

Dear Federation leaders,

I saved the most important bit to the end, so you need to read through ...

Every week we ask a rabbi or community leader to give us a short (2-4 minute) video *dvar*, a short commentary on the week's Torah portion. We post them on our main Federation Facebook page. If you haven't seen them or don't use **social media** so much, please [email my colleague Sarah Segal](#) and we'll send them to you by email. If you do use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter, you can find our postings by using the hashtag **#IamGMW** (and if you're posting something about your Federation experiences, you should use the hashtag too, so we can follow you). If you didn't see them, you can read [my latest posting on religious pluralism here](#), a [quirky but fascinating experience that connects us to Refusenik Jews and our history here](#), and [a powerful piece on a Federation leadership visit to Houston by Maxine Schwartz here](#).

Meanwhile, what has over 350 legs, is impervious to rain, and goes off in 26 different directions while staying together in one place? That would be the over 175 people who enjoyed **Live & Learn** last Saturday night at the JCC in Scotch Plains. Guests noshed on desserts, sipped nice wine, swayed to a candle-lit and spice-scented musical Havdalah by the Shabbatoners and then enjoyed two hours of contemporary and accessible Jewish learning offered by local rabbis, cantors and Jewish educators – all of whom volunteered their time and talent to Bring Jewish Learning to Life. Collectively, our Greater MetroWest community learned about How to See the Good in People who Drive You Crazy, Jews in Space, Why Purim is Not the Jewish Halloween, and Gun Control in Jewish Law, among the 26 sessions that were offered. Spilling out into the JCC hallways were the sounds of laughter, singing, coffee-tasting or art-appreciating. Live & Learn was chaired by Mindy Goldberger and Mark Lindenberg and made possible with a generous grant from Michael and Ruth Margolin.

For the second year, CRC is bringing a delegation of parents and their high school-aged children to **the AIPAC Policy Conference**, joining 18,000 pro-Israel supporters who are coming to Washington to advocate for a strong US-Israel alliance. Thus far we have 14 families participating with room for six more. Thanks to a generous grant from the Iris Family Foundation, CRC is subsidizing the registration fee for students. In return, our students have formed a Teen

Leadership Council which is helping CRC plan, market and recruit for an Israel On Campus conference at Federation on April 22. AIPAC's Jonathan Kessler, Director of Strategic Initiatives who serves as our scholar in residence, met with the group last week and will meet with them again in Washington on day two of policy conference. The parent/ teen cohort has become a national model for a successful inter-generational initiative at AIPAC and also serves to create tighter bonds for these families with Federation. A minimum gift of \$180 is required to receive the registration subsidy.

Finally, I received an email from my friend and colleague Matt Levin this weekend. Matt is the Exec of the Boca Jewish Federation and a father of awesome kids. You should read this. It's important:

The last couple of days have been so very painful in our community. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School is in Parkland about 10-15 minutes from our Jewish Communal Campus. At least 1/3 or more of my staff live in Parkland and several have children or grandchildren at Douglas. Our own community Day School on campus pulls at least 30% of its students from Parkland.

My COO, Mel Lowell, had two of his grandchildren locked in classrooms, one hiding in a closet because the shooter was next door. The other, a 10th grade girl, lost 3 close friends in the carnage and has been barely communicating since Wednesday. Mel is one of the toughest people I know. At 70, he has life and world experience. And yet, for the 2 hours he and his daughter couldn't reach the kids, he says he was jello. The kids are his life.

Our Associate Director of March of the Living spent an hour and half with her Junior daughter texting from where she was hiding under a teachers desk in a classroom. The shooter had been at the other end of the hall.

The COO of my aforementioned community day school, Donna Klein Jewish Academy, lost his nephew in the shooting and his daughter lost her lifelong friend in the carnage.

My own 17 year old son had two USY friends injured in the attack, one by a grazing bullet in the arm and the other child with a broken foot from falling down a staircase in the chaos of everyone trying to get out.

This isn't Newtown, Sandy Hook, Columbine, etc. Now it's my backyard. A city picked this week as the second safest in America.

We all get caught up in the mission at hand. Now more than ever, every sector of American society who cares about our kids and is in the business of education, have to begin using our voice, individually and collectively. We can pretend that issues like immigration, guns and many other public policy issues of the day don't affect our business, but a new generation of activists are coming along who expect something more from their Jewish leadership.

Forgive the rant. I spent last night at a vigil and spend late last night trying to explain to my middle child, 13, that random acts of violence doesn't mean he is less safe at school. I wish I believed it.

Dov