



# GLOBAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP 2019–2020 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 selected the latest cohort for its Global Justice Fellowship, which will include leading clergy from across the United States. The fellowship period is from October 2019 to April 2020 and includes travel to Guatemala, 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 clergy 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



### DAVID BAUM

Rabbi David Baum is the first full-time Rabbi/Spiritual Leader of Congregation Shaarei Kodesh in West Boca Raton. He was ordained in 2009 by the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he also received

an MA in Jewish Education. While in rabbinical school, Rabbi Baum gained valuable and diverse experience ranging from congregational work in the Northeast and South, to Hillel and organizational work, to social justice work and community organizing. Rabbi Baum is the past president of the Southeast Region of the Rabbinical Assembly, immediate past president of the Palm Beach County Board of Rabbis, and a member of the Rabbinical Assembly's Social Justice Commission. He is also the vice president of the Palm Beach Board of Rabbis, serves on the Levis JCC Board of Directors, and is an active member of the Boca Raton Interfaith Clergy Association. Rabbi Baum and his wife Alissa, a Doctor of Clinical Psychology, have three children: Avi, Harrison and Layla.



### ANALIA BORTZ

Rabbi Dr. Analia Bortz is the first Latin American female rabbi, ordained in 1994 by the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires. Since 2003, she has served as Rabbi of Congregation

Or Hadash in Sandy Springs, Georgia, which she co-founded with her husband, Rabbi Mario Karpuj. Rabbi Bortz is the founder of the Jewish Fertility Foundation of Atlanta; founder of Hope for Seeds, a group for couples struggling with infertility; and co-founder of BaKeN, an initiative to support people battling mental illness. Rabbi Bortz earned her MD from the University of Buenos Aires, her PhD in Ethics from the Catholic University of Valparaiso, and she is pursuing her Doctor of Hebrew Letters at Hebrew Union College. She was a Senior Rabbinic Fellow of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and she is a certified life coach. In 2018, Rabbi Bortz was recognized as one of "BBC's 100 Women" for her work in addressing the holistic treatment of women struggling with infertility. Rabbi Bortz and her husband have two daughters, Tamar and Adina.



### VERA BROEKHUYSEN

Cantor Vera Broekhuysen serves as spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El in Haverhill, MA. A Massachusetts native, she was ordained by Hebrew College in 2016, simultaneously earning her MA in Jewish Education.

Cantor Broekhuysen brings community together in joyful, curious, passionate and musical Judaism, which lifts up the voices of all participants and responds to our world's urgent call, "Tzedek, tzedek tirdof" – "Justice, justice you shall pursue." She is a member and former Secretary of the New England Board of Cantors, a member of the Greater Haverhill Clergy Association, and a chavairah (fellow) of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. In 2017, she co-founded the Merrimack Valley Interfaith Sanctuary Network. In 2018, Cantor Broekhuysen received Merrimack Valley Project's MICAHA Award (Ministry in Community Action Honoree), given for her work on immigration justice in the Merrimack Valley. Cantor Broekhuysen, her husband Mike and their sons live in North Andover, MA.



### FELIPE GOODMAN

Rabbi Felipe Goodman became Rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom in July 1998. Rabbi Goodman's charisma has made a profound impact on the Jewish community of Las Vegas. In 2013, he was

chosen by *The Daily Forward* as one of America's Most Inspiring Rabbis, in "36 Rabbis Shaping The 21st Century." He was appointed by the Rabbinical Assembly to serve in the Joint Placement Commission of the Conservative Movement and was also recently appointed by the Jewish Theological Seminary to the Joint Retirement Board of the Conservative Movement. He currently serves on the Executive Council of the Rabbinical Assembly. In 2010, Rabbi Goodman was selected to attend a series of meetings at the White House to discuss the dynamics and relationship between the Obama administration and the Jewish community. Rabbi Goodman is also part of the AIPAC National Leadership Council.



### CAPERS FUNNYE

Rabbi Capers Funnye currently serves as the Rabbi of Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation. He has been the spiritual leader of the synagogue since 1991, and he has worked

with several community organizations throughout the city of Chicago on issues of social justice and police accountability. Rabbi Funnye is a member of the Chicago Board of Rabbis, and he has worked with other rabbis on several *batei din* bringing converts into the Jewish people.



### RACHEL GRANT MEYER

Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer is the Rabbi-in-Residence at HIAS, the world's oldest and only Jewish refugee resettlement agency. She develops educational materials, resources, and programs

that educate American Jews about refugee issues, connecting the plight of contemporary refugees to Jewish values and history, and she travels around the United States teaching and speaking about the global refugee crisis. A graduate of Columbia University, Rabbi Meyer was ordained by Hebrew Union College in New York. Before joining HIAS, Rabbi Meyer served as Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Shalom in New York City. Her writing has been featured in *The Forward* and *The New York Daily News*, and she is the author of an essay that appears in the book "Seven Days, Many Voices: Insights into the Biblical Story of Creation."



### COREY HELFAND

A native Midwesterner, Rabbi Corey Helfand grew up a diehard Kansas City Royals, Chiefs and Jayhawks fan. After attending Jewish day school for 13 years, he went on to pursue a love of studying politics

and law while deepening his passion for Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Studies. In rabbinical school, Rabbi Helfand learned to bring entrepreneurship and the rabbinate together, a perfect fit for serving as the Senior Rabbi of Peninsula Sinai (PSC) in the Bay Area. Under his leadership, PSC has revolutionized the financial model for synagogues. Rabbi Helfand is a master community builder, a gifted teacher, speaker, and storyteller. He is married to Jenny Ackerman, and together they have three children: Eden, Matan and Jonah.



### SARAH MACK

Rabbi Sarah Mack has served Temple Beth-El since 2003. She was ordained by Hebrew Union College and spent a year studying at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. A native of Seattle,

WA, Rabbi Mack graduated from Brandeis University in 1996 with degrees in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and English. Rabbi Mack currently serves as President of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island. Rabbi Mack has served previously on the boards of the Jewish Alliance, the Chaplaincy Center, Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island and the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty. She currently sits on the board of the Center for Reconciliation. Rabbi Mack is one of the founders of the Rhode Island chapter of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Rabbi Mack and her husband, Jeffrey Isaacs, enjoy raising their two sons in the smallest state in America



### LAUREN HENDERSON

Rabbi Lauren Henderson grew up in a small-but-mighty Jewish community in Spartanburg, South Carolina, as part of an interfaith family and went from there to Rice University in Houston, where

she graduated cum laude in Religious Studies and History. She was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary with a master's in Midrash and a Certificate in Pastoral Care in 2016. After serving as a Jewish Emergent Network Fellow for two years at Mishkan Chicago, Rabbi Henderson now serves as a fulltime Rabbi with Mishkan, where she focuses on developing family learning, spirituality and social justice. She is married to Joel Dworkin, an outdoor experiential educator, and they live in Chicago with their dog, Sophie.



### SUZANNE SINGER

Rabbi Suzanne Singer joined Temple Beth El (TBE) in 2008. She serves as a member of the Reform Movement's Commission on Social Action and has led advocacy efforts through interfaith organizations.

She was named a Riverside "Champion of Justice" and "Woman of Distinction." She has been published in "The Torah: A Women's Commentary", "The Reform Jewish Quarterly", and in two CCAR Press collections. In addition to two master's degrees from Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Singer holds an MA in Journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, where she also earned a BA in Comparative Literature. She was ordained by Hebrew Union College in 2003. Before the rabbinate, Rabbi Singer was a television news and public affairs producer. As executive producer of the documentary series "POV" she won two national Emmy awards. She also produced a national preschool series, "The Puzzle Place". Rabbi Singer is married to actor Jordan Lund.



### GORDON TUCKER

Rabbi Gordon Tucker was the Senior Rabbi at Temple Israel Center in White Plains, NY for 24 years (now of Emeritus status). Currently, he is a Senior Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of

North America. He holds an AB from Harvard College, a Ph.D. from Princeton University, and rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). He has been on the JTS faculty since 1976 and was the Dean of the Rabbinical School for eight years. In 1979-80, he was a White House Fellow, and served as Special Assistant and Chief Speechwriter to U.S. Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti. He is a member of the International Council of the New Israel Fund, a past Chairman of the Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, and a past member of the Board of Directors of UJA Federation of New York.



### ELYSE WECHTERMAN

Rabbi Elyse Wechterman has served as Executive Director of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association since 2015. She has brought a commitment to social justice, a passion for interfaith and

inter-communal partnership and a deep respect and love for her Reconstructionist colleagues to the position. Before joining the RRA, Rabbi Wechterman served as the spiritual leader of Congregation Agudas Achim in Attleboro, Massachusetts from 2001 to 2014. A 2000 graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Rabbi Wechterman brings an open and inclusive approach to teaching Jewish life and traditions. She is committed to empowering Jews and fellow travelers on their individual and unique Jewish journeys. Rabbi Wechterman holds a BA in International Relations and a BS in Journalism from Boston University. She lives in Abington, PA with her husband, David Nerenberg, and is the parent of two children, Avi and Sharon.



### VICTOR URECKI

Rabbi Victor Urecki has served as spiritual leader of B'nai Jacob Synagogue in Charleston, West Virginia, since 1986. He serves on the National Council of AIPAC, is a board member for the West

Virginia Interfaith Refugee Ministry, and has served on the board of directors at the University of Charleston. He was the 2011 recipient of the West Virginia "Living the Dream Award" and the 2014 "West Virginia Civil Rights Day Award" for his work on interfaith relations. He co-founded The Root and the Branch, an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for faith traditions in the Kanawha Valley to come together, dialogue, and learn from one another. Rabbi Urecki writes frequently for *Charleston Gazette-Mail* and speaks throughout the state about religious tolerance and mutual respect. As Communication Director for the West Virginia Interfaith Refugee Ministry, he is an activist for immigration and refugee resettlement.



### JOSHUA WHINSTON

Rabbi Josh Winston was ordained by the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. He has earned an MA in Hebrew Letters and Jewish Education, and he is pursuing a doctorate in Pastoral Ministry.

Rabbi Winston served congregations in Connecticut, California and Washington state before arriving at Temple Beth Emeth in 2016. He is married to Sarah Raful-Whinston and is the proud father of Mollie, Eva and Ori. Rabbi Winston believes that showing up is one of the most important things we can do for each other. He tries to do this with his congregation and teaches his children the same.

## 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 has spent his career championing human rights as an attorney, activist and leader. He joined AJWS as Executive Vice President in 2009 and 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 an advisor to The Conversation: Jewish in America, and he is on the board of Leading Edge: Alliance for Excellence in Jewish Leadership. 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 the Director of International Education and Jewish Engagement at American Jewish World Service, where she harnesses

the political power of rabbis and other Jewish leaders to advance AJWS's mission of promoting human rights in the developing world. Her team is responsible for implementing the Global Justice Fellowship and engaging the leadership of the American Jewish community to join AJWS's human rights campaigns. 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 education programs in Latin America, Asia and Africa. She 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, *Senior Program Officer (IEJE)***

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



**SHAYNA SALIMAN, *Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Programs at AJWS***

Shayna Saliman serves as the Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Programs at AJWS and is also a Program Associate

for International Education and Jewish Engagement, supporting the Global Justice Fellowship program. Prior to joining AJWS, Shayna worked as the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning Fellow at the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) in Rwanda, a community for orphaned and vulnerable youth that provides housing, healthcare, schooling and extracurricular programming. Shayna earned her BA in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and was a former AJWS intern in Los Angeles in 2012.



**HANNAH WEILBACHER, *Program Officer, Jewish Advocacy and Engagement***

Hannah Weilbacher is an organizer and advocate serving American Jewish World Service as the Program Officer for Jewish

Advocacy and Engagement. Prior to joining AJWS, Hannah worked at the Jewish Social Justice Roundtable, a coalition of progressive organizations pursuing social justice from a Jewish perspective. She has been a community organizer for a number of campaigns and causes, and she was the chief organizer for the groundbreaking DC Paid Family Leave Campaign with Jews United for Justice. She was also a field organizer for a winning congressional campaign in New Hampshire. Hannah believes in the power of organizing and building relationships that lead to meaningful action. She holds a BA in politics from Oberlin College and is originally from the suburbs of Philadelphia.