



GLOBAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP 2017–2018 FELLOWS AND STAFF BIOS

The AJWS Global Justice Fellowship is a selective program designed to inspire, educate and train key opinion leaders in the American Jewish community to become advocates in support of U.S. policies that will help improve the lives of people in the developing world.

AJWS has launched the latest Global Justice Fellowship program, which will include leading rabbis from across the United States. The fellowship period is from October (2017) to April (2018) and includes travel to an AJWS country in Mesoamerica, during which participants will learn from grassroots activists working to overcome poverty and injustice. The travel experience will be preceded by innovative trainings that will prepare rabbis to galvanize their communities and networks to advance AJWS's work. Fellows will also convene in Washington, D.C. to serve as key advocates to impact AJWS's priority policy areas.

The 14 fellows represent a broad array of backgrounds, communities, experiences and networks.

RABBINIC FELLOWS



LAURA ABRASLEY

Rabbi Laura J. Abrasley is a rabbi at Temple Shalom in Newton, Massachusetts. She has served this congregation since July of 2015, and is committed to inspiring and implementing active, engaged

opportunities for connection, community, lifelong Jewish learning and *tikkun olam*—repairing the world—among her congregants. Rabbi Abrasley was ordained at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles, where she also earned a Master's in Jewish Education. During rabbinical school, she was an education intern at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, and upon ordination in 2013, she served for two years as the Director of Lifelong Learning at Congregation Beth Or in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Previously, she worked in education and technology sectors in Boston, most recently serving as Youth Educator at Temple Israel. She grew up in Houston, Texas, and holds a degree in psychology from Texas A&M University.



NOAH FARKAS

Rabbi Noah Farkas serves at Valley Beth Shalom (VBS), the largest congregation in California's San Fernando Valley. He was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2008, and before joining VBS,

he served as the rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he helped rebuild the Jewish community after Hurricane Katrina. Rabbi Farkas is also a social entrepreneur: he launched the Seminary Leadership Project, which has trained Jewish clergy to create social change through JOIN for Justice, and he is the founder of Netiya, an interfaith organization that works on food issues in Los Angeles. In 2015, Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl appointed Rabbi Farkas to the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority, which oversees the regional strategy between public and private partnerships to end homelessness. He has been featured on NPR as a changemaker and was named one of America's most inspirational rabbis by the *Forward*."

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ANDREW FEIG

Rabbi Andrew Feig, a native Chicagoan, has lived and worked in Los Angeles for the last 19 years. Currently, he teaches at Hebrew Union College's teacher preparation program, DeLeT, where he mentors

student teachers both in and out of Sinai Akiba Academy, a Los Angeles Jewish day school. Rabbi Feig previously worked at Milken Community High School, where he was Dean of Students and a Rabbinics teacher; and as an administrator and teacher at Stephen S. Wise Temple Elementary School. He was ordained as rabbi in 2007 by the Academy for Jewish Religion, California. He also holds a degree in Hebrew studies and political science from the University of Wisconsin and a Master's in Jewish studies from the University of Chicago.



JUSTIN GOLDSTEIN

Rabbi Justin Goldstein is the rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, an independent Jewish community in Asheville, North Carolina. Born and raised in a secular home near Chicago, Illinois, Rabbi Goldstein

found Jewish identity as a teenager connecting to the land and people of Israel. After he discovered a love and admiration of the Jewish textual tradition as an undergraduate at Hampshire College, he began studying at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University. Upon ordination in 2011, Rabbi Goldstein served as rabbi of a congregation in Bangor, Maine. He is committed to pluralism and egalitarianism and to respecting all expressions of the Jewish tradition. Rabbi Goldstein is a Rabbis Without Borders Fellow and was designated by the *Forward* as one of the most inspiring American rabbis of 2016.



LILA KAGEDAN

Rabbi Lila Kagedan is the senior rabbi at the Walnut Street Synagogue in Chelsea, Massachusetts, and is the first Orthodox woman to adopt the title of rabbi. Ordained by Yeshivat

Maharat, Rabbi Kagedan also studied at Midreshet Lindenbaum and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is a Shalom Hartman Institute Rabbinic Leadership Initiative fellow and the founder of the Sulam School in Brookline, MA. In addition to her rabbinical career, Rabbi Kagedan is a medical ethicist, having trained at The University of Toronto, Harvard University, The Medstar Washington Hospital Center and Massachusetts General Hospital. She is currently an instructor of bioethics at New York Medical College and a Gender, Culture, Religion and Law Research Associate at Hadassah Brandeis Institute, and is a clinical ethicist as well as a chaplain in hospitals and hospices. She is studying for Yadin Yadin smicha and is a dual Canadian and American Citizen.



ADINA LEWITTES

Rabbi Adina Lewittes is the founder of Sha'ar Communities, which offers innovative and diverse portals into Jewish life and fellowship in northern New Jersey.

She is also an interim part-time rabbi at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York City, a faculty member of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Heschel School. Rabbi Lewittes is an experienced rabbi, teacher, speaker and writer, and a creative entrepreneur in the reimagining of Jewish life for the 21st century. She is a leading voice in the conversations around intermarriage and the Conservative movement, and LGBTQ Jewish life. Raised in the Orthodox community of Montreal, Rabbi Lewittes was the first Canadian woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi. She was also the first female Assistant Dean of the Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary.



JOSEPH MESZLER

Rabbi Joseph Meszler is the spiritual leader of Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts. His activism in reducing hunger and gun violence has led him to form deep interfaith partnerships. He

has been a Brickner Fellow with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and belongs to the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, Hevraya. He has authored several books, including: *Gifts for the Poor: Moses Maimonides' Treatise on Tzedakah* (College of William & Mary), *Witnesses to the One: the Spiritual History of the Sh'ma* (Jewish Lights Publishing), *A Man's Responsibility: a Jewish Guide to Being a Son, a Partner in Marriage, a Father, and a Community Leader* (JLP), *The JGuy's Guide: the GPS for Jewish Teen Guys* (coauthor, JLP), and *Facing Illness, Finding God: How Judaism Can Help You and Caregivers Cope When Body or Spirit Fails* (JLP).



ARIELLA ROSEN

Rabbi Ariella Rosen is a rabbi at Temple Adath Israel in Merion Station, Pennsylvania, where she seeks to build creative educational experiences and inclusive spaces for Jewish engagement. Rabbi

Rosen has worked for several years on the faculty of the Foundation for Jewish Camp's Cornerstone Seminar, training camp counselors to engage with disabilities rights, gender identity, and other significant issues through innovative experiential programming. As a rabbinical student at Jewish Theological Seminary, where she was ordained in 2015, she served on JTS's Committee on Gender and Sexuality, and participated in CLAL's Rabbis Without Borders student fellowship. Through her involvement with JOIN for Justice, Rabbi Rosen developed a passion for community organizing, a skill she has continued to cultivate in her various communities.



ILANA SCHACHTER

Rabbi Ilana Schachter is the Director of Community Building at Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York. For the past seven years, Rabbi Schachter has worked at Hillels across the country, first as

the Rabbi and Director of Jewish Student Life at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where she built and sustained a thriving Jewish community on a Jesuit campus, and most recently at Penn Hillel, where she served as Senior Jewish Educator and Campus Rabbi. While in Los Angeles, she became involved in the Jewish food movement, and actively works to create a more sustainable and food secure world for all people. As a rabbi and community builder, Rabbi Schachter fosters relationships, interfaith cooperation, and the pursuit of social justice rooted in faith through Jewish texts, values and rituals. She was ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where she also received a Master's in Hebrew Letters, and she received her AB with honors in Comparative Literature and Judaic Studies from Brown University.



HOWARD STECKER

Rabbi Howard Stecker is the senior rabbi of Temple Israel of Great Neck in Great Neck, New York. A graduate of Columbia University, he received ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary,

where he was a Wexner Graduate Fellow. Rabbi Stecker recently became a Senior Rabbinic Fellow of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem after participating in their Rabbinic Leadership Initiative. He serves on the membership committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, as secretary of the New York Board of Rabbis, and is a member of the Great Neck Clergy Association. He also participated in the formation of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island and spent many summers teaching at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires.



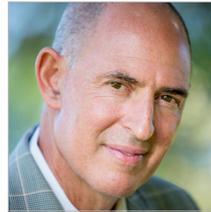
ELLIOT TEPPERMAN

Rabbi Elliott Tepperman has been the spiritual leader of Bnai Keshet in Montclair, New Jersey, since 2002. His rabbinate is characterized by interwoven commitments to community, spirituality and social justice. He currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association as First Vice President and is organizing to build the sanctuary movement in New Jersey with Faith in New Jersey (PICO). He has previously worked with Jewish Funds for Justice and taught congregation-based community organizing at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and other seminaries. He was also a member of Bend the Arc's 13th Selah cohort, a past President of the Montclair Clergy Association and a founding member of the Industrial Areas Foundation-affiliated New Jersey Together.



ELIE WEINSTOCK

Rabbi Elie Weinstock leads the KJ Beginners Program at Congregation Kehilat Jeshurun in New York City and is a member of the Talmud faculty at the Ramaz Middle School. A past member of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America, he is Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis, a member of AIPAC's National Council, and a participant in the Shalom Hartman Institute's Rabbinic Leadership Initiative. Rabbi Weinstock is a veteran of both formal and informal educational programs and a Yeshiva University graduate. He received his Rabbinic ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and a Master's in Jewish Philosophy from the Bernard Revel Graduate School.



DAVID WEIZMAN

Rabbi David Weizman, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Shalom in Clearwater, Florida. He weaves Jewish meditation and connection to the natural world into his daily practice as a rabbi and has served as scholar-in-residence in congregations across the country. Previously, he was the founder and head of education at Congregation B'nai Ha'Aretz in Garberville, California, while working as a forest-fire fighter. Rabbi Weizman also served as a chaplain on the Post-9/11 Emergency Response Team at the World Trade Center. He has held numerous internships, including the Park Slope Jewish Center and the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services in New York City. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Cleveland State University and was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2000, where he also received a Master's in Hebrew Letters.



JULIE ZUPAN

Rabbi Julie Zupan currently serves as the Director of the Union for Reform Judaism's Reform Jewish Outreach Boston (URJ RJOB), which provides classes and workshops for interfaith couples and individuals exploring Judaism. She also serves as faculty, teaching in many of its programs. Since receiving rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1999, she has served in a variety of educational and pastoral settings.

AJWS STAFF



ROBERT BANK, *President and CEO*

Robert Bank is President and CEO of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the world's leading Jewish organization working to end poverty and promote human rights in the

developing world. Robert, who joined AJWS as Executive Vice President in 2009, has spent his career championing human rights as an attorney, activist and leader. Robert previously served in New York's municipal government and in the leadership of GMHC—one of the world's leading organizations combatting HIV/AIDS—where he played an instrumental role in the campaign to overturn the ban on HIV-positive people entering the United States and becoming U.S. citizens.

Robert received Harvard Law School's Wasserstein Public Interest Fellowship, and his leadership has been recognized with GMHC's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Partners in Justice Award from AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps. He is also an advisor to The Conversation: Jewish in America and is a board member of Peripheral Vision International, which supports advocates in East Africa who deploy media to advance social change. Robert's passion for human rights was shaped growing up in a Jewish family in South Africa, which was engaged in the struggle to end apartheid.



LILACH SHAFIR, *Director of International Education and Jewish Education (IEJE)*

Lilach Shafir is responsible for overseeing the creation and implementation of the Global Justice Fellowship. Lilach has spent more

than five years living overseas, including three consecutive years in East Timor as a leadership trainer and one year in Israel as a Dorot Fellow. Lilach has led groups of North Americans on international travel programs in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Ghana with AJWS, National Geographic and Putney Student Travel. Lilach holds a Master's in international education from Stanford and a bachelor's in international studies and Latin America. Lilach is an advanced speaker of Spanish, Portuguese, Tetun and Hebrew.



RUTH W. MESSINGER, *Global Ambassador*

After a remarkable 18-year presidency, Ruth took on a new role as AJWS's first Global Ambassador in July 2016, continuing her crucial work of engaging global leaders, activists,

rabbis and interfaith leaders to speak out on behalf of oppressed and persecuted communities worldwide. Ruth joined AJWS in 1998, following a 20-year career in public service in New York City.

As a leading activist for human rights around the globe, she lectures widely and holds leadership roles in the faith-based advocacy arena. She chairs the social justice committee of the State Department's Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group and is a member of the World Bank's Moral Imperative working group on extreme poverty. Ruth has been honored by many national Jewish organizations and has been named for the past decade among the "world's most influential Jews" and religious leaders by *The Forward*, *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Huffington Post*.



JOSEPH GINDI, *Program Officer (IEJE)*

Joseph Gindi is the Program Officer for International Education and Jewish Engagement at AJWS, where he is responsible for the creation of Judaic content, including the

weekly Dvar Tzedek, and engaging rabbis and North American Jewish communities. Joseph, who hails from the Syrian Jewish community of Deal, New Jersey, is a Jewish educator with over 10 years of experience across the Jewish organizational and denominational landscape. He has Master's degrees in Near Eastern and Judaic studies from Brandeis University and in religious studies from the University of North Carolina, where he wrote his Master's thesis on the use of classical texts in the Jewish environmental movement. Joseph has studied in batei midrash at the Pardes Institute, Mechon Hadar, and The Jewish Theological Seminary.



RORI KRAMER, *Director of Government Affairs*

Rori Kramer is the Director of Government Affairs and leads AJWS's advocacy work in Washington, D.C. Most recently, she was the Deputy Assistant Secretary

for Senate Affairs at the U.S. State Department, leading the department's legislative priorities and managing its relationship with the United States Senate. Previously, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional, Global and Functional Affairs and Senate Director, both also at the State Department. Rori has worked as the Senior Foreign Policy Adviser to U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), member of the Senate Foreign Relations and the Finance Committees. There, she played a key role developing the senator's legislative priorities on foreign policy, international development and trade. She holds degrees from the College of William and Mary, University of Oxford and the London School of Economics.



CHARLES KARGMAN, *Program Associate and Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Programs*

Charles Kargman serves as the Executive Assistant to Vice President for Programs Shari Turitz and a Program Associate for the

Department of International Education and Jewish Engagement (IEJE) at AJWS. As Executive Assistant, he supports the Vice President while working on special projects around her budget, grantmaking portfolio and publications. As Program Associate, he assists with the planning, logistics and implementation of the Global Justice Fellowship (GJF), AJWS's six-month social justice program for rabbinic leaders. Charley graduated from the University of Chicago with a bachelor's degree in political science and a minor in environmental studies.