

## Freedom

Next week is *Pesach*, Passover – when we retell the story of our departure from Egypt and our liberation. It’s a festival filled with so many layers of meaning and customs. We eat matzah to represent the food we were forced to eat as we fled slavery. We sit at the seder table to teach our children, and to be reminded of what counts in life and community. We celebrate freedom, and we teach so as not to forget.

Rabbi David Teutsch taught that the striving for freedom wasn’t just about “freedom from.” It’s also about “freedom to.” The freedom to “make the world a more sacred place by expanding God’s presence in it.” To celebrate the positive, the inspiring, and the meaningful.



Last month, more than 40 women from our community participated in a unique and memorable mission to the South to learn about the history of the Civil Rights Movement, and the role that many Jews from our own community played – including the incredible Jackie Levine, who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and was arrested several times for standing up for the rights of all Americans. It was a rare and moving testament to our community’s commitment to freedom.

Meanwhile, our partner agencies on the ground around the world, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, continue to stand ready to bring Jews to freedom from anywhere in the world. Wherever there’s a Jew in need – your Federation, your values, are at work. “To be a free people in our own land” isn’t just an abstract anthem – it’s a business plan for our Federation. **No one gets left behind.**

In our Jewish Community Centers and Jewish Family Service agencies, our programs and platforms for the disabled and vulnerable uphold this value too. We all have the freedom to make the world a more sacred place.

Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson once said, “Freedom is within our grasp, and Pesach reminds us that we need to reach.” We need to reach. We can’t take the benefits and advantages of community for granted. This incredible community, and the hundreds of agencies, synagogues, and programs that are part of it, don’t just happen by accident. They happen because people like **you** care.

If you haven’t yet made your gift to the 2016-2017 UJA Annual Campaign, now is the time. [Please click here.](#) Don’t wait for someone else to stand up for what you believe in. **Be the someone else** you can be proud of.

*Chag sameach* – a warm, meaningful and joyous Passover to us all.