



PSJC Newsletter



Fall 2025/5786

From Rabbi Carie



It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

That, for me, is how this year has felt. On so many levels, as an American, as a Jew, as a human being, this year has hit new lows.

The desperate need to protect immigrants, seeing the threats to/weakening of our democracy; the challenges facing Jews in this age of increased antisemitism; the hostages still suffering in Gaza; the ongoing war and the humanitarian crisis it has brought for Palestinians...There is so much that can bring us down and that feels overwhelming in the world right now.

But at the same time, many of us have had moments of joy this year: for some, the birth of a baby, for others, a wedding. For some, a promotion or a long-awaited retirement, for others, like my family, a graduation and the start of college! (Go, NOA!)

For our PSJC community, our centennial year has held moments of deep joy and community and even celebration. One such moment was the remarkable GALA we celebrated in June, honoring our past (the hundredth year of this building and my twenty-fifth year with PSJC) and looking forward to our future with great hope and enthusiasm. I was honored to celebrate and be celebrated along with Alvin Steinfeld, a central re-founder of the modern incarnation of PSJC, and our other “OGs” — and to do so surrounded by past presidents, former rabbis and cantors of PSJC, PSJC members, community leaders, colleagues, neighbors, family, and friends. It was an experience I will never forget, and I want to express my deepest gratitude to all who worked so hard to bring this experience to our community, just at the moment we needed it most.

It was important to celebrate with community, to feel even a night of the hope and joy and potential for the

future that comes when knowing we are not alone. At a time when many of us feel powerless to change our world, it is essential to remind ourselves that we are indeed a part of something quite beautiful, dynamic and strong.

I have thought a lot since then about this need to release and to celebrate the light even and especially during these dark times. It may occasionally feel frivolous or even indulgent, but when done well, as a moment of release and connection, to a community, a family or even to our most whole selves, it becomes essential to our well-being as we walk through this ever-so-challenging world of ours. When it is paired with deep efforts to speak and act for justice and fairness, it is good to allow ourselves to pause and smile and even celebrate. These moments, especially when shared with community are what will refresh us and give us the strength to do all the work that we are called to do in the world today.

In this new year, may we come together, to speak out, to act for justice and kindness, and yes, to celebrate as well.

Shanah Tovah

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by Park Slope Jewish Center (PSJC)

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From Co-Presidents Stephen Gandel and Elizabeth Wollman



We hope everyone had a pleasant, enjoyable summer. Welcome to autumn at PSJC! As we prepare for the beautiful and inspiring High Holy Days, we're also excited to build on the many successes of our vibrant spring, which began with the entertaining and surprisingly lucrative yard-sale extravaganza and culminated in the joyous Gala. We're deeply grateful to everyone who helped make Rabbi Carie's 25th anniversary and our building's centennial such a memorable *simcha*. Special thanks to Esther Schwalb, our resident gala *balaboosta*, and Faye Penn, our stalwart fundraising *mensch mit sechel*. We're also incredibly lucky to have our wise, talented, and good-humored staff — Aileen Heiman, Stephanie Cooke, and Patrick Francis — who, along with Patrick's team, went above and beyond to expedite our spring milestones.

But spring wasn't just about celebrations. PSJC hosted a wide range of events and initiatives. The mighty Positive Aging Initiative (PAI) held book club meetings, speaker series, and social gatherings. Thanks to Roberta Moskowitz, PAI also organized sandwich-making and egg-gathering sessions for CHIPS (Community Help in Park Slope), earning PSJC a feature in CHIPS' 2025 newsletter.

Our Kitchen Club, led by Greg Selig, prepared several delicious *kiddushes*, and we look forward to more culinary delights this year. *Yesod*, our 20s and 30s group led by Rabbi Hayley Goldstein, continued to grow and diversify, hosting potlucks, park picnics, a hike in Inwood Park, arts-and-crafts events, poetry writing, and a *Kabbalat Shabbat*. Congregants also enjoyed breaking in a new Ping Pong table, competitive *mah jong* games, and a night of spiritual vocalizing with the *Nigun* Collective. *Talmud* study under the tent with Rabbi Hayley was a highlight, surrounded by blooming flowers after their first full winter in dormancy.

PSJC remains engaged with the pressing issues of our time. Our Israel series featured professionals

who helped us stay informed about the ongoing Israel/Hamas war. We hosted J Street representatives in June; participated in the Israel on 5th Parade in May; and welcomed Israeli peace activist Gili Getz in July, who shared powerful photos and videos from recent anti-war protests. In June, many congregants joined the No Kings March, a national protest against inhumane policies introduced by the Trump administration. We also hosted a community *Yom HaShoah* event in April, featuring Satah Kamaras' moving illustrated documentaries about her family's survival.

We've also made strides toward becoming a greener, more environmentally conscious *shul*. Thanks to Jeanne Stellman's foresight and grant-writing skills — and the generosity of Jeanne and her husband Steven — we now have clearly marked recycling and waste bins, energy-efficient lightbulbs, new dishes and utensils, and a sparkling eco-friendly industrial dishwasher. These upgrades will help lower our utility bills and allow us to enjoy *kiddush* on compostable or reusable plates that can be cleaned efficiently and sustainably.

This fall, we're continuing to find meaningful ways to celebrate our community and connect Jewishly. The 2025 - 26 Hebrew School year kicked off on September 14th with a lively morning assembly, followed by a vegetarian *cholent* taste test and a football showdown between Rabbi Carie's Kansas City Chiefs and Aileen's Philadelphia Phillies.

Looking ahead, we'll be announcing more exciting initiatives, including PSJC's new *Chai* Society, which will allow members to include PSJC in their wills and help secure the *shul's* future. We thank Reba Snyder, Shoshi Israel, Freddie Brooks, and Jeremy Lechtzin for their dedication in developing our planned giving program.

Please check our website calendar at [PSJC.org](https://psjc.org) for all our offerings. Whether it's PAI, the Israel series, *Yesod*, the Kitchen Club, or something new, we welcome your presence and enthusiasm. If you have an idea for a social or educational event that would resonate with PSJC members, please reach out to us at presidents@psjc.org.

Shanah tovah to all. We wish you a happy, healthy, peaceful year ahead — one filled with celebration, connection, and joy, and (we hope) much less strife, sorrow, and worry. From our keyboards to G-d's ears!

From Hayley Goldstein, Associate Rabbi



When I tell people I'm from Minnesota, the first thing they usually say (after saying Minn-e-soooooota? as a joke) is, "Oh, so you must love the winter!" The truth is that no, actually, I do not. Winters in Minnesota were so cold when I was growing up that, if you went outside with wet hair, your hair could quite literally break off. When you breathed in

through your nose, little icicles would form all the way up your nasal cavities (ouch!), and your vision would be clouded by the air trying to turn the wetness of your eyes into fresh snow. The people who survived winters like this for 18+ years and did not come to dislike the cold are few and far between, or at least I am not among them.

Winter (and even fall, which signifies that winter is approaching) is a season that I am warming up to, as I tell myself (and *Tanach* tells us):

לְכָל זְמַן וְעַתָּה לְכָל חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
A season is set for everything, a time
for every experience under heaven

Just as the summer is a time of abundance of sunshine and flowers and fresh fruits from the farmer's market, there is merit and even beauty in the dark, quiet time of year where we hopefully have an abundance of warmth inside instead of outside.

This summer was full of abundance at PSJC, and some really exciting new growth for the community. It started out with a bang with our incredible Gala, which was a true testament to the beautiful and underutilized ability this community has to party extremely hard, as well as a testament to the love and appreciation we all share for Rabbi Carie and her 25 years of service to this community. Beyond that, as always, it was a joy to run *Shabbat* services while Rabbi Carie was away on her sabbatical, and each week I was continuously shocked by how many people stayed in town for the weekend, filling our lower sanctuary with warmth and song.

I was also privileged to teach a learning series on Prayer as Offering, in which we looked at sources and brought in our own experiences about why we

pray, what *kavannah*/focus/intention really means, what is the role of silence in prayer, what is the role of song, and so much more. I don't think I am alone in saying that I learned so much about the diversity of prayer experiences, orientations and aspirations that lay right here in our PSJC community. I hope to run a part two of this series this fall — I hope you'll come learn with me!

Connected to this prayer series is a greater initiative to rethink our *Tefillah* at PSJC as a whole. I was privileged to be in the *Hadar Shat"z* Fellowship this past year, where we got to not only hone our prayer leadership skills, but also think about the best ways to support lay leaders in our communities. I am excited to bring this learning to PSJC in the new year in the form of *tisches*, playlists, and learning opportunities that are solely for prayer leaders, hopefully creating the sense that those who lead *tefillah* at PSJC are a part of a bigger team with a very important purpose.

Additionally, *Yesod* (our 20s and 30s community) has continued to flourish, with *Shabbat* dinners in people's homes that are bursting at the seams, *Shabbat* afternoon park hangs, a Brooklyn park clean up with *Adamah*, and more. You may look around the *shul* on *Shabbat* and notice that *Yesod* folks are trickling into services as well, which is a beautiful and welcome change for our community.

In *Parshat Miketz*, which we read in the heart of winter, our dreamer Joseph interprets the dream of Pharaoh to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine. He directs all of Egypt to prepare adequately by storing up grain during the years of plenty. The *Sfat Emet* explains this to mean that, "[We need] to prepare ourselves well in days of plenty, in those times when holiness is apparent to us. We should fix that radiance firmly in our hearts, so it may be there for the bad times when holiness is hidden."

May we be able to store up a bit of the abundance of summer and fall, the colors of the flowers and the feel of the sun on our skin, so that even in the depths of winter it is there to warm us in our hearts. I am so looking forward to a fall and winter together that is full of song, prayer, and community.

Shanah Tovah!



**From Aileen Heiman
Director of Education and
Engagement**

***Vision to Action:
My 13th Year at PSJC***

When I was twelve, I stood on the *bimah* at my synagogue and led the parts of the Friday night service I was allowed to lead (at my non-egalitarian synagogue). Debbie Friedman's "Youth Shall See Visions" became the mantra of my *Bat Mitzvah* experience — I quoted it in my speech on Isaiah's prophetic visions, and we played the song at my celebration: "Today's the day I take my stand, the future's mine to hold. Commitments that I make today are dreams of days of old."

I felt the power of making a commitment to the Jewish community as part of living my ancestors' dreams. That sense only deepened as I stepped more fully into Jewish life: learning how to read *Torah*, owning a *tallit*, and ultimately becoming a professional Jew. In so many ways, my *Bat Mitzvah* was the epitome of what we hope they all are: not an end, but a beginning — a meaningful transition into a life of Jewish learning and leading.

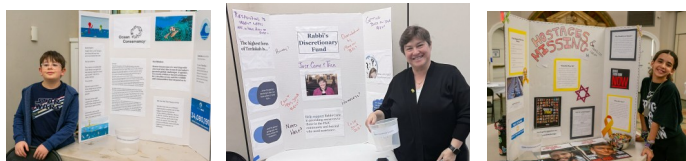


**Pre-B'nei Mitzvah students and parents
learn about *tallitot* from Merrie Handfinger
(and make their own *tzitzit*!)**

This summer I began my own "*Bat Mitzvah* year" at PSJC—lucky number thirteen. It might seem like an odd number to celebrate (unless you are a Swiftie) — since we typically mark milestones in fives and tens — but it feels so Jewish to mark this moment of transition. It's not a beginning or an ending, but a recognition of growth, change, and what's still possible; both for me personally, and for us as a community. I feel honored to celebrate my *Bat Mitzvah* year

with our Tot *Shabbat* leader (and more), Amie, and the man who keeps the boiler and everything else, running, Patrick, as we all started within a few months of each other in 2013.

Another line from the song still echoes in my mind: "We must live for today; we must build for tomorrow." That's exactly where we are at PSJC.



**R. Carie and 6th Graders promote their causes
at the annual spring Tzedakah Fair**

We're living fully in today: with vibrant programming for all ages and stages, a thriving Hebrew School community, meaningful services, and concluding our centennial year celebrations. We're working hard to engage people — on *Shabbat*, during the High Holy Days, at family programs, and more — and at the same time, we are building for tomorrow.



**Students reenacting spiriting R. Yohanan Ben Zakkai
out of Jerusalem in a coffin in order to preserve
the memory of the oral law**

We're dreaming of a PSJC that is accessible — where Jews of all backgrounds, identities, and knowledge levels feel not only welcomed but truly included in our services and communal life. We're beginning to build more intergenerational programming to foster stronger connections between our youngest learners and our wisest elders. We're thinking deeply about what it means to retain and engage members through life's natural transitions — like post-*b'nai mitzvah* families, empty nesters, or those shifting into new personal or spiritual chapters.



We are a community with big hopes and a relatively small staff, so dreaming is the easy part. We're doing a lot — and we could do so much more with additional support. If I'm dreaming personally, it's hiring a dedicated professional to oversee the day-to-day logistics of our Hebrew School. That would allow me to focus more on curriculum development, family engagement across all ages, and being the bridge between our educational, engagement, spiritual, and pastoral work. It's a dream grounded in strategy — because when we invest in our staff, we're investing in our ability to meet the needs of a dynamic and growing community.

From Cantor Judy Ribnick



Shalom! My search for new melodies to add to PSJC's High Holy Day prayers begins the day after Simchat Torah the previous year. I am always on the lookout for music that can enhance our communal prayer experience. Take a look at the "PSJC High Holy Days Music" site (<https://www.psjc.org/hhd-music>) - we have created quite a repertoire! This collection contains more than 100 prayers, songs and melodies that we've sung at PSJC over the years. It is a repository of the sounds that help lift our spirits and bring our yearnings to life. It's a good place to listen to melodies that are new to us, refresh our memories from previous years, and enjoy some of our "favorites."

Here are a few melodies I've been excited about this year that I plan to bring into our *t'fillot*. This first is Deborah Sack Mintz' Hashiveinu. If you're not familiar with Deborah Sacks Mintz, she is someone to check out. The second, Awaken, is Marni Loffman's take on the *Viddui* on Yom Kippur; here are the lyrics to "Awaken". I thank R. Hayley for introducing me to this song! Marni Loffman is a rising star to listen to. The third is Chabad Lubavitch's *Ki Anu Amecha* sung by the talented Shulem Lemmer (we'd start at 0:47)

None of these songs will replace the beloved versions we use. We will weave them to offer a different interpretation that will perhaps bring new insights into our davening. I encourage you to listen to these three melodies as well as check out PSJC High Holy Days Music so that we can lift and deepen our *yontif* experience together. I look forward to davening and being together with you.



**Unfurling and reading from the *Torah* Scroll on *Shavuot*
(Come back in October for our community
Simchat Torah services to see it unrolled again!)**

As we enter the High Holy Day season, I invite you to look around and notice what's already here TODAY at PSJC — and to imagine with us what more could be possible. Your presence matters. Your ideas matter. Your dreams matter.

May we continue to live fully in today, and build bravely for tomorrow — together.

L'shanah tovah.

Some more wonderful Hebrew School moments from the past spring:

Lag B'Omer s'mores, 7th grade trip to the Lower East Side, end of school year celebration and general cuteness!





From Stephanie Cooke PSJC Administrator



The Gala was an incredible evening for me. It wasn't just the strong turnout or the energy in the room, but the opportunity I had to connect with so many of you in person. Because I split my time between working upstate and making frequent trips to Brooklyn, nights like that remind me what makes the PSJC community so special.

Our 100 Years Celebration continues this fall with two more events:

- ♦ September 14: Football Watch Party & Vegetarian *Cholent*/Chili Cook-Off
- ♦ December 20: End-of-Year Celebration

These gatherings don't come together on their own. Our maintenance team works hard to keep the building welcoming and to ensure every event runs smoothly. Their behind-the-scenes work allows the rest of us to enjoy these moments fully.

For the latest information about programs and events, please visit psjc.org. I'll be back in Brooklyn before and during the High Holy Days, and I look forward to seeing many of you in person then.



Stephanie and Aaron upstate

PSJC's New Rabbinic Intern

Arielle Rivera Korman is a fourth-year rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She is a Jewish musician, prayer leader, singer and songwriter, and released an album of traditional Jewish music entitled *Full of Mercy*. She has appeared on albums of other Jewish musicians including Batya Levine, Aly Halpert and Rena Branson and has lead numerous services with *Romemu* Manhattan and *Romemu* Brooklyn. Arielle co-founded and served as the founding executive director for *Ammud*: the

Jews of Color Torah Academy. She has worked for the Bronfman Fellowship and adores constructing and facilitating pluralistic Jewish spaces.

Arielle is thrilled to join the team this year at PSJC. She cannot wait to learn with you all, to sing, to spend time, to celebrate, laugh, mourn and cry with all of you.



Arielle Rivera Korman

PAI Update

In recent months, PAI has continued the programs which have drawn so many people to the group.

There have been several informative Shared Wisdom sessions on Zoom; these sessions have been quite varied. Lisa Altschuler offered a discussion of the use of undercover "unannounced, standardized patients" to improve medical services. Ira Singer compared the beliefs of Greek Stoics with Hebrew texts from Ben Zoma. Julia Kamen Birnbaum introduced the practice of growing plants indoors using "hydroponics," while Steve Mazie presented a timely talk on the Supreme Court's current Calendar. In a very contemporary program, Leora Singer presented on current advances in AI, including Chat GPT.

The Book Club has developed its own identity as "a group within a group" while welcoming new members. Recent titles have included Alberto Luis Urrea's fictional treatment of a Mexican ancestor in *The Hummingbird's Daughter*, Olga Tokarchuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, Jonathan Freedland's account of a man who escaped from Auschwitz in *The Escape Artist*, and David Grann's report of an 18th century shipwreck and its challenging results in *The Wager*. The Club has already established a varied calendar of readings for the coming year.



PAI Book Group

PAI tours have included a visit to the Greenpoint neighborhood and a tour of an exhibit on the nuclear industry and its detractors at The Poster House in Manhattan.



Greenpoint Tour

Yoga for Strength and Balance has concluded its exercise sequence. *Mah Jong* will resume in the Fall after a brief summer vacation.

We can all look forward to another PAI *Shabbat* next year. The third PAI *Shabbat*, held in May, was another successful and inclusive event which is now a tradition at PSJC.



Poster Museum

We continued providing food for the CHIPS community, adding soups, salad, tuna and egg salad sandwiches to the items we have donated. For those in our neighborhood experiencing hunger, these items were certainly appreciated.

PAI looks forward to more members of PSJC joining the group. Any member who is at least 50 years old is welcome. Contact: PositiveAging@PSJC.org.

-Michael Rieman

Introducing Legacy Giving at PSJC

Earlier this year the Board chartered a new committee with the mandate to introduce to PSJC the important concept of legacy giving. Such gifts will ensure the long-term financial stability of PSJC for future generations.

The Legacy Committee's goal is to create a sustainability fund with gifts that will, over time, support the mission and continuity of the PSJC community.

What is Legacy giving? It's a form of charitable giving in which donors leave a legacy by planning future gifts from a will, retirement account, life insurance policy, annuity, donor-advised fund, or other asset. The beauty of legacy giving is that it requires no upfront donation, and yet it's a great opportunity to be philanthropic and to enable us to thrive as we move into the future. All members are capable of participating in planned giving since it does not affect your current finances. Legacy gifts acknowledge your intent to support our very special Jewish community into the future.

Funds received from legacy gifts will be invested separately from PSJC's operating budget, as the intent is to grow a fund that will support the community into the next century.

Members and donors who make a legacy commitment will join our newly formed *Chai* Society. Members may choose to be anonymous or can be publicly honored for their commitment to a future gift.

It's remarkably easy to participate! We are happy to discuss the details of this new program and answer any questions. Reach out to legacy@psjc.org

-Freddie Brooks





Speaking of Israel Update

Post-Passover Israel programming saw several inspiring and informative PSJC events. On April 27 we hosted Elhanan Miller, a Jerusalem-based rabbi who is an expert on Islamic-Jewish relations. He spoke about the Arab-Israeli response to October 7th, as well as the overall attitude of Israelis towards events in Gaza.

A few days later a ceremony was held at PSJC marking the transition from Israel's Memorial Day (*Yom haZikron*) to Independence Day (*Yom haAtzmaut*.) The ceremony was done in conjunction with Rabbis for Human Rights.

In May Rabbi Ayala Dekel spoke at a *Lev Tahor* gathering. She is the Founder of *Bina*, a secular *Yeshiva* in Israel, where Jews of all stripes connect with their heritage through our foundational texts. Rabbi Dekel spoke passionately about holding *Kabbalat Shabbat* ceremonies in Tel Aviv's Hostage Square, during which Israelis from disparate communities found commonality through prayer and song.

Perhaps the most emotionally charged presentation of the spring was given by Gili Getz, an Israeli-American photographer and peace activist. Gili spoke about the Israelis demanding an end to the war in Gaza, which he documented by displaying his photographs of rallies and protests he had helped organize. He also spoke about his work forging alliances between Jewish and Palestinian activists, to make a more compassionate and just Israel. His presentation was given in honor of Rabbi Jeff Marker Z"L, and featured a photograph Gili took of him, along with his memories of Jeff's passion and work towards peace.

Our final presentation of the season was by J Street. They are a pro-peace, pro-Israel, pro-democracy organization, that lobbies Congress on behalf of their goals. A panel of J Street activists and staff members discussed how they go about their work of ensuring that US policy helps preserve the conditions for a two-state solution. They also explained how volunteers can help with their work. The presentation by J Street offered hope for a centrist approach to the challenges facing the Jewish community both here and in Israel.

Looking forward, mark October 9 on your calendar for a Brooklyn-wide observance of October 7th. The

observance will take place at Kane Street Synagogue.

PSJC will also be hosting the Parents Circle Families Forum, which brings together Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis to discuss their grief over losing family members, due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The tentative date for this important presentation is October 23.

Stay current with the PSJC blast to learn about other Israel-related events throughout the year.

-Ben Krull

Hevra Kadisha Update

We are proud at PSJC to have a *Hevra Kadisha* that celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

A *hevra kadisha* ("sacred society") is a Jewish burial society. Historically, due to the vital role it plays, the *hevra kadisha* is one of the first institutions established in any new Jewish community.

In Judaism, providing a proper burial is called "*chesed shel emet*" (the ultimate kindness), since it is a loving task done for the deceased, which can thus never be repaid. The rituals around preparing the deceased for burial are performed with humility, deference and respect, and are meant both to honor the deceased and to provide comfort and peace of mind to those who have lost a family member or loved one.

Some of the services that our *hevra kadisha* provides are *shmirah* (sitting and being present with the deceased before the burial, while reciting psalms or other inspirational words, or simply meditating), and *taharah* (the ritual washing and dressing of the deceased in plain white garments just prior to burial).

A meaningful part of Jewish communal life is to be found in the practices that have been developed over centuries to honor and care for people when they die.

The PSJC *hevra kadisha* is always in search of volunteers from the community to help strengthen and grow this important group. If you'd like to learn more about us, or to volunteer with our group for *shmira*, *tahara*, or both, please email us at:

hevra.kadisha@psjc.org.

-Eden Wofesy and Florence Hutner



Avodah Reflection

Teshuvah and Growth

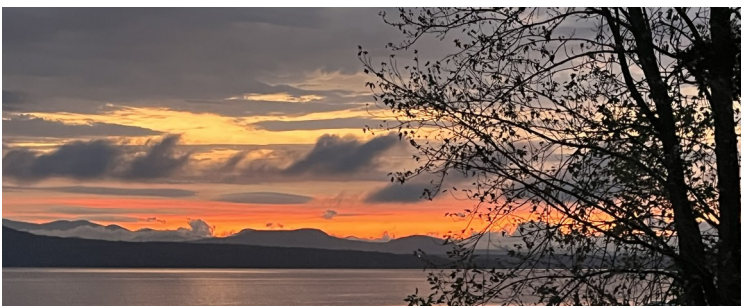
Teshuvah is hard work. In *Mishneh Torah*, *Teshuvah* 3:4, the Rambam implores each person to act as if their spiritual account is perfectly balanced between merits and sins. This formulation posits that each person's spiritual account, and indeed the account of the entire world, depends on the righteousness of their next act. This is in fact a lot of work to constantly have the fate of humanity resting upon the merit of your next actions.

In the Rambam's formulation, the clear bias is towards you choosing to behave meritoriously, given the extreme universal repercussions of your actions. Surely, after several correct, righteous choices, one can relax a bit assured of the merit banked up for the future. However, the Rambam insists that there is no rest for the wearily righteous, as it were, nor is there hope for those whose sins may have demonstrably outpaced their merits as of late.

While the concepts of growth and fixed mindsets were popularized much more recently by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck, the Rambam's formulation anticipates a philosophy where challenges are viewed as opportunities, constructive feedback is embraced as a way to continue improving, and skills are in need of constant development. As we try our best this *Elul* and *Yamim Noraim* to improve ourselves and the entire PSJC community, let's choose the growth mindset to help us continue to learn and grow throughout the year.

Shanah tovah!

- Eli Wolfhagen



Garden Update

Thanks to Alan Palmer and Gavrielle Levine, Hebrew School students may one day be welcomed back with Fig Newton cookies --- or maybe a fresh fig or two — harvested from the new fig tree in the PSJC yard! In May, Alan and Gav reached out to the Yard Committee with the generous offer to relocate one of their fig trees to our garden. Now, lush with new growth, the fig is one of many delights in our newly renovated garden.

These renovations resolved long-standing challenges with flooding and puddling after rainstorms. Instead of pooling, rain is now absorbed and nourishes the recently planted beds, which have been bursting with blooms since spring.

This fall, you will notice clusters of deep purple chokeberries on the aronia bush and the first orange blush of sumac leaves signaling cooler weather ahead. September activities in the yard will focus on enriching the soil with compost and mulch. This month will also see new plaques recognizing the many generous donors who made the renovation possible.

If you want to get involved, we'd love your help! Experienced gardeners and enthusiastic volunteers can sign up to be notified of stewardship activities. Want to pitch an idea for community programming that features the yard (think Korean pickled shiso leaves or handmade seed balls)? Volunteers can reach out to us at yard@psjc.org.

-Carrie Sadovnik



Alan Palmer with our new fig tree
And Hebrew School gardeners



Meet Our 2025 Brooklyn *ShinShinot**

Each year (except for the unfortunate interruption of COVID), our community welcomes *ShinShinot* — young Israeli volunteers dedicating a year of service before joining the IDF. Their mission goes beyond teaching Hebrew: they bring faith in people, showing that even in difficult times, humans are capable of goodness and empathy. They offer a living link to Israeli culture and a belief in education as a tool to understand reality, think critically, and trust in the power of young people to create change.

ShinShinot add color and depth to the work in our communities to connect our children to Israel — fostering a sense of belonging to a place rich in history, nature, and roots. The *ShinShinot* themselves also learn a new language — not just English, but the language of community, belonging, and *Tikun Olam* — and bring their songs, prayers, and traditions to life here.

At a time when it can be very challenging for many in our community to connect with Israel, due to disagreements with government policy and the ongoing crisis in Gaza, the *ShinShinot* offer direct human encounters. These moments can be simple and social, or deeply challenging, helping us to engage with Israel in a meaningful, human, and nuanced way.

As one Israeli song, *Kol Od*, reminds us:

"As long as the morning rises, as long as the children sing about a new year — everything begins here again from the start."

This year, we are thrilled to welcome three remarkable young women: Ayala, from Kiryat Ono, Adi from Mevaseret Zion, and Shaked, from Aviel.



Brooklyn *ShinShinot* Ayala, Shaked, and Adi, together with Lior, the Brooklyn *Shlich*a

Adi, who will be working with PSJC, is a member of *Krembo Wings*, working with youth with complex special needs. She enjoys reading, crocheting, and spending time with her two half-brothers. In addition to PSJC, Adi will serve at Luria Academy, Temple *Shalom*, *B'shert*, and JCC Kings Bay.



**Adi Malka Shalom
PSJC's new *ShinShinot***

The *ShinShinot* have a busy schedule, working in multiple schools and synagogues while making every effort to be fully involved in the community in various ways. They live together in a Clinton Hill apartment with Renana and Yael, the *ShinShinot* from Manhattan, learning to live independently, care for one another, and create a home together. We invite you to meet them, host them, learn from them, and share your own stories. If you are interested in hosting, you can sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/hostfamily25-26>.



Ayala, Shaked, and Adi, with Manhattan *ShinShinot*, Renana and Yael, after a session with Rabbi Carie

Shanah Tovah — may this year bring mornings as steady as the rising sun, bright letters on the board, and new beginnings full of spirit and song.

-Lior Lekner, Brooklyn *Shlich*a (Israel Emissary)

*The term "*ShinShinot*" is used when all of the participants are female, as they are this year. When they are all male or mixed male and female, "*ShinShinim*" is used.



LAST BUT NEVER LEAST: THE GALA!



Looking Back on the Gala

On June 8th, 280 guests came to PSJC to celebrate our beautiful *shul*'s 100th birthday and Rabbi Carter's remarkable 25 years at the helm. The dazzling performers, presenters, food, drink, and home-made (!) desserts*, gorgeous yard and building — all contributed to a thoroughly PSJC event. Gratitude and joy was palpable!

Particularly in this landmark year, we are reminded to appreciate everything that we have here at PSJC. These past eight months, we've come together on numerous occasions to acknowledge where we came from, all that we've built together, and what we dream to build in the years to come. Now, with the remarkable fundraising effort led by Faye Penn and her hardworking team, we are on our way. We now know what we are capable of.

So once again, I'd like to thank everyone who helped make the evening a stunning success, from staff and volunteer planners to performers, presenters, PSJC bakers, and J2 Catering. We saw with our own eyes just what we — and our *shul* — can do, if we work together. Such a fundraiser cannot be merely a centennial event. We need to do this — or something like it — every year to sustain our historic *shul* and beloved community. So please step up and be a part of the next one. Bring all your talents. *Kudos* all around. *Shana Tovah* to you and yours.

- Esther Schwalb

* Stay tuned for a PSJC cookbook with recipes for these amazing desserts!

Gala Fundraising Update

We are deeply grateful to our community for the outpouring of support surrounding June's anniversary gala, so tirelessly helmed by Esther Schwalb. From purchasing tickets to stepping up as sponsors, so many of you came together to honor Rabbi Carie Carter's 25 years of service, Alvin Steinfeld's dedication, and the synagogue's 100th birthday. Your presence and generosity made the evening not just a celebration, but a true expression of what makes our community strong.

We are thrilled to share that we more than doubled our initial fundraising goal of \$200,000, raising more than \$475,000 in donations and pledges through 2027. While we still have a ways to go to reach our three-year goal of \$600,000, these funds will go directly toward sustaining and strengthening the programs, services and spiritual life that make PSJC a vital center for Jewish life. Later this fall, you can also look forward to a series of special events and activities focused on renewing and beautifying our *Torah* scrolls — a fitting way to carry our community's spirit and generosity into the years ahead.

Huge thanks to this community for all you've done to help secure our future.

- Faye Penn

Esther



Faye



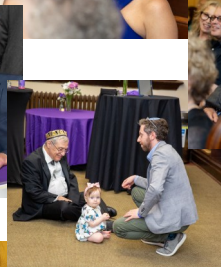
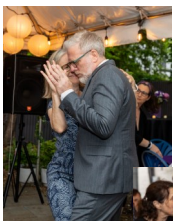
Turn the page for more Gala photos!



June 8, 2025



We came, we saw,
we partied!



All Photos by Emily Louick Photography