

IMPACT!

DONOR APPRECIATION REPORT

APRIL 2024



THE LIVES YOU ARE IMPACTING

How you bring the joy of Judaism to our community



MY CAUSE

Avi and Rachel Kantor



Chabad of Jackson Hole has woven a tapestry of positive influence throughout our family's life, leaving an indelible mark of warmth, community, and spiritual growth. At the heart of this impact lies personal friendship, as our interactions with members of the Chabad community have transcended mere religious affiliation to become genuine connections rooted in care and support. Through regular gatherings, celebrations, and shared moments, we've found a sense of belonging and camaraderie that extends far beyond the walls of the synagogue.

Two pivotal milestones in our family's journey were the bar mitzvahs of our boys, events that were not just ceremonies, but reflections of the inclusive spirit fostered by Chabad. These celebrations were both joyous occasions for our family and moments where every member of our precious community played a significant role, reinforcing the idea that each individual is valued and cherished. It was through these experiences that our boys embraced their religious heritage and learned the importance of communal bonds and collective celebration.

Equally significant has been Chabad's impact on our daughter's journey. Beginning in a Jewish day school, where she first began to grasp the depth of her heritage, she subsequently transitioned to an exhilarating pursuit of competitive ski racing in Jackson, Wyoming. However, it was a pivotal moment during a Chabad teen conference that sparked a profound transformation. There, amidst the camaraderie and wisdom shared, she rediscovered her passion for Judaism, reigniting a flame within her soul. This newfound fervor led her to make the courageous decision to enroll at an all-girls Orthodox high school, where she could further immerse herself in her faith and embrace the teachings that resonated so deeply with her spirit. After graduation, she continued her spiritual exploration in Jerusalem.

In essence, Chabad has transcended its role as merely a religious institution for our family, becoming a wellspring of inspiration and support, enriching our lives in myriad ways. Alongside milestone celebrations and guidance in our spiritual journey, Chabad has fostered a sense of belonging and purpose, encouraging us to embrace our faith wholeheartedly and extend our positive contributions within and beyond our community.



MY COMMUNITY

Cheryl Hutt and Saul Silverstein

As lifelong practitioners of Conservative Judaism, I approached the Wyoming Chabad with some trepidation. These were among the questions that swirled in my mind: Would it meet my needs? Would I be accepted? Would I fit in? Would I feel welcome as a woman?

The answers to these questions was a resounding YES!

Living in a small town in Wyoming with a modest Jewish population, I had little choice when I wanted to say weekly Kaddish after my father's death. As Chabad offered the only weekly Jewish services, I arrived at the Chabad residence on a cold Saturday morning in January for Shabbat services. Without any questions or hesitation, we were warmly welcomed and invited to stay for Shabbat lunch.

Thereafter, I have come to Shabbat services almost every week while residing in Wyoming for the last 5 years. And the Rabbi always includes some prayers in English for those of us who are not Hebrew-adept.

Shabbat dinner every Friday is the most fun time of my entire week! Jews of all ages, from infants to 80+ convene around their dining room table for weekly Shabbat dinners, which includes locals as well as many visitors from all around the globe. The diversity of people I have met and engaged with at that table is truly remarkable – from rabbis to national park rangers to titans of industry.

I feel that I have become a part of the Mendelsohn family and Chabad has given me a kind, caring, warm community in my newly adopted town. It has provided me with a new purpose in a gracious, non-judgmental, accepting environment. I always feel “heard” and conversation, exchange of ideas, and different opinions are encouraged and discussed. Everyone is asked to provide a thought, comment, or idea that was on their mind that week. From the smallest sentiment to the most profound, I always come away feeling that I have learned something and know the people of my community a little better.

If ever I was concerned that women would be considered subservient to men at Chabad, these notions were immediately dispelled. It is abundantly clear that the Rabbi and Rebbetzin are a team of equals, each performing the duties for which they are uniquely qualified and deeply committed to bringing Chabad ideals to the broadest Jewish community – ALL Jews no matter their level of knowledge or observance are embraced without judgment. Their joy in Judaism is whole-hearted and contagious. Being a member of the Wyoming Chabad has enriched my life in ways that I could never have anticipated and I have been made the better for it.



a. Menorah Lighting & Chanukah Party at the WY State Capitol Building



c. Ladies' night out and Challah Bake



b. Purim Party



d. Groundbreaking Ceremony and donor appreciation for the Chabad Jewish Community Center



f. Bar Mitzvah at the Amangani Resort



e. Chip Neiman, Majority Leader of the Wyoming House of Representatives, stands with Israel and the Jewish people



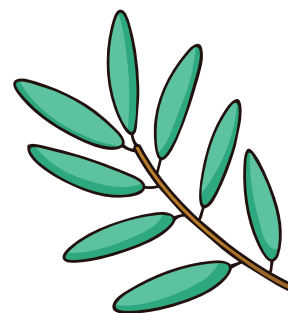
h. Chanukah party with friends and fare



g. Religious and Elected leaders stand at the WY State Capitol Building in support of Israel



i. Cowboy & Contractor





THOUGHTS FROM THE RABBI & REBBETZIN

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we prepare for Pesach 2024, the eternal words of the Haggadah, Vehi Sheamda, ring louder than ever: "And this (Hashem's blessings and the Torah) is what kept our forefathers and what keeps us surviving. For, not only one arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and Hashem saves us from their hands." This sad reality, has once again shocked the conscience of the Jewish people when Israel was viciously attacked on October 7.

In response, the Chabad Jewish Center of Wyoming has been on the forefront of educating the public in support of Israel's moral duty to protect our brothers and sisters in Israel and to combat antisemitism. In spite of our collective anguish, our amazing community has come together, rallied and joined the fight.

Here is a list of our 10 proudest moments during these past 6 difficult months:

1. On October 7, in the midst of celebrating the joyous Bar Mitzvah of Liam Kantor, we were notified of the horrific land, air and sea attack Hamas perpetrated on the people of Southern Israel. We immediately turned our prayers to Israel and ensured that Liam's major milestone would continue on unabated. Chabad's response to Haman, Hitler and Hamas is more happy Bar Mitzvah's.

2. On October 9, we hosted a spontaneous prayer vigil in the Town Square with an uplifting message of Torah, Prayer and Charity. In a beautiful display of Achdus, approximately 100 friends in the Jewish and broader community stood together including leaders of the Jackson Hole Jewish Community.

3. In the recent aftermath of the attack in Israel, we celebrated the Bas Mitzvah of our daughter Rochel Mendelsohn at Legacy Lodge owned by our Muslim Lebanese friend, Jim Darwische. Jim joined me on stage as we modeled how local Jews and Muslims can get along when we embrace co-existence and reject radicalism.

4. Our weekly Shabbat dinners have become an oasis of support and strength for existing and new members of our community. Not a week passes without comment of how these community gatherings are a source of comfort during this time of global Jewish tumult.

5. In the immediate aftermath of October 7, our community stepped up and donated \$17,319 to United Hatzalah to provide lifesaving medical equipment to the heroic paramedics serving on the front lines in Israel.

6. We hosted Keith Isaacson, head of Kibbutz security for the region near Gaza, for a gripping virtual presentation of the Jewish bravery he and his security team witnessed while repelling the barbaric attackers on October 7.

7. We hosted Rabbi Leo Dee, who lost his wife and two daughters in a terror attack in Israel. His passionate talk focused on Faith in the Face of Terror.

8. With the help of Rabbi Yaakov and Malkie Raskin of our newly established Chabad center in Laramie, we hosted a powerful prayerful event at the State Capitol Building in Cheyenne. After Torah, Prayer and Tzedaka, we heard from more than a dozen Jewish, political and religious leaders with unwavering support for Israel. Ran Bar-Yoshafat, a combat officer in Israel's special forces, told his harrowing and heroic story of fighting the terrorists in Gaza.

9. For Chanukah, our community sponsored a first-of-its-kind project, mailing 13,000 menorah kits to every home in Teton County and to every Wyoming state politician. Together with the Menorah, candles and a dreidel, every kit came with a letter asking to light the Menorah by the window, snap a photo and post it on social media with the hashtags: #WYStandsWithIsrael #WYStandsWithJews

We received hundreds of letters and calls of support from the amazing non-Jews in our Jackson Hole community.

10. On Purim, as our community partied at the home of Saul Silverstein and Cheryl Hutt, we handed everyone a card with the name of a hostage held in Gaza and requested a mitzvah be done in their merit. Dozens of Jewish people increased in Jewish observance in support of our brothers and sisters who languish in the Hamas terror tunnels.

In the face of terror, we at Chabad will never give up on our mission to shine the light of Torah, Judaism and Jewish values within and beyond our community. We will redouble our efforts to tell the true story of Israel and the Jewish people. We will continue to empower our own community to stand united, with deep faith, steeped in Jewish tradition, to ensure Am Yisrael Chai.

With much gratitude to our generous donors who make all of this and more possible,

**Rabbi Zalman and Raizy Mendelsohn
Co-Directors
Chabad Jewish Center of Wyoming**

PS Our major project to build the Chabad Jewish Community Center of Jackson Hole is well underway. There are still some dedication opportunities left to honor your family legacy or memorialize a loved one. Please let us know if we can give you a personal tour of the construction.



Just came home from two weeks in Cheyenne for the Joint Appropriations Committee and received your nice gift of a Menorah To Go. I will treasure it always for what it stands for & who sent it to me. God bless you Rabbi and your family.

PS: My wife bought me a Star of David lapel pin. Wearing it tomorrow to a meeting!

- Tim Salazar
Member, Wyoming Senate



I would love to join for Shabbat tomorrow. Can you please put me on the list? The meals themselves are incredibly generous, and I hope to come to many more. I want to give back in some way. How can I best support Chabad as a thank you for your hospitality?

- Justin Shaber

