

Letters to the Editor



Boost to security

September 29, 2016

Re “Community beefs up security after bombings,” September 21

Like many of you, I listened to and read the news of the recent bombing in New York and related incidents in New Jersey and realized that this is hitting too close to home.

In these crazy times, we know these kinds of scenarios are possible anywhere. As you may have read in “Community beefs up security after bombings” (Sept. 22), individual organizations are taking measures to make themselves and their constituents safer.

For the last few years, we’ve done a good job of protecting the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ’s physical space, and we’ve offered some levels of security consultation to formal institutions in the community — synagogues and agencies, for the most part — who turn to us and ask us for help.

But in this current security climate, we need to do much more to ensure that all members of our Jewish community are well protected, safe, secure, and connected. No one is better positioned to focus on the collective security of our Jewish community — to connect all the dots — than federation. And we’re not just talking about synagogues and agencies. We’re talking about any site that is obviously Jewish, including kosher butchers, Judaica stores, delis, and the like.

We can create — and have created — detailed and thoughtful lists of priorities, procedures, ideas, and proposals as to how to address this need. But all of these documents are just well-intentioned

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plans on paper without the financial resources to implement them. That said, I am proud to let you know that, in an overwhelming vote at last week's federation board of trustees meeting, we decided to extract funds from our emergency reserve to invest in enhanced communal security. These funds will pay for a chief security officer, enhanced training and awareness programs, community-wide alert systems, and more. The funds are not fungible (i.e., they did not come from our regular budget, and had to be specifically approved from an emergency allocation), and I believe that this will be a major boost to protecting and securing the community.

It's a different kind of emergency from one in which bombs are falling on our beloved Israel, or a war is breaking out. But the end result would be just the same: How would we look at ourselves in the mirror the day after an incident in our community, knowing that we could have taken steps to prevent it and did not make it happen?

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CEO/executive vice-president

Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ

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