



CENTER FOR
SMALL TOWN
JEWISH LIFE

Dear Friends:

Five days ago I walked with Chayim Goldberg, an Orthodox high-school teacher from the Bronx, down a long, winding dirt path in rural Vassalboro, Maine, to the shores of the Kennebec River. He was holding a handful of brand new knives from the hunting section of the Waterville Walmart, and I felt a mixture of amusement and bewilderment. He needed to prepare these knives for a kosher slaughter demonstration we were holding on a local ministers farm as part of the fifth annual Maine Conference for Jewish Life. I looked on with awe as he dipped his instruments into the same powerful river that runs along Watervilles Main Street. ***An ancient mitzvah. An iconic Maine river. Preparing for a groundbreaking Jewish future in a place few would expect, but more and more people have come to cherish.***

This incredible moment was a fitting coda to our most successful and well-attended Maine Conference for Jewish Life to date. Nearly 250 people came to Thomas College and downtown Waterville for a weekend of intensive and intimate Jewish learning, prayer, music, and community. We offered a pickling workshop with the founders of the Brooklyn-based Gefilteria; a creative, locally minded Maimonides workshop with Rabbi Lisa Vinikoor of Bath; a rowdy, klezmer Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Sruli Dresdner and Lisa Mayer of Auburn; and an impactful session with Yotam Polizer of IsraAID on how Israelis of all faiths are supporting Syrian refugees. We were also blessed to be joined by rabbinical students from all denominations, students who brought us their best Torah, and learned about our unique and crucial work in the Pine Tree State.

Together we were writing a new chapter of *Torat HaMaine*, the Torah of Maine.

I am writing not only to reminisce, but also to ask you for your support so that we can sustain and further develop our work. Two of the grants that have funded our conference are running out this year: the JTS Seeds of Innovation grant and a grant from the Sam L. Cohen Foundation. We are so grateful for their support, but now it is up to us to carry on the work. The Center for Small Town Jewish Life staff, along with our incredible array of teachers and preachers, has proven what is possible in Maine.

It is up to all of us to affirm the Centers value to our state and the Jewish people. Please consider supporting our work as we embark on another ambitious, creative, warm, and joyful year of Jewish life. Any gift of any size is celebrated, needed, and employed in the service of crafting superlative Jewish experiences in our state.

<http://www.colby.edu/jewishlife/support/>

If you wish to donate online, please follow this link, and choose Center for Small Town Jewish Life in the drop-down menu. You can also send checks to:

**The Center for Small Town Jewish Life
Colby College
4271 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME 04901**

We work hard to make our programming accessible to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. As we celebrate this incredible achievement, ***please give the gift of Jewish life*** to everyone in our community.

Thank you again for your participation, interest, and support in our work. We look forward to seeing you at our **Fall Shabbaton, October 26-27, 2018, at Colby College**, and at next years **Maine Conference for Jewish Life, May 31-June**

2, 2019, at Thomas College.

With love and appreciation from the shores of the Kennebec,

Rabbi Rachel M. Isaacs
Director, Center for Small Town Jewish Life

P.S.: Were on TV! Watch [here](#):


<http://www.wabi.tv/content/news/Jewish-heritage-conference-held-in-Waterville-485082721.html>


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