



2021/2022

MJE

manhattan jewish experience

Rabbi Mark Wildes
FOUNDER/DIRECTOR

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal
SENIOR DIRECTOR

Rabbi Avi Heller
DIRECTOR OF FELLOWSHIP

Zahava Schwartz
FELLOWSHIP COORDINATOR

**LAMM
FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAM**

MJE Lamm Fellowship, now in its 15th year, with 205 graduates to date, is a select cadre of MJE participants with little or no prior Jewish education who have expressed a desire to move their Jewish learning to the next level. The program seeks to educate and inspire knowledgeable and passionate leaders for the future. This year's class includes 20 men and women who meet each week at MJE West for three hours of Jewish study, including classes, discussions and one-on-one learning.. In addition they join together for experiential seminars, socials and Shabbat experiences throughout the year. In 2016, the fellowship was dedicated in honor of Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm Z"TL for his years of extraordinary scholarship and leadership on behalf of the Jewish people.

MJE Lamm Fellowship Bios Class of 2021/2022



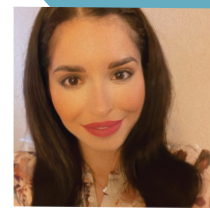
Elana Algov

Elana, a "green wave" native from the Jersey Shore, moved to New York City a little over four years ago in order to experience occupations unique to the Big Apple. Her most enjoyable job so far was an overnight security guard at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Over the years Elana has engaged in studies on topics including fine art, music performance, acting, photography, languages (Hebrew, Latin and Mandarin Chinese), Medical and Data Sciences and even martial arts and Krav Maga. Having uncovered an endless well of intellectual curiosity and love for Judaism, Elana looks forward to beginning Torah studies with the 5782 MJE Fellowship class.



Sivan Aulov

Although Sivan wasn't born in New York City, she got here as fast as she could. Originally from Austria, Sivan earned her graduate degree in Mental Health Counseling in Dallas, Texas and considers herself fortunate to pursue her life's passion of therapy (emotionally connecting with people in a deep way). When she isn't studying Torah with her Chavruta, you can find her running in Central Park, eating her way through the city, or laughing in various comedy clubs across town. Sivan hopes to gain a deeper admiration and respect for her Jewish roots through the MJE Fellowship.



Anais Basso

Born and raised in Brazil, Anais studied International relations at FAAP, and is currently working in finance, as a Chief of Staff. During her free time, Anais likes to learn, cook, and spend time with her daughter. She's always looking for a new adventure, and found that the MJE Fellowship was the best adventure to go on. When Anais is not busy with everything else, she loves photography and enjoying nature.



Schuyler Gordon

By day, Schuyler is an attorney working as the Principal Law Clerk to a Justice of the Supreme Court in Queens County. By night, he serves as a firefighter for the Manhasset-Lakeville Fire Department in Great Neck, New York, where he has volunteered since 2004, including four years as a Lieutenant and two years as Captain. In his precious free time, Schuyler enjoys homebrewing, backpacking, cycling, and playing bass and mandolin. Coming from a non-observant, yet strong Jewish family, Schuyler is eager and grateful for the opportunity to develop his spiritual practice as an MJE Fellow.



Sean Hollis

Sean was born and raised in Scarsdale, New York and currently practices law at a nationally renowned firm in midtown Manhattan, where he concentrates his practice in franchise law, high exposure litigation, and general corporate law. In his off time, Sean exercises, plays guitar and studies Torah in addition to making jokes and bringing people together through laughter.



Jori Holloway

Jori, a young Jewish professional living and working in New York City, grew up in Cleveland, Ohio in a Conservative household. She went on the Young Judea Year Course program in Israel before college, where Jori found a stronger Jewish identity and inspiration to become more religious and attend Yeshiva University. She worked in Human Resources until she found her passion for Recruitment at Atrium Staffing. In her spare time she loves to run, dance, go to the beach and socialize with her friends on the Upper West Side. She is very happy to be a part of this year's MJE Fellowship Program.



Justin Koatz

Justin was born and raised on Manhattan's Upper East Side. He now lives on the Upper West Side, where he enjoys being a part of the vibrant Jewish community. Justin graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont with a degree in East Asian Studies, and completed his Graduate studies in Nanjing, China through a Johns Hopkins University program. Justin works in the anti-financial crime division of a major investment bank. He is a polyglot and language enthusiast who speaks Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese with varying degrees of advanced fluency. Justin's hobbies are long-distance running, genealogy, dabbling in new languages, and studying Judaism.



Miranda Lapidés

Miranda is a Marketing Account Executive at Jewish National Fund-USA and a Brand Ambassador for the New York Adventure Club. Originally from Connecticut, she studied at George Mason University, where she earned a B.A. in Psychology. Now a proud New York resident, Miranda came to MJE in search of community and a desire to expand her Jewish knowledge. When she's not at Fellowship, she be found with good book, behind a microphone, or on the streets learning NYC history.



Allyson Long

Allyson is originally from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, but moved to NYC four years ago, and now resides on the Upper West Side. She graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in Cultural Anthropology, and currently works as an Account Manager at a start-up in the Animal Health industry. In her free time you can find Allyson in Central Park with her dog Bagel, at home trying out a new recipe, or at a local brewery sampling craft beers. Allyson loves learning new things and is very excited to be part of this year's Fellowship class, learning alongside an incredible group of people!



Ethan Cramer

Ethan was born and raised in Rockland County, NY. He studied Economics at Binghamton University, where he had the opportunity to spend a year of study abroad in London. Ethan has been living in NYC for the last 3 years, including a stint in the Upper West Side Moishe House. He currently works in finance. Ethan enjoys reading, traveling, architecture, tennis, basketball, hiking, backgammon, beaches and being involved in the MJE community.



Alexandra Feingold

Alexandra, originally from Commack, Long Island, went to Binghamton University where she studied International Relations. She currently works in Public Relations. Alexandra is an enthusiastic and curious student who enjoys studying Jewish spirituality and loves learning at MJE. Thanks to the help of her amazing Chavruta, Ilana Bauman, and her mentor, Jill Wildes, Alexandra has been able to delve into some of Judaism's most difficult questions and transform her Jewish identity in the past year. In her spare time she can be found listening to a kabbalah podcast, singing, songwriting, and performing with her band. Thank you MJE!



Yaron Glassman

Born in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn to a family of Shoah survivors, Jason was raised in Princeton and was a Bar Mitzvah at 770. Having rekindled his Jewish observance over the pandemic, Jason has found an amazing community in MJE to help foster his spiritual growth and education. When he's not learning Torah and doing mitzvot, Jason is an entrepreneur in tech working at a startup as a Product Manager. Jason enjoys playing jazz piano, producing synth pop music, and is a modestly legendary karaoke sensation when the occasion calls for it.





Hannah Pasternak

Hannah is a writer and editor originally from Tenafly, New Jersey. She works as the Associate Director of Special Projects at Self magazine, a Condé Nast publication, and has previously held roles at Rolling Stone and Marie Claire. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Brown University, she moved to Manhattan, and now lives on the Upper West Side. She's thrilled to join this year's Fellowship class at MJE and deepen her connection to Jewish liturgy and rituals.



Justin Rolnick

Originally from Los Angeles, Justin moved to New York City a year ago during the pandemic. Inspired by a need for more dining-solutions at his college & fraternity, Justin started a company that runs dining halls for schools around the county. Justin joined the MJE Fellowship to foster a more observant lifestyle for his future family; so he will be able to teach his children about the deeper meaning Judaism and have a Jewish home.



Barry Sasson

Born and raised in Westchester, New York, Barry attended Brandeis University for his Bachelor's degree, followed by Baruch College Sicklin School of Business, where he earned a Masters in Accountancy. Barry worked in accounting for several years, but is currently pursuing a career change. In addition to discovering his new career, Barry is also using his time off to enjoy his hobbies and interests, which include photographing sunsets, traveling the world, taking long walks to explore Manhattan, and learning more about his Judaism at MJE. Barry is passionate about increasing his Jewish knowledge by committing to the MJE Fellowship program.



Natasha Whitney

Natasha is a long-time West Coaster who has decided to put down roots in her city of origin, New York. She has a BA from Harvard and an MA from Stanford. Natasha is a software engineer who identifies as a perpetual student, interested in everything from obscure programming languages to the nuances of auto-fiction. Her passions include increasing diversity in STEM professions, anything aquatic or outdoorsy (she has surfed in the Rockaways and sailed on the Hudson), scratching inchoate artsy itches (R&B singing, creative writing) and spiritual growth. Natasha is excited to fill in the gaps in her Jewish knowledge and deepen her relationship with Judaism.



Maria Zarankina

Maria was born in Moscow, Russia, and raised in New York since she was 13. She graduated from the New York Institute of Technology with a Bachelors in Architecture and works as a Code Development Architect for the NYC Department of Buildings. Maria has experience working in diverse design firms, from boutique architectural to multidisciplinary A&E companies. Outside of work Maria loves to draw and engage in creative design projects. She is a proponent of a healthy, vegan lifestyle in support of animal rights and overall wellness, and has a great interest in exploring Judaism which she pursues via the MJE Fellowships!



The **MJE Senior Fellowship Leadership Program** consists of a select cadre of committed MJE participants who have a deep desire to move their Jewish learning to the next level. This program combines weekly learning, mitzvah workshop, Chesed projects, Shabbatonim and a special track within the Spring Retreat to produce the next leaders of MJE.

Senior Fellowship Bios 2021 - 2022



Katie Barnett

Katie was introduced to MJE over four years ago and has never looked back. For the past three years, she has worked in Business Development for LiveRamp, a Data Connectivity Platform. Prior to that, Katie spent nine years in various roles at Nielsen, rising from Administration Assistant to Vice President of Client Solutions. A Miami native and graduate of the University of Miami, Katie moved to New York in June 2009. She lives on the Upper West Side with her husband, Avi, her baby girl, Raina and her dog, a lab/beagle mix, Hazel.



Suzanne Berkeley

Suzanne was born in Brooklyn, and after living in Florida, she returned to Manhattan. She is a licensed clinical social worker and earned a Master's in Social Work and her Bachelors in criminal justice and sociology. Prior to becoming an LCSW, she was a Probation and Parole Officer. She currently works with behavioral health disability claims while seeing therapy clients part time. Her dog regularly walks her in Central Park and is often judged by her cat. Her passions include animal rights and veganism. She has dabbled in improv, stand-up and sketch writing. MJE has afforded Suzanne the opportunity to reconnect and deepen her Torah knowledge.



Brooke Bryant

Brooke is a nonprofit leader with expertise in fundraising, strategic planning and business management. Currently, she serves as Director of Development at Kaufman Music Center, holding prior positions at Hospital for Special Surgery, Cooper Union and iMentor. Also a classically-trained singer, she has performed with leading choirs and chamber music ensembles in NYC. She holds a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from the CUNY Graduate Center and a BA from Wellesley College. Brooke and her husband live in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn and are proud members of Congregation B'nai Avraham.



Melissa Gitman

Born and raised in Montreal, Melissa is a physician at Mount Sinai Hospital specializing in microbiology and infectious disease. She graduated from McGill Medical School and earned a Master's of Public Health at Harvard University. In her spare time, Melissa is an avid gymnast, loves to travel the world, and participate in MJE programs.



Chloe Godin

Chloe is a Swiss-American who moved to New York City 9 years ago. She works as a real estate broker at Triplemint, dedicated to helping her clients get the best possible deal and experience. Chloe loves to meet new people, practice yoga and dance Zumba and is is passionate about any form of learning. She just joined as Senior Fellow at MJE after having attended events for the last couple of years and is very excited about this program and community.



Samantha Grossman

Samantha is a marketing professional from New York City who loves exploring the world, learning new philosophies and swapping stories about Jewish journeys. An avid runner, baking enthusiast and bikram yoga devotee, Samantha is most passionate about personal growth and the relationship forges with others along the way.



Adrian Gurcovschi

Adrian Gurcovschi was born in Colombia (South America) before moving to Florida at the age of nine. Adrian subsequently moved to New York at nineteen to complete his undergraduate studies at Yeshiva University. He later obtained a Juris Doctor from Fordham Law School and now practices law as a commercial litigator. Through the MJE Senior Fellowship, Adrian has gained a better understanding of his Jewish roots and become a positive role-model to his community.



Stephanie Hausner

Stephanie is from New City, NY where she proudly held the position of Councilwoman of Clarkstown for 8 years. She graduated from the Johns Hopkins University with a degree in International Relations. Stephanie is the Chief Program Officer for the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, focused on coordinating efforts to fight antisemitism and strengthen the US-Israel relationship. Stephanie enjoys the NY Rangers, racking up frequent flyer miles, reading, and baking challah. She is excited for another year of MJE's Senior Fellowship.



Jamie Levy

Jamie is a young Jewish professional living and working in New York City. She is originally from Florida, where she graduated from the University of Florida. She is currently working for Fendi. She has a passion for baking, art and a love snow. Jamie is very happy to be a part of this year's MJE Senior Fellowship Program.



Evan Rabin

Evan is one of the few MJE Community members that was born and raised on the Upper West Side. He graduated from Dwight School, (three blocks away from MJE) in 2008 and Brandeis University, with a BA in Business and International Global Studies in 2012. Evan spent the spring of his Junior Year studying abroad in Masa Israel Program at Tel Aviv University. After doing enterprise sales in Corporate America at Oracle and Rapid7, he utilized his true passion for chess as a National Master and began Premier Chess in July 2017, which now runs programs in over 100 schools and companies.



Diane Schrenzel

Diane is a 24-year-old Parisian-born and -raised master's student in digital marketing at Yeshiva University. Her professional and personal interests include art history and business as well as internships at Christie's and Sotheby's, Diane has always been passionate about Judaism and since she enjoyed the Fellowship program last year so much, she decided to further her grasp of intricate Jewish topics by being a Senior Fellow. Diane is so grateful that MJE feels like a home away from home.



Alan Hedrick

Alan is a Licensed Real Estate Agent in New York City, specializing in residential sales in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. Originally from Denver, Colorado, he relocated to New York City in 2011 (after spending several years in Aspen). Fun fact, Alan speaks Spanish fluently! When he is not at work Alan enjoys traveling, hiking, sailing spending time outdoors. He has been a part of the MJE community for a few years. Alan has enjoyed learning with MJE and looks forward to continuing his spiritual growth.



Anna Hertz

Anna works in the retail industry and is currently a Senior Manager of Operation Planning and Analytics for a global hair care company. Outside of work, Anna enjoys reading, cooking, Jewish learning, and spending quality time with loved ones and friends. A native New Yorker, Anna loves being part of the vibrant UWS and MJE community. She is newly engaged to her beshert, Todd Schwartz.



Ilya Ivraghimov

Ilya has grown up in Queens, New York since he was 8 years old, after moving to the United States from Russia. He attended and graduated from Tuoro College, where he was able to study Biology and pursue his passion of acting, spending free time at Manhattan's Acting Studio. Ilya has since been featured in plays and short films! He is also passionate about cooking. Ilya joined MJE right before the pandemic hit and was inspired to join Fellowship. He is always excited to learn Torah and more about Jewish History. With MJE, Ilya has rediscovered himself!



Devra Seidel

Devra Aviva, originally from Cherry Hill, New Jersey is a classical pianist, actor-singer, teacher and musical director currently living in New York City. Her undergrad degree is from Oberlin Conservatory of Music followed by her Master's of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music. After, she spent six weeks studying in Israel at Neve Yerushalayim. She has worked as an accompanist and vocal coach, performed in festivals and was the co-creator and musical director for Kids Company Showcase. She would like to express her gratitude to the entire MJE staff for the opportunity to participate in the Senior Fellowship this year and to take her learning to the next level.



Scott Shapiro

Scott is originally from Pennsylvania and attended Rider University where he majored in Finance. He first joined MJE for our Monday night class and after hearing Rabbi Wildes talk about the Torah he realized that MJE was a perfect fit. Since then Scott has become an active member in the MJE community and proud graduate of 2017/18 Fellowship class. In his free time Scott enjoys bike riding, snowboarding and hiking.



Max Sterling

Max grew up in the Midwest and went to school outside of LA. He taught English on a Fulbright grant in Argentina and earned his MFA in Acting from Columbia University. Before starting graduate school, Max volunteered in Israel, working on ambulances with Magin David Adom. He has worked extensively with the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene and has developed his own photographic work around Jewish identity and ritual objects.



Carly Korman Schlakman

Carly grew up in Manalapan, New Jersey and attended the University of Massachusettes, Amherst where she graduated in 2017. She got married last year! Carly fell in love with Israel and Zionism on her birthright trip in 2015. She currently works for the Jewish National Fund (JNF) recruiting high school and college students to various Israeli programs. Her favorite pastimes are talking Israeli politics, playing with dogs and shopping online.



Dan Lasman

Dan Lasman (Daniel Chaim ben Baruch) is a first generation American from Berkley, CA. Dan holds a BA in European History as well as World Literature from UCSC. Dan also earned a Master of Science in Sustainable Real Estate Development from NYU. He enjoys spending time with his family, is an avid outdoorsman and hiker, enjoys reading, cooking, writing poetry, painting, playing djembe and gardening. Dan enjoys learning with the MJE Senior Fellowship, a cornerstone of his weekly Torah studies, His favorite Jewish topic is learning how to raise his new daughter Billie (Vilna Devorah) with Torah values in concert with his wife Lea Lasman.



Shoshana Levitt

Shoshana is a Silicon Valley native now residing in Murray Hill, working in Customer Success at a Neobank. She discovered MJE soon after graduating New York University and has since been an active community member. In her free time, Shoshana enjoys singing, playing piano, cooking and dabbling in graphic design.



Taryn Tanzer Grunstein

Taryn is a native New Yorker who moved down south to attend Tulane University where she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Management and Master of Accounting. Upon graduation, Taryn returned to NYC and is currently President of Patient Care Associates, Inc., the premier point-of-care mobile diagnostic testing company in the North-East. In her free time, Taryn enjoys the company of her close friends, live music and traveling to destinations far removed from the "beaten path." Taryn is excited to continually connect and learn more about her Jewish roots through the MJE community. Taryn and her husband Steve have a beautiful baby girl, Estelle.



FELLOWSHIP SUPPORTERS

Laurie & Lewis Barbanel

Pearl Ginsburg

Basya & Jonah Lobel

Harriet & George Blank

Lisa & Paul Glazer

Elisa & Alan Pines

Doris & Marcus Blumkin z"l

Becky & Avi Katz

Randi & David Sultan

Dr. Aviva & Gershon Distenfeld

Phyllis & Abraham Katz

Tehilla & Guy Tsadik

Shira & Jeff Eisenberg

Bertha z"l & Dr. Henry Kressel

Leigh & Daniel Waxman

FELLOWSHIP SYLLABUS HIGHLIGHTS

One-On-One Learning

Personalized peer learning with knowledgeable Jewish Day School-educated young professionals.

The Next Level with Rabbi Mark Wildes

Fundamentals of Jewish Law; in both practice and philosophy.

Insights Class with MJE Educators

Essential topics presented by MJE Educators ranging from Women in Judaism and Jewish History, to Chassidic Mystical Thought.

Seminars on Jewish Experience with Rav Avi Heller

Trips include the YU Seforim Book Sale, kashrut tour of Whole Foods and visiting a matzah baking factory.

Facets of the Torah with Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal (Senior Fellowship Class)

Understanding Chumash via study of the Parsha.

ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES

Israel Trip

As a capstone to their year of study, Fellows spend 9 days in Israel connecting the land to Tanach and Jewish history.

*The Claire and Jack Margolius & Marilyn Margolius Craft MJE Fellowship Israel Trip is sponsored by Leigh and Daniel Waxman

Social Events

Fun and informal get-togethers with MJE Rabbis & Educators to solidify group cohesion and create a lasting bond between Fellows.

Shabbatons

Observing Shabbat at MJE and in suburban communities exposing Fellows to the broader Jewish community.

MJE Spring Retreat

Intensive 3-day spiritual getaway in the Berkshires with seminars, sports, kumzits and beautiful Shabbat experience

Mentors

Each Fellow meets monthly with an MJE mentor to learn new skills and receive coaching through their personal Jewish growth.