

Song of Miriam Awardees Brunch is back

After a three-year hiatus during the pandemic, The Jewish Women's Round Table honored 17 women during this year's 28th Song of Miriam Awards Brunch on June 4.

The 2023 brunch named the volunteers honored during the pandemic and recognized a new group of outstanding women. Though each woman is nominated by her respective organization, the community unites to honor the women who volunteer their time and energy to ensure the continuity and vibrancy of the Jewish community of Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Following are the women honored during this year's brunch:

Judith Arbetter, honored by Shalom Bayit (Bend)

Over the past six years, Judith has helped Shalom Bayit navigate many transitions. She joined the Affiliation and Rabbi Search Committees before joining the CSB board – first as a member-at-large, and then as vice president. She currently serves as the head of the Policy and Procedures Committee.

Susan Berniker, honored by Women of Reform Judaism/Beth Israel Sisterhood

Susan leads Beth Israel Sisterhood as well as serving on WRJ's Pacific District Social and Advocacy Team. She has deepened Sisterhood's engagement in the issue of reproductive health and rights; through her efforts, Sisterhood provides period products to the Somali American Council of Oregon. She has also taught Sunday School for a decade.

Shelley Kaplan, honored by Temple Beth Sholom (Salem)

Shelley is an active member of TBS' Cha-GaT committee, which focuses on social justice and community outreach. She took the leadership role in hunger and homelessness, creating a "mitzvah meals" program that distributes meals to the homeless. She has been heavily involved with Family Promise, which provides housing support for vulnerable populations and has volunteered at warming shelters.

Nehama Bennett-Teasdale, honored by Shir Tikvah

Nehama has taught in Shir Tikvah's Nashira Education Project for 10 years. While teaching, she pioneered "Hebrew Through Movement" in the Portland area. She has served as a member of the Tefillah Committee and the Education Committee, and is now on the Board of Directors. She also served on the design committee for Shir Tikvah and Eastside Jewish Commons.

Karen Blauer, honored by Eastside Jewish Commons

Karen grew up in Portland and has been deeply involved in the Jewish community in



2023 Song of Miriam awardees gather for brunch Sunday, June 4, at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. Front row, from left: Susan Berniker, Janet Grubel, Shelley Kaplan, Judith Arbetter, Nehama Bennett-Teasdale, Martha Soltesz. Back row, from left: Estelle Golden, Ayanne Groupp, Karen Blauer, Sacha Reich, Etti Segal, Shira Newman, Naomi Harwin, Tamar Wyte-Lake. Not present: Jaime Gross, Kathy Chusid, Sari Sapon-White. (Courtesy Marki Maizles)

many ways. She has served on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, B'nai B'rith Camp, Jewish Family & Child Service and Cedar Sinai Park. She was one of the co-founders of Eastside Jewish Commons and is currently its board chair.

Kathy Chusid, honored by Jewish Family & Child Service

Kathy has served on the JFCS board since 2015 and has been on its executive committee as secretary and then vice president. She has served on the agency's Strategic Planning and Life & Legacy committees. At the start of the pandemic, Kathy helped establish JFCS' Advisory Council. She also dedicated time to the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation and Chabad of North-east Portland.

Estelle Golden, honored by The Next Generations Group

Estelle serves on the NGG executive committee that guides and implements its educational and social programs. In addition, she is a member of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education's Holocaust Speakers Bureau, where she has coached new speakers. She is also the incoming president of the Congregation Kol Ami chapter of Women of Reform Judaism.

Jaime Gross, honored by Beit Haverim

In addition to her work as congregation administrator, Jaime volunteers for virtually all temple events, contributing her time and baking skills to make each event a success. She also contributes time and expertise to the Technology Committee, helping it transition to and from holding services

on Zoom. She has been very involved with JAFCO, Jewish Adoption and Foster Care Options.

Ayanne Groupp, honored by Kesser Israel

Since 2001, Ayanne has been involved in Kesser Israel, starting off as the youth director. She has served on the board since 2019 and has been treasurer for the past three years. In 2018 she worked on a grant for security that provided money for both Kesser Israel and Maayan Torah Day School. Recently, Ayanne secured an education grant for youth, family and community programming that has greatly enhanced the shul's activities.

Janet Grubel, honored by P'nai Or

Since joining P'nai Or in 2016, Janet has chaired the Membership Committee and has been a member of the Fundraising Committee. Serving as treasurer for the last six years, she has been responsible for a wide range of financial duties. She is a member of the Council and Executive Committee, making her part of P'nai Or's Presidential Trio, which makes the major decisions for the congregation.

Naomi Harwin, honored by Portland Jewish Academy

Naomi co-chairs PJA's Kehillah Organization and plans events that build community for faculty, students and families. She is a member of the PJA ambassador group, has served as class rep for her children's classes and is a member of the executive

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