

YESH

THE INSTITUTE FOR
NEWISH JEWISH
PROFESSIONALS

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS



ADAM BENDER

Director of Teen Engagement, Westchester Jewish Center

Following high school, Adam participated in Nativ College Leadership Program in Israel, studied at the Hebrew University, and volunteered in a youth village, among other opportunities. He graduated with a degree in finance from the University of Minnesota in 2016. Since then, Adam has worked as engagement director at Temple of Aaron in St. Paul, MN, where he gained experience with all ages from toddler through young adult. Currently, Adam works with students in seventh through twelfth grades.



ANNA LEAH BERSTEIN SIMPSON

Website Administrator, Hadar Institute

Anna Leah graduated from Dartmouth, where she studied Classical Archaeology, Art History, and French, served as vice president of Religion and Education at Dartmouth Hillel, and headed the Writing Assistant Program. After college, Anna Leah worked as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Lyon, France, followed by two years studying Information Architecture at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon on a merit scholarship for international students. An alumna of Yeshivat Hadar and the Kevah Teaching Fellowship, Anna Leah has taught at Limmud Bay Area and worked at the U.S. National Archives.



SARAH EAGLE

Outreach Program Coordinator, Sharsheret

After graduating from Brandeis University, Sarah started working three years ago at Sharsheret. Her responsibilities include developing and facilitating national educational programming and overseeing Sharsheret's Young Professionals Circle in New York. Additionally, she cultivates and maintains partnerships with national organizations and facilitates bar and bat mitzvah projects. Sarah is looking forward to collaborating, brainstorming, strategizing, and working together to strengthen further the nonprofit field and the Jewish community. She holds a master's degree in education from Bank Street College in Manhattan.



DARA FERSEL
Development Executive, Women’s Philanthropy, UJA-Federation of New York (UJA)

More than three years ago, Dara left the public relations sector for the Jewish non-profit world — and wholeheartedly believes that she made the right decision. At UJA, Dara works in the Professional Women’s Division, providing lay leaders with opportunities for personal, professional, and philanthropic growth. Dara graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a B.A. in Communications.



SHAI KARTUS
Development Executive, UJA-Federation of New York

After graduating from Binghamton University in spring 2015, Shai began working at UJA. She knew it was her dream job, having interned at UJA the previous summer. Shai, who recently celebrated her three-year work anniversary, works as a development executive. Cultivating the Jewish journeys of young professionals in their 20s and 30s, she oversees various leadership development and content programs on the Emerging Leaders & Philanthropists (ELP) team.



MAURA KOENIG
Israel Programs Admissions Director, Jewish National Fund

Maura grew up in Syracuse, New York, where she was extremely involved with her synagogue and youth group. She was a longtime, passionate camper and counselor at URJ Eisner Camp, including both going on and leading the NFTY in Israel trip. Maura is a 2011 graduate of SUNY Oswego, where she earned a B.A. in theater. Maura has a passion for Jewish education and Israel and has been doing Jewish education work since graduation, first as director of youth engagement at Scarsdale Synagogue and for the past two years with the Jewish National Fund. Maura is a Birthright Fellow and is involved actively with many 20s and 30s Jewish groups in Manhattan.



MALLORY KOVIT
Program and Engagement Director, Hillels of Westchester

Mallory is entering her fourth year with Hillels of Westchester. Throughout the year, she also works with teens in United Synagogue Youth and BBYO Passport. This past year, Mallory completed her certificate in Jewish Experiential Education through M2 and Hillel International. A graduate of Stony Brook University, where she was very involved with Jewish life on campus, Mallory was inspired to work in the Jewish communal world during her year as an intern at Stony Brook Hillel. She’s also a certified yoga instructor, a birth doula, and a vegetarian.



NAOMI KRIKHELY
Social Worker, JCCA

Professionally, Naomi engages in empathic intervention with children and families. She works to support people and their strengths as they move through life. Naomi graduated with a bachelor’s in Psychology and Sociology from Queens College and with a master’s degree in Clinical Social Work from NYU. She is grateful for the opportunity to pursue her dream of contributing to a kinder society through her everyday work.



NAOMI LEVIN
Operations Coordinator, JDC Entwine

Naomi has been working at JDC since 2015. In her role, Naomi manages projects and ensures their successful execution. She has supported a diverse portfolio of programs, and currently focuses on the year-long Jewish Service Corps and other large-scale events. Naomi has a master’s in Community and Social Change with a Specialized Track in Community and Program Development from University of Miami.



AMANDA LINDNER
Director of Communications, Avodah

Amanda Lindner is the director of communications at Avodah. Before entering the Jewish nonprofit field, Amanda worked as a local journalist and government press secretary. She was named the “Rookie Reporter of Year” by the New York Press Association and is a recipient of the “30 Under 30 Long Island Young Professionals” award. Amanda lives a zero-waste lifestyle in Brooklyn, New York, which was recently featured in the New York Times. She also runs the vegan and zero-waste social media blog, Enviromensch. Amanda is a proud graduate of George Washington University and holds a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication.



TERI MCGUIRE
Associate Program Manager, Foundation for Jewish Camp

The granddaughter of two Holocaust survivors, Teri vowed at a young age to give back to the Jewish community. She informally kept that vow as an active member, then staff member, and group leader for United Synagogue Youth and its summer programs and as a participant on the Nativ College Leadership Program in Israel. She continued that journey by earning her undergraduate degree in Judaic Studies from Binghamton University and a dual master’s degree from Brandeis University’s Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program. Teri is passionate about informal Jewish education, teen engagement, and the power of legacy.



ILANA MITTLEMAN

Project Coordinator, NORC Advocacy and Leadership Institute, JASA

Ilana develops and leads a series of workshops for advisory council members at eight of JASA’s Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs). In addition, she oversees the Volunteer Services Department, which engages volunteers in service throughout JASA’s New York City sites. Ilana, who joined JASA in 2014, received a B.A. in Health: Science, Society & Policy (public health) from Brandeis University.



DESIREE NEISSANI

Director of Theme-Based Programs, Onward Israel

As the director of Theme-Based Programs at Onward Israel, Desiree oversees logistics for summer internship programs in Israel for young adults. In her role, she works on best practices for recruiting participants and coordinates with organizers on the ground to ensure unique and meaningful summer experiences. After graduating with a B.A. from Fordham College Lincoln Center in Religious Studies and History in 2014, Desiree participated in an Onward Israel service-learning program. That experience fostered her desire to give back, which led to her to begin her nonprofit career at UJA-Federation of New York.



GADI PASKOFF

Coordinator, Camp and Teen Initiatives, 14th Street Y

Originally from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Gadi recently graduated from American University. After college, he participated in a fellowship with Temple Sinai in Washington, D.C., where he designed and taught programs for children of all ages. Gadi spent ten summers as a camper at URJ Camp Harlam, where he was also a counselor and a Unit Head. Gadi’s current work focuses on staff hiring & training, trip planning, and other camp programming.



MIRIT SANDS

Assistant Director of the Lese Center for Living Judaism, Central Synagogue

Mirit grew up attending the New Orleans Jewish Day School and Camp Ramah Darom. Her active participation in Young Judaea and United Synagogue Youth ignited her passion for Judaism and fostered a sense of belonging. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from Columbia University and a B.A. in the Hebrew Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Then, she pursued her master’s degree in Jewish Education at the William Davidson Graduate School at JTS and worked at Ramah in the Berkshires as a program coordinator before she became a full-time educator at Central Synagogue.



ZACHARY SCHAFFER

Community Strategy Associate, Israel Action Network, Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)

Zachary’s role empowers people to build support for Israel and counter delegitimization in the context of two states for two peoples. Zachary is also a trained Resetting the Table fellow and a Charles Bronfman Israel Policy Forum Atid Convener. Graduating with honors from the University of Pittsburgh, he holds degrees in Rhetoric and Political Science and a certificate in Corporate and Community Relations. As a Mid-Career Fellow at Gratz College, Zachary is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Nonprofit Management.



JAMIE SCHECHNER

Development Executive, UJA-Federation of New York (UJA)

More than three years ago, Jamie began her career at UJA. She currently oversees UJA’s Young Wall Street Community and Life Insurance Division, as well as several firm campaigns within the Wall Street & Financial Services team. Her expertise includes working with the next generation of philanthropists through industry-specific and social programming in order to further engage donors and prospects. Jamie received a B.A. in human development from Binghamton University.



LAURA SCHULTZE

Communications Associate, Jewish Teen Funders Network

Laura, a California native, is a graduate of San Francisco State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Drama. With a strong background in youth engagement, she was the founding camp director of Pied Piper Players Summer Theater Conservatory, a theater arts camp in San Mateo, CA. After moving to New York in 2014, Laura has continued to work in the Jewish educational space — at URJ Camps, JCCs, and synagogues, including Temple Israel of the City of New York and B’nai Jeshurun. Laura strives to empower Jewish teens and professionals through stories and experiences.



JOSHUA ULL

Director of Student Life, Solomon Schechter School of Westchester

After high school, Joshua studied and volunteered in Israel with the Nativ College Leadership Year Program. After the gap year program, he attended Muhlenberg College and majored in Jewish Studies. Josh went on to work for United Synagogue Youth as the regional youth director of Northern and Central New Jersey. In addition to his current position, Josh is proud to spend his summers leading cross-country teen leadership experiences for the USY on Wheels program.



SHOSHANA WEINER
Program Manager, Repair the World

As a born and raised Midwesterner, Shoshana has migrated to the East Coast in search of Jewish experiences beyond her Ohio hometown. After graduating from Tufts University, Shoshana spent a year in Tallinn, Estonia, as a JDC Jewish Service Corps fellow where she developed innovative Jewish programs in a community still feeling the effects of the Soviet Era. Inspired by her time in Tallinn, Shoshana moved to NYC to focus on Jewish education, engagement, and the Russian-Speaking Jewish community. In her current role, Shoshana focuses on the Repair the World fellowship. You can reliably find Shoshana running through Central Park, reading a mystery novel, or strolling through the city in search of the best borscht.



ADAM WOLFTHAL
Development Executive, UJA-Federation of New York (UJA)

Adam graduated with a master's in Nonprofit Management from Dowling College. Then, he tried his hand at starting a clothing company and writing a poetry book before finding his way into nonprofit work through the New York Junior Tennis League. Adam happily made the move to UJA's Long Island office and began working on their Aqua Run: Race Against Poverty, which has raised almost \$900k to date.



MICHAL YONATI FRAIMAN
Director of Development and US Alumni Relations, American Friends of IDC

Michal graduated from IDC Herzliya, the first private university in Israel, with a degree in Persuasive Communications and a minor in Psychology. During her studies, Michal lived in an underserved community in Herzliya and volunteered with local youth and their families. During her army service, Michal was a commander in Nativ, IDF's Jewish education unit, where she earned an Outstanding Commander award.



EMILY ZUSSMAN
Manager of People and Special Projects, OneTable

Emily received her Master of Social Work and certificate in Jewish Communal Leadership from the University of Michigan. While pursuing her degree, Emily completed her field placement at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in the NEXTGen department. Emily's most formative Jewish experiences stem from an extensive background as a camper, counselor, and supervisor at Tamarack Camps in Ortonville, Michigan. She is passionate about supporting colleagues and building teams that build strong Jewish identities and communities.



Funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation, YESH brings together people who are 2 – 4 years into their careers in the Jewish nonprofit sector, helping them focus their drive to succeed and grow in the field and in their own professional lives.



UJA-Federation of New York cares for Jews everywhere and New Yorkers of all backgrounds,
responds to crises close to home and far away, and shapes our Jewish future.

