Beyond the

GATES

Confirming Our Legacy





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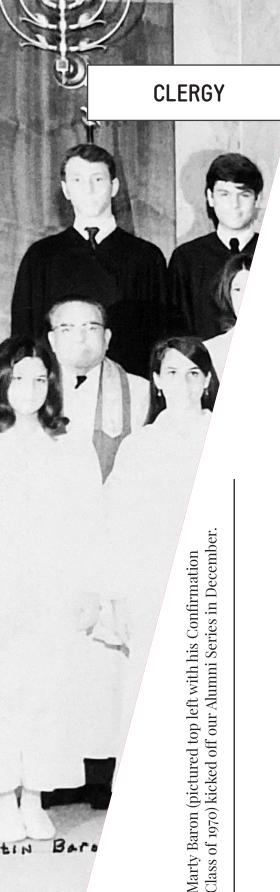
Torah Circle

We express our gratitude to our congregants. Thank you for your commitment to our temple through your Torah Circle Pledge. Beyond the

GATES

CONGREGATION SCHAARAI ZEDEK SPRING 2021

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Confirming Our Legacy

Celebrating our past, present, and future Jewish leaders in the community

n February 4, we were joined on Zoom by Rik Heller, founder and CEO of Wello, Inc. Rik was confirmed by Schaarai Zedek in 1973. It was fascinating to hear him talk about how he created a temperature-taking kiosk to detect potentially infectious individuals in 2014 before infectious disease was as common a topic as it is today. Rik joined us from Dallas and talked about the future of disease prevention, but what I will take most from his presentation was how Rik spoke of Schaarai Zedek.

Rik began his presentation with a photo of his parents, sharing that he and his brother had begged them to let them go to religious school at the temple. (This is the way all of our students come each Sunday morning!) He spoke fondly of his time at Schaarai Zedek, and his actions after his program finished reinforced his sentiments. After

most congregants said "thank you" and "goodbye," Rik and his brother, joined by their mother, stayed online along with five other members of the 1973 Confirmation class, reminiscing over their shared experience in Rabbi Sundheim's Confirmation class and leading up to it.

Rik was part of our alumni series that also featured Pulitzer Prize winner Martin "Marty" Baron (confirmed 1970), who just announced his retirement after eight years as the Washington Post executive editor. Marty's presentation can be seen on our YouTube channel (youtube. com/congregationschaaraizedek). On April 22, we will be joined by Janet Echelman (confirmed 1981), a world-renowned sculptor whose most recent piece, Bending Arc, is installed at the new St. Petersburg Pier. As exciting as it's been to see the accomplishments of so many of our alumni, it's been even more re-

L. Zielor

Beyond the **GATES**



Rik Heller (pictured top row, with his Confirmation Class of 1973) joined us in February via Zoom.

freshing to see how they remember their time in our walls and, more importantly, how they're living by the Jewish values they learned here.

Our first edition of "Beyond the Gates" provided a peek into how our congregants have experienced life moments during the COVID-19 pandemic. This edition highlights just a few of our recent alumni who are doing exciting things, along with all of the alumni who are currently sitting on the synagogue's Board of Trustees. We know we could have several volumes holding the accomplishments of all of those who grew up in our walls, so we hope no feelings are hurt. We simply wish to remind us of all of our community's power to impact the future of infinite lives. I know there will be many opportunities in the future to tell more stories of our distinguished alumni and those who are quickly becoming distinguished alumni.

We are also celebrating a new generation of Schaarai Zedek confirmands who are beginning their adult lives by making us all very proud. I am now starting to get calls from my first b'nai mitzvah students and confirmation students, located all over the country, asking me to be a part of their weddings. I am delighted to find young adults living Jewishly as they continue to make Jewish holidays and other observances a part of their lives. But most importantly, they are genuinely living Jewish values in their study, work, and relationships.

We at Schaarai Zedek feel an immense responsibility to all of our young people. Working alongside parents, we are trying to instill Jewish connections that will last far beyond our kids' time in our walls, and we are hopeful that Jewish values will always be a voice in the back of our young people's minds as they

make choices in each of their adult lives. This is why we have worked so hard to make sure that our Amy Gail Buchman Preschool and Flom Religious School have been there for our kids in a safe way under this year's challenging circumstances. While different from "normal," our kids have seen innovative methods that have made the most of our situation, and it has indeed been a delight to see how our congregational team has worked together to make them happen safely.

In Genesis 28:14, God tells Jacob, "Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants."

As a 126-year-old congregation, we have alumni who have gone north, south, east, and west. We have

former students who have been elected to public office, become sports stars, helped to keep people healthy, pursued justice, and molded the minds of future generations. Most importantly, we have created mensches, good people, who let their Jewish values motivate them to make the world around them better. We pray that the young people in our schools today and in

future generations follow in their footsteps, ensuring that our congregation's legacy is a world in which Schaarai Zedek, the gates of righteousness, are open wide for all people. •

Our Confirmation Class of 2020 celebrated with a hybrid online/in-person service on October 18, 2020.



MAZEL TOV

Confirmation Class of 2020

02



Lauren Maye Alexander

Parents: Faith Alexander and Brian Alexander

Noah Beryl Berg

Parents: Victor Berg and Deborah Appel

Haley Arin Black

Parents: Michael and Lora Black

Annie Nora Gruman

Parents: Eric and Dana Gruman

Jacqueline Sarah Hochberg

Parents: Lauri and David Hochberg

Emily Samantha Feldman

Parents: Mitch and Michelle Feldman

Rachel Eden Fischel

Parents: Alissa and Paul Fischel

Nathan Arnold Fisher

Parents: Steve and Cheryl Fisher

Ryan Samuel Frank

Parents: Gail and Gary Frank

Shai Aaron Kleiner

Parents: Lawrence and Paula Kleiner

Jaclyn Rose Nast

Parents: Edward and Lauren Nast

Rose Fei Ping Sacks Zusman

Parent: Ellen Sacks Zusman

Sela Ivy Teplin

Parents: Vicki Kaufman and Stephen Teplin

ALUMNI

Board of Trustees Then & Now

03





"I grew up a student at CSZ. When I returned to Tampa as an adult, I became part of the Brotherhood Board which led me to a seat on the Board of Trustees. To me, CSZ has become a place of belonging and provides a feeling of warmth and comfort whenever I am there."

- Robert Applebaum





"My favorite memories of growing up at Schaarai Zedek were celebrating Jewish holidays at our synagogue with friends and family. It's my honor to serve on the board now to help ensure that these celebrations continue for our congregants and their families."

- Cheryl Fisher





"Being able to lead my synagogue that has shaped my life since I was young means a great deal to me. This is my second home, and I am proud to help mold its future."

- Ben Gersten





"Being involved in leadership at Schaarai Zedek is exceptionally rewarding. The foundation of my Jewish values, both spiritual and community-oriented, was established during my childhood at the synagogue. My mission while serving our great congregation is to motivate future generations to be young leaders empowered by our historical traditions."

- Michael Rosenbach





"Serving on the Board at Congregation Schaarai Zedek is meaningful to me because the temple always served a special place in my life. It's where I was Bat Mitzvah'd, confirmed, married, had baby namings for my children, sent them to AGB Preschool, and now Sunday School. I look forward to the cycle continuing with my children."

- Caroline Schwartz





"I believe it is important to give back to the place where so many life-cycle family memories took place. Contributing to that legacy is truly meaningful."

- Scott Shimberg





"Congregation Schaarai Zedek has been an important part of my family's life dating back nearly 55 years. In fact, it's unlikely I would have been raised in Tampa had Rabbi Zielonka not hired my grandfather to be the Associate Rabbi in 1967. Rabbi Birnholz officiated my Bar Mitzvah (1997), Confirmation (1999), and wedding (2016). It is a privilege to be able to serve on the Board of Trustees and **Executive Committee for** an institution that has meant so much to my family and me."

- Daniel Singer





"My heart is full when I think about the honor of being able to help lead our Congregation. It means the world to me, and I hope I have set an example for our children. L'dor Vador!"

- Joan Wadler

by Jackie M. Rosenthal, M.D.

ALUMNI

04

Residency During COVID-19





n July, I started my residency training in New York City. While I will ultimately be training at NYU to become a dermatologist, my first year of residency will be spent working on the hospital front lines as an internal medicine physician. Starting residency during 2020, in the middle of a global pandemic, was filled with a plethora of emotions:

- Excitement as I cared for my first patients as their "doctor."
- Nervousness as I prescribed my first medications and performed my first procedures.
- Curiosity as I was challenged with fast on-the-job learning. Sadness as I held my first family meetings to express grave news.
- Anxiousness as I prayed for the healing of my patients.
- Compassion as I treated each patient and family as though they were my own.

But above all, I have learned the true meaning and privilege of being a physician. I am humbled and honored to begin my career during this pivotal moment in history, and I am hopeful for a future filled with more health and happiness.

In parallel to beginning residency, my fiancé, Jake Himeles, and I started meeting with Rabbi Simon in preparation for our marriage. Through these premarital meetings, Jake and I have gained a greater appreciation for our religion, our love, and the deeper meaning of our marriage.

We are grateful for the new role Schaarai Zedek has played in our lives, and we look forward to having Rabbi Simon officiate our wedding in November! •

05

Story of a Lone Solider

by Jake Salzer



fter my confirmation in 2009, I worked as a teaching assistant in the fifth-grade Religious School class, helping students learn Hebrew to prepare for their b'nei mitzvot. Teaching students was a rewarding and fun experience, and I would never have imagined it would also prepare me for my future.

In 2014, I moved to Israel and joined the Israel Defense Forces. I served as a technician in a battery of the Iron Dome, a missile interception system designed to shoot down small rockets that were often launched into Israeli civilian areas.

To serve in the Israeli Air Force, I had to become fluent in Hebrew. Thus, what I had learned and helped teach during my time at Schaarai Zedek came in handy, and I was able to put it to good use to do the important job I had effectively. The practice I had teaching students allowed me to help others better, and my service was incredibly meaningful, and it was an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life.

I currently live in Washington, D.C., and am a student again. I am working on my Master's degree in Securities Studies with a concentration in Terrorism and Substate Violence at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

It is hard to believe that my confirmation and teaching assistant days were so long ago, as it feels like it happened just yesterday. I went from tutoring Hebrew in Florida to tutoring English in Israel and continue to tutor even today.

Looking back, I fondly remember the lessons I learned from Rabbi Birnholz and Rabbi Simon, and I hope that other students gain as much from their experience at Schaarai Zedek as I did. •

ALUMNI

LEARNING THROUGH A JEWISH LENS

hen Rabbi Simon asked me to write a piece for this magazine, I was thrilled at first. But slowly, the panic started to set in. After all, I wasn't the most involved student during my early Sunday School years. Like many, going to Sunday School never felt like my choice, just something my sister and I did to get us through our Bat Mitzvah years. I have an October birthday, but my mom wanted me to finish out my seventh-grade year. That's the year that made the difference for me.

Veronica, my older sister, was in the ninth grade and loving her confirmation class with Rabbi Birnholz. As she spent more time getting involved at CSZ, I found myself spending more time there, too, even just talking with the other congregants in youth group events. I began to see how we are all such different people, brought together by what seems like both the smallest and biggest common denominator; being Jewish.

Through all of this, I realized I never stopped being a student at Schaarai Zedek. Even after my confirmation, when I became a Teacher's Assistant, I continued to learn from those around me. Sure, I learned to read Hebrew and the fundamental Jewish values during Sunday school, but my "Jewish education" was never something limited to those two hours a week.

I am constantly learning what it means to be Jewish, whether from the three-year-olds I teach at Amy Gail Buchman Preschool or from the other teachers at the Sunday School, where I am now the Art Director of the PreK-second-grade program. I also learned from the students I would speak with when assisting Lindsey Dewey with youth programs. And it's these "lessons" that help me do just about everything today. They say you learn something new every day. That has never been truer than when you're at Schaarai Zedek. •





07

Embracing My Jewish Roots

by Veronica Grady

rowing up, Sunday mornings to me meant 45-minute car rides to and from the temple, struggling through Hebrew lessons that I started considerably later in my Jewish journey, and, when I was lucky, getting to see Lindsey Dewey, the Youth Director. As a child from a relatively unobservant household who was pretty shy, my connection to Judaism was difficult to navigate and sometimes felt more built around my family's history than any present relevance. That is, until my first NFTY event. Hatikvah Kallah

in eighth grade was the moment I remember thinking Judaism might actually be fun.

I couldn't have possibly known at that time the ripple effects that weekend would have on my life. I traveled to Poland with my peers in 2012, stayed involved in Sunday School as a teacher's assistant, and took on leadership within SchZFTY, all the while defining my own relationship with my religion. Suddenly, I was the one delighted to make the drive to South Tampa, eager to spend any moment I wasn't at school or studying at the synagogue.

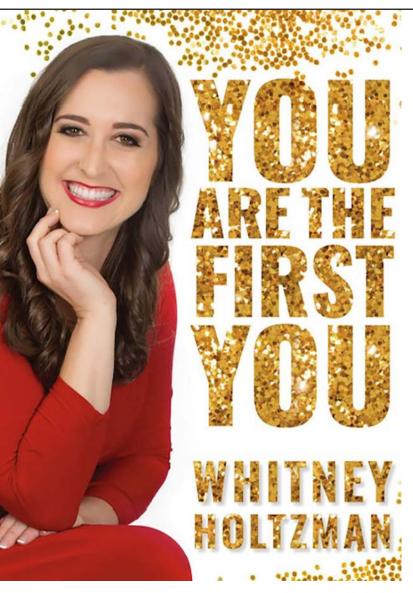
When I left for college, I knew that continuing to be part of a Jewish community was important to me, and I became deeply involved in my campuses' Hillel. I spent breaks back home volunteering at NFTY events, and my summers were also Jewishly involved, from internships with the URJ Youth team in New York to months spent in Warwick at the URJ Kutz Camp. By my junior year, I was lamenting to my Hillel staff members that the work I was doing in Jewish life felt more meaningful and engaging than anything I was doing in the classroom. It was at that point that they helped me see a future in Jewish professional life. Now, as a Springboard Innovation Fellow at Vanderbilt Hillel,



I spend my days working to create the type of community and connection for my students that CSZ instilled in me. My goal of helping every student find what makes Judaism uniquely theirs stems directly from my time as a student of teachers like Lindsey Dewey, Rabbi Simon, and Rabbi Birnholz, who all helped illuminate the ways that our faith is so very alive and relevant at every age. •

ALUMNI

Social Victory



Scharaai Zedek is the reason I was able to pursue my dream career of working in sports. When I was growing up, my mom, Gail Holtzman, would attend the temple board meetings on Monday nights. She would tell my dad, Steve Holtzman, that he was in charge of putting my brother and me to bed on those nights while she was at Scharaai Zedek for her board meetings.

Like clockwork, she'd come home after the Monday night board meetings, and my dad would have me under one arm and my brother under the other arm (way past our bedtime) watching Monday Night Football. My dad refers to those nights as quality parenting.

There's no doubt my dad instilled my love of sports in me. He was a diehard Yankees fan growing up, and we had a whole room in our house filled with baseball memorabilia. For me, I fell in love with football first. We spent our Sundays at the Bucs games, and that is where I discovered my own passion for sports. When it came time to go to college, I realized that life is short, and I wanted to spend my

Whitney recently published a book titled "You Are the First You."



time doing what I loved. I told my parents I wanted to be the sideline reporter on Monday Night Football. They asked if I could pick a career with more than one opening. I said I'd gladly also do Sunday Night Football, which just doubled my options!

I went on to the University of Florida, where I was lucky enough to experience two football and two basketball championships between the time I was accepted and graduated. I was also there during the Tim Tebow era and was lucky enough to be a sports reporter for the campus TV station. During my summers at UF, I interned for the Tampa Bay Rays, Turner Sports, and ESPN.

After graduating, I joined ESPN to help them launch their women's initiative, espnW. I then went on to run social media for Major League Baseball and all of its teams. My pivot into the marketing world came when I began working for entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk. Through Gary, I was ultimately connected with RISE, an organization that uses the power of sports to promote racial equality. RISE was founded by Stephen Ross, who owns the Miami Dolphins. I'd found my calling at the intersection of sports and making the world a better place.

I now have my own company, based in Tampa, called Social Victories, where I help pro athle-

Whitney and family with Rabbi Birnholz at her bat mitzvah at Congregation Schaarai Zedek.

"I'd found my calling at the intersection of sports and making the world a better place." tes and leaders in the sports world build their brands. The majority of my athlete clients are in the NFL. I help them maximize their time in the spotlight and find their purpose off the field, so they can build additional careers when their playing days come to an end.

I also recently published a book called "You Are the First You." It details my career journey and all of the lessons people need to know in life and in business, but that no one teaches in school. The book is available in bookstores and on Amazon.

I knew I always wanted to come back to Tampa, thanks in large part to the friends who are like family we've met through Scharaai Zedek. I hope my career path inspires others to follow their hearts and chase their dreams. Mine started many years ago, thanks to those Scharaai Zedek board meetings on Monday nights! •

RABBI RICHARD J. BIRNHOLZ



ANNUAL GIVING

We express our gratitude to our congregants. Thank you for your commitment to our temple through your Torah Circle pledge.

s we celebrate the accomplishments of many who have passed through our gates as young people, we know that we couldn't give our congregants of all ages so many opportunities to embrace their Jewish lives without the support of all of you.

During this challenging year, with your help, we were able to focus on safety, reaching our congregants in new and innovative ways while still providing one-on-one connection and care whenever needed. Our Rabbi Richard J Birnholz Torah Circle allows us to ensure that financial means are not a barrier to anyone's participation in the congregation. It also allowed us to be innovative in the way we've brought Temple services and programming into your homes over the past year.

Thank you to this year's Rabbi Richard J Birnholz Torah Circle Challenge Donors: Laura and Richard Eggnatz; Laureen and Scott Jaffe; Meg and Gary Moskovitz; Laura and Steve Salzer; the Gil, Betsy, Dan, and Holly Singer Family (in memory of Rabbi Frank Sundheim); and Paula and Carl Zielonka (in memory of Rabbi David and Carol Zielonka). In a time of uncertainty, each of these families stood up and paved the way for the congregation to follow their lead, and that's precisely what you all did!

Thank you to all Torah Circle donor families who made Congregation Schaarai Zedek a priority this year. On behalf of the clergy, staff, and board of trustees of the congregation, please know that our congregants are our top priority, and we thank you for making our holy work possible! •





2020-2021 Challenge Givers

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Laura & Steve Salzer
the Gil, Betsy, Dan, & Holly Singer Family
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Gail & Andy Titen
Joan & Marc Wadler
Shelly & Steven Walk*
Alex & Andrew Warren*
Ruth & Jean Yadley*
Anonymous

Beracha (Blessing) - \$250

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*Donation is new or increased from last year and will be matched by the Torah Circle Challenge Givers.

If you would like to make a donation to the 2020-2021 Torah Circle, please call the temple office at (813) 876-2377.



Congregation Schaarai Zedek 3303 W Swann Ave Tampa, FL 33609-4643

CSZ AT HOME

While information about programming is not currently being mailed to your homes, please make sure to read our weekly CSZ at Home emails and visit zedek.org often for information about services, classes, and other gatherings.

Feel free to contact the temple office with questions any time!

Website: zedek.org Email: office@zedek.org Phone: (813) 876-2377 Facebook: @csztampa Instagram: @schaaraizedek

YouTube: Congregation Schaarai Zedek

In-Person Events

Please watch your email for the most recent updates regarding our process for our ongoing return to in-person events. This will occur in stages, and we look forward to seeing all of you again safely soon. If you have questions regarding lifecycle events, please reach out to our clergy.