B"H celebrates 25 years at Marais Road Shul. In recent years, we have had the privilege of singing with visiting Chazzanim Shai Abramson, Chief Cantor of the IDF; Colin Schachat; accompanied by former choirmaster and world-renowned arranger Raymond Goldstein. We have also hosted Cantors Shimon and Dov Farkas and Brett Kaye from Australia, among others. This year we hosted a shabbat with Oshy Tugendhaft and the Celebration Singers from Johannesburg as part of our centenary celebrations.

A very special feature in our Shul has been our Shul Youth Choir under the musical direction of Cantor Ivor Joffe. These talented young boys have added an uplifting dimension to our harmonic sound and have been well received by the congregation.

Our musical footprint continues to extend beyond shul services through our recordings, collaborations with musicians, musical Kabbalat Shabbat services as well as Concerts and other communal events.

While this gives us an opportunity to honour our past, we look forward to introducing the new voices of tomorrow. Our Shul Choir may be smaller than in the peak decades of the 20th century, but our mission to uplift our congregants



Choirmaster: Josh Friedman

Melody: Daniel Bloch, Nathan Bloch, Barrie Reingold, Gary Saven, Ralph Wagenheim, Kenneth Zaacks

Tenor: Norman Katzeff, Selwyn Shandel, Adrian Wener

Alto: Steven Wagenheim, Reuben Wagenheim, Samuel Hertz, Zac Rosenberg

Youth Choir: Dylan Burstain, Jamie Burstain, Noah Closenber, Lex Feinberg, Sacha Feinberg, Menachem Hecht, Ashton Musikanth, Lev Nassimov, Harel Shnaps, Benji Rudnick, Adam Zandberg

in prayer remains. We warmly extend an open invitation to former choristers, visiting singers, and new local voices. If you have a passion for shul music and wish to join us, please reach out to our Choirmaster Josh Friedman or Cantor Ivor Joffe. We enter the future just as we began the past: united in harmony, anchored by tradition, and singing a new song to Hashem: "SHIRU LASHEM SHIRU SHIR CHADASH".

Mazal Tov to Marais Road Shul on its Centenary. Shana Tova U'Metuka to you and your families.

Cantor Ivor Joffe and Josh Friedman





FROM ALL OF US AT LANCE REAL ESTATE



SHANA TOVA

“

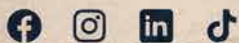
To a new year of peace, gratitude and unity. May we always remember the strength of our people and the deep connection we share, as the Cape Town Jewish Community as well as the greater Jewish nation.

”

Lance Cohen

CEO, LANCE REAL ESTATE

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MAZEL TOV *to our* CHATAN TORAH



STEVEN FRANKEL

Who are the members of your family?

My wife Brenna, and sons, Oliver & Isaac. How long have you and your family been part of Marais Road Shul, and what first brought you here? We joined Marais Road in 2010, after returning from a number of years in London. We chose the Shul because my wife's Grandparents, Harry and Becky Symons were members as well as Brenna's Mom, Lydia Abel. Harry attended on Friday evenings and thus our son Oliver (aged 3 at the time) got to enjoy some Shabbat services, with his great-grandfather.

Can you share a particular memory or moment at the shul that has been especially meaningful to you? There are many, but I would say both our sons bar mitzvahs have been very meaningful for us. The Rabbi and staff at Marais Road helped to make both simchas very special. We are a musical family, so I am always enchanted by Ivor and the choir's spiritual rendition of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah on the High Holidays. Our son Isaac sang in the choir briefly, which is also a special memory for me.

How has your Jewish journey evolved over the years, and how has it perhaps changed in recent years in light of the global climate and

events affecting the Jewish people? I have come to understand that Jewish life is very broad, and there are multiple access points for different Jews. My wife has taught me the value and importance of celebrating the broader traditions in Judaism, whereas I tend to be a bit rule driven at times. I am starting to appreciate the different energies of the Jewish year as I get older – I enjoy the seasons and associated holidays. Recent events have been a reminder how important it is to strengthen our Jewish identities and stand proud, but also to remember that we need to listen to each other and try to respect different points of view.

What gives you the greatest sense of optimism about both Jewish life in South Africa and the future of our country?

I think that Cape Town and Johannesburg are experiencing a "golden age" with regard to their Rabbinical leadership – there are numerous Rabbis who are able to connect with congregations in a meaningful contemporary way and in so doing sustain and enrich Jewish life and communities. There is a lot of turmoil in the world, so cities like London and Sydney which were regarded as safe havens for Jews are sadly no longer so, and South Africa is thus quite a good option these days!

Is there a particular message, blessing, or wish that you would like to share with our community as you receive this honour?

Torah is the ultimate "how to live" guide. It is a tree of life with the deepest roots and the highest branches, connecting us to Hashem's wisdom. In our digital world, we all reach for immediate gratification, to get quick answers. It is easy. Delving into Torah requires work but if we invest the time, the rewards are infinite and the answers are often solid and enduring. As parents or grandparents, we need to share bits of Torah with our kids and those around us, so they will learn that Chat GPT and Claude are great tools - made by man and woman - but our Torah, made by G-d, is absolute truth.





RBS

RBS - Insurance Solved
Proud Brokers to the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation

Shana Tova!

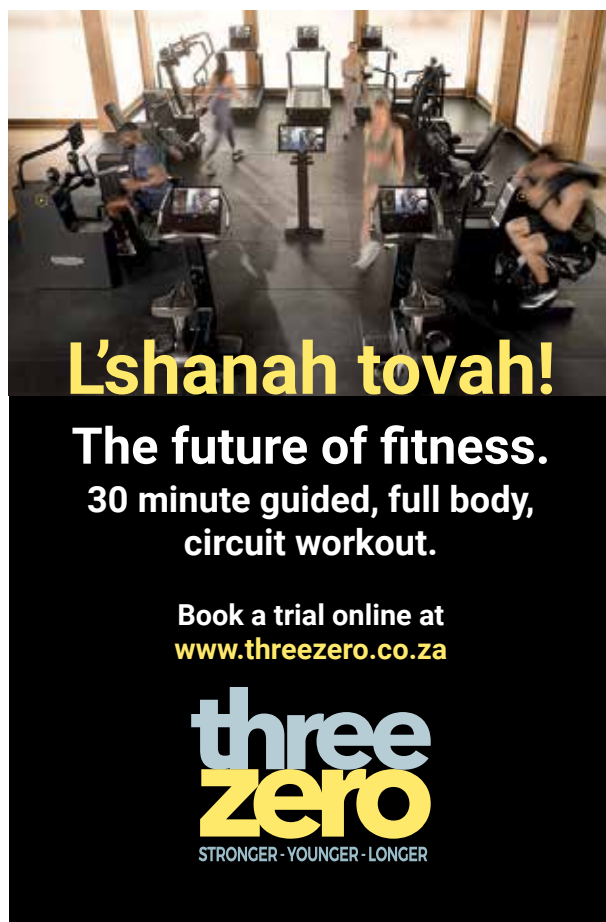
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NEW YEAR!**

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U METUKAH**

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MAZEL TOV *to our* CHATAN BEREISHIT



SAMUEL SEEFF

Who are the members of your family?

My wife Simone and children Lara, Georgina and Kai.

How long have you and your family been part of Marais Road Shul, and what first brought you here?

I have been a member since about 1996. I joined after moving into the area.

Can you share a particular memory or moment at the shul that has been especially meaningful to you?

There have been many special moments for me, including: being married under the auspices of the Shul (Rabbi Steinhorn); my Ofraf on the Shabbat prior to my wedding; having all 3 children have their Siddur ceremonies there; and all 3 had their B'nai Mitzvah there, High Holy Day aliyot; sitting upstairs with the Friday night overflow during year-end Shabbat services; Shabbat Service for kids at Weizman followed by dinners in the Hall.... (some 18 of them...!!)

How has your Jewish journey evolved over the years, and how has it perhaps changed in recent years in light of the global climate and events affecting the Jewish people?

Not really, I think it has been relatively consistent. I think (sadly) we're more aware of the dangers facing Jews all around the world, and one perhaps keeps more up to date with issues facing Jews worldwide than we may have done in the past.

What gives you the greatest sense of optimism about both Jewish life in South Africa and the future of our country?

A short question with a long answer! I'm optimistic because I believe that we still have a lot to offer SA. We are fortunate that at present we can still be Jewish, practice our religion, and participate in society more freely than in many other places in the world. Having said which we must continue to be on guard - a potential attack/threat may be around the corner and we can't afford to be complacent... I'm confident that SA is moving in the right direction politically and very hopeful that a change of Government (previously considered unlikely) is a possibility. With that, will hopefully come service delivery and (hopefully) a corruption-free government that will provide opportunity for all, better living standards for all, and a growing, healthy GDP. So much potential!! We just need a few things to fall into place.

Is there a particular message, blessing, or wish that you would like to share with our community as you receive this honour?

I'd like to reflect on the centrality of the Shul in our lives and the appreciation we should show for it on an ongoing basis. Our signature life events are conducted through the Shul and we should be grateful for the role it plays and the meaning it provides on an ongoing basis.





JAEMI WIDAN & JORDAN BIDERMAN-PAM
18 FEB 2026



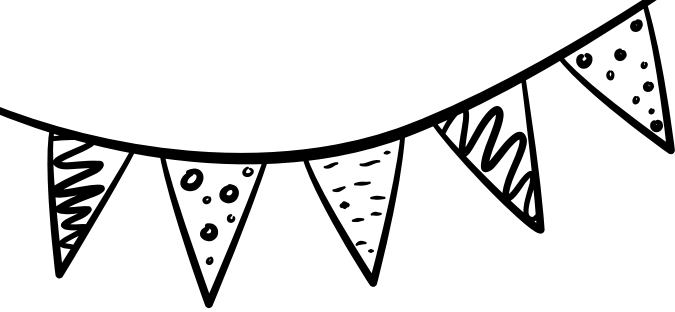
JESSICA MILLER & JOSHUA LAZARUS
26 FEB 2026



ALEX ISSAKOW & GREGG BRYER
1 MARCH 2026



weddings



births



MAX LEVI FITTINGHOF
28 AUG 2025



ARIA SHELTON
14 APRIL 2026



NAVA FUCHS
13 MARCH 2026



KAI SCOTTIE STOCH
25 AUG 2025

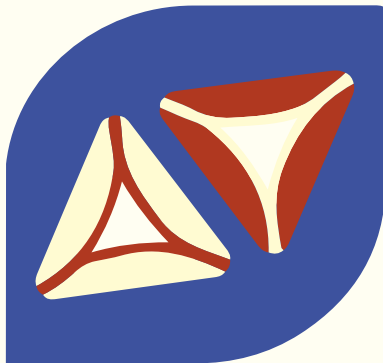
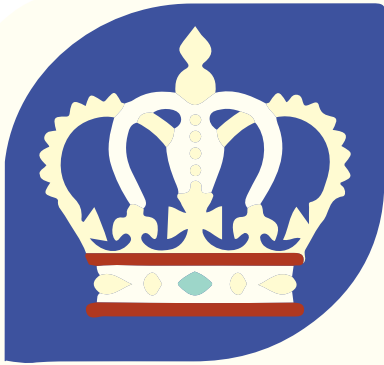


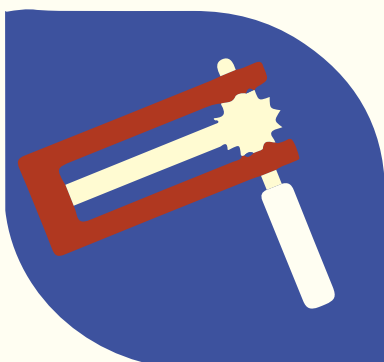
JEDD ROSS MAYO
4 MAY 2026



SHAIYA AMOULS
7 MAY 2026







פורים

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day that follows**

For the New Year. For new life. For the first day of school. For the simchas and the milestones. For the pick-ups and drop-offs, the stroll home from shul, and the daily routines. CSO Cape Town is always here. For the moments you celebrate. The moments you barely notice. And everything in between.

Shana Tova to you and your loved ones.

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Rosh Hashanah 5787

Shana Tova u'metuka and well over the fast to all
Marais Road congregants
From all of us at **Osrin Group**

OSRIN GROUP

Celebrating **COMMUNITY,** **CONNECTION,** *and* **CONTINUITY**

Tribute to our Marais Road Shul Seniors

As the shofar sounds to usher in 5787, we look back with gratitude on a year filled with warmth, laughter, and connection within our Marais Road Shul. At the heart of our vibrant family is our cherished seniors community. This golden generation embodies our history, wisdom, and enduring spirit. They are truly the heartbeat of our community and the foundation of our Shul. Over the past year, our seniors' events have become essential anchors of fellowship, joy, and Jewish life, regularly buzzing with community energy.



A YEAR OF SHARED MOMENTS AND FESTIVE SPIRIT

Our gatherings offered a diverse, stimulating lineup of activities. Standout highlights include: Inspiring guest speakers: We hosted fascinating talks covering current Jewish affairs, holistic wellness and report backs from members who visited Israel and other Jewish communities around the world.

FESTIVE PRE-CHAG CELEBRATIONS

Food, friendship, and festive spirit took centre stage. From dipping apples in honey for Rosh Hashanah to Succot high teas, Chanukah concerts and Purim celebrations, the spirit of every Chag was felt deeply with divrei torah and fulfilment of the appropriate mitzvot for each occasion.

MUSIC AND MELODIES

Afternoon and evening entertainment performed by Cantor Ivor Joffe and friends brought immense joy. Concerts featuring popular musicians filled the hall with nostalgic melodies and delightful sing-alongs.



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SENIOR SHABBAT DINNERS

Hosted in collaboration with the Cape Jewish Seniors Association (CJSA), these Friday night milestone Shabbat dinners brought us together to share the ruach of Shabbat through inspiring davening, delicious food, singing and chavershaft.



MORE THAN JUST AN EVENT

While the food and entertainment are a major drawcard, the true magic lies in the social connection. In a fast-paced world, our gatherings provide a safe, welcoming space to catch up with lifelong friends, forge new companionships and feel deeply valued.

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS

These initiatives thrive thanks to the dedication of our seniors sub-committee, Cantor Ivor Joffe, our Shul staff and our dedicated volunteers. This team pours their hearts into planning and hosting each event with utmost thought and care. Most importantly, we thank our seniors for your presence, your smiles, and the lifetime of wisdom you bring to our spiritual home.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 5787

In the New Year, Marais Road Shul remains deeply committed to expanding and enriching our Shul seniors' programme. We look forward to welcoming you back for more enriching events and shared celebrations. We wish our entire seniors community a *Shana Tova 'Metuka*—a happy, healthy, and sweet New Year B"H filled with good health, happiness, nachas and many more shared simchas.

Leshanah Tovah Tikatevu V'techatemu!



Last October, Rebbetzin Chani Hecht joined a **Momentum Israel** trip organised by the South African Zionist Federation. Six women from Cape Town participated, joining a further twelve mothers from United Herzlia Schools. Describing the experience as "a five-star journey that was both inspiring and deeply nourishing," Chani explained that Momentum brings Jewish mothers from around the world together for a seven-day educational experience designed to strengthen their connection to Jewish identity, Israel and their communities. Reflecting on the experience, Chani shared, **"One of the things I appreciated most about Momentum was its unwavering belief in the unique role of Jewish women. The trip reinforced something I have always believed**

that women are the heart of Jewish life and the cornerstone of the Jewish home. It was incredibly affirming to be part of a programme that celebrates and empowers women to recognise the profound impact they have on their families, their communities and the future of the Jewish people."

Although Momentum often caters to women who are less connected to Judaism or Israel, Chani found that the experience fulfilled a different, but equally important, need.

"It filled my own bucket so that I can continue giving to my home, my family and my community. It nourished me on every level and was a welcome opportunity to simply receive before returning home inspired to continue giving to others."

Rebbetzin Chani's Momentum Diary

Seven Days. Seven Values. One Unforgettable Journey.

Each day of the trip centred around a different value that framed our learning, discussions and reflections. Every morning began with a talk connected to that day's theme and every evening ended with a "Reflect and Connect" session. Our main speaker was author and educator Nili Couzens, while our bus group included women from Cape Town, Dallas, New York, Kansas and Israel.

Monday – Unity and Mutual Responsibility

We arrived in Tel Aviv and joined 200 Jewish women from around the world for the Momentum welcome dinner. The dancing, the colourful Momentum pashminas and group photograph perfectly captured the excitement and unity of the week ahead.



Group pic



Pre-trip session with Abigail Smith



Welcome dinner

Tuesday – Courage

We met IDF soldiers serving on the front lines and heard their remarkable stories of courage and resilience. A moving and dancing experience on the Tel Aviv beachfront, followed by a visit to an Ethiopian community centre, created powerful moments of reflection, vulnerability and connection.



Guru Zuzu

Wednesday – Human Dignity

One of the most emotional days of the trip included visits to Hostage Square, the Nova Music Festival site and a kibbutz near the Gaza border. Hearing first-hand accounts of the events of 7 October and standing overlooking Gaza were experiences I will never forget.



Nova site Memorial



October 7th Hero

Thursday – Faithfulness and Trust

After exploring the spiritual meaning of emunah, we walked through Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter. Standing on the rooftop overlooking the Kotel, praying at the Wall and visiting Ir David reminded me of the deep connection between our people, our history and our homeland.



Dream view

Friday – Learning and Growth

The day focused on strengthening our understanding of Israel and the beauty of Shabbat. After lighting candles at the Great Synagogue, we welcomed Shabbat at the Kotel before sharing a beautiful Shabbat dinner with all 200 Momentum participants.



Old City, Jerusalem

Shabbat – Peace and Wholeness in the Home

Shabbat centred on relationships, parenting and building peaceful Jewish homes. Sharing meals with Jerusalem families and ending Shabbat with Havdalah overlooking the Old City made for an unforgettable day.



With the Israeli moms



Shabbat Candles

Sunday – Gratitude

Our final day focused on gratitude. After volunteering at Hadassah Hospital, we celebrated the week's journey at a farewell banquet that ended just as it had begun: with heartfelt emotion, joyous dancing and an overwhelming sense of gratitude. This was just the beginning of building on the connections made in Israel and we still get together whenever we can.



Post Shabbat ice-cream



Post trip connecting



COMMUNITY SHOWS LOVE *for* *the* **JEWISH FITNESS** **COACH**

By Vanessa Valkin

When Yoel Levy, known as “The Jewish Fitness Coach” to his hundreds of thousands of social media followers, decided to run the Cape Town Marathon, he had no idea what an invigorating and uniting force he would be for the local Jewish community. Marais Road’s Rabbi Hecht, who ran the marathon too (well done, Rabbi!), said that Levy inspired so many to support him. “It gave our community an opportunity to stand in the streets of Cape Town with a sense of pride and feel a dignified connection to the State of Israel.”

Just before the Marathon, at the shul’s Shavuot dinner at the Premier Hotel, Levy spoke about his personal challenges and how he had overcome them. Levy struggled with dyslexia as a teenager and a speech impediment but discovered he did excel in athletics. He set a goal to run the London Marathon, and at 18, he became the youngest person ever to complete it. He gradually built a loyal following across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

Levy told the audience at Shavuot that a year and a half ago he was invited by the organiser of the Dead Sea Half Marathon to participate. Following news of the murders of the Bibas brothers and their mother Shiri who were taken hostage on 7 October and later killed in Gaza, he decided to run



in a batman costume for Ariel Bibas who so loved the superhero and for his baby brother Kfir. From there Levy carried the story of the Bibas family around the world. He ran marathons in 10 countries, bringing awareness to the challenges facing Israel to the rest of the Jewish world. His efforts have received widespread attention – including from people who had never heard of the Bibas boys’ tragedy. Although he was thrilled to be in South Africa to run, he received numerous threats and online intimidation in the days leading up to the event. He said he could barely sleep and did not feel safe to be out and about. Not only was he threatened and intimidated but there were also attempts to get the race cancelled.

In a post on Instagram he reflected with tears, “In the last week I have received threats, videos, posters and protests against me for being a Jew, running for two boys. I’ve never felt more nervous in a run.”

“They brought a message of dignity, pride, and peace in the face of so much hostility and hatred...”



Ironically Levy's mission has never been political or religious or Zionist. "All I ever wanted to do was try and be positive. I've never ever said one thing negative about any other culture or religion. I've just tried to be a proud Jew and to run for two boys who deserve to be remembered."

Ronen Jackson, President of the Shul, was very moved by Levy's talk and he joined thousands of supporters gathered at cheering stations along the marathon route on 24 May, an initiative organised by the South African Zionist Federation Cape Council.

"It was incredible to see how the community came together in support. There were hundreds of people dressed in batman outfits, in Levy's traditional orange and black colours - with signs, with Israeli flags - cheering him on," said Jackson. "They brought a message of dignity, pride, and peace in the face of so much hostility and hatred," added Rabbi Hecht. "Everyone who participated, as spectators or the runners, were completely energised by the experience. My hope is that they carry that sense of purpose and identity into the weeks ahead."

Yoel Levy saw Jackson along the route and asked him to run alongside him for a kilometre. Levy complained that his hamstrings were sore and he was exhausted, but they chatted as he held a poster of the Bibas boys in his hands.

"He told me how fearful he had been before the race and how much intimidation and hostility he received," said Jackson. "But he was blown away by our community and the amount of support he got and how warm and embracing people were towards him."

Said Jackson of the day - "It was electric. It was unifying. The passion and support that everyone contributed...it was one of those experiences that one remembers forever."



BATI *Club*

By Rebbetzin Chani Hecht



BACK ROW (L-R): SADIE JOSSEL, EDEN HESSEN, NOVA POZNIAK, OLIVIA CLOSENBERG, AVA RUBENSTEIN, TZFAT BARR
MIDDLE ROW (L-R): ANNA SHER, MARNI GAMSU, REBECCA BLOCH, RACHEL COHEN, RAFAELA CUNIO, ELLIE GOLDBERG
FRONT ROW (L-R): NAOMI KATZ, SHAYNA HURWITZ, EMMA BRENER, ALEXANDRA JAFFE, ROMI LAHAT, EMMA RUBENSTEIN



b CEREMONY



The Bat Mitzvah Club Graduation Ceremony was a beautiful celebration, marking the culmination of a meaningful year of learning, growth and friendship.

Inspired by the timeless words of Eishet Chayil, this year's ceremony explored the many qualities that together create the portrait of a remarkable Jewish woman.

Through heartfelt presentations, the girls reflected on the lives of the extraordinary women of the Torah, sharing the timeless lessons they had learnt from them and how those lessons continue to guide and inspire Jewish girls today.

The musical and vocal accompaniment of Cantor Ivor Joffe, with the choir and talented musicians, were a magnificent addition. One of the most moving moments of the ceremony was the traditional parents' blessing, as mothers and fathers surrounded their daughters with love and encouragement at this significant milestone.

The celebrations concluded with a delicious afternoon tea in the decorated hall, where families and friends gathered to celebrate the achievements of our Bat Mitzvah girls.

More than a graduation, the ceremony celebrated the beginning of a new chapter, reminding each girl that she has a unique role to play in the ongoing story of the Jewish people.



MOSHELE *and the* **CALL of the SHOFAR**

Once there lived a young boy named Moshe who had lost both his parents. Because he was small and much loved by the people of his town, everyone called him Moshele. When he was younger, Moshele studied Torah with the other children in cheder. As he grew older, however, he needed to earn a living. The townspeople helped him by filling a basket with buttons, needles and other small items, which he sold in the nearby villages.

The work was not easy. In summer the roads were hot and dusty, and in winter they were covered with snow. Moshele rarely complained. His greatest wish was simply to spend more time learning Torah.

One winter's day, Moshele was walking along a snowy road, softly reciting Tehillim

as he went. The snow fell more heavily, covering the path until he could no longer see where he was going. Without realising it, he wandered into a small wood. Tired and cold, Moshele sat down beside a tree stump to rest. He tried hard to stay awake, but soon his eyes closed.

A kind farmer travelling nearby noticed the boy in the snow. He quickly lifted Moshele into his wagon, wrapped him warmly and brought him home. The farmer and his wife cared for him until he recovered.

When Moshele awoke, he could not remember his name or where he had come from. The farmer's wife gently reassured him and began calling him Peter. Moshele stayed with the family and helped them with their work. He was



hardworking, cheerful and eager to learn, but he had no memory of being Jewish.

Many months later, the farmer took him to town to sell produce. The streets were unusually quiet, and they soon discovered that it was Rosh Hashanah. As they passed the synagogue, Moshele felt strangely drawn towards it.

He stepped inside and stood quietly near the door. The people were wrapped in tallitot, praying with deep feeling. The melodies seemed familiar. The Torah scrolls, the words and the atmosphere stirred something inside him. Then the shofar was sounded. Tekiah. Shevarim. Teruah.

The notes reached deep into Moshele's heart. Memories began to return: his childhood, his Torah learning, his people and even his true name. "It is me," he whispered. "I am Moshele. I am a Jew."

The shofar seemed to be calling him home—not only to the town he had



forgotten, but to the person he truly was. With tears in his eyes, Moshele thanked Hashem for helping him remember. He knew that no matter how far a person may wander, the soul never forgets where it belongs.

CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS



QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

1. Why do you think Moshele felt drawn to the synagogue before he remembered who he was?
2. What sounds, smells, foods or traditions make you feel connected to your family and to being Jewish?
3. The shofar helped Moshele remember his true identity. What message do you think the shofar gives us each Rosh Hashanah?
4. The farmer and his wife showed kindness to someone they did not know. What can we learn from the way they helped Moshele?
5. What does the story mean when it says that "the soul never forgets where it belongs"?





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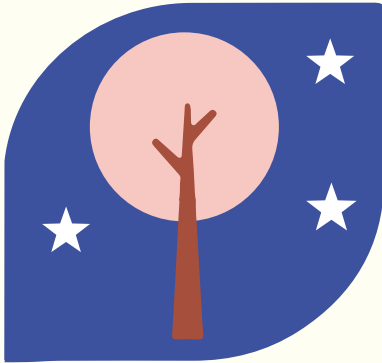
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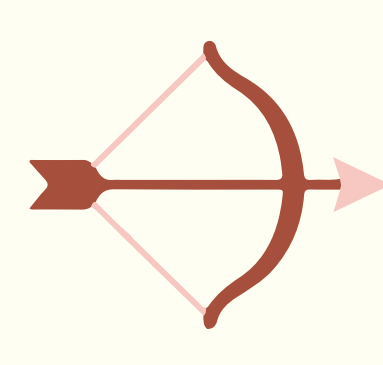
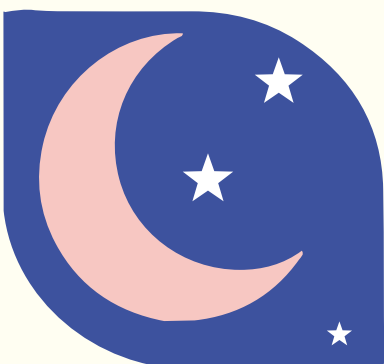


MARAIS ROAD SHUL *and* HERZLIA WEIZMANN

Marais Road Shul is proud to share a unique and meaningful relationship with Weizmann Primary School. Each year, every grade is welcomed into the Shul for a special experience designed especially for them - from Shabbat dinners and Siddur ceremonies to singing in Shul and other memorable programmes. These shared moments strengthen the children's connection to Jewish life, community and the Shul, creating treasured memories along the way.







LAG B'OMER

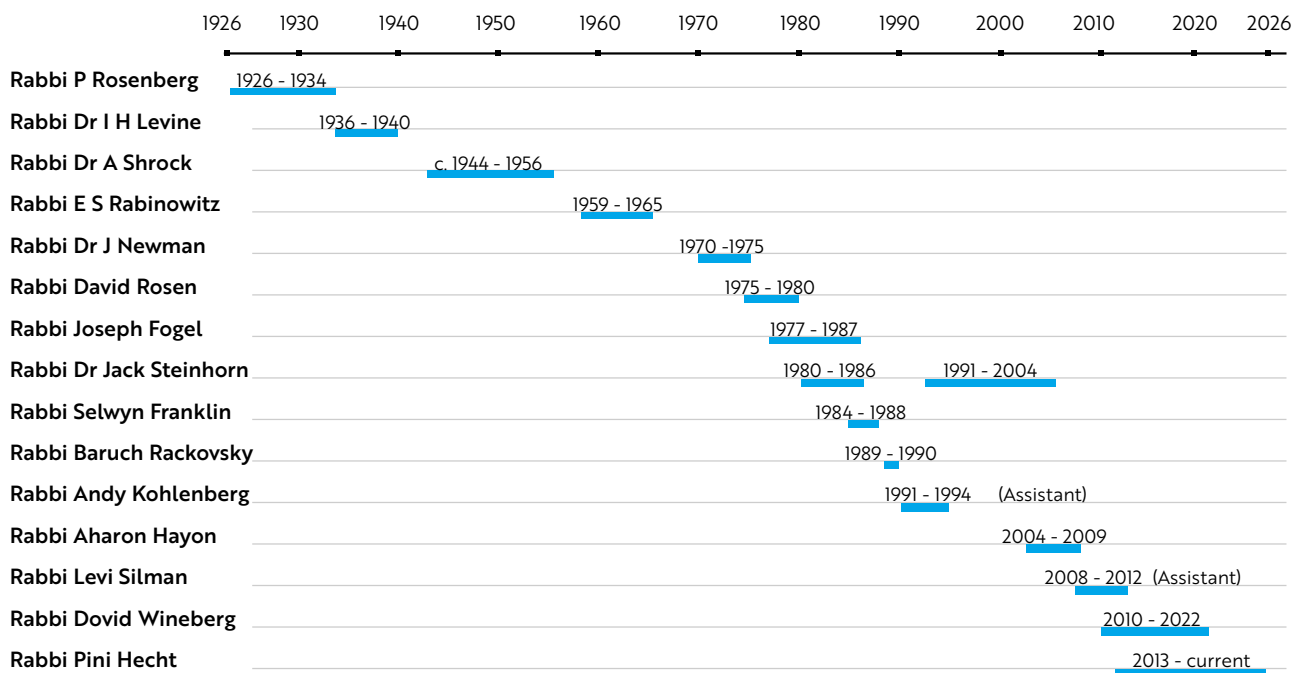
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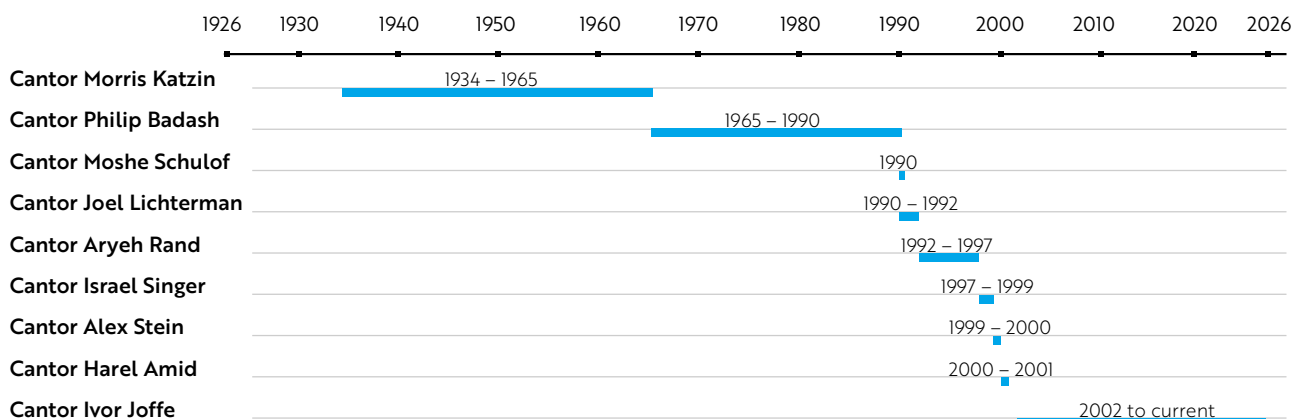


For a century, Marais Road Shul has been shaped by generations of dedicated lay and spiritual leadership. We honour those who have served our community and helped guide it from 1926 to today.

OUR RABBIS



OUR CHAZZANIM



OUR PRESIDENTS

Mr A Abrahams
1926 – 1929 / 1939 – 1941

Dr H Kramer
1927 – 1928 / 1929 – 1930

Mr I Mauerberger
1930 – 1931 / 1938 – 1939

Mr A Jackson
1931 – 1934

Mr A Sacks
1934 – 1938 / 1941 – 1943

Mr J Shenkman
1943 – 1945

Mr J Phillips
1945 – 1947

Mr P Wilensky
1947 – 1948

Mr P Marks
1948 – 1950

Mr N Bloch
1950 – 1951

Mr A Sack
1951 – 1953

Mr A Yach
1953 – 1955

M L Aronson
1955 – 1956

Dr M Epstein
1956 – 1958

Mr J Yankelowitz
1958 – 1959 / 1966 – 1968

Mr M Berzack
1960 – 1962

Mr R Lessem
1962 – 1964

Dr E L Kirsch
1964 – 1966 / 1972 – 1974

Mr S L Gross
1968 – 1970

Mr O Kinderlerer
1970 – 1972

Mr A B H Margolis
1974 – 1976

Mr S Sive
1976 – 1978

Mr M Galloon
1978 – 1980

Mr N Smith
1980 – 1982

Mr L Van de Kar
1982 – 1984

Mr L Marcow
1984 – 1985

Mr G Breskal
1985 – 1987

Mr E Segal
1987 – 1989

Mr J Sapire
1989 – 1991 / 1994 – 1995

Mr C Sossen
1991 – 1992

Mr C Scher
1992 – 1994

Dr H Buchinsky
1995 – 1997

Mr D Cohen
1997 – 1999

Mr A Berman
1999 – 2001

Mr C Allen
2001 – 2003

Dr C Rabinowitz
2003 – 2006

Mr S Bloch
2006 – 2008

Mr H Lewin
2008 – 2009

Mr A Miller
2009 – 2011

Mr S Gore
2011 – 2013

Mr S Greenhill
2013 – 2015

Mr A Bloch
2015 – 2019

Mr D Gordon
2019 – 2023

Mr R Wagenheim
2023 – 2026

Mr R Jackson
2026- current

OUR CHAIRLADIES

Leah Berzack
1960 to 1962

E Rabinowitz
1962 to 1963

Leah Marks
1964 to 1971

Zelda Newman
1971 to 1974

Fanny Levinsohn
1974 to 1981

Shirley Segal
1981 to 1991

Leah Bub
1991 to 2002

Luba Allen
2002 to 2003

Esther Bloch
2003 to 2010

Kerry Miller
2010 to 2014

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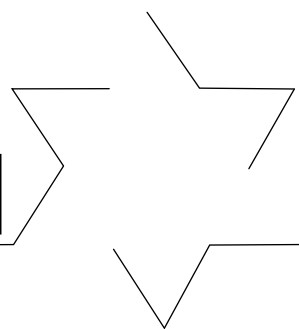
As we celebrate Rosh Hashanah, a time for reflection and new beginnings, may your table be filled with delicious food and your hearts with joy. We wish you a year of sweetness, prosperity, and good health. L'Shanah Tovah!



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A TRIBUTE *to* YOM HASHOAH



DANIEL GRUZD

YOUNG MARAIS ROAD SHUL MEMBER
& HEAD BOY HERZLIA HIGH

I stand before you as a student, a young Jew, and a descendant of those who fled Eastern Europe before the Holocaust. I am a product of the history we mark today.

Ninety years ago, a window opened. This was a window of time – narrow, urgent, and closing fast. A window through which some were able to escape. And through which most were not. That window is at the heart of what we remember today.

In 1933, Hitler came to power. For many Jews, the danger was immediately clear.

For others, it was impossible to believe it would come to what it came to. Surely it would pass. Surely the world would not allow it. The window was open, but most could not yet see what was waiting on the other side.

*"I know this history,
and I will carry it
forward, l'dor v'dor,
from generation
to generation"*

By 1935, the Nuremberg Laws had stripped Jews of their citizenship. The window began to narrow. In 1936, the Olympics came to Berlin – a curtain drawn across a window so the world outside could not see what was happening within. That same year, the SS Stuttgart docked in Cape Town harbour, carrying families who had made the agonising decision to leave, with little more than a few items in a suitcase and the quiet, devastating hope of a new beginning. By 1937, the Aliens Act had effectively barred further Jewish immigration. The window was narrowing to almost nothing. And then came the night of the 9th of November, 1938. Kristallnacht. The Night of Broken Glass. In a single night, the windows of synagogues, Jewish businesses, and Jewish homes across Germany were smashed. But it was not just glass that shattered that night. It was the last desperate hope that they could still survive by staying. The window of escape did not just close

on Kristallnacht. It was shattered. Deliberately. Publicly. Without consequence. By 1939, the war had begun. The window was sealed.

For those who had made it through – who arrived in Cape Town with their suitcases and their grief – escape was only the beginning. They searched desperately for news of those they'd left behind. For the vast majority who remained in Europe, the Holocaust brought annihilation. The window had closed, and there was no way back through it. Ninety years is a lifetime. And yet here we are, in this cemetery, still gathering. Still remembering. Still saying their names.

But there is another window I need to speak about – one that is closing now, quietly, and with less drama, but with consequences just as profound. It is the window of living memory.

The last survivors of the Holocaust are nearly gone. My generation – the young people of this community – we are the last generation that had the chance to sit across from a survivor. To hold their hand. To look into their eyes and hear the words: "I was there. I survived. I persevered". That window is almost closed. And when it closes, it will never open again.

What remains is us.

We are also the first generation to grow up watching Holocaust denial spread virally across the globe. On the same platforms where we learn and connect with friends, there are people – some of them my age – who look into a camera and tell the world it didn't happen. We are the first generation for whom antisemitism arrives not in pamphlets, but in notifications. Not shouted in a street, but casually shared, anonymously and algorithmically, to millions.

We stand at a strange and serious window. The last to receive the memory firsthand and the first to have to defend it in a digital world that has no memory of its own.

The window is no longer about escape. It is about remembrance. And it is our responsibility to keep it open. Because time dulls memory. It turns tragedy into history, and history into a footnote. That is precisely why we are standing here today,

*... we are the last generation
that had the chance to sit
across from a survivor.
To hold their hand.
To look into their eyes
and hear the words:
"I was there. I survived.
I persevered".*

and why we have stood here for many years, and why we will continue to stand here for many years to come – because this must never be allowed to fade into the background of the world.

Every time we show up to a ceremony like this one, we hold the window open. Every time we push back against a lie we see online, we hold the window open. Every time a young person stands up, as I am standing up now, and says:

"I know this history, and I will carry it forward, l'dor v'dor, from generation to generation" – we hold the window open.

To those who were denied the window – who stayed, who waited, who believed in the very country they called home, who were never given the chance to leave – we remember you. We say your names in this cemetery, and we refuse to let you disappear.

And to my generation: we are not bystanders to history. We are its next guardians. The window of memory is in our hands now. Time will try to close it. Indifference will try to close it. Denial will try to close it. It is our responsibility – yours and mine – to hold it open. Not just in remembrance of what happened, but in commitment that it can never and must never happen again.

The glass shattered in 1938. But we are still here, still gathering. Still remembering. Still holding the pieces.

Am Yizkor! May we always remember.

(Amended version of original speech)



IN MEMORIAM



Sincere sympathy is extended to the families of the following members who have passed away.

ALEC COHEN
AUBREY MUSNICK
ARNIE WITKIN
ARNOLD SWIEL
CARIN WOLMAN
CAROL BARNETT
CAROLE SWARTZ
DAPHNE GEVINT
DAVID BRESKAL
DAVID HERSCH
DOREEN KAY
DOROTHY BAGRAIM
EDITH SCHNEIDER
EILEEN SMIEDT
ELDRED POLIKOFF
ESTELLE SIVE
ETA SCHER
FANNY SAPIRE
GEOFFREY NEIMAN

GOLDA LOWENSTEIN
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JOSEPH KATZ
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KEILE GROSS
KEITH BENJAMIN
LARA RUSSAK
LES LAZARUS
LESLIE LEWIS
LESLIE SWEIDAN
LESLIE VIDES
LILIAN SHELDON
LOLA GOLD
MARION GLEZER
MATHILDE DOBRIN
MAUREEN AGINSKY
MAUREEN GORDON

MEL MARSHALL
MERLE RUTENBERG
MERVYN ROSENBERG
MORRIS ROZEN
NAOMI SANK
NEVA GISHEN
PATRICIA ABRAHAMS
RALPH SEGAL
REVA CHAIT
RICHARD GELB
RUBY MARON
SARAH BRAJTMAN
SELWYN GORDON
SONJA KESCHNER
STAN KATZ
VIVienne BERNSTEIN
WOLFIE BLOOM

*Wishing all a happy
and healthy New Year*



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