



Hakhel Israel Trip

November 4-11, 2018



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs
Creating a common Jewish future

Table of Contents

Welcome from MDA	3	Useful Information	14
Welcome from Aharon	4	About our Tour Operators	16
About Hazon	5	Staff Bios	17
About Hakhel.....	6	Participant Bios	18
Upcoming Conferences & Events	7		
Itinerary			
Sunday, November 4	8		
Monday, November 5.....	8		
Tuesday, November 6.....	9		
Wednesday, November 7.....	10		
Thursday, November 8.....	11		
Friday, November 9.....	12		
Saturday, November 10.....	13		
Sunday, November 11.....	13		

Welcome



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs
Creating a common Jewish future

On behalf of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs,

We welcome you to Israel! The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs is proud to be a partner of Hakhel, and is grateful that you have chosen to be part of this one of a kind trip!

The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs is entrusted with fostering the connection between world Jewry and the State of Israel through joint activities and ongoing dialogue. The Israeli government sees itself as committed to being responsible for all Jews worldwide, whether they live in Israel or the Diaspora. This historical partnership has consistently meant cultivating a meaningful, enduring and strategic relationship between the government and the State of Israel and all Jews in order to guarantee the future of the Jewish People.

The incredible work of the Intentional Communities movement in Israel has seen the fruits of its labour, as new communities emerge and flourish every year, whilst the older groups remain strong and vibrant. We hope that you are able to take guidance, know-how and precedent from these communities back to your hometowns and see your intentional communities take root.

The ultimate goal of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs is to strengthen Jewish identity and ties with Israel. We hope that your trip to Israel allows you to see Israel in a fresh light, and gives you the opportunity to engage with a side of Israeli culture that you may never have seen before.

Wishing you all a productive trip and ongoing success in your communal work,

Dvir Kahana

Dvir Kahana
Director general of the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs

Welcome

Dear friends,

When I was 16, a group of friends and I found a deserted building which used to be a restaurant, on the outskirts of Kiryat Tivon (Northern Israel). We renovated the place and became a strongly connected group, my first intentional community. As a result, I joined the HaNoar HaOved VeHalomed youth movement, served in the Nachal and lived in communes until I was 22 or so. At about this age I became religious, which is a whole different story, and moved to a mixed religious-secular community in Jerusalem and then founded Garin Shuva in 2009, the intentional community on the Gaza border in which I live to this day. This community developed into the Nettirot network of communities, through which I was also one of the founders of MAKOM in 2011.

The idea to try and take the Israeli model of intentional communities and apply it to Diaspora Jewry in some way, came up the first time I met Nigel Savage, founder and president of Hazon, in 2012. Two years later we received a grant from the UJA-Federation of New York to start "Hakhel", the first ever Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator. Its purpose was, and still is, to cultivate the emergence of a range of new experiments in Jewish communal life, as part of the general rejuvenation of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and using the Israeli movement as inspiration.

Since that first experience in communal life, I became a strong believer in the power of communities to transform the lives of their members, as well as their surroundings. As Margaret Mead is believed to have said (although she probably didn't), "don't ever underestimate the power of small communities to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever had". Israel, to a large extent, was built by small communities, such as the Kibbutzim and Moshavim, and is being revitalized from within in our generation by MAKOM communities.

This history begs the question: can small intentional communities change the course of Diaspora Jewry for the better? The partnership with the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, and between us all, gives us the opportunity to now ask this question seriously, and hopefully find some good answers.

I invite you to keep an open mind during the upcoming week, ask questions (especially the hard ones), take notes and try figuring out how what you see can be relevant to your own communities back home.

Yours truly,

Aharon Ariel Lavi
Director of Hakhel

About Hazon



The word "hazon" means "vision."

We're the Jewish lab for sustainability. We work to create a more sustainable Jewish community – and a healthier and more sustainable world for all. We do this through immersive multi-day programs like food conferences, retreats, and bike rides; through thought-leadership (writing, teaching and advocacy); and capacity-building – fostering new experiments in Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming & Environmental Education, across the Jewish world.

Our programs are multi-generational and open to people of all religious backgrounds and none. We are based in New York, Detroit, Denver, Boulder, and at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in the Connecticut Berkshires.



Education

We offer Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming & Environmental Education (JOFEE), providing thought-leadership and immersive experiences for a spectrum of ages and interests. From institutions and individuals using our wide range of curricula and sourcebooks to kids at our Teva programs weighing their leftovers and young adults living in community and farming with Adamah, Hazon supports learning at the intersection of Jewish life and sustainability.

Action

Hazon participants take action. We compost and pickle. We improve the energy profiles of our Jewish institutions, use our food dollars to support local farms, and meet thousands of our neighbors at regional Jewish Food Festivals. We raise environmental awareness while riding our bikes. We share sustainable Shabbat meals, create gardens at our Jewish institutions, plant seeds for future generations, build intentional communities in North America, and visit our partners in Israel's environmental sector.

Advocacy

And in settings from synagogues to community board meetings to global climate marches, we advocate on local and regional projects like bike lanes and family-owned farms, as well as on national issues like climate change and sustainable agriculture. Hazon provides rabbis with sermon materials on climate issues, and training and support for meetings with government representatives. Hazon participants speak up to help make the world we all share healthier and more sustainable for everyone.

About Hakhel



The Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator

Hakhel was founded on the premise that communal life is an irreplaceable component in maintaining Jewish identity, and yet existing community models do not resonate with increasing numbers of people. Derived from the Hebrew word for community, “Hakhel” means “assemble,” a term which alludes to the project’s two-fold aim of encouraging and developing young communities, and using these communities as a method for engaging young adults in Jewish life, learning, and service. The initiative is intended to cultivate the emergence of a range of new experiments in Jewish community. It exists to amplify and strengthen new expressions of Jewish community, not only in North America but also, now, in other parts of the Jewish diaspora.

We invest – both directly and indirectly – in a wide range of new initiatives and experiments in Jewish community. We want to encourage and nourish greater health and sustainability. Where possible, we hope to learn from some of the remarkable experiments in sustainable and intentional communities that have grown dramatically in Israel in the last two or three decades.

Hakhel has launched its third cohort of more than forty communities across almost five continents. These nascent Jewish Intentional Communities are on the brink of creating co-housing projects, developing farms and eco-villages to promote sustainable living, and tackling social justice issues, among a variety of other experiments.

If you are part of a nascent Jewish Intentional community, or you’d like to develop or join one, Hakhel can help lead the way. Applications for the next cohort open in the summer of 2019. For more information about Hakhel, please contact us at hakhel@hazon.org.

Upcoming Conferences/Events

EUROPE GATHERING

November 16-18, Prague

Join us in historic Prague for the upcoming gathering of Hakhel communities in Europe. The weekend gathering will be held in conjunction with the annual summit of the European Council of Jewish Communities, who have chosen creative and constructive ways to respond to challenges for European Jewish communities as their theme. Share and discuss the challenges of building an intentional community in Europe with those who have been in the field for decades, gain practical skills for setting up and running a community, and enjoy a joyous Shabbat together, complete with a guided tour of old Prague.

JEWISH INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE 2019

March 28-31, Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center, Connecticut

We can't wait to hear how your communities have been growing! This year's JICC will feature tracks of varying styles to make sure that everyone returns to their community with just the answers they were looking for, and skills they were missing.

Details with your Hakhel Advisor

HAZON'S RABBIS' RETREAT

March 31-April 3, Isabella Freedman

This retreat focuses on giving back to spiritual leaders of all backgrounds and disciplines – the people who give so much to our community every day. The retreat is designed to promote deep rest and rejuvenation, and is aimed at providing clergy with support and resources to create healthier and more sustainable Jewish communities. Clergy from all streams of Judaism are warmly invited to attend. For interested participants from beyond the northeast USA, additional financial assistance is available.

hazon.org/rabbisretreat

2019 HAZON SUSTAINABLE ISRAEL TOUR: IMPACT INVESTING

May 12-19

You're invited to join us for the first tour in which we focus explicitly on impact investing in Israel. We will travel, experience, and learn together about some of the greatest challenges of environmental sustainability facing Israel and the world.

hazon.org/israeltour

ISRAEL RIDE 2019

November 5-12

Cycle from Jerusalem to Eilat and broaden your understanding of the region as you meet Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians working towards peace, environmental sustainability, and regional cooperation. Sign up early to secure your spot on this epic adventure!

israelride.org

Itinerary

Sunday, November 4

9:00 PM – Arrival in Israel – Meet the other participants who are joining this unique experience at Ben Gurion airport, where you will be met by your guide.

Travel to hotel, Check in, Orientation

Overnight: ANA Haifa

Monday, November 5

Past to Present

Group Orientation at Hotel

Hike in the Arbel – Overlooking the Galilee and Golan, this area has ties to ancient Israel as well as a holdout with Roman forces before the destruction of the temple. On the hilltop, we will meet ourselves and each other, and begin our journey together.

Group building; an opportunity to frame the conversations for the coming days.

Lunch in the Kibbutz Degania Dining hall

Meeting with Muki Tzur – Muki Tzur is a renowned scholar and expert on the Kibbutz movement. As the first intentional community, we will learn about the early history and the transitions that have taken place over the last 20 years.

Where did we start and how did we get to the present iteration of intentional communities?

What is an intentional community, and why does it make a stronger community?

Travel to Haifa

Meet with members of Intentional Communities in the Hadar Neighborhood

The Hadar neighborhood is home to several different communities. We will divide into small groups to meet with different representatives in a more intimate setting, and to hear about their community models.

How does an urban community interact with their human environment? What does it feel like to be a member of an intentional community? How can communities interact and cooperate?

Dinner at Robin Food – Robin Food is a social business and a one-of-a-kind restaurant that uses saved produce from local grocery stores and shop owners to prepare vegan cuisine. We will meet with the founders and help prepare our meal as well as be joined by the community members we met earlier.

How can self-generated income be used to actualize vision?

Overnight: ANA Haifa

Tuesday, November 6

A Deeper Look at Two Communities

Meet with members from Mishol the Urban Kibbutz in Nazareth Illit

This will be a special visit as your guide James Grant-Rosenhead is one of the members of the Kibbutz and he will share their unique model. An extended visit will provide opportunities to ask in-depth questions and explore specific examples of the activities of the Kibbutz.

What challenges arise when co-living, and how can they be resolved? How does the kibbutz model work as a framework for co-housing? How does a shared vision unite the community?

Lunch in Afula

Meet with Tarbut Afula

Tarbut believes that the essence of the artistic process is to build upon and expand the reality of 'what is' into the realm of 'what can be'. Its mission is to use art and culture as a vehicle for self-empowerment and social change to reshape the future of Israel, promoting values of social solidarity, equality, democracy and tolerance. We will go on an interactive tour and learn about their model of community.

How can art effect change in the public sphere and what is the role communities can play in that exchange?

Travel to Jerusalem

Dinner at the Hotel

Overnight: ANA Agron – Jerusalem

Wednesday, November 7

Decision Making from Different Angles

Travel to the Knesset

Meeting with a representative from the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs

The Ministry is a partner in the Hakhel program and their representatives will share their vision of community. Members of the Knesset will join the conversation to share their point of view.

Top-down decision making: how do decisions made in the Knesset affect local communities? How do the decision makers view the communities acting for social change in their remits?

Interactive program with Aharon Ariel – In the Rose Garden of the Knesset

Which models of decision making exist, and in which situations are they best implemented?

Lunch and conversation with Shorashim/Judur/Roots

The group will meet with Palestinian and Israeli activists and discuss the work being done by Roots – a place where locals can take responsibility. Their work is aimed at challenging the assumptions our communities hold about each other, building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict in our respective societies. This is a grassroots and local model for making change – from the bottom up.

How can citizens decide and create a better future? Decision making at the level of the individual.

Visit to Pardes: the Pluralistic Beit Midrash

Through text study, we will explore the role of the Beit Midrash as a community hub in Jewish tradition and extrapolate that to our own community models.

What is the role of Jewish tradition and leaning in our communities?

6:30 PM – Independent Dinner in Mamilla / Old City

Overnight: ANA Agron – Jerusalem

Thursday, November 8

Social Periphery in the Center of Israel

Travel to Gedera

Ethiopian Community in Gedera

We will meet with members of the Friends By Nature community network of Ethiopian intentional communities. We will learn about their history and immigration to Israel as well as the work they are doing in the neighborhoods. Following the meeting we will eat a traditional Ethiopian lunch in the homes of the community members.

How can a marginalized group form an outward-looking community? How was this community built?

Travel to Lod

Tour and Conversation with the Garin Torani Lod

Lod is a fascinating city, located 20 minutes from Tel Aviv but ranked one of the poorest cities in the country. It is a mixed Arab/Jewish city with historical connections to the three major religions. The Garin Torani is the largest intentional community in the country and we will hear about their successes and challenges. We will be guided by Beni Prince, who you may remember from the JICC 2018.

What is the power of religious communities to effect change in the urban sphere? What does success look like?

Travel to Jerusalem

Optional Eco Tour of the Shuk

The Machane Yehuda shuk is one of the biggest in Israel. It testifies to the greatest abundance the land of Israel has ever seen. This tour will explore the significance of contemporary environmental issues related to the production and consumption of food. In this tour of the Machane Yehuda Market through an ecological lens, the educator will describe the emergence of globalized food in Israel in the past 30 years, and discuss what is fueling the growth of this phenomenon.

How can ecology and consumerism be combined seamlessly and sustainably?

6:30 PM – Independent Dinner in Mahane Yehuda

Overnight: ANA Agron – Jerusalem

Friday, November 9

Going South

Travel to Sderot

Meeting with Noa Asher Berkley

Noa is part of the intentional community Migvan in Sderot and a mentor in the Hakhel program. She will address community issues and discuss life on the Gaza border.

How can an intentional community function in this volatile region?

Lunch in Beersheva

Meeting and Tour with the Reshet

The Reshet is a community of young adults in their 20's and 30's who chose to stay in Beersheva after their university studies to create a vibrant and inviting scene for young adults. Their programs range in scope. We will meet with the founder of the community.

What tools can be used to create local change and promote urban renewal?

Travel to Mitzpe Ramon

Check-in, prepare for Shabbat

Egalitarian/Orthodox service options

Shabbat with Garin Torani in Mitzpe

Shabbat dinner in the homes of community members. After a long week, enjoy a home cooked meal and an opportunity to better understand the community's vision.

Tish at hotel

Overnight: Ana Mitzpe Ramon

Saturday, November 10

Shabbat – An Island in Time

Optional Egalitarian/Orthodox services

Lunch in the hotel

Meeting with the Dror Yisrael community

Dror Yisrael is the socialist youth movement that also spawned intentional communities across the periphery. We will meet with the members and hear about the social change initiatives.

How can communities use businesses to push their agenda for social change?

Seuda shlishit and final conversation

Havdallah

Stargazing in Mitzpe Ramon

Overnight: ANA Mitzpe Ramon

Sunday, November 11

Back to Reality – Incorporating the Lessons Learned

Check out

Travel to the airport

Useful Information

Insurance

You will have insurance coverage while you are with us on the trip through a leading insurance firm (Egert et Cohen). The plan covers visits to hospitals and site visits by doctors for all medical issues. There is a hotline open 24 hours a day that connects participants to the relevant medical facility. In addition, for any hospitalization the plan covers up to \$100,000 including ambulances and helicopter evacuation.

There is coverage for pre-existing medical conditions and medical emergencies. In the case of a sudden and unexpected deterioration of a pre-existing condition where:

- A) The condition has been stable for 6 months preceding arrival in Israel
- B) If the conditions are the result of an accident, there was no hospitalization or treatment in the 6 months preceding arrival in Israel.

(Excluded: cancer treatment, AIDS, transplants, dialysis, M. S. Cystic Fibrosis, active psychiatric conditions)

Money

- Israeli Shekels: The New Shekel (ILS) notes are in denominations of 200, 100, 50, and 20. Coins are in denominations of 10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50 and 10 agorot.
- Credit/Debit Cards, ATMs and all major credit cards are accepted. ATMs are widely available.
- Exchange Rate Indicators: 1.00 USD = 3.59 ILS
Currency conversion rates as of September 12, 2018
- You can change money at the airport, and there are ATMs at the airport, and in or near most of our hotels. We suggest not bringing too much cash, as it is more convenient to use a credit card.
- Everything during the tour is taken care of, but some meals take place during free time in various interesting locations, which participants will purchase themselves.

Important Phone Numbers

Be sure to have these numbers with you at all times.

Gabe Axler, logistical director: 052-522-3601

Aharon Ariel Lavi: 050-473-4513

Safety

To stay safe in Israel, as in any foreign country or place with which you are not familiar, we want to encourage you to take some extra precautions.

- Don't do anything you wouldn't do at home.
- Travel with friends or fellow Tour participants. There is safety in numbers – and your taxi will be cheaper.
- Stay in public places and be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep your valuables close. Do not leave your bags unattended.
- Carry some type of identification with you at all times.
- Most Israelis speak English. If you are lost, ask for help or stop in any hotel for directions.
- Use common sense and trust your intuition – if you feel like you might be in a bad area – leave. If you have any concerns about your safety call Gabe or Jared at any time.

For those who are continuing their stay in Israel after the tour is over, the trip will end at Ben Gurion airport and from there you should make your own way to your destination. There are plenty of travel options including taxis and trains directly from the airport.

About our tour operators

Pnima



Pnima is a social tourism venture that provides local and international tourists with a meaningful and authentic experience, that gives them an alternative look into diverse populations and societal challenges in Israel, via face to face encounters with local grassroots activists and mission-driven communities.

pnimaisrael.org
gabe@pnimaisrael.org

Eretzlr



Eretzlr works to promote urban resilience in Israel's geo-social periphery, in order to create attractive and sustainable places to live in, whose residents enjoy quality of life and a sense of belonging and purpose. We do this by establishing mission-driven communities that operate social businesses and propel educational, cultural and economic change from the ground up.

eretzir.org.il
info@eretzir.org.il

Staff Bios



Gabe Axler is originally from Chicago and has worked in the field of informal Israel education and educational tourism for 10 years. He has a B.A. in History from Binghamton University and an M.A. from Spertus College in Jewish Professional Studies. In 2010, he made Aliyah with his wife and was a founding member of the mission-driven community Kehillat Beerot in Be'er Sheva. He is the proud father of Sela, Hadar, and Emanuel and when he is not working on bringing groups to communities across Israel he

enjoys, hiking, reading, and playing basketball.



Aharon Ariel Lavi is the founder and director of Hakhel: The Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator in the Diaspora. Aharon is a professional community organizer and serial social entrepreneur who believes that networks are key to shaping our reality. Aharon is a co-founder of Garin Shuva on the Gaza border; the Nettiot Intentional Communities Network, reengaging Haredi Ba'alei Teshuva into society; And MAKOM: the national umbrella organization of intentional communities in Israel. Lavi lives with his wife Liat,

their four children, and a dog in the Negev. When he isn't working or studying Torah, he likes to ride his bike in the open fields of the Negev, and is desperately trying to learn to play the flute, a guitar, or anything that makes music.



James Grant-Rosenhead is a founding member of Kibbutz Mishol, the biggest urban educators' kibbutz in Israel. James was born in 1974 in Leeds, England, where he got involved in Jewish leadership, intentional communities, and Israel through joining the Habonim Dror youth movement. For the past 20 years, since making aliyah, James has been building intentional communities, intentional community networks, federations of community networks, and related social and educational projects all over Israel. He is also a co-founder of

the National Council of Mission-Driven Communities in Israel and of Hazon's Hakhel Jewish Intentional Community Incubator worldwide. From 2015-2017, James served as an Israeli emissary to Habonim Dror North America, based in New York, while also mentoring for both Hakhel and Hillel International's Ezra Fellowship. Today, James works at Mishol I.T. as a computer programmer and lives in Kibbutz Mishol in Nazareth Illit with his wife and three daughters.

Participant Bios

Jack Ben Harari is an extrovert that has mastered sarcasm and more importantly mac and cheese. Passionate about people and culture and finding new ways to implement that into the workplace and community.

Anna Batler is a high school English teacher, an aspiring Jewish romance novelist, and a YouTube enthusiast. She lives with Gil Landau and their kids in a large apartment building in downtown DC that Jewish residents call the shtetl.

Elie Benhiyoun was born and raised in a home that also functioned as the Chabad House serving downtown Chicago. His years in yeshivah took him through the Jewish communities of France, Argentina, Los Angeles, New York and Singapore where he also received his rabbinical ordination / smicha. A few years later he founded Chabad of Lincoln Park & DePaul University and established a community of families, college students and young professionals under "The Urban Jew" brand. He also led five Birthright trips during that time and was trained as a Birthright Fellow. He now works as Lead Development Officer at Lamplighters Yeshivah and serves on the Leadership Committee at Hevria. His passions include writing, singing, playing music, specialty coffee and exploring the heck out of wherever he is.

Raised in a Conservative home, **David Borowsky** was brought back to Judaism via Mussar, which he has been practicing for the last several years. In addition to running an investment management firm, he is heavily involved in bringing Mussar to the Harrisburg, building the Jewish community across denominational lines, and working with young men with substance abuse issues.

Carl Chopper grew up in Greenbelt, Maryland outside of Washington, DC. He is now a Reconstructionist rabbi engaged in chaplaincy, advocacy, interfaith dialogue and community leadership in and around Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Asherah Cinnamon became an artist in the mid-2000's. In the previous twenty years, she trained teams to build coalitions in a wide variety of circumstances through her leadership in the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI International). Her art uses Jewish ritual and imagery as a basis for contemporary sculpture and installation art, incorporating sustainable, locally sourced natural materials. Her themes bring attention to traditional ethical concepts (including Tikkun Olam, Shmita, and Selichot), while building community with diverse groups through collaboration and public engagement. She is particularly interested in building community among artists. Her work has received international recognition and can be seen at asherahcinnamon.com.

Gabriel Falk spent this past year studying at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Alon Shvut, Israel, where he also studied during his gap year after high school. Previously, Gabe worked for three years as a financial services consultant at Novantas, and spent most of his free time building UWSJews, a grassroots community for Orthodox young professionals in NYC, together with a few awesome co-founders. While he has lived in New York for most of his life, Gabe considers it to be the highest form of compliment when people suggest that he's from "out-of-town". He and his wife, Debra, will return to New York City in the fall where Gabe will begin Yeshiva University's rabbinical school. He is excited to return to the UWS and continue building the UWSJews community.

Yedida Fink is the founder of Shaare Shamayim Frum Farm, and a pioneer and builder at this Orthodox intentional community. Mother, Grandmother and entrepreneur; excitedly looking forward to growing her community, and being an outreach to the many Jews on nearby farms and ranches, as well as being a source of support to survivors of domestic violence and Jewish young people struggling to find the right path for themselves.

Deborah Fishman Shelby is Founder of FED, a platform for ideas built into an inclusive Jewish community. She is also Director of Communications for The AVI CHAI Foundation and NYC Igniter for ROI Community. Deborah's mission is to ensure everyone is fed -- physically, intellectually, spiritually and on a basic human level.

Kathie Green is an enthusiastic community builder and connector of people. Her passion for relationship building was ignited during her years in career management consulting, where she coached clients on job search networking strategies. On a personal note, Kathie is an avid supporter of the Alzheimer's Association, a planning committee member of the SF Walk to End Alzheimer's, and a champion of dementia caregiver wellness. She and her husband, David, live in San Francisco with their son (4 years) and daughter (10 months). David is the Chief Program Officer at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco and a former student of the Pardes Institute in Israel. Kathie and David were born and raised in Los Angeles, California and graduated from Occidental College.

Devorah Miriam Harris is looking for a way to create a positive impact in the local community and provide affordable, ethical, organic kosher foods.

Casey Krebs is building a community around Jewish food through cooking, nature, current

ritualistic practices, and Tikkun Olam. Her path in life has always involved good food and farm to table practices. With so much of Jewish culture embedded around food and so much love in our Jewish gatherings, Casey plans on implementing a community to keep people interested in our heritage with updated, relevant cutting edge and interesting practices. The point is to identify and relate to people who wish to engage in a Jewish community but may not be finding the right fit. She is an artisan granola maker; food lover; cook; farmer; gardener; nature lover; writer; and photographer. She gets her love of baking from her Bubbie.

Gil Landau is a banking enforcement attorney living with my family of 5 (including Anna Batler) in the downtown DC Jewish shtetl. He's designing a board game about lobbying, though mostly just want to just play more games. When not engaging in the above activities, he's usually either recruiting for some communal event or devouring a (non-terrestrial) science fiction book in a day.

Sara Linden is a Community Builder Extraordinaire and an experienced Program Manager with a demonstrated history of working at the intersection of Jewish community and entertainment culture. She is an admissions professional by day, mah jongg maven by night, and mom 24/7 with her husband, Seth, to their sons, Ezra (5 years) and Pax (2 years) in San Francisco.

Rivka Nehorai is a visual artist, teacher, and writer, as well as an outspoken activist for artists and creative spirits, insisting that raw, redemptive art-making is the means for mental and spiritual health. Rivka teaches artistic approaches to high school students as well as – her favorite thing in the world – figure drawing for adults. Rivka does a daily chicken dance balancing act between mothering three little ladies and attempting to find her way within the greater art world. Her current work can be viewed at

Participant Bios

rivka.gallery, and her written work on hevria.com. Rivka is the program manager for Hevria, assisting in galvanizing the Jewish spiritual creative world.

Craig Oshkello is a founding member of Living Tree Alliance, a farm based Jewish cohousing community in Vermont. He works as a landscape architect and enjoys spending time with his family and friends.

Stacey Sephirah Oshkello is an educator, healthy lifestyle coach, community leader, and nurturing mother, who fosters transformational experiences that help create a joyful life. Stacey Sephirah is the co-founder of Living Tree Alliance, a three-fold initiative that includes a residential cohousing community, organic working lands farm, and a seasonal, earth-based Jewish enrichment program. She loves integrating Jewish traditional practices into a holistic lifestyle amongst family and community, that is relevant to our modern times. She is committed to building Living Tree Alliance as a place that is redefining community, regenerating land, and revitalizing Jewish culture. Most of all, she is nourished by spending time outdoors alone, with her children, husband, and community.

Amberly Polidor is a co-founder of the Asiyah, a Jewish prayer community, and (virtual, for now) coffee shop, creating a home for spiritual exploration and meaning-making informed by Jewish and other wisdom paths in Cambridge and Somerville, MA. A professional copy editor and writer, she is also a graduate of Kol Zimra, Rabbi Shefa Gold's two-year Hebrew chant leadership training program. As Rebbetzin (rabbi's wife), she also serves as a logistical supporter, fact-checker, and reality-checker.

Falynn Schmidt works for an architecture firm as their business development leader. She supports her firm's museum, theater, and higher education studios. She is a Pardes alumna, and a three-time Hazon Israel Ride and three-time Hazon NY Ride & Retreat participant. She has dreamed of creating and living in an intentional community for many years.

Brian Shelby is the Operations Director at FED Social, LLC; an intentional community in New York City that seeks to forge and strengthen bonds among a diverse population. Prior to joining FED, Brian worked in finance at Credit Suisse, Barclays, and Morgan Stanley. Brian lives in Manhattan with his wife, Deborah, and their two daughters. He is a life-long native New Yorker, and is invested in the continuance of the FED project to introduce the city to itself.

Matthew Towle works as a residential supervisor at an assisted living facility in Burlington, Vermont. He works with elderly individuals who have developmental and medical needs. Matthew is involved in Judaic studies and religious life with several synagogues in Burlington and has studied with several teachers and Rabbis throughout the years. He offers his skills and passion for life, to Living Tree Alliance as a board member and volunteer at many of our festival programs and community events.

Jake Wilner is a community builder and co-organizer of UWS//Jews, a grassroots community of young Jews on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. When not planning for the future of the Jewish people, he can usually be found on an airplane, where he works as a strategy consultant at Deloitte Consulting.

Notes



The Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator

We are grateful to our partners and supporters:



Ministry of Diaspora Affairs
Creating a common Jewish future



Pearlstone Center

