

THE WEEKLY PRINT

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NOVEMBER 10, 2022

Meet the next Jewish Republican congressman from Long Island

The Queens native will make history as Long Island's first openly gay representative

By Matthew Kassel

In his second consecutive bid for a New York congressional seat, George Santos made history on Tuesday, winning a competitive race that will make him the first openly gay representative from Long Island elected to serve in the House.

The newly minted congressman-elect can also claim another unique distinction: Santos, 34, will be the only Jewish Republican member of New York's House delegation when he is sworn in this January.

It is not a position Santos is taking for granted, he explained in a recent interview, as he prepares to represent New York's heavily Jewish 3rd Congressional District, which covers the North Shore of Long Island as well as a portion of eastern Queens.

"The way I look at this is, I'm going to represent one of the most Jewish-rich districts in the country, with the most population of Jews," he told *Jewish Insider* on Wednesday, "and I'm going to do that honorably."

Days before the election, Santos met Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau at the Chabad of Great Neck, where the Republican candidate spoke with Jewish community members and vowed to "stand strong as antisemitism and violent crime shakes us to the core," according to a recent social media post.

"That just tells you, I'm connected with the community," Santos explained. "They know I'm there for them without me having to campaign on it, because it's common sense, second nature, and I've always been a part of the community with them."

He said he would apply the same level of commitment to every constituent in the district. "Whether my mother's Jewish background beliefs, which are mine, or my father's Roman Catholic beliefs, which are also mine, are represented or not," he said, "I want to represent everyone else that practices every other religion to make sure everybody feels like they have a partner in

me."

Santos, a Jewish-Angolan first-generation American, prevailed over his Democratic rival, Robert Zimmerman, by a decisive eight-point margin earlier this week, flipping an open House to succeed Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-NY), who is retiring after a failed gubernatorial bid. Last election cycle, Santos failed to defeat Suozzi, losing by 12 points in his first campaign for federal office.

Even as Republicans underperformed in the midterms, the North Shore upset was part of a broader sweep in which GOP candidates claimed all of Long Island's four congressional seats, including the Suffolk County district vacated by Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY), who lost a gubernatorial bid on Tuesday.

For years, Zeldin had been the lone Jewish Republican congressman from New York, and one of just two Jewish Republicans in Congress.

Hank Sheinkopf, a veteran Democratic strategist in New York, said there was once a “substantial number” of Jewish Republican members of Congress in the New York City suburbs.

“Santos may be the beginning of something new or just the creation of something old, which is suburban Jews as Republicans,” Sheinkopf said, suggesting that the Long Island election could hint at a possible “resurgence of suburban Jews finding themselves much more comfortable with Republicans than Democrats.”

Like Santos, Zimmerman, a longtime public relations professional and Democratic National Committee member, is Jewish as well as openly gay. The general election matchup is believed to have been the first congressional race featuring two openly gay candidates from both major parties.

The two opponents, however, claimed to hold little if anything else in common. Over the course of the race, Zimmerman had sought to persuade voters that his GOP rival was an extremist who supported a national abortion ban and participated in the Capitol riots of Jan. 6, 2021, among others things.

Santos, who denied those claims, was for his part aggressively focused on crime and inflation, echoing a broader Republican messaging strategy that appears to have resonated with voters across Nassau and Suffolk Counties. “Essentially what they don’t want is New York City coming to Long Island,” Sheinkopf told JI. “Crime was always the issue.”

“The people have spoken,” Santos

declared in the interview. “Whether you’re a Republican or whether you’re a Democrat, they wanted a change in representation, and that’s what I represented. Now, I need to deliver that, and I’m going to deliver that equally for everybody in the district.”

In his outreach to voters in Nassau County, where Democrats hold a registration advantage, Santos recalled building close relationships with Persian Jews in Great Neck, who are traditionally conservative and, broadly speaking, believe that nuclear negotiations with Iran lend legitimacy to an authoritarian regime. “My friends in the Persian community, they’re fantastic to me,” Santos said. “I go to Shabbat with them, I go to temple with them.”

“I think the largest crime that we can talk about when it comes to antisemitism and the threat to Israel is any kind of negotiation with Iran,” Santos argued. “I want people to understand that I’m a ‘no’ on any kind of deal with Iran. I’m a ‘no’ on any kind of money given to Iran. Matter of fact, I believe sanctions should be doubled and tripled.”

His position, he said, is the “best way to speak up not only for human rights” but also “for the freedom of the people in Israel to not live under the threat and oppression of the radical regime in Iran.”

Santos, who described himself as a non-observant Jew, said his four visits to Israel were “the most exciting experiences” of his life.

“I’m a partner of Israel. In foreign policy, I believe Israel is our friend, Israel is our ally, and they’re the only democracy in the Middle East and we need to defend them,”

he said. “They have a right to exist, they have a right to defend themselves, and it is a promise that must be kept to the Jewish people. I will continue to fight and be an ally for them.”

He said he was “very much looking forward, as a member of Congress, to working with” Benjamin Netanyahu, who is likely to be tapped to form the next government in the coming days. “I’m very excited to see the U.S.-Israel alliance just grow stronger and stronger each day.”

“Anything we can do from the perspective of foreign policy to strengthen that relationship,” Santos told JI, without elaborating, “I will always be an advocate and I will always sign on to those initiatives.”

Santos, a graduate of Baruch College who previously worked on Wall Street, declined to mention future House colleagues with whom he might want to collaborate. “What you see on TV and what you get in real life, it’s always different, so I don’t know,” he told JI. “It’s a matter of if our personalities are going to match or if we’re going to have the same visions and ideals for certain specific issues that we should work on together.”

“I look forward to discovering that together and working with Republicans and Democrats,” Santos said. “Whoever wants to get work done for Americans, I’m going to work with.” ♦

Shapiro, citing Pirkei Avot, sails to victory in PA

The state attorney general's victory over far-right Republican Doug Mastriano offered Democrats early hope on Election Day

By Gabby Deutch

As anxious Democrats around the country waited for election results to come in on Tuesday night, a jubilant crowd of more than a thousand was in a celebratory mood from the moment they walked into Josh Shapiro's election night party at a convention center on the far edges of the Philadelphia exurbs.

While vulnerable Democrats elsewhere in the state struggled in close races that remain undecided, Shapiro was declared the victor by the *Associated Press* shortly after midnight, leading Doug Mastriano by more than 500,000 votes.

"I spoke a lot about my faith in this campaign. My family and my faith call me to service and they drive me home," Shapiro told a cheering crowd in a triumphant victory address. "You've heard me read Scripture before, that no one is required to complete the task, but neither are we free to refrain from it, meaning each of us has a responsibility to get off the sidelines, to get in the game and to do our part. And so I say to you tonight, that while we won this race — and by the way, won it pretty convincingly ... the job is not done. The task is not complete."

Guests mingled throughout the night alongside a hearty spread of food, including charcuterie, cheese, fruit and vegetables, and a table containing heaps of leftover Halloween candy. Supporters of the governor-elect partied to a bass-pumping blend of early 2010s pop and classic rock. A coach bus decked out in Shapiro branding, a relic of a campaign bus tour across the state, sat at one end of the hall. People wrote messages to Shapiro and signed their names in Sharpie. A massive screen showed results coming in from around the nation on CNN,

and guests burst into applause when the network called the race for Shapiro.

In conversations with *Jewish Insider*, Jewish Democrats at the party noted Shapiro's strength as a candidate — and the weaknesses of his opponent, a far-right state legislator who has advanced conspiracy theories about the 2020 election.

"I think that Shapiro is going to win resoundingly, because I still believe in the better angels of humanity, and I think Mastriano panders to the lowest and the worst," Rabbi Greg Marx, senior rabbi at the reform Congregation Beth Or in Glen Maple, told *J* early in the night.

Shapiro came out to address the still-packed crowd at 11:30 p.m.

"Real freedom prevailed here tonight in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I stand before you tonight, thanks to all of you, in the birthplace of our democracy, in the cradle of liberty, and look you in the eye and say because of you, our democracy endures," said Shapiro, who ran a campaign that focused on a broad range of economic and social issues, as well as protecting Pennsylvania's elections. "We value our freedom. We cherish our democracy. And we love this country."

His remarks did not mention John Fetterman, the Democratic Senate candidate who was holding his own party in Pittsburgh and whose victory over Dr. Mehmet Oz would be called by AP several hours later, albeit by a slimmer margin.

Over the course of the campaign, Oz had hammered Fetterman for his approach to criminal justice, calling Fetterman soft on crime and arguing that he will make the state less safe. State Rep. Jared Solomon, a Democrat who represents northeast

Philadelphia, noted that Shapiro largely avoided falling into the same trap as Fetterman and other national Democratic figures by leaning on his experience as attorney general.

"He is an AG, so he has those credentials, law and order, but also he's talking about the issue while he's running for governor, so he's not shying away from it," Solomon explained. "I think a lot of times Democrats tend to not want to address the issue at all."

As governor, Shapiro will have to work with a Republican-controlled state legislature, where Mastriano will remain a state senator. But Shapiro's supporters point out that he won endorsements from several Pennsylvania Republicans.

"I think it's widely accepted, on both sides of the aisle, that Josh will be an effective governor," said Brett Goldman, a co-founder of Democratic Jewish Outreach Pennsylvania and a lobbyist for the cannabis industry. "He's built a lot of relationships with Republican legislators, and they respect him as a colleague."

Solomon added that Shapiro prioritized outreach to people who are not straight-ticket Democratic voters. "Democrats are up against some really strong headwinds," said Solomon, who added that reaching across the aisle is part of Shapiro's "brand."

Earlier Tuesday, Shapiro cast his ballot with his family at their neighborhood polling place in Abington, in Philadelphia's Main Line suburbs.

"I'm incredibly humbled to be receiving the kind of support we're receiving from Republicans, Democrats, independents, and it's a coalition that will, God-willing, not only help us win today, but help us govern in the future to bring people together," Shapiro

told reporters on Tuesday morning.

His election night party was on his home turf in Montgomery County, where he nurtured his own political career, starting in the statehouse. Scores of supporters, benefactors and mentors from Shapiro's nearly two-decade political career in the county and the state were on hand to claim

some degree of credit for Shapiro's rise — and to speculate about his future.

"People on the national stage are going to really learn who Josh Shapiro is," said Noah Marlier, a Montgomery County elected official.

Marcel Groen, a former chairman of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party whom

a friend described as a mentor to Shapiro, said, "I think I have a pretty good idea of where he's headed." When asked whether he thinks Shapiro wants to run for higher office, Groen responded: "He doesn't, but I do [want him to]." ♦

NOVEMBER 10, 2022

Collins, prepping for top GOP Appropriations spot, pledges to fight efforts to condition aid to Israel

'I will continue to push back against those like Sen. Sanders and Sen. Warren... who have proposed conditioning that essential aid,' Collins said after a recent trip to Israel

By Marc Rod

As she prepares to become the top Republican on the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee — which helps control the government's purse strings — Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) pledged to fight efforts from some colleagues to condition aid to Israel.

With the retirement of Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AR), the Maine legislator is in line to become the top Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee in the new year, giving her significant power over where and how funding is allocated across the federal government. Whether she becomes the chair of the committee or its ranking member is dependent on the outcome of outstanding Senate races in key battleground states. In her new role, Collins pledged to push back against efforts to condition aid to Israel.

"I strongly support [U.S. aid] funding, and in my new role as the top Republican on

the Appropriations Committee, and I hope, as chairman of that powerful committee, I will continue to push back against those like Sen. [Bernie] Sanders [I-VT] and Sen. [Elizabeth] Warren [D-MA], and members of the Progressive Caucus in the House, who have proposed conditioning that essential aid," Collins told JI last week.

Just ahead of the U.S. and Israeli elections, Collins took a weeklong trip to Israel at the end of October for meetings with officials including Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, National Security Advisor Eyal Hulata, Mossad Director David Barnea and Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar. She also spoke on the phone with Prime Minister Yair Lapid. The Opposition Leader Benjamin Netanyahu — who now looks likely to be tapped as prime minister again — canceled a scheduled meeting "at the last moment," according to Collins.

While in Israel, Collins also met with Bashar Azzeh, a member of the National Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization, with whom she said she discussed her concerns about U.S. aid to the Palestinians given the Palestinian Authority's continuing practice of so-called martyr payments to the families of terrorists. Direct U.S. aid to the PA is largely blocked by the Taylor Force Act, but the Biden administration has resumed assistance to the Palestinian people through the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

"As long as the Palestinian Authority is paying the families of terrorists, it's very difficult to justify the resumption of any aid," she said.

The Maine senator also visited an Iron Dome missile-defense battery and spoke with its developers, which she said will

make her “a more effective advocate than ever” for that program.

Collins also told JI — unprompted — that she had urged Israeli officials to ramp up defensive military aid to Ukraine, noting the Jewish state’s specialization in air-defense weaponry and the use of Iranian drones by Russian forces.

“I understand that Israel’s first priority has to be to ensure its own defense,” Collins told JI. “I did encourage Israeli officials — while understanding the need for that priority — to be more helpful to the Ukrainians. I just wanted to mention that because that is an issue that I brought up several times.”

Collins has been one of the most prominent voices for moderation and

bipartisanship among Senate Republicans. Speaking to JI on Israel’s Election Day earlier this month, she downplayed the impact that a now-likely right-wing Israeli government would have on the bilateral relationship. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) reportedly warned Netanyahu that bringing far-right extremists into his government would damage the U.S.-Israel relationship.

“My view is that it’s up to the Israelis to pick their leaders, that is not up to us,” Collins said. “To me, the strong bond that we have with Israel transcends whom the Israelis may choose for their leaders... I would never presume to tell the Israelis whom they should vote for.”

“Having said all that, let me say that I do view Senator Menendez, Senator [Ben]

Cardin [D-MD], and many other Democrats as being strong supporters of Israel, but there is definitely a faction in the Democratic Party that I do not view as strong supporters of Israel,” Collins continued.

Collins said Iran’s nuclear program was also a frequent topic of discussion during her visit. She is a proponent of a permanent diplomatic solution that would foreclose Iran’s pathway to a nuclear weapon in perpetuity.

“It is very telling to me that the Iranians have been able to enrich uranium to a point where they’re very close to producing uranium that would be enriched sufficiently for nuclear weapons. The speed with which the Iranians were able to do that [is] a clear warning to us,” she said. ♦

NOVEMBER 6, 2022

Koch’s Israeli investment chief aims to disrupt venture capital funding

Eli Groner was a top aide to Netanyahu before joining U.S. firm that has given nearly \$1 billion to Israeli startups

By Shoshanna Solomon

The article first appeared in The Circuit.

Eli Groner meets with hundreds of startups each year as the managing director in Israel for Koch Disruptive Technologies, which since 2018 has doled out almost \$1 billion to emerging Israeli companies. For the fraction of those deemed disruptive enough to get funding, KDT, the venture arm of gigantic U.S. conglomerate Koch Industries, sees itself as a devoted ally that doesn’t expect quick returns.

“We are patient capital,” Groner told

The Circuit during an interview at the firm’s 35th-floor Tel Aviv office overlooking the Mediterranean. “We invest with the expectation that we are going to partner with them forever or for at least for 10 years. Now, that is not always the case, but that is certainly the way we look at it when we make an investment. So, we want to work with people that are high integrity, resilient, committed and playing the long game.”

Dressed in a light-blue button-down shirt and tailored tan trousers, the American-born Groner has business experience and

an insider government background that impressed KDT when the firm opened its Israel office three years ago, the only one outside the United States. Now 52, he spent three years as a top aide to then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, serving as director-general of the Prime Minister’s Office. Any political savvy he gained in government has been useful in representing Koch Industries, whose owners are among the biggest contributors to right-wing causes in the U.S.

KDT, founded in 2017, focuses on “early

and growth stage” technology companies around the world, with an aim also at finding synergies to boost parent company Koch Industries. The Wichita, Kan.-based conglomerate had revenue last year of more than \$125 billion and 120,000 workers worldwide. It owns a diverse group of companies involved in activities that include manufacturing, agriculture, paper, building materials, oil refining, renewable energy and medical products.

KDT’s first foray in Israeli startups, and first investment ever, preceded Groner’s joining the firm – \$100 million in backing for Insightec, a maker of magnetic resonance-guided ultrasound technology. The company’s products help alleviate ailments like Essential Tremor, which causes involuntary trembling of the head, hand and voice, and Parkinson’s disease, which causes uncontrolled movements throughout the body. KDT followed up with an additional \$100 million to the company in March 2020.

When it first funded Insightec, KDT didn’t have an office in Israel. On a visit to meet industry players, company executives had an encounter with Groner, fresh out of the Prime Minister’s Office, who offered a geopolitical overview of Israel and the region. “We really connected on vision and values,” Groner said. “Six months later I got a formal offer to join KDT and open up the Israel office.”

Groner has since led KDT’s investments in 13 Israeli startups that operate in fields ranging from health care, semiconductors and cybersecurity to manufacturing and agriculture.

As a rule, Koch-funded companies must be “disruptive” — having the potential to promote “creative destruction — the continuous process of iterating, improving and destroying current business models and platforms, even our own,” the firm says on its website. Ideally, they can also transform Koch Industries, to help the mother ship keep up with industry developments and best prepare itself for the future. As far as the chosen entrepreneurs, they must be dedicated and flexible, Groner said.

“You can have the best vision, the best strategy, the best technology, [and] you’re going to be beaten down time and again, because things aren’t always going to

go your way,” he said. “A founder who is resilient, who can roll with the figurative punches, and figure out how to execute, no matter which curveballs are thrown his or her way, those folks are gold.”

Groner’s efforts come during a period when Israel is forging new partnerships with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and other Arab countries, under the banner of the Abraham Accords signed two years ago.

It is a “very exciting time for the region,” he said. “It is an opportunity for everyone, whether you are an entrepreneur, whether you are an investor. But at the end of the day, it is going to be the same values and principles that apply. Are you aligned in values? Are you aligned on vision?”

Because of Koch’s wide variety of enterprises, the conglomerate can help startups test and sell their technologies within its holding companies and its network of partners, thus getting their product to market faster and providing “meaningful support for entrepreneurs,” Groner said.

In the health care sector, besides Insightec, KDT has invested in Immunai, which seeks to map the immune system to create new therapies and drugs, and Neuralight, which is building a platform driven by artificial intelligence to improve drug development for patients with neurological disorders.

In the semiconductor field, KDT led two investment rounds for a total of \$217 million in Vayyar, a developer of radar imaging technology for sensors used in a variety of industries. KDT has also invested in cybersecurity startups Cyrebro, where it led a \$40 million funding round, and OneLayer, in which it made an equity investment of \$6.5 million; KDT led a \$45 million investment round in the drone startup Percepto, and invested in the agtech firm Greeneye Technology, which uses AI and deep learning technologies for the selective spraying of pesticides. KDT’s first exit was the sale of Israeli software firm DeepCube to Nasdaq-traded Nano Dimension Ltd for \$70 million, according to Crunchbase data.

According to data compiled by the IVC Research Center, which tracks the Israeli tech industry, capital raised in Israel with Koch participation totaled \$1.33 billion in

2021 as opposed to \$150 million in 2017. In the first nine months of 2022, capital raised by Israeli startups with Koch participation totaled \$304 million.

Corporate venture capital involvement, such as Koch’s, in Israeli tech companies has surged over the past few years, with such deals accounting for almost 50% of the total in 2021, a bonanza year for fundraising by startups. Investment has slowed in 2022,

“The rise in activity by Koch reflects a rise in the involvement of corporate venture capital funds in the Israeli tech ecosystem, and the need of local tech firms for the significant amounts of money they can provide,” said Marianna Shapira, a senior analyst at IVC.

Koch Industries has been the subject of controversy for years – with critics pointing to the extraordinary wealth of members of the Koch family, their large contributions to conservative political causes, and their vast political influence on a variety of issues in the U.S., including skepticism about climate change. OpenSecrets, an organization that tracks campaign spending, reported that Koch Industries has injected over \$1 million in backing, directly and indirectly, dozens of House and Senate candidates who voted against certifying Joe Biden’s presidential victory after protesters rioted in the U.S. Capitol.

Asked whether controversy surrounding the Koch family affects his work, Groner said he is sure there are many company founders that his office funds who do not agree with him or with Koch politically. “The best way to change people’s perceptions is to work closely with them and partner with them and focus on areas where we are aligned.”

Declining to address the issue directly, a company spokesperson pointed to an article written two years ago by Charles Koch. In it, the billionaire co-owner, chairman and CEO of Koch Industries congratulated President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on their victory and called for all parties to work together to solve the crises that are holding back the nation.

On the issue of climate change, the Koch website says “manufacturing and a healthy environment aren’t mutually exclusive” and shows data about how the firm is cutting emissions, producing less waste and investing in energy efficiency projects.

As chief of Netanyahu's office from June 2015 to May 2018, Groner was responsible for domestic and international policy decisions, from developing Israel's offshore natural gas fields and deregulating the economy to setting up the nation's cyber bureau and its digital health policy. At the same time, he juggled foreign policy issues and was tasked to deal with Israeli political parties.

Before joining Netanyahu, Groner was Israel's economic attaché to Washington. Previously he was a senior advisor to the chairman of Tnuva, one of Israel's largest food makers. He also worked for six years as a consultant at McKinsey & Company and five years at *The Jerusalem Post* as a sports and economic reporter.

As a child he lived in the central New York city of Binghamton, where his father was the rabbi of an Orthodox Jewish congregation. After moving to Israel, Groner performed his

military service as a paratrooper. He went to college at Israel's Bar-Ilan University and earned an MBA at New York University.

The business world is different from politics and government, Groner said, but he feels very much at home in both worlds. "It is two different muscles, two different skill sets. And it is very, very hard to succeed in both because it requires different skills. I personally, am very intrigued by both worlds. I enjoy both worlds and recognize that each one has different benefits and drawbacks."

He must also now operate in an environment that has turned sour for tech, with shares and valuations plunging globally in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, rising inflation and lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lower valuations, Groner said, are healthy for the economy, as they can create

investment opportunities while clearing the field of poorly performing companies.

"You are going to see valuations go back to normal, sanity returning to the markets," he said. "Any great crisis is a horrible thing to waste. This is going to create incredible opportunities for people that are patient and take a long-term view." Koch is committed to Israel, he said, because the company has identified that there is within the tiny nation a "very distinctive concentration of disruptive technology."

Groner said Israel's value comes from a unique concentration of entrepreneurs, academic institutions, the military, venture capitalists and growth equity investors spread over a small geographical area.

"There's no place else like it in the world, really," he said. "That is my focus here." ♦

NOVEMBER 9, 2022

A new \$18,000 award hopes to retain top talent at D.C. Jewish nonprofits

Concerns about low salaries and lack of recognition in Jewish nonprofits extend beyond the D.C. area.

By Ben Sales

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Jewish During her decades as a lay leader in the Washington, D.C., Jewish community, Phyllis Margolius chaired or helped guide a laundry list of major organizations — from the local Jewish Community Foundation to the local

branch of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to March of the Living.

Throughout all those roles, her husband Philip Margolius told *eJewishPhilanthropy*, "Her best friends over the years, and her confidantes, were not lay leaders but were the professionals" at those organizations. Now, Margolius is establishing an annual \$18,000 prize in her memory, to be awarded

to one innovative local Jewish nonprofit professional who commits to making their career in the field.

"She went out of her way to make sure that not only were the professionals getting what they needed, but that they were treated with respect," Margolius said of his wife, who died in 2014. "She always felt that too many lay leaders treated the professionals,

sort of, as hired help.”

Margolius hopes that the award, called the Phyllis G. Margolius Impossible Dream Award and given by the family foundation that also bears her name, will spur top talent in the local D.C. Jewish nonprofit sector to make their careers in the Jewish world, rather than leaving after several years for higher-paying jobs. A former senior partner at the law firm Margolius Mallios, he compared the situation of Jewish nonprofit professionals to first-year law associates who have a huge workload.

“What we’re finding is people are dropping out,” Margolius said, adding that one local Jewish organizational executive told him that “he has a terrible time maintaining people in the field. He gets smart people, and after four to five years, they leave and go to higher-paying jobs or more respected jobs. So he’s saying, anything we can do to keep people in the field” would be welcome.

Concerns about low salaries and lack of recognition in Jewish nonprofits extend beyond the D.C. area. A recent survey by Leading Edge, of employees in the Jewish nonprofit sector, found that most respondents believe they are paid too little, and that their organizations are overstretched.

“Any philanthropic investment that goes toward recognition and demonstrating the value of Jewish professionals is a net positive,” Gali Cooks, the president and CEO of Leading Edge, told eJP, adding that the Margolius award falls in the same category as the Covenant Foundation’s prizes for Jewish

educators, or the Jewish Funders Network’s awards for nonprofit professionals. “When I was reading this, I was like, ‘This is really beautiful.’”

But Cooks added that money alone is not enough to keep talent in the Jewish nonprofit world. The survey found that the top factors in keeping employees engaged in their organizations are whether the organization shows care for employees and their well-being, and whether managers treat their employees with respect.

“If we’re talking about retention — wanting people to devote their life, their energy, their time, their career to the Jewish nonprofit sector — the money is going to be super important,” she said. “And yet, it is not the only thing, and not the most important.”

Margolius told eJP that he too recognizes that the financial award is not sufficient to keep people in the sector. The award mandates that applicants will have to commit to staying in the Jewish nonprofit sphere, though Margolius recognizes that there’s no way to enforce that provision. He hopes that the award will afford a measure of recognition and prestige to the rising stars of the Jewish nonprofit world — to show them that their work is noticed and appreciated.

The award will be presented at a ceremony in April, and the recipient will be selected by a committee made up of longtime Jewish leaders and a couple of boldface names: Ted Farber, former longtime CEO of the local Jewish federation; former Jewish Agency for Israel Chairman Sallai Meridor; Sara Hurwitz, former speechwriter for Michelle Obama; Simone Friedman, founder

of the Partnership for Patient Advocacy; Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; and Susan Turnbull, former chair of Jewish Women International.

“It’s still a very nice addition, [but] I can’t say we’re really contributing to increasing their salary,” Margolius said. “But what we are doing is recognizing the talent of these people, and I hope the agencies that employ them will recognize their talent and the community will recognize their talent, and the pay scale will go up.”

Professionals must have five years of experience in the Jewish communal world and live in the D.C. area. Margolius said the award is targeted not at the CEOs of large organizations, but rather at the heads of smaller groups, or at mid-level managers in larger agencies. While he said he knows many effective CEOs of large organizations, he believes there should be more pay parity across the sector.

“We need to seriously look as a community at the pay scale of our professionals,” he said. “I think some executives make too much money in the Jewish world and their staffs make too little money.”

While the award will go to one person per year, Margolius hopes candidates apply repeatedly, and would like to see the effort replicated by other foundations in other cities.

“I think there are a lot of very talented people,” he said. “We’re trying to incentivize people. If you don’t win this year, you’ll win next year.” ♦

Illuminate — formerly Jewish Women's Foundation of New York — expands mission to focus on social entrepreneurs

Now, the organization is providing cohort support for women leading organizations, and is eyeing further expansion.

By Esther D. Kustanowitz

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

When Lara Mendel was 15, she attended a weeklong summer camp that brought together students from different backgrounds to address prejudice and discrimination. In college, she was one of several Jewish students invited by the German government to meet with former Nazis and visit concentration camps, where many of her family members had been killed in the Holocaust. These formative experiences are the origin story of The Mosaic Project, an effort co-founded by Mendel in 2000 to prevent ignorance, prejudice and segregation by convening children from different backgrounds and using peer connections and experiences to build toward peace.

Mendel is also executive director of the organization, which has served more than 75,000 people through its various programs. But because the project wasn't focused on programming for Jews, she told *eJewishPhilanthropy*, her efforts seldom qualified for Jewish philanthropic support.

Then along came the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York — which at its annual convening yesterday revealed its new name, Illuminate (derived from “elle,” the French word for “her” or “she”), to match the organization's expanded footprint and mission.

Mendel became part of the third cohort of The Collective, a small group of women social entrepreneurs and activists who support each other, troubleshooting challenges and serving as peer support for

one another.

When it was founded in 1995, the foundation was conceived as a women's grantmaking organization, CEO Jamie Allen Black said. Now, Illuminate is providing cohort support for women leading organizations, and is eyeing further expansion.

It hopes to launch an incubator for small organizations, and to be able to provide back-office support so that organizations don't have to bear the cost burden of duplicative effort. Illuminate also hopes to build out an emerging leaders' program for women to learn about organizational governance during their early stages of philanthropic development, with the aim of placing them on boards at Illuminate and in other organizations. It also aims to hold a summit every two years on emergent issues related to women's leadership and visionary philanthropy; bringing philanthropists and organizational leaders together to discuss how funding and advocacy can be harnessed to make change.

Because cohort members come in as accomplished leaders, Illuminate's goals include “honing their skills, finding out what they need and giving it to them, giving them a safe networking space to collaborate with other leaders,” the group's board president, Rachel Weinstein, told *eJP*. “It helps one to grow and work through problems and adapt.”

Another major change from the group's original mission is the geographical specificity of its original name: Once accurate in describing its donors as being “of New York,” the organization is now headquartered in New York but has cohort

members and donors worldwide.

The organization is also receiving external funding for the first time, from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, which has given the organization \$50,000 to recruit its fifth cohort.

“Through the Collective, Illuminate's efforts to expand and democratize Jewish leadership will result in a more inclusive pipeline of dynamic women leaders that reflect the diversity and vibrancy of U.S. Jewish and Israeli communities,” Rebecca Shafron, Schusterman's program officer for U.S. Jewish grantmaking, told *eJP*. “We look forward to experiencing more of the impact these talented leaders will continue to have.”

Illuminate's core components, launched four years ago, are its nonprofit leadership cohorts (The Collective) and its small groups of philanthropists (Visionary Circles), which interact with each other in a network. There have been four Collective cohorts, with 39 members in total. Visionary Circles have about 20 members, with Illuminate board members currently occupying half those seats.

Illuminate draws on the social and group philanthropy features of giving circles and community foundations, and the deep investment in a person and her idea that characterizes startup incubators, “synthesizing their key features into something new,” Allen Black said.

For example, in Mendel's case, Illuminate's leadership understood that her work was steeped in Jewish values and invited her to submit an application — along with dozens of others — for support. The applications were reviewed by

donors in the Visionary Circles, who asked questions, watched organizational videos and interviewed project founders until they narrowed down the list to 10.

Each cohort member receives \$20,000 a year for two years in support of their work, with an additional professional development fund of \$5,000 in the first year.

For Mendel, someone who has worked in diversity spaces entirely outside the Jewish professional community, being part of a completely Jewish support network was new, but “absolutely phenomenal.”

“Because I do work in a diverse community, being able to tap back into being supported and tapping back into my Jewish identity and looking at how that affects my leadership style and what I do has been really profound,” Mendel said.

Weinstein said that the cohort members had founded their organizations because of their personal experiences. Rachel Zaslow had witnessed horrible birth practices as a midwife in Uganda, and founded Mother Health International, a maternal health organization working in Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Haiti and the U.S. Evie Litwok was formerly incarcerated, and founded Witness to Mass Incarceration. Tamar Manasseh founded MASK – Mothers and Men Against Senseless Killings, a Chicago-based anti-gun-violence organization, when a child was killed at a local bus stop.

“They just don’t want to sit on the sidelines and see an injustice happen,” Weinstein said. “They waded into that space and said, ‘We need to make change here.’”

Collective members also learn from Ruth Messenger, a longtime Jewish New York community leader and former Manhattan borough president who was an early donor to the organization and now advises, educates and facilitates the cohorts. She also participates in one of the circles, and studies with the board several times a year.

Messenger added that Elluminate invests in the leadership potential of the cohort members in a way that is “unusually comprehensive and thoughtful.”

“We ask our participants to think about leadership with a gender lens, about Jewish attitudes and values of leadership and about exercising leadership with moral courage,” Messenger said. “So those are all key perspectives.”

Weinstein said that Elluminate hopes to train philanthropists as well as nonprofit executives. She described the organization as a space for philanthropists to learn the tools that will help them to be more strategic and intentional about their giving, using a gender lens, a Jewish lens and theories of social change and impact.

“We don’t want that just to apply to somebody who can write a check with lots of zeroes on it,” Weinstein said. “We want to create intentional philanthropists no matter where they are in their financial capacity. So we welcome people in all different stages and capacities of giving to participate with us. And we think that having a diverse group of women sitting around the table helping us to choose the leaders for our collective helps us to create the best, most diverse group of leaders to be a part of our collective.”

Allen Black said that each donor circle includes up to 20 women ages 29 to 91, and represents every decade in that range. The time commitment for donors is eight sessions of 2 to 2.5 hours over the course of eight months, with a lot of reading and watching videos so they can get to know prospective cohort members and their organizations.

The organization, which has a staff of five and a board of 23, operates on an annual budget of \$1.5 million; funds come from its spring gala, from an investment account and from individual donations from donors including board members and those in visionary circles. Since the organization started its grantmaking in 1997, it has spent \$7 million funding 300 projects and their leaders.

While the sustaining amount for participating in a donors’ circle is \$3,000, people under 40 are only expected to pay \$1,500. If people want to be part of a circle but are not able to give at the expected level and are passionate and bring a unique outlook or commensurate lived experience, Allen Black said, there are ways of making it work.

“Some people give a lot more and many people give a lot less. And so we’re counting on the ‘mores’ to make up for the less in terms of budgeting,” she said.

“It’s really rare that you might be able to not be the person with the most means, but still be able to sit in a room and have a

voice in terms of decision-making about who’s going to get funding and who’s going to get to be part of this unique leadership experience,” Weinstein added.

Allen Black added that this looser approach helps with Elluminate’s commitment to diversity in both the cohorts and the visionary circles, a commitment that has moved the organization forward and enabled them to support more — and different kinds of — projects and leaders.

Five years ago, there were no women of color or LGBTQ+ women in the organization or participating in its programs, and only one LGBTQ+ grantee. The grantmakers and the funded projects were only Jewish and U.S.-based, and the average donor age was 70.

Now 20% of grantees are Jewish women of color; eight grantees identify as LGBTQ+; all grantees identify as women and half are under the age of 40. Grantees now helm projects in Africa, India, Colombia, Argentina, Spain, Ukraine and also Israel. Additionally, grantmakers are not all Jewish, and there’s no minimum gift requirement to join.

Mendel — who was in New York this week for the organization’s last cohort gathering and annual convening before its name change became public — also acknowledged the importance of connecting over points of passion to make change, especially across cultural or experiential distance.

“We all need to come together,” Mendel said, adding “I think Jews need to be seen as leaders in working on initiatives; we need to be seen as winners in the fight against discrimination. We need to work side by side with everybody. And that’s for our safety as well as everybody else’s safety. Because we are all interconnected.” ♦

ADL acquires JLens, entering the impact investing space

For the ADL, this means entering directly into shareholder meetings and speaking with corporate social responsibility executives in order to impact company policies.

By Ben Sales

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

The Anti-Defamation League will acquire the Jewish impact investing organization JLens, a sign of the increased focus Jewish groups are placing on combating antisemitism and anti-Israel boycotts in the corporate world.

For the ADL — which has historically campaigned against antisemitism in the market through advocacy, coalitions, boycott campaigns and the media — this means entering directly into shareholder meetings and speaking with corporate social responsibility executives in order to impact company policies.

For JLens, which was founded in 2012, it means the group's mission has gained the support and imprimatur of one of the largest and most prominent Jewish organizations. And it likely means a doubling down on pushing companies to disavow antisemitism and distance themselves from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel, known as BDS.

More immediately, in practical terms, it means JLens will “grow considerably” in terms of budget and staff, ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. JLens has a staff of four that will now grow to six. It will add on a researcher focused on companies' environmental, social and governance policies, known as ESG, and will also hire a day-to-day director so that JLens' founder and current CEO, Julie Hammerman, can focus on growing the organization and gaining buy-in across a wider swath of the Jewish community.

The ADL has an annual budget of

approximately \$100 million. While JLens declined to share its annual budget, according to GuideStar, which tracks nonprofit finances, JLens is required to file a Form 990-N, an abbreviated tax document for groups with gross receipts normally under \$50,000.

“Brands mediate so much of our lives,” Greenblatt told eJP. “In our country, when consumers are so cynical about government, and are so cynical about organized religion, and so cynical about political candidates... consumers feel like their brands represent them and their values. This gives the ADL the opportunity, it gives us a seat at the table in a way that I think will allow us to be more effective advocates for our community and its core values.”

In recent years, the ADL has focused on pushing companies to disavow antisemitism or boycotts of Israel or its West Bank settlements. A campaign in 2020 aimed at getting Facebook to clamp down on hate speech saw the group and a coalition of other civil rights advocates recruit 1,200 companies and organizations to join a temporary ad boycott of the social network.

More recently, following Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter, a similar coalition urged companies to pause their Twitter ads.

The ADL also urged Unilever, the parent company of Ben & Jerry's, to halt the ice cream manufacturer's boycott of what it termed “Occupied Palestinian Territory.” And it waged a public campaign in recent weeks to successfully urge sportswear giant Adidas to end its collaboration with the fashion label of Kanye West, following West's antisemitic comments.

But this acquisition means a change in

strategy. Both Greenblatt and Hammerman separately told eJP that, had this acquisition occurred before the Adidas ordeal happened, the ADL, via JLens, may have had an existing relationship with Adidas' corporate leadership, potentially avoiding the controversy altogether or accelerating its conclusion. JLens manages a \$200 million fund that it invests in 300 of the largest companies in the United States, including corporate giants like Amazon and Target, in order to have a say in their shareholder meetings. It also rates companies according to how their policies line up with a set of values.

“This values-based investment field is enormous — it's trillions of dollars in investment capital, it affects the public behavior of hundreds of companies, the most powerful companies in the world,” Hammerman told eJP. “And it's space the Jewish community needs to have a strategic presence in, longer-term.”

Last week, JLens, the ADL and a range of other Jewish organizations reached an agreement with the financial firm Morningstar, which JLens accused of supporting BDS and displaying an anti-Israel bias in its ESG evaluations. The agreement saw Morningstar change its practices and commit to training to address those claims.

The ADL's acquisition of JLens promises more activism of that kind. JLens evaluates companies based on their approach to antisemitism, hate speech and anti-Israel activism, but also looks at issues that historically have not been in the ADL's purview — like environmental policies, how the companies affect access to health and

nutrition, or how they pay their employees.

While Hammerman believes all of that work will continue, Greenblatt said the ADL's focus is on its traditional mission of combating antisemitism and bigotry. Last year, Greenblatt said in a speech that the group is placing a substantial focus on combating anti-Zionism and antisemitism from the left.

"I've reiterated... the link between anti-Zionism and antisemitism [and] we've seen that in companies moving away [from Israel] in ways that are troubling," Greenblatt said.

"This space is multidimensional. Yes, BDS is an issue. Yes, brand spokespeople who are not aligned with companies' stated values are an issue... I think that the issues will iterate and change over time. It's hard to say what will be this percent or that percent."

Greenblatt is not worried about the possibility that having a subsidiary of the ADL invested in hundreds of companies could open his group up to being criticized for affiliations with unsavory companies, telling eJP that he's found that "people will find reasons to criticize ADL at any

opportunity."

By the same token, JLens isn't worried that the affiliation will cut it off from partnerships with elements of the progressive activist world that shun the ADL.

"The nice thing about the ESG space is, that movement was started by faith groups," Hammerman said. "And despite some of the differences that we might have, whether it's about Israel or... antisemitism, there really is an interest in having the Jewish community at the table as a partner." ♦