

# Bringing Mussar Wisdom to our Community Leaders

By Susan Goldberg Schwartz

The Buffalo Jewish community has begun a spiritual journey, of sorts, to become a community with leaders who lead with deep hearts and caring souls. As Howard Rosenhoch writes in his president's column, we were blessed this past March to have had multiple opportunities to meet and learn with Alan Morinis, Dean and founder of The Mussar Institute. We are also fortunate to be able to bring the Institute's Lead with Jewish Values (LWJV) program to our community that has begun to engage 20 community volunteer leaders from our synagogues and local Jewish agencies to deepen their personal and spiritual selves. These include: Temple Beth Tzedek, Kehilat Ohr Tzion, Jewish Federation, Bureau of Jewish Education, Jewish Community Center, Hebrew Benevolent Free Loan Association, Jewish Family Service, Holocaust Resource Center, Congregation Shir Shalom and Kadimah. I am honored to be working alongside Evie Weinstein in guiding these



The committee which brought Alan Morinis Scholar-In-Residence program to Buffalo included (from left) Susan Goldberg Schwartz, Lisa Wallenfels, Cheryl Stein, Alan Morinis, Patty Adler, Shira Goldberg, Ethel Melzer, Chair Mark Horowitz, Federation Professional Evie Weinstein, Joni Shatkin and Robin Raphael.

dedicated leaders on the Mussar path.

According to Alan Morinis, the ultimate goal of LWJV is for leaders to learn and practice in the way of Mussar in order that they become a more effective, more fulfilled, more valued partner of the many people with whom they serve as a volunteer.

Volunteer leaders are essential to our community's ability to achieve its goal of building a more vibrant and caring Jewish

Buffalo. We know that Jewish organizations run most effectively when the volunteer leadership function with a shared set of Jewish values. LWJV uses the Jewish tradition of Mussar to guide the character and values development that can radically change the culture and operations of a volunteer-led organization.

Each two weeks, the participants in LWJV will focus on one middah or soul trait;

among them patience, humility, honor, and gratitude. In addition to required readings, the participants will meet in the large group for an in-depth conversation. During the 2nd week, each participant will meet with a chevruta/study partner to look at additional texts. In addition to study, a very important Mussar principle says that it takes practice to create personal change. The practice component is made up of three daily practices: recitation of a reminder phrase, a specific task/activity and lastly, keeping a daily journal.

Buffalo is the 2nd Jewish community to bring LWJV to its volunteer leaders, following the footsteps of leaders in Kansas City. We have only had our first two va'ad (group) meetings and I have already heard the participants express how their personal lives and volunteer experiences have already been impacted by the Mussar teachings and practice. Our hope is that not only will they all become more effective leaders, but find greater fulfillment in the volunteer work that they do.

## Looking for something fun?



*Interested in being involved in creating a Winter 2018 Jewish Cultural Festival?*

**Come to a meeting at the  
Niagara Falls Convention Center  
Wednesday, June 1 6:00 PM  
for meeting • food • music!**

Questions? Email [rgoldberg@jfedbflo.com](mailto:rgoldberg@jfedbflo.com)

## PJ Library's Harold Grinspoon in Buffalo



PJ Library Program Officer Beth Grafman and Harold Grinspoon from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation in Springfield, MA, visited Buffalo in April to hear our PJ Stories and to help Buffalo expand our program.



Harold Grinspoon, founder and funder of PJ Library was in Buffalo to meet with members of our community. He is seen here with community members who shared their stories of how PJ Library has changed the Jewish lives of their families. From left, Christina Akers, Mr. Grinspoon, Jessica Grubea, Nina Lukin, PJ Library in Buffalo Director Mandy Weiss and Buffalo PJ Chair Stacie Stone.