



# The Chronicle

## The Community Newspaper of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida

Issue #9, May 2020

Iyar - Sivan 5780

### Together We Support Jewish Life Locally and Globally

Dear Friend of the Jewish Council,

There is no doubt that these are unprecedented and highly challenging times for our community, our country, Israel and the world. Another day, week, month passes under the draining reality of this new normal, with needs escalating dramatically among the most vulnerable. More families are dealing with illness and some have been devastated by loss. ***Our hearts go out to every one of them.*** This may be one of the most difficult periods our community has ever faced. But the burden is shared by every one of us -- together. A core value of Jewish life is, "*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh*" (all of Israel are responsible for one another). Our shared Jewish values provide a road-map for weathering this storm, and we will translate those values into community-defining actions: saving lives, caring for the sick and performing acts of kindness.

Although the offices of the Jewish Council and many of our partner agencies in North Central Florida have been closed to the public, it does not mean our Jewish community has shut down. Obviously, it is not business as usual. The Jewish Council, like others, has canceled or postponed public events, but we remain very much open for business to help the hungry, the sick and others at-risk. We will continue coming together in other critical ways, providing support to each other and for the vital organizations and congregations that give so much life to our lovely community. Yes, these are uncertain, challenging times. What is certain is that -- together -- we will meet the challenge. We will keep you apprised of communal needs, the ways we are helping and how you can, too.

Since mid-March, the Jewish Council has been regularly checking in with community members and offering aid, whenever possible. Our women's giving circle, the Mitzvah Makers, has also awarded monies to several local agencies who are on the front lines of responding to need in our community. Since the beginning of this fiscal year, we have distributed over \$10,000 in micro-grants to organizations like Bread of the Mighty, St. Francis House, Family Promise and many others. We are proud to work with the Mitzvah Makers and all of the dedicated agencies who do such important, life sustaining work.

We hope you enjoyed our virtual programs this spring. JCNCF's Israel Day celebration for Yom HaAtzmaut, a Facebook live streamed concert with Israeli singer/songwriter, Rami Feinstein, was viewed by nearly 200 people. Our online program for Holocaust Remembrance Day - Yom HaShoah - can still be viewed on the JCNCF website under the events tab.

The Jewish Council's umbrella organization, the Jewish Federations of North America, has put together a website ([www.jewishtgether.org](http://www.jewishtgether.org)) of curated resources and experiences. Whether it's for yourself, your family or as a professional, we hope you will find what you're looking for -- from virtual Jewish events to ways to connect, learn, share or help.

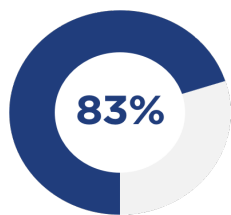
Through the efforts of the Jewish Council and the Jewish Federations of North America, we impact Jewish lives, sustain the Jewish people, and enrich Jewish communities for generations to come. We are able to achieve our philanthropic and program goals through the generous donations of our community members in North Central Florida and beyond. ***So far this year, the JCNCF Annual Campaign has raised over \$165,000 of our goal of \$200,000. That's 83% of our target! We are so grateful to all whom have already donated to the Annual Campaign -- thank you! With your help, we can get to 100%!***

Here in North Central Florida, and around the world, wherever Jews call home, your support of the Jewish Council makes a difference in more ways than we can say. Every dollar of every donation counts, so please give what you can. ***We thank you in advance and we are grateful to be your partner in sustaining our Jewish community.***

Best regards,

Dr. Steven M. Slutsky  
Campaign Chair

Virginia Brissette Hirshik  
President & CEO



## Together we can do extraordinary things!

JCNCF's Annual Campaign goal for 2019/2020 is \$200,000, and so far we have raised over \$165,000. That's 83% of our goal. Visit [www.jcncf.org](http://www.jcncf.org) to make your secure donation online now, or contact us at 352.371.3846 or [office@jcncf.org](mailto:office@jcncf.org).

The Jewish Council of North Central Florida operates entirely on the contributions of generous community members like YOU! With that in mind, the JCNCF events that you see listed in this newsletter each month are made possible by those donations. Please consider making a gift to the Annual Campaign or to any of our special funds. Your donation supports Jewish causes locally and globally and means so much to so many.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Pledged \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### JCNCF Mission Statement

*As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, the JCNCF has been formed to operate and engage in philanthropic, cultural, and other group activities for charitable and educational purposes that shall contribute to the welfare of the Jewish community of North Central Florida and other Jewish communities around the world.*

### The Chronicle

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of North Central Florida.

### Submissions Policy

News and announcements of events that are of interest and open to the entire Jewish community will be included as space allows. The times and places of regular and special Jewish religious events, as well as Jewish organizational events, will be placed in the Chronicle's monthly community calendar.

Please submit original material of 500 words or less, not published or to be published elsewhere, along with photos of interest to the community. Submissions may be e-mailed in Word document format to [chronicle@jcncf.org](mailto:chronicle@jcncf.org); or dropped off at the Jewish Council of North Central Florida office. Please submit photos in high resolution with a caption identifying the subject and all people depicted. JCNCF reserves the right to edit all submissions. *The Chronicle* does not publish letters to the editor.

*The Chronicle* and the Jewish Council do not endorse the goods and services advertised in these pages, and make no representation as to the kashrut of the food, products, and services in such advertising.

If you have any questions, email [chronicle@jcncf.org](mailto:chronicle@jcncf.org) or call 352.371.3846.

**All submissions are due on or before  
the 10th of the month prior to publication.**

## The Board & Staff of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida

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## Thank you to Phillip Schwartz!

The virtual 2020 Yom HaShoah community memorial program was compiled and composed by Philip Schwartz from the library of JCNCF Yom HaShoah programs that he has filmed, recorded, and preserved for more than 20 years. The Yom HaShoah committee, JCNCF, and the entire Jewish community in Gainesville and our surrounding region are grateful to Philip for his many talents and tireless dedication to enhancing and maintaining the memories of our events and lives.



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A generous donor has pledged to match donations to PJ Library received until the end of June

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# A Twenty Year Perspective of the Jewish Council

**By Rosalie Bandyopadhyay, Outgoing Vice President  
Jewish Council of North Central Florida**

Twenty years ago, Jewish lay leaders perceived that our local Jewish community had many vibrant branches, but they believed coordination and communication among these branches was essential to ensure positive growth. After an incredibly empowering "Town Hall" opened to any community member who chose to attend and then many months of organizing under the auspices of the Gainesville Jewish Appeal, The Jewish Council of North Central Florida (JCNCF) was founded.

The first goal was to have a community-wide communication vehicle. *The Chronicle* soon began publishing and was mailed at no charge to every household regardless of religious or group affiliation. This was made possible by volunteer work and generous donors who covered all costs. Now, thanks to our dedicated staff, advertisers and donors, the regular monthly mailing continues and *The Chronicle* has an on-line version, as well.

Secondly, we wanted to expand local cultural and educational activities for all residents with the specific goal of reaching the unaffiliated, youth and seniors. The programs now presented by the Jewish Council twenty years after its founding has surpassed our "wildest dreams" in those early days. The collaborations developed to help implement these programs have been remarkable. The many years of work by JCNCF officers, members of the Board of Directors, the volunteers and part-time staff in the early years began this successful journey now ably continued by present staff and a new generation of volunteers and Board members.

As always – in the past, in the present and in the future – the Jewish community of North Central Florida supports Israel and worldwide Jewry through generous financial donations to Jewish Federations of North America and especially the two programs in Israel that we have adopted – The Jaffa Institute and Beit Ruth.

This remarkable achievement started with a dozen or so of us meeting on Sunday mornings in Gilda Josephson and Jeff Weingarten's home – over bagels, of course - once again proving the belief that true and positive change can begin with just a small group of dedicated individuals. From there the incredible support of our Jewish community – their work, ideas and financial donations - has continued this remarkable local "grass roots" organization called JCNCF. Here's to the next twenty years!



## Thank you, Rosalie, for Twenty Years!

As Rosalie leaves the JCNCF board, we are grateful for her enduring support. Whether serving on the board, committees, or offering advice and coaching during campaigns and projects, Rosalie's institutional knowledge and organizational skills have been invaluable. *From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!* - Dawn Burgess-Krop, Past President



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# An Uphill Challenge for Equity

by Heath Lynn Silberfeld

*This is another in a series of articles about anti-Semitism and bullying—and progress made in countering them—in the Alachua County school system. The articles in this series focus on actions taken by the school board and how parents and students who attended the May 2019 school board meeting perceive any progress made.*

While we're making our individual and collective ways through the COVID-19 pandemic, and while schools in the Alachua County School District (ACSD) are learning to deliver curriculum online, the Jewish Council of North Central Florida and community members remain ever attentive to how accurately and respectfully our community is being perceived and treated. That rings true as we continue to follow how the ACSD board, school administrators, teachers, and other staff adhere to the state mandate for curriculum delivery of appropriate Holocaust history throughout the grades, as well as how Jewish students are being spared the indignities of anti-Semitism.

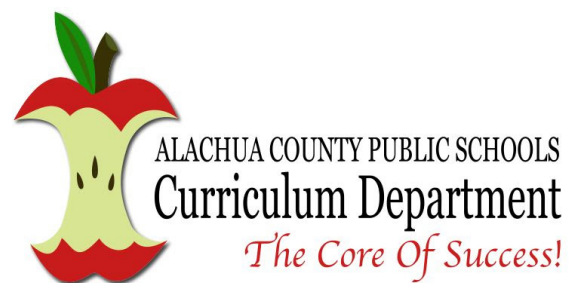
It's been a year since it was reported in June 2019 in The Chronicle that community members had attended a monthly meeting of the Alachua County School Board to report about bullying by students who—in part out of youthful ignorance and in part fueled by willful stereotyping—terrorized Jewish students verbally with anti-Semitic slurs and visually with swastikas carved into wooden desktops, better-than-you put-downs meant to demean and offend, and such.

At the May 2019 meeting of the Alachua County School Board, assurances were given that the matter would be addressed and that the state mandate for Holocaust education would be followed. Some positive changes have occurred, but social and educational issues persist for Jewish students, as well as for others.

In February I spoke at length with school board member Tina Certain and came away with confidence in her commitment to work in the schools and advance equity for all students. She shared that the ACSD is working toward "Exemplary Status," the official term for successfully implementing the state standard of integrating cross-cultural lesson plans into the curriculum year-round, which includes Holocaust as well as African American history. According to Ms. Certain, about 25% of those units and modules had been written by February 2020, with 2 units and 16 modules for grades K–6, 5 units and 25 modules for grades 6–8, and 4 units and 20 modules for grades 9–12. Professional development is key to integration of these materials, and much of that is on hold until we get through the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, some teacher resources have been made available online via the University of Florida library system.

One cause of bullying, including anti-Semitism, is the fact that magnet programs are set up as schools within schools, which provides an appearance of a desegregated school system alongside the reality that it's not. According to Ms. Certain, even the physical plant in the magnet program at Joseph Williams Elementary at 1245 SE 7th Avenue in Gainesville exemplifies cultural disparities. On a tour of that school, Ms. Certain and other school, district, and state leadership visited two classes and observed dirty hallways and uncomfortably warm room temperatures for local students, whereas the gifted program students' classrooms were noticeably cleaner ("They could eat off the floor") and better furnished and supplied. She was told "It's a different janitor" for different wings of the building, but of course that is an unacceptable explanation. For students, these conditions foster a sense of being unequal and underprivileged and at times result in anti-Semitic provocations lobbed by the local students against those Jewish students who arrive from other parts of Gainesville to participate in the magnet program. This scenario is repeated in other schools. The inspection team made a list of what had been identified as okay and what was needed "to grow." These problems are systemic and have been in place through multiple school and district administrations. As is often the case when it comes to change, it has to come from below.

A bright spot amid the challenges is that Bishop's school counselors have been delivering the Teaching Tolerance curriculum and delivering it to all three grade levels through Language Arts and Social Studies. They also have been using the Pyramid of Hate curriculum with seventh-graders; it covers bullying, name calling, discrimination against ethnic groups, and gender identities. District administrators have discussed other proposed changes with JCNCF's Virginia Brissette; Rebecca Jefferson, Curator of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at UF; representatives from the Florida Holocaust Museum; and the ACSD's Media/Instructional Resources Department; more will be reported on these in future issues of The Chronicle.



Source: Website, Alachua County Public Schools

*Note: When physical/social distancing allow in-person public meetings again, school board meetings will resume on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 pm at the Alachua County School District office, 620 E. University Avenue, Gainesville, phone: 352-955-7300. You may visit any school in the district (when it reopens) by submitting your request 24 hours in advance.*

# An Update from Beit Ruth Village:

**by Danielle Burenstein, Executive Director  
Beit Ruth Educational & Therapeutic Village**

Dear Friends of the Jewish Council of North Central Florida,

First, everyone from the Beit Ruth Village – our Board of Directors, our New York and Israel staff, and, of course, our girls – hope you are all safe and healthy.

So much has happened since we last had the opportunity to “talk” with you in the March issue of *The Chronicle*. The 31 days of March seemed more like 31 years as we all were forced to adapt to a new vocabulary – COVID-19, coronavirus, shelter-in-place, social distancing – and adjust to new realities – constant hand-washing (and handwringing), stockpiling food, and communicating with colleagues and loved ones, day and night via online platforms.

Many of us are dealing with unique challenges. The same is true for the Beit Ruth Village. To give you the on-the-ground realities of how our girls and staff are coping, we spoke with Mor Ben Simchon Lipin, Beit Ruth’s Village Manager and a trained Social Worker who specializes in the treatment of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in girls and women.

## When did the Village realize the seriousness of this situation?

In early April, I asked one of our social workers how many days have we been dealing with corona because I have completely lost my sense of time. I feel like I have been in the Village forever. But really, at the end of February, we started to understand what was happening.

Then, on March 15, we received orders from the court that girls would no longer be allowed to leave the Village for scheduled home visits or other external activities. All field trips and Beit Ruth-hosted conferences and seminars in the Village were cancelled, but the Village remains opened. (Note: As a government-designated “essential” organization, Beit Ruth remains open during emergency situations, just like a hospital.) All staff have received a special hard copy certification to enter and leave the Village to continue working and caring for our girls.

## How did girls react to the news?

The girls were upset, scared, and sad, but we explained that we need to protect them and their families at this time. Even though they have everything they need – food, safety, care – it is very difficult and puts a lot of pressure on them and the staff. We also explained that this is bigger than Beit Ruth, this is bigger than Israel – the whole world is closed. But you know, they are young and they don’t have perspective. Even we as adults still find this hard to understand.

## What has been most challenging?

The only tool we have right now is to tell the girls that they need to trust us. We’ve relaxed certain Village rules for positive behavior to give the girls some breathing room, like extra phone time or sweets during the week which we usually don’t give them because we try to teach healthy eating habits. But these are not normal times – and if this will help, then it is the right thing to do, for now. We listen to them when they speak and cry. The girls really feel this, so they are cooperating. And of course, we all understand their heightened anxiety.



**Mor Ben Simchon Lipin, Beit Ruth's Village Manager**



# Protecting the Vulnerable During the Coronavirus

**How are you managing to keep the girls busy with school and other activities?**

We must keep the “routine” going. We adapted the school day, changed things around as needed. We’ve increased our therapeutic enrichment activities that we normally do – more sports, Zumba, art, and music. It helps to lower anxiety and stress. And we’ve had to bring in additional counselors and other vital staff.

**How are the staff coping?**

What is difficult is that now we have been ordered to wear masks all day, but how can we wear a mask for 15 hours a day when we work with our mouths? Our staff is so committed. We know this is an important battle to fight. We keep staff safe by checking their fever every time they enter the Village. We want to keep everyone safe. We also created a Beit Ruth virtual hug. And we clean a lot!

**What is most important for our community of supporters to know?**

We know you are there and that you are helping. I am connected to other organizations and they don’t have the truly amazing and special support that we have to provide some relief during this crazy and dangerous situation. We are so grateful for this – for them. I want – we want – them to know how thankful we are.



Beit Ruth’s “Virtual Hug,” our social distancing expression of love



During COVID-19, Beit Ruth has been sending a message to all of our friends and supporters that “We Are All in This Together.”

**What have you learned about the Village?**

If you work at Beit Ruth, you need to be creative every day. The positive effect of corona is that it has been a quick course for all of our staff about how to work with our girls when the only tool you have is yourself – the connection, the relationship. This is what it is all about.

# Jewish North Central Florida Responds to COVID-19

In the face of the global pandemic of 2020, local Jewish institutions have adapted in amazing ways to keep programming and resources available to you in North Central Florida. The seriousness of COVID-19 hit the United States at a particularly difficult time for the Jewish community, at the beginning of Passover. In response, local congregations quickly switched up plans for their traditional Seders to their first virtual ones. Rabbi Berl Goldman with his staff and volunteers at the Lubavitch Chabad Jewish Student and Community Center took on the challenge of making sure everyone in our local community had what they needed for a proper Passover by providing Seder to Go Kits.

Other local institutions have shifted their weekly activities to an online format so their congregants can stay connected and spiritually engaged. Temple Shir Shalom in Gainesville have been offering Shabbat services, as well as, educational classes through Zoom including Torah study and Coffee Breaks with Rabbi Michael Joseph. In addition to streaming services online each week, at Congregation B'nai Israel, Rabbi David Kaiman is hosting virtual Torah on Tuesday and virtual Schmooze with the Rabbi sessions. Congregation B'nai Israel has also established a virtual book club and Temple Shir Shalom's Green Team is keeping it's members engaged with climate activism.

The Jewish Council of North Central Florida quickly pivoted to provide an online substitute for our annual Yom HaShoah and Yom HaAtzmaut programs. Thanks to the dedication of Phillip Schwartz and the rest of JCNCF's Yom HaShoah committee, we now have a permanent digital commemoration available for view at [jewishritual.com/yh2020](http://jewishritual.com/yh2020). Over two hundred guests joined us live on Facebook for a concert with Rami Feinstein broadcast directly from his living room in Israel. JCNCF's weekly e-news is packed with links to classes, lectures, movies and more to keep you informed and engaged from home.






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## Transitions: Community Life Events

*Do you have a life cycle event you would like to share with our JCNCF community? Please submit items to [chronicle@jcncf.org](mailto:chronicle@jcncf.org). Submissions may be edited as space allows. Pictures are welcome and encouraged! Transitions may include birth, engagement and wedding announcements, bar and bat mitzvah, graduations, promotions and honors, and memorials.*

***In Memoriam: Our community mourns the passing of these beloved friends and family members:***

Carole Ann Noble Binder,  
Wife of Henry Binder.  
Mother of Phil Kabler and Marjorie,  
Susan, and Gary.  
Grandmother of Ashley and Allyson and Jonathan.

Frances Hirschtritt,  
Wife of George Hirschtrit Z"L.  
Mother of Joanne Hirschtritt Licht & Jonathan Licht,  
Mindy and Meryl.  
Grandfather of Iszy, Aitan, and Yadid.

Shirley Hodes Millender,  
Wife of Ivan Millender,  
Sister of Beverly and Edward, Irwin and Nancy, Leonard Z"L and Carole, Albert Z"L and Nancy.  
Grandmother of Sarah, Abigail, Rachel, and Hannah.

Jerome Modell,  
Husband of Shirley Graves,  
Father of Charles and Carol,  
Jack and Judy, and Julie.  
Grandfather of Melissa and Dean, Randi and Jake,  
Matthew, Jason, Jennifer and Kevin,  
and Lindsey and Mike.  
Great Grandfather of Elizabeth and Madeleine.

***May their loved ones find solace in their memory.***

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# Gainesville Congregations & Organizations

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[www.bnaiisraelcds.org](http://www.bnaiisraelcds.org)

352.376.1508, ext 101

## **Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida (CJS)**

Dr. Norman J.W. Goda, Director

Sandra James, Office Assistant

[web.jst.ufl.edu](http://web.jst.ufl.edu)

PO Box 118020, Gainesville, FL 32611

352.392.9247

## **Congregation B'nai Israel (CBI)**

Rabbi David Kaiman

Jenifer Petrescu, Executive Director

Shauna Sikron, Coordinator of Jewish Learning

Diamond Hadley, Administrative Communications Specialist

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

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352.376.1508

## **Gainesville Chapter of Hadassah (HAD)**

Meredith Bacharach, President

[mwbacharach@gmail.com](mailto:mwbacharach@gmail.com)

352.256.7631.0

## **Hillel at UF (HLL)**

Rabbi Jonah Zinn

[www.ufhillel.org](http://www.ufhillel.org)

2020 W University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32603

352.372.2900

## **Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA)**

[www.interfaith-encounter.org](http://www.interfaith-encounter.org)

## **Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica (LIB) at the University of Florida**

Dr. Rebecca Jefferson, Director

[cms.uflib.ufl.edu/Judaica/Index.aspx](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/Judaica/Index.aspx)

George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

Gainesville, FL 32611

352.273.2865

## **Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ)**

Rick Gold

[goldrickus@gmail.com](mailto:goldrickus@gmail.com)

571.337.8018

## **The Tabacnic Lubavitch-Chabad Jewish (LCJC) Student & Community Center**

Rabbi Berl & Chanie Goldman, Directors

Rabbi Aharon Chaim & Pessie Notik, Co-Directors

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## **Helping Hands Clinic Dinner Has Re-Opened**

Thank you to all of our dedicated community volunteers who have supported this project every month. The Jewish Council has committed to support the Helping Hands Clinic by providing one meal each quarter for the coming year. To help with this project you can volunteer to provide a dish for a meal, serve the meal with us, donate to underwrite the cost of the meal, or all of the above! Please contact JCNCF with any questions at 352.371.3846 or [office@jcnf.org](mailto:office@jcnf.org)



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## Ocala & Other Congregations & Organizations

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### Chabad House of Ocala & The Villages (CHOV)

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www.ourchabad.org  
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352.330.4466

### Congregation Beth Israel (CBI-O)

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### Congregation Beth Sholom (CBS)

Cantor Alisa Forman, Spiritual Leader  
www.bethsholomcitrus.org  
102 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills, FL 34464  
352.746.5303

### First Congregation Sons of Israel (FCSI)

Rabbi Joel Fox  
www.firstcongregationsonsofisrael.com  
161 Cordova Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084  
904.829.9532

### Ocala Chapter of Hadassah (OHAD)

Judi Siegal, President  
morrobay03@embarqmail.com  
352.237.8277

### Temple B'nai Darom (TBD)

Rabbi Harold Jaye  
www.facebook.com/TempleBnaiDarom  
7465 SW 38th Street in Ocala, FL 34474  
352.624.0380

### Temple Beth Shalom (TBS)

Rabbi Ze'ev Harari  
www.jewishocala.com  
1109 NE 8th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34470  
352.629.5837

### Temple Shalom of Central Florida (TSCF)

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www.templeshalomcentralfl.org  
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WHEN	JCNCF Programs & Events	WHERE
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day	JCNCF Office Closed
Friday, May 29 - Saturday, May 30	Shavuot	JCNCF Office Closed