

WESTCHESTER COUNTY'S ONLY MONTHLY JEWISH NEWSPAPER FOR 25 YEARS

Havorah Program Coordinates Special Needs Seders

STAFF REPORT

One of the largest human service agencies in the County, Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), is providing care to people of all ages and diverse backgrounds who are confronting significant challenges. As part of its community service, their Havorah Program celebrates Jewish life, holidays and traditions for individuals with disabilities and their families. The program has been part of WJCS Partners in Caring for more than 20 years, in partnership with synagogues and JCC's throughout Westchester County.

On April 3, from 5:30-7:30 pm, Beth El Synagogue Center



Rabbi David Schuck and Rabbi Zachary Sitkin at the 2018 Special Needs Seder at Beth El Synagogue Center, New Rochelle

in New Rochelle and WJCS Havorah, will host a special Needs Seder called Tastes of a

Passover Seder, for residents of some of the 13 group homes that are sponsored by WJCS. Rabbis David Schuck, Zachary Sitkin and Cantor Uri Aqua will

lead the festivities using an adapted and abridged Haggadah. Music will be provided by The Westchester Klezmer Band. Beth El members and the Sylvia and Robert Sher Chesed community organize, set tables, prepare and serve during the Seder. Havorah is funded exclusively through the generosity of individual donors.

On April 10, from 6 to 8:30pm, Temple Shaaray Tefila, Bedford Corners and WJCS Havorah will also present a Night of Traditions: Singing the Songs of Passover, for other members of the group homes sponsored by

WJCS. This meaningful occasion will be led by Rabbi David Greenberg and is run by volunteers, other temples in the area and local businesses.

Both events are coordinated by the Havorah program. Usually 100-to 150 people take part in each of these events including guests and the people that accompany them from their residences. Other special needs individuals who live in private homes come with their families.

WJCS is proud of their Jewish core values upon which they were founded in 1943. The agency's experts provide care in the fields of mental health, trauma, disabilities, youth, home care and geriatric services.

Their highly trained staff

serve more than 20,000 adults, children and families each year through approximately 80 programs stretching from Yonkers to Peekskill. WJCS social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, care managers, home health and personal care aides, education specialists, residence managers and direct care workers provide compassionate care, foster personal growth and help ensure the dignity of all individuals and families.

Through private funding and support from UJA-Federation, the Jewish programs Department works with synagogues and other institutions to meet the diverse needs of Westchester's Jewish community.

Greenburgh Hebrew Center Purim Carnival Attracts Over 200 Revelers

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Over 200 joyful participants streamed into Greenburgh Hebrew Center (GHC), Dobbs Ferry for their Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 17th featuring a Super Slide; Bouncy Sports Inflatable; Pre-school Game Room; Crafts and



Left to right: Sabrina Pasternak, "Princess Leia," Star Wars; Sarina Pocius, "The Broken Doll;" Emma Silver, "Luna Love," Harry Potter.

Shushan Food Court. Wearing "a recyclable thing," Fourth Grade Hebrew Teacher Jimmy Rachlin was the target of not-so-subtly thrown nerf footballs, "Aim at Haman" as well as facial cutouts for Queen Esther and King Achashverosh.

"We often come together for challenging times but this is an opportunity to come

together and celebrate, which is wonderful and everybody comes out. It's going to be a great day," GHC Rabbi Jay Stein exclaimed.

Families with young children in a plethora of colorful, vibrant costumes joined Rabbi Stein for a special Megillah reading and listened to a hilarious Purim Spiel, "Purim Gone Wrong," a Muppet-like puppet show presented by playwrights and puppeteers Frieda Belasco, Ella Finkelshtein and Natalie Garson, including modern touches such as Vashti saying, "I won't dance unless I get a mink coat!" "The reason why it is called 'Purim Gone Wrong' is that the stuffed

animals putting on the show didn't cast correctly. But they still have fun," Belasco explained.

GHC Cantor Janet Leuchter led Purim songs in the Small Chapel.



Jack Barth, "Tracker from Paw Patrol."



Jed Ilany, "Cowboy;" (left) and best costume winner Isaac Ilany, "caterpillar."

The Carnival was graced by the magic show of "Joshua K" (Joshua Kurzban), 27, who performed such tricks as turning scraps of paper into a long stream of tubing emerging

Magician Joshua K

from his mouth, levitating a young lady and effortlessly solving a Rubik's Cube.

"I am originally from Long Island, New York born and raised in a little town called Seaford," Kurzban noted. "When I was five years old, I saw a magician at a neighbor's birthday party and got hooked. I learned from my Temple the history of Harry Houdini, went to magic shops, got some magic books from the library and the rest is history.

"We need magic to lift us out of dark times," Kurzban concluded.

