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JULY 30, 2026

Heritage Foundation under fire over new allegations of antisemitic culture

A former trade policy analyst at the conservative think tank said that many new hires were fixated on conspiracy theories about the Holocaust

By Matthew Kassel

Nine months after the Heritage Foundation came under fire for defending Tucker Carlson’s friendly interview with a neo-Nazi, the conservative think tank is facing fresh scrutiny over accusations that it has enabled an extreme culture in which new hires feel free to question the Holocaust and to engage in historically revisionist debates about World War II, with no apparent internal policing from leadership.

Former Heritage employees, who had been part of a mass staff exodus stoked by its president’s refusal to disavow Carlson for hosting the neo-Nazi influencer Nick Fuentes on his podcast last October, told *The New York Times Magazine* in a newly published investigation that they encountered troubling debates during their time at the organization over issues like “whether the Holocaust happened or not” and “who was the bad guy and who were the good guys” in the war against Hitler.

Andrew Hale, a trade policy analyst at Heritage who left in January to join a rival think tank launched by former Vice President Mike Pence, recalled that prior to

departing he had found new hires were fixated on antisemitic conspiracy theories about the Holocaust and Israel of the sort popularized by Fuentes, Carlson and Candace Owens, the extreme-right podcast host.

Hale confirmed to *Jewish Insider* in an interview on Wednesday that new, particularly younger, staffers at Heritage “openly said things which were antisemitic, whether they realized it or not,” crediting their views to an obsession with far-right social media channels.

“The Heritage Foundation had an opportunity to combat antisemitism and misogyny but instead they chose to hire people with these views,” Hale argued, while claiming that the think tank’s “original goals have been subverted under the current leadership” and is now “a force for antisemitism and misogyny.”

Brian Phillips, a Heritage spokesperson, called Hale’s claim about the Holocaust debate “absurd” but did not address related allegations from former staffers, whom the think tank sought to discredit as “self-

serving, bitter and vindictive” in a statement to the *Times Magazine*.

“There is no debate at the Heritage Foundation whether the Holocaust happened and our record opposing antisemitism is long, consistent and public,” he said in a brief email statement to JI, sharing a link to a page on Heritage’s website detailing such efforts.

The foundation, which had long been influential to Republican administrations, has found itself on the defensive after its president, Kevin Roberts, posted a controversial video to social media last fall in which he dismissed Carlson’s critics as part of a “venomous coalition,” among other terms widely interpreted as antisemitic tropes.

“Heritage is catering to a conspiratorial streak popular with Gen Z Republicans, perhaps out of the belief that it’s the future of the party,” Daniel Samet, a fellow with the conservative American Enterprise Institute who focuses on U.S.-Israel relations and Middle East policy, told JI. “It’s one thing to have serious heterodox views. It’s another to spew dreck about

Jews. Heritage is failing to draw a line in the sand.”

Among those who left the organization over their discomfort with Roberts’ decision and handling of the fallout were the leaders of an antisemitism task force that opted to sever ties with the think tank last November, even as they voiced hope to “collaborate” again.

Late last month, Luke Moon, a conservative Christian activist and co-chair of the task force, returned to Heritage as a part-time visiting fellow to support its “efforts to combat antisemitism,” the organization said in a statement.

Moon has said he chose to join the organization after Yoram Hazony, an Israeli American political theorist and national conservative leader who has denounced Carlson as antisemitic, became a member of its board in May.

But Moon said on Wednesday his recent

experience had been “the opposite” of the internal culture that former staffers had described to *The Times*. “They’re almost a little overzealous to have me there,” he told JI. “There’s a real frustration in the reputation being tarnished.”

Still, others who left the think tank said that they remained unconvinced Roberts had meaningfully reckoned with his remarks. Yaakov Menken, the executive vice president of the Coalition for Jewish Values who resigned from the antisemitism task force last year, said that Roberts had not distanced himself from the rhetoric he used in his defense of Carlson.

“Anyone who thinks I belong to a ‘venomous coalition’ either doesn’t understand antisemitism or is a part of spreading it,” Menken told JI. “Heritage cannot combat antisemitism and endorse it at the same time.”

Josh Blackman, a legal scholar who also

resigned from Heritage last year, said he had “not seen any public or private action taken by” the think tank “to adequately address” concerns over antisemitism that precipitated departures. “Until changes are made, I’m not sure how Heritage can be seen as a credible partner in the fight against antisemitism,” he told JI.

While Moon acknowledged that there were “certainly” issues at Heritage last fall, he said the think tank no longer employed problematic staffers like the former chief of staff who had written Roberts’ scripted comments about Carlson.

“There’s an explicit and very clear expectation on me to take on antisemitism on the right,” he said, adding that Heritage had also hired a researcher to help him with such work. “They’ve been very clear to me where they stand on antisemitism.” ♦

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‘These are not ordinary times’: Inside Jewish Detroit’s get-out-the-vote campaign for Haley Stevens

Leading rabbis across the state are urging their congregants to vote for Stevens — even if they’re not saying so explicitly

By Gabby Deutch

Several large Detroit-area synagogues emailed their congregants earlier this summer to urge them to vote in Michigan’s Aug. 4 primary — what seemed at first to be a somewhat bland call to make their voices heard and exercise their civic duty.

Then, as primary day drew closer, the messages took on a sharper edge from the usual staid, nonpartisan rhetoric that houses of worship might have sent in the past ahead of major elections.

“While we aren’t going to tell you who to vote for and we have never sent a message like this in our congregation’s history, these are no ordinary times,” the leaders of Temple Israel, the Reform synagogue in West Bloomfield that was the site of a violent antisemitic attack in March, wrote in an email last month.

The rabbis did not directly tell congregants whom to support in the Democratic Senate primary between Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI) and Abdul El-Sayed, a former public health official. Instead, they merely described a politician who sounded a lot like Stevens: “a candidate whose record, actions, and rhetoric demonstrate the strongest commitment to protecting Jewish lives by combating antisemitism, seeking federal security funding for American Jewish communities, and supporting Israel’s security and right to exist as a Jewish state.” (The Conservative Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield used similar language in a letter to its congregants in June.)

El-Sayed, who has made attacking AIPAC a central tenet of his campaign, has refused to say whether he believes in

Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. El-Sayed condemned the Temple Israel attack — which did not result in any casualties aside from the assailant, a Hezbollah sympathizer who drove a truck into the synagogue preschool before opening fire — but said that “hurt people hurt people,” referring to the attacker’s ties to family members in Lebanon affiliated with Hezbollah who were killed in Israeli strikes.

The email from a nonprofit religious institution was just one of many that are being forwarded between the inboxes of Jewish Michiganders in the final days of the Senate primary, which is open to all registered voters regardless of party affiliation. Rabbis’ unprecedented advocacy in the race reflects the urgency surrounding what many Michigan Jews view as one of the most important elections in their

lifetime: between a moderate, pro-Israel lawmaker who has represented the hub of Detroit's Jewish community for nearly eight years and an insurgent far-left candidate whom they view as dangerously misguided when it comes to matters of Jewish communal concern.

Rabbi Aaron Starr, of Shaarey Zedek, told *Jewish Insider* on Tuesday that Stevens is "a longtime friend of the Detroit Jewish community." But he stopped short of publicly naming her as his preferred candidate. Still, he said that the stakes feel different in this election, prompting the stronger-than-usual message to congregants.

"This is not difficult at all because I just feel it is so important," Rabbi Asher Lopatin, who leads the Orthodox Kehillat Etz Chayim synagogue in Detroit and is director of community relations at the Ann Arbor Jewish federation, told JI. "We really have seen a lot of energy, I would say really just in the last month. People have woken up, I think, to this danger."

"We've spoken in condemnation of and in praise of elected officials' and candidates' rhetoric on both sides of the aisle," he said of the synagogue's past political commentary. "Yet this election feels like a more existential moment for the Jews of Michigan, of the United States and around the world."

Other rabbis are being more overt in their support for Stevens. Rabbi Asher Lopatin, who leads the Orthodox Kehillat Etz Chayim synagogue in Detroit and is director of community relations at the Ann Arbor Jewish federation, sent an email this week to his personal contact list urging them to vote for Stevens. He also noted that his position does not formally represent the views of his employers.

Three dozen members of Detroit's Orthodox community, including several rabbis, signed a letter calling on observant Jews to support Stevens, whom they described as an "outspoken supporter of Israel and a devoted ally to the Jewish community."

Among Orthodox Jews, who are more

likely than secular Jews to identify as Republican, there is an educational push to remind voters that in Michigan, they can vote in whichever primary they choose — Democratic or Republican — regardless of their party affiliation.

"In the primary, many of the Democratic challengers to these candidates are hostile to our community. It is imperative to vote for those who support us," the Orthodox Jewish leaders wrote. "Having a voice in deciding who the Democratic candidate is will be important no matter who you vote for in November in the general election. You do not need to be a registered Democrat to vote in the Democratic primary."

"We need all the help we can get, the people we can get, to represent the Jewish population," Gail Mash, an 81-year-old resident of a senior housing facility operated by the Detroit Jewish Federation, told JI. "There are people who are homebound and have nothing to do. This is the best thing they can do: take an active part and feel that they're doing something for the community."

The frantic email campaigns and WhatsApp chains are joined by the actual bread-and-butter of campaigning: phone banking and canvassing. Gail Mash, an 81-year-old resident of a senior housing facility operated by the Detroit Jewish Federation, calls herself and her group of politically engaged girlfriends the "Bubbe Brigade." (Mash described herself as a former "Kennedy girl" who has been a Democrat her whole life.)

The "Bubbe Brigade" makes phone calls each week to members of the Michigan Democratic Jewish Caucus, a grassroots group representing Jewish Democrats within the state party, and reminds them to vote.

The Democratic Jewish Caucus campaigned with Stevens in the Detroit suburbs over the weekend at a canvassing event that was also promoted by the Jewish Democratic Council of America, a national group that is supporting efforts to rally Jewish voters for Stevens. JDCA is hosting more than a dozen phone banking events,

and it has also made a five-figure digital ad buy in support of Stevens.

"When Jewish Americans needed a champion, Haley Stevens stepped up," the ad says. It touts Stevens as a leader in fighting antisemitism, "creating jobs" and "delivering for Michiganders."

Polling has shown El-Sayed with a small lead, though the dynamics of the race have shifted in Stevens' favor since a third candidate, state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, dropped out earlier this month.

In the final debate of the campaign on Monday, El-Sayed repeatedly went after AIPAC and attacked Stevens for her support of the U.S.-Israel relationship. The rhetoric has left some Jewish Democrats in the state confused — and frustrated — at the way Israel, and its political supporters in the U.S., have become so central to a primary for a pivotal Senate swing seat.

"We have concerns that are sometimes unique from other communities' concerns," Ari Weisenfeld, the director of state relations at Agudath Israel, told JI. "If you want your elected officials to take them seriously, whether that's at the local, state or federal level, you need to get out and vote."

"The Jewish community is just like, why is there this obsession with this organization that a lot of us do not have an affiliation with?" said Decky Alexander, who chairs the Democratic Jewish Caucus. "It is just mind-blowing that this is such a consumptive issue when we have real threats to our Constitution, our democracy and the economics that are going on."

Early voting is already underway, but campaigning will continue until polls close on Tuesday. Ari Weisenfeld plans to travel to Detroit from his home in Connecticut to urge Orthodox Jews to vote. As the director of state relations at Agudath Israel, an Orthodox umbrella organization, Weisenfeld is not promoting a particular candidate — all he cares about is that observant Jews get out and vote. He plans to try to visit as many synagogues as he can for morning *minyanim* between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m, reminding people to vote. If people need a ride to the polls, he'll provide it. ♦

JULY 27, 2026

Jewish leaders worried about Michigan's prime position on Dems' 2028 calendar

The state has been the epicenter of the anti-Israel movement, and will play a key role in nominating the next Democratic presidential candidate

By Matthew Kassel

The selection of Michigan as an early Democratic primary state in the 2028 presidential nominating contest, approved on Friday by a panel of the Democratic National Committee, is prompting some concerns among Jewish and pro-Israel activists who fear the party's sharp divisions over Israel and its recent controversies over antisemitism could create a volatile political landscape during the key contest.

In recent years, Michigan has been at the center of some of the fiercest fights over Israel animating the Democratic Party. In the 2024 presidential race, for instance, the battleground state first laid the ground for the "uncommitted" movement that urged primary voters not to vote for former President Joe Biden as a protest against his support for Israel during the war in Gaza.

At Michigan's state party convention in April, meanwhile, pro-Israel candidates were heckled by far-left activists, while an attorney with a history of praising Hezbollah was nominated for a position on the University of Michigan Board of Regents, episodes that left Jewish voters questioning if they belonged in a party they had long called home.

The state's Democratic Senate primary, set for Aug. 4, has emerged as the latest high-profile proxy battle between the party's mainstream and far-left factions. The most heated clashes have revolved around Israel and AIPAC, the pro-Israel advocacy group that is now spending millions to help Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI), a close ally, in a bitter race against Abdul El-Sayed — whose rhetoric targeting Israel and ongoing refusal to recognize its right to exist has alarmed Jewish voters.

Michigan's presidential primary will now tentatively go fifth among the six states chosen for early primaries, on Feb. 22 — a

week after New Mexico and a week before Virginia. South Carolina will kick off the nominating contest on Jan. 22, followed by Nevada and New Hampshire. The newly proposed calendar will need to be ratified by DNC members at a meeting in Austin next month.

If the schedule is officially locked in, Michigan, which has the most delegates of the states chosen, "figures to be one of the first anti-Israel or antisemitic states that has a vote," Dennis Bernard, a Jewish leader in Michigan who helps advise members of both parties, said in an interview with *Jewish Insider* on Sunday.

"I do think we will be very much a bellwether state" that "could be the first true test of the Democratic Party and how big their tent is," added Bernard, the national chair of government relations for the Jewish Federations of North America. "You will potentially see a continuation of that war going on right now."

Several Jewish leaders in Michigan said the Senate primary outcome would likely help crystallize their expectations about the degree to which Democratic conflict over Israel, and the state's role in elevating that battle to the forefront, may end up influencing the presidential election.

"Those results will give us a better indication of 2028," said Michael Horowitz, one such Jewish leader in Michigan, noting the positions espoused by El-Sayed are not a "national trend yet," despite a recent series of primary wins by anti-Israel Democrats who ran in progressive House districts. "We'll see how deep this well is. I'm not naive, but I don't know."

Still, the Democratic Party and pro-Israel community "have to get together and take control of the narrative again, because they're winning the narrative," he told *JJ*, referring to the far left. "We have got our

work cut out for us. We've lost the narrative."

"If you talk to major Democratic donors, they're concerned about Michigan because the moderate wing of the party is disappearing," Ed Sarpolus, a Democratic pollster in the state, told *JJ*. "Democrats could be worse off in 2028 if they don't get back to the issues."

By contrast, Asher Lopatin, a rabbi who serves as director of community relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, cited Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's endorsement of Stevens last week as a sign that "may indicate the direction Michigan Democrats are going in for 2028," which he called "not falling into the anti-Israel obsession trap."

"I realize it's a rosy scenario, but I am hopeful," he told *JJ*.

Political strategists who spoke with *JJ* shared mixed predictions about Michigan's early place on the 2028 primary calendar. Ed Sarpolus, a Democratic pollster in the state, said it could "exacerbate tensions within the Democratic Party" over Israel, disrupting a fragile effort to show unity ahead of what is expected to be a bruising general election to reclaim the White House.

But Adrian Hemond, a Democratic strategist in Michigan, said it "is way too early to predict with confidence" how Israel "will play as an issue" in the 2028 Michigan presidential primary, arguing that "a lot will depend on how hard candidates lean into the issue."

"If the situation in the Middle East deteriorates further," he explained to *JJ*, "this issue could look very different."

Some experts have also speculated that Michigan's position could lead to uncomfortable confrontations for pro-Israel

centrists like Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Jewish Democrat who is frequently cited as a prospective presidential candidate and who has faced antisemitism over his views on the Middle East.

Some Jewish leaders, however, said a pro-Israel win in Michigan could help defang the far left at what may be a key inflection point in the race. If an openly pro-Israel candidate emerged in the state, “I think it would be a surprise as to the traction they got,” since it “would stand out as authentic,” said one prominent pro-Israel activist in Michigan, granted anonymity to speak candidly about a sensitive issue.

He was not hopeful that such a candidate would step up. “I don’t see why Michigan is the venue in which someone does a complete paradigm shift” on Israel, he told JI, citing the existing political headwinds. “I think we are kind of a laboratory for the Democratic Party across the nation.”

One pro-Israel strategist in Michigan, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that several potential 2028 contenders have already visited the state and have had private meetings with Jewish donors and groups — including Rahm Emanuel, the Democratic operative and former Chicago mayor, and Maryland Gov. Wes Moore.

“A couple others have had meetings with prominent Jews while in Michigan, but I can’t say for sure if the reason for meetings was to lean into the Jewish vote,” the strategist told JI.

While Michigan also went fifth in 2024 after it had lobbied for an early slot, the state promises to play a more consequential role in the next election because it will be a competitive primary, as opposed to the last

cycle in which Biden faced no serious opposition before dropping out of the race.

Anti-Israel activists have insisted that former Vice President Kamala Harris lost Michigan, home to the largest concentration of Arab American voters in Dearborn, due to her alignment with Biden’s support for Israel during the war in Gaza.

But many Jewish Democrats in Michigan, who make up a sizable and politically engaged constituency, say the left’s vilification of Israel as well as AIPAC is not only misguided but also a distraction from more urgent concerns that are much more relevant to swing voters who will ultimately decide the election. Some suggested that Michigan’s status in 2028 as an early nominating state could stoke those tensions and overshadow other issues, in a repeat of the last cycle.

“The antisemitic rhetoric that we have observed on the right and the left, the attacks on Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, are, sadly, going to be issues that both parties have to address in 2028,” Robert Zimmerman, a longtime DNC member, told JI while assessing the 2028 primary landscape. “Democrats have to do a much better job of standing up to that hateful rhetoric.”

“It means that the real issues facing Michigan will continue to be less important” than the hostility to Israel now energizing the activist left, Hannan Lis, a Democratic fundraiser and Jewish community leader in the state, told JI. “I cannot tell you I’m optimistic. I’m a realist,” he said.

Even as he acknowledged “two years is a

long time,” he voiced anxiety that “support for Israel has become a litmus test for a lot of Democratic candidates,” as it has grown increasingly politicized in party primaries.

Despite reservations about Michigan’s potentially divisive role in the presidential race, some Jewish leaders in the state and beyond said they were still staying positive.

In a statement to JI, Jessica Alexander, chair of the Michigan Democratic Jewish caucus and a vice chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, said party activists had “worked hard to make the case for Michigan to be an early primary state, because the state reflects the country’s diverse demographics culturally and geographically.”

“Yes, there is a vocal virtual subset of folks who want to make not the Middle East, but Israel and the U.S.’s engagement in and with it the center” or “soul” of the campaign, she said, “but the reality on the ground is that it’s not the most formidable issue no matter how the press skews it.”

Noah Arbit, a Jewish Michigan state representative who has been outspoken against rising antisemitism in his own party, said that the Democratic Socialists of America and other groups “seem to feel that Israel is a galvanizing wedge issue they can employ to take over the Democratic Party” and for now “seem intent on putting it at the forefront of the primary debate in 2028, regardless of Michigan’s place in the calendar.”

“I’m resigned to the issue being at the forefront of the primary conversation,” he told JI last week, “despite the fact that I would argue Americans have far more pressing concerns about the state of and future of our country than an interminable conflict 5,000 miles away.” ♦

Conservative rabbis further welcome interfaith families — but keep weddings off the table

Movement's Rabbinical Assembly offers prayer to be said after an interfaith marriage ceremony, English blessing for non-Jewish spouse at a bar or bat mitzvah

By Jay Deitcher

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

Eight months after the Conservative movement apologized to interfaith couples for treating them as if their relationships were a threat to Jewish survival, the rabbinic arm of the movement announced a new set of Jewish legal rulings to provide concrete ways congregations and rabbis can better welcome interfaith families. This still does not include the officiation of interfaith weddings by Conservative rabbis.

The announcement came in the form of a publication titled, "Gateways Into Jewish Living: Guiding the Conservative/Masorti Rabbi in Supporting Families with Non-Jewish Loved Ones" authored by the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

The nine rulings were voted on by 23 rabbis from the committee, with most passing by a wide margin. The most contentious issue — passed with 14 votes in favor, five against and four abstentions — dealt with offering a *Hanukkat Habayit*, a dedication of the Jewish home, for interfaith families who are building an "exclusively" Jewish home.

The movement now defines a Jewish household as one that "has at least one member of the household who is Jewish and is living and is considering intentionally how they want to bring Judaism into their into their family life, and if they are blessed with children, how they can raise their children with Jewish experiences and Jewish education," Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal, the CEO of the Rabbinical Assembly, told eJewishPhilanthropy.

"Two generations ago, the assumption

was that if someone intermarried, it meant that they were not interested in living a Jewish life and raising a Jewish family," Blumenthal said. Movement leaders assumed intermarried couples wouldn't be interested in learning about everyday Jewish laws based around keeping Shabbat or practicing holidays.

The new rulings affirm that synagogues can hire a Jewish person with a non-Jewish spouse for positions other than clergy or other positions of religious authority, such as cantor, and also allow rabbis to offer interfaith couples a blessing either before or after they get married and for other life-cycle events. Jewish leaders are also allowed to accept donations to mark these life changes.

According to 2021 Pew research, 72% of non-Orthodox Jews who married post-2010 have spouses of another religion. In the mid-20th century, the Conservative movement was the largest Jewish denomination in the U.S., but by 2021, 15% of Jews identified as Conservative. According to some Conservative leaders, these dwindling numbers prove that better engaging interfaith families is an existential issue for the movement.

The goals of the changes announced in the publication are "inspiring observance of *mitzvot*, inspiring study of Torah, inspiring people to seek God," Rabbi Pamela Barmash, a co-editor of the publication, told eJP.

Previously, the movement looked to households with two Jewish parents to attain these goals. What changed is that the movement now sees intermarried couples as a target audience as well. "Our focus now is really on inspiring couples and families who are intermarried to live a Jewish life, to maintain an exclusively Jewish home, and

if they have children, to raise Jewish children," Barmash said.

"Many couples are already participating meaningfully in Jewish life, and intermarried families are raising Jewish children," Barmash and Rabbi Emily Barton wrote in the introduction to the publication, acknowledging that interfaith families now make up a large percentage of the community. "We must recognize that often the couple or family just wishes to be a part of the Jewish community just like every other Jewish family, not as a 'separate yet equal' constituency within our Jewish organizations and synagogues."

After the destruction of the ancient Temple, "The rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud... had to recreate Judaism anew because they had no other choice," Barmash and Barton wrote. "Our situation at the beginning of the 21st century may not be as dire, but it is as urgent."

The publication holds that an individual's status as a Jew remains matrilineal, passed down by mother or through conversion, and also emphasizes that Conservative clergy can only officiate weddings where both partners are Jewish, though they can attend intermarriage weddings as a guest.

But the publication also announces many changes, solidified for the first time as Jewish law. In recent years, many rabbis have gone rogue and others have left the movement completely due to the movement's stance on interfaith marriages and the lack of inclusion of clergy in interfaith wedding ceremonies. Many of the changes in the report are already widely performed by Conservative clergy. Yet the topic of interfaith marriage remains one of the core divisions within the movement.

The publication looked to answer

minute questions because they are the “genuine questions that are coming from our rabbis,” Barmash said. “They’re not theoretical questions, a question about Shabbat, a question about Pesach and chametz [leavened products]. It’s because our rabbis are being asked these questions.”

New rulings in the publication establish that while non-Jews still cannot have an *aliyah* to the Torah — recite a blessing before a Torah reading — they can accompany their partner to do so. Non-Jewish parents “may and should” be included in English blessings on the *bimah* during their children’s *bar* or *bat mitzvah*.

Additionally, a rabbi is allowed to give an intermarrying couple who intend to live an exclusively Jewish life a *Mi Shebeirach*, a prayer blessing the couple with a loving Jewish home, before or after the wedding day, but not at the wedding.

Offering blessings before and after a wedding “emphasizes to couples that they are embraced by our communities, and No. 2, it provides an opportunity around the time of marriage for our rabbis to engage couples and have conversations with them about what it means to create a Jewish home,” Blumenthal said. “Many of our clergy already have been engaged in many of these practices,” and they looked to the Rabbinic Assembly to create “the *halachic* language to be able to explain as they provide these opportunities.”

The publication also states that non-Jews can now participate in baby namings and at a *brit milah* by reading an English reading or, at the *bris*, by acting part of the chain of people who carry the child from the mother’s arms to the lap of the *sandak*, who holds the baby during the ritual. A non-Jew cannot serve as a *sandak*.

Before Passover, the publication said, a Jewish partner cannot sell their *c?ametz* to their non-Jewish partner, even though they may feel that doing so would feel more inclusive to them. A non-Jewish partner can serve as a “Shabbos goy” on Shabbat, performing labor that is halachically prohibited for Jews on the Sabbath, as long as it’s not directly asked for by the Jewish

partner, though a young Jewish child can ask them to do so directly.

The publication delved into mourning rituals and funerals: Rabbis cannot perform funerals for non-Jewish spouses if the spouse practices another religion — instead, clergy of their faith should perform the ceremony. But if a spouse is non-practicing, a rabbi can perform the ceremony as long as it includes no non-Jewish religious elements. Rabbis can perform a funeral for an unaffiliated non-Jewish spouse or child and include Jewish elements as long as it’s appropriate and fulfills the wishes of the deceased. Jews can sit *shiva* and recite *Kaddish* for their non-Jewish relatives, but non-Jews do not have to do so, and the community is not required to provide a minyan for a *shiva* if they do.

The rulings are not requirements for Conservative congregations but permissions, ultimately leaving the decisions of how to engage interfaith families in the hands of the communities and their leaders, Barmash said, the same way congregations decide if they are to read the entire Torah over a year or over a three-year cycle.

“Some rabbis will look at this and say, sections X and Y apply and section Z and Q don’t apply,” Rabbi Ashira Konigsburg, the chief operating officer for the Rabbinical Assembly, told eJP. “And other rabbis will make [the] opposite decision.”

Still, some in the Conservative movement described the changes as superficial or banal, affirming practices that are already widespread, while avoiding the core issue: interfaith weddings.

“What I found particularly strange is that they constantly repeat that the wedding day itself is not all that significant, but are doubling down on any form of officiation or ‘verbal participation,’” Rabbi Oren Steinitz, rabbi at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevre Shas outside of Syracuse, N.Y., told eJP. “If it’s not that important, why is this your hill to die on? If it *is* important, then why pretend that all these cosmetic changes can make a real difference?”

Keren McGinity, the movement’s former director of intermarriage engagement and

inclusion, who was dismissed from her position last July, is “delighted to see the CJLS respond thoughtfully to interfaith issues, however, the *teshuvah* reads as archaic,” she told eJP. “Some Conservative rabbis have already been doing what it mentions for years.”

The publication, when discussing the expectations of a couple building a Jewish home, said that “there should be a clear expectation that non-Jewish symbols and observances would not be a part of the couple’s home (e.g., no Christmas tree).”

This prohibition “will not land well with families who have a tree for cultural — not religious — reasons, just as immigrant Jewish families did earlier in American history,” McGinity said.

While many in the movement are focused on the fact that there hasn’t been a change to allow Conservative rabbis to participate in interfaith wedding ceremonies, Blumenthal said, “the fact is, creating a Jewish home, raising Jewish children, that takes place every day of their lives.”

Many advocates in the community, including McGinity, have advocated for an alternative interfaith wedding ceremony to be created. But it was “not addressed by this *teshuvah*,” Konigsburg said.

“We’re a diverse movement that has [some rabbis that] will feel that this is already beyond what they feel is needed in their community, and we have others who feel that they need additional tools,” Barmash said.

The movement hired an intermarriage and Jewish living program manager and created advisory groups to help congregations with the recommendations in the paper. It is also working on creating curricula and training for rabbis.

“As rabbis, we enjoy the privilege of being invited into people’s lives, and we want to assure them that we care about them,” Barmash and Barton wrote in their introduction. “As people figure out their own identities and relationships, it is our role to help them integrate Jewish tradition in the conversation.” ♦

JULY 28, 2026

Moskowitz challenger runs on military record in contested GOP primary

George Moraitis is running against Boca Raton Mayor Scott Singer and businessman Dan Franzese to take on Moskowitz

By Marc Rod

Former Florida state Rep. George Moraitis is hoping that a bipartisan approach and his background in the Statehouse and as a military veteran will make him a formidable candidate to take on Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL) in South Florida in November.

Moraitis is running in the Republican primary in Florida's 25th Congressional District against former Boca Raton Mayor Scott Singer, who is Jewish, and businessman Dan Franzese. In the general election, the winner will face Moskowitz — or his socialist primary challenger — in the district redrawn to favor Republicans.

Republicans are also seeking to block a Libertarian candidate from making it onto the ballot in November, fearing that a third-party candidate could strip away some of the GOP vote and hand a victory to Moskowitz.

Moraitis trails Singer and Franzese in fundraising — Singer has raised nearly \$2 million to Franzese's \$1.5 million and Moraitis' \$840,000 — but recently picked up the endorsement of the *Sun Sentinel*, the largest newspaper in the area.

Moraitis told *Jewish Insider* he spent his "whole life in public service," serving in the Navy on submarines and as a state representative. He said he wants to work to "restore the American dream," protect U.S. national security and defend "our God-given freedoms" of worship, speech and assembly, including combating rising antisemitism, as well as what he described as efforts to shut down churches and Christian prayer.

During his time in the Navy, Moraitis was stationed with the 6th Fleet in Naples, Italy, a role that included helping to defend allies such as Israel, which was at the time part of the U.S.' European Command. He never had the opportunity to travel to Israel

while in the Navy but said he would plan to do so as a member of Congress.

He said that Israel is an important part of both Jewish and Christian "shared spiritual heritage."

"I appreciate that the Israeli government has done so much to protect religious minorities, particularly the Christians," Moraitis said. "In addition to having a Jewish state, they've done more than anyone in history has done, frankly, to protect the Christians."

He said he's seeing challenges on the left and "to some extent on the right" to Israel's status as a Jewish state. He argued that many of those opposing Israel's right to exist fail to understand Israel's creation in the aftermath of the Holocaust and centuries of antisemitism.

"I am committed to the Jewish people having a homeland in the nation of Israel. I mean, I think there's a spiritual component to that. We definitely have a national component ... our own national security is tied to being strong in the Middle East. Israel has been our strongest ally in the world," Moraitis said. "I am 100% committed to Israel existing as a Jewish homeland and being a strong and important ally of the United States."

Moraitis said he also supports continued U.S. military aid to Israel — increasingly a hot-button issue on both sides of the aisle.

He said he was supportive of the administration's efforts to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, adding that it was an "open question" whether that goal could be accomplished diplomatically.

He acknowledged that polling has shown the American people would not support an expanded war with Iran but said he supports U.S. efforts to control the Strait of Hormuz and impose a blockade on Iranian ports.

"I do want to give peace a chance. We can't make this about regime change because we really can't ultimately control that without huge numbers of casualties and a much bigger effort than what we're putting into it, and I don't think the American people are prepared for that," Moraitis continued.

"I do want to see us get to a peace where Iran gives up their nuclear weapons," he said. "I do feel that we've had to do this. I also feel that we need to move this to a place where we do stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, whether or not this regime continues on."

He warned that the United States will regret if it fails to take the opportunity to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and continuing to spread terrorism around the region, warning that Iran could attack the United States or Israel if it obtained a nuclear bomb.

In a stance that's becoming increasingly unpopular among Republicans, Moraitis said he still believes that there will ultimately need to be some form of a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians, while emphasizing that neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority are equipped to run a Palestinian state and that such a state would need to be demilitarized and might take decades to bring to fruition.

"Israel has to have the right to defend itself. They can't give up their security to do it, the way they tried to do it ... pulling out of Gaza [in 2005]. Obviously it didn't work because ultimately the vacuum was created and Hamas stepped into it. And so, I think this next effort would have to be something a lot more supervised," Moraitis said. "But I do ultimately support a transition to an autonomous state."

In the long run, he said that resolving the

continued conflict would be beneficial for both sides.

Asked about addressing antisemitism at home, Moraitis touted the hearings and other efforts by congressional Republicans over the past four years to address antisemitism on college campuses, which he said should continue. He said that the federal government should leverage federal funding to compel schools to take action on antisemitism.

"I just think we need to take a stronger stand on it," Moraitis continued, specifically raising concerns about Florida Republican gubernatorial candidate James Fishback, who has campaigned on an openly antisemitic line. "There's just really no place

for that in our party or really even in America."

He also emphasized the need to call out antisemitism when it appears and to continue to fund security grants for communal institutions.

Moraitis argued that he'd be the best-positioned Republican to win the seat in November given his status as a veteran and his experience in the Statehouse. He also argued that he has a "track record of winning — I've never lost an election," arguing that some of his competitors have underperformed the GOP ticket in the past.

"I do feel like if I get up there, I'm doing this for the right reasons. I want to get things done. I have a record of reaching across the aisle to get things done," he

continued. "There's a lot of things we can do on a bipartisan basis. I think Washington's gotten too polarized, and I think some of the candidates, the way they're running is going to make it difficult to govern with these small majorities that we have."

And he emphasized that, while he's not Jewish himself, "there's really not going to be any daylight between myself and [the Jewish candidates running in the seat] on supporting Israel and fighting antisemitism."

He also said that the Republican Party is "better positioned to support Israel and fight antisemitism" — a pitch to pro-Israel Jewish voters who have been a strong base of support for Moskowitz in the past. ♦

JULY 27, 2026

How Debra Band revives a dying Jewish artform

Band spent 30 years in health policy before turning full-time to Judaica; now, the Library of Congress houses five of her books

By Christina Sher

POTOMAC, Md. — Debra Band's art studio sits at the back of her Maryland home, a room crowded with kosher parchment, jars of 23.75-karat gold leaf, the parrot she recently fostered and the unfinished pages of three books she's working on simultaneously. It is, by her coy admission, a mess. "It's chaos," she said humbly, "that's what makes it so great."

Earlier this year, the Library of Congress acquired five of Band's illuminated biblical manuscripts, which carry her visual interpretations of *Shir HaShirim*, *Tehillim*, *Sefer Shoftim*, and more. The books now sit in the permanent collection of the Library's Africa and Middle East Division.

Twenty-five years ago, when Band first brought her *Song of Songs* book to the library to show its then-head of the Hebraica section, she watched him lay all 65 pages out on a long table and pull out a jeweler's loupe. She assumed he was hunting for errors in her calligraphy, and started speaking quickly, over-explaining the iconography.

In an interview with *Jewish Insider*, Band recalled him cutting her off and saying: "Don't worry, if anyone in the country reads this book when it comes out, it will be me. Right now, I just need to look for the honeybees."

The bees are Band's signature; her Hebrew name is Devorah — honeybee. As a private joke with herself, she tucks a small painted bee into nearly every manuscript page she makes.

Her other influences are more concrete. In one of her pieces, Band used a pattern she believes decorated Solomon's Temple in her work, and imagery drawn from the ruins of Persepolis for her project on Esther. "There's actually very little left from Susa other than the footprints," she said of the more-famous setting of the Esther story.

Band has a history degree from Concordia University and a master's in political science from MIT. She spent her 20s and 30s in health policy work and early Health Maintenance Organization management.

The pivot to art happened almost by accident, and by embarrassment. Pregnant with her first son, Band used adhesive Hebrew press-on lettering and Letraset, a pre-desktop-publishing staple, to make his birth announcement herself rather than hire a calligrapher.

She was, she says, "mightily ashamed" of the result, despite having read and written Hebrew before she could do either in English. While pregnant with her second son, she enrolled in Hebrew calligraphy classes at a Jewish learning center in Berkeley. Within a few months, she had her first commissions. Her early work was shown at the Jewish museum there.

Judaism, in Band's view, never built the kind of widely recognized visual vocabulary that other traditions have.

"The church has always had illuminated manuscripts since the early medieval years," she told *Washington Jewish Week* in 2023. "They had a very sophisticated visual vocabulary that was necessary because very few Christians until the modern era

were literate. Jews were literate to a much higher degree, so there wasn't the same need for visual imagery."

The result, in a lot of surviving Jewish manuscripts, was imagery that stayed at the level of "either narrative or just sheer decoration," rather than developing into a fuller symbolic language.

Illuminated *ketubot* flourished for centuries in Sephardic communities, but no example survives from the medieval Ashkenazi world most American Jews descend from. The practice only returned in the late 1960s. Band sees other attempts since then as partial at best: "David Moss has done a little bit along those lines," she said, "but not a systematic vocabulary."

Band's source material is *midrash*, which she describes as "incredibly visual — lots and lots of imagery."

"So what I started doing was going into *midrash* to pull out imagery that could be used to illustrate not only historical but also abstract stuff," she told JI, calling the process a "teaching impulse" aimed at bringing "certain kinds of rabbinic thought into public view."

Band also makes custom *ketubot*, for which she and the client "have a talk about the couple's lives and interests, and from that first discussion I take away ideas that I work together into a sketch."

She prefers clients arrive open-minded. "I actually ask people to come into the process with as few preconceived notions about what they're going to end up with as possible," she said. "Forget about the *ketubah*, forget about weddings, and just talk to me about themselves, about their relationship."

For Mitch Rales, founder of the Glenstone museum in Potomac, Md., she designed a *ketubah* "very much of the earth of the place" — wood-grain patterns and small pieces of the same marble quarried for the Washington Monument. "That's when I can really stretch out," she said, "and we do something really imaginative that is great fun."

A commission for Randy Schoenberg, the attorney in the Klimt restitution case portrayed in "Woman in Gold" and grandson of composer Arnold Schoenberg, drew inspiration from his grandfather's

music. "My job in this *ketubah* was going to be to convert Schoenberg's twelve-tone scale into color," she said. "And it came out great."

She prefers a long runway on these projects. "I like to have about six months before the wedding to work," she told JI, "I really work very hard to have the *ketubah* to people at least a month before the wedding — this should not be one of those last-minute details."

Band traces the impulse behind all this less to a single moment than to her upbringing. Both her parents were children of rabbis, and after settling in Chattanooga, Tenn., they worked hard, she says, "to give us a very strong sense of Jewish identity and learning and life."

As a child, she was the one who carried a box of matzah into her overwhelmingly non-Jewish classroom before every Passover to explain the holiday to her classmates. "This has been my thing since I was a kid," she shared.

"Each group should learn enough about the other to be demystified," she said. ♦

JULY 28, 2026

Family, friends of slain Blackstone executive Wesley LePatner launch foundation in her memory

Announced a year after the deadly shooting at her firm's Manhattan offices, the organization will focus on cultivating layleaders, promoting civic engagement

By Nira Dayanim

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

One year after Jewish philanthropist and Blackstone executive Wesley LePatner was killed in a shooting at the firm's Manhattan headquarters, her husband and community members announced the launch of a foundation in her memory to cultivate lay leaders and promote civic engagement. According to a statement, the Wesley Mittman LePatner (WML) Foundation's central goal is to develop a network of "1,000 leaders" working in a range of

industries who can use their skills to strengthen the nonprofit ecosystem: serving on boards, mentoring others and launching community initiatives.

The announcement came ahead of a memorial service for LePatner on Tuesday night at Manhattan's Central Synagogue and shortly after Blackstone held a walk in her memory in Central Park.

The foundation's flagship program, Wesley Leaders, will be a two-year leadership accelerator that matches members of the fellowship cohorts from across a range of industries with

accomplished mentors in their fields, the new organization said. The program will begin in New York City before expanding across the country, creating "a multiplier effect that becomes the living expression of who Wesley was," according to a statement.

"What we are officially launching today is not just the start of a love letter to my amazing wife," said Evan LePatner, her husband, in a statement. "We are building programs and a community that she would have led, nurtured, and inspired many others to join... That investment will help forge a stronger future for the citizens of

New York City and our country more broadly.”

The foundation will be chaired by Evan LePatner and run day-to-day by its CEO, Laurie Blitzter, a longtime board member at the Birthright Israel Foundation and Hillel International, and global chair of Birthright Excel. Other founding members of the board include Brian Friedman, president of Jefferies Financial Group, and Suzanne Peck, president of UJA-Federation of New York, both of whom knew LePatner personally and professionally.

The foundation is also supported by former Meta executive and philanthropist Sheryl Sandberg, who said she met Evan LePatner after his wife’s death. In a social media post, Sandberg, whose husband Dave Goldberg died of a heart attack at 47, reflected on the unexpected loss of a spouse.

“I got to know Evan LePatner after his wife, Wesley, was tragically killed in the Park Avenue shooting last summer. In the year since, I’ve watched him carry a grief no one should have to carry. Today – one year since he lost Wesley – Evan is launching the Wesley Mittman LePatner Foundation to carry her legacy forward, and I am so

moved by how he has chosen to honor her memory,” she said.

“I know that grief and purpose can live side by side — that the people we love and lose can keep shaping the world through the work we build in their memory. Evan is proof of that,” Sandberg wrote.

Before her death at 43, LePatner worked as the global head of Core+ Real Estate at Blackstone and CEO of Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust. She was also highly involved in philanthropy, both in the Jewish world and across New York City. In 2023, at UJA-Federation of New York’s annual Wall Street Dinner, she was awarded the Alan C. Greenberg Young Leadership Award. Friedman was honored beside her at the dinner. She was remembered by many, in both the corporate and philanthropic worlds, for her mentorship.

“We will do this work the way Wesley did everything: with full commitment, the highest standards, deep and sustained investment in people, and a genuine love for elevating the places where we live and the communities we serve,” said Blitzter in a statement.

A companion initiative to the fellowship, TeamWesley, will run community events,

educational programs and service projects tied to organizations across New York City that were important to LePatner during her life.

“One year ago today, we lost Wesley LePatner – one of the most remarkable people I have ever known. She combined extraordinary talent and drive with genuine humility, kindness and compassion. She was a terrific leader, a trusted partner, a devoted mother, wife, daughter and an incredible friend to so many,” Blackstone President and COO Jon Gray said in a statement after the memorial walk in Central Park on Tuesday.

“More than 1,800 people joined in what was a meaningful opportunity to reflect, share stories and celebrate an exceptional person who left an indelible mark on all of us. I know she would have been touched to see so many gathered in her honor,” Gray said. “What endures most, across Blackstone and beyond, is the example Wesley set – through her generosity, leadership and unwavering commitment to others. Her legacy lives on in the countless people she inspired throughout her life.” ♦

JULY 29, 2026

Skip the swipe: New app matches Jewish day school grads (mostly) the old-fashioned way

The Well — named for the biblical story of Eliezer finding Isaac’s wife, Rebecca — combines the best of matchmakers and technology, founder Erica Schwartz told JI

By Haley Cohen

When the biblical Abraham sought a wife for his son Isaac, he dispatched his trusted servant to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. The servant, Eliezer, stopped at a well and prayed for a sign: the right woman would offer water not just to him, but to his camels as well. Rebecca did exactly that — and became Isaac’s match.

That story now has a modern namesake. A new dating app called The Well, slated to launch in the coming weeks, exclusively matches Jewish day school alumni. It’s

aiming to fill a void for the very affiliated Jews searching for their *bashert* but tired of swiping.

“As I started to watch the way the world — at least in my Modern Orthodox circle — was meeting or not meeting each other, something felt very broken to me,” Erica Schwartz, the app’s founder, told *Jewish Insider* on Tu B’Av, the Jewish holiday of love, which began at sundown on Tuesday.

“Back in my day, we’d go to a synagogue and you’d meet and mingle outside and

somebody might give you a call. Now everything is through a matchmaker and people aren’t meeting in person so everything is moving to more formal apps or *shidduch* résumés.”

Schwartz graduated from the Modern Orthodox Ramaz School on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, where she now serves as board chair. She also sent all six of her children to Jewish day schools. She said the aforementioned methods of dating were not “speaking to what I look at as this large middle niche I’m putting under the banner

of the day school crowd, where they have a Jewish background and identity so they're not a random Jew out there on a dating site, and they're also not the ultra-Orthodox dater who is going to, through a matchmaker, go on six dates and then get married."

"In that middle camp are all these day school graduates who are looking to meet somebody," continued Schwartz. "It seems like such a natural place of overlap and connection, they just need to become aware of each other. That's what The Well is trying to do — build a niche area of Jewish dating."

Unlike mainstream dating apps — including other Jewish ones — known for endless swiping, The Well features no swiping at all, which makes it feel more personal, said Schwartz. She describes the platform as "human intuition and wisdom working in tandem with technology."

The Well enters a crowded field of established Jewish dating apps — swipe-based JSwipe, application-only Lox Club and older-skewing JDate. But it's betting that its swipe-free, day-school-verified niche can reach daters that those other platforms don't.

Users, who must be in their 20s and 30s, begin by filling out a profile form. The first thing they're asked to note is the day school they attended and year of graduation. Day school graduates of all backgrounds — from pluralistic to yeshiva — are welcome to join, but users must submit two names of people who can vouch that they attended that school. "That's our current verification system. We need to see how that works and are prepared to tighten it a bit," said Schwartz.

The profile form then prompts users to speak with a chatbot named Elli — a nod to Eliezer from the biblical story.

Elli is trained to ask follow-up questions in nuanced ways and pick up the user's personality, said Schwartz. It asks users to describe their religious beliefs, share their profession and include key dating details like height preference or college alma mater.

Users also have the option to fill out the form manually, but Schwartz said taking advantage of Elli is preferred.

The Well also offers a small, vetted cohort of matchmakers if users wish to open their profile to them. Daters can also book an

individual phone session with a matchmaker for \$180, but otherwise the app is entirely free of charge.

A team of about a dozen advisors and matchmakers has been involved since the app's inception, including two Modern Orthodox rabbis: Rabbi Elie Weinstock, senior rabbi of the Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach on Long Island, and Rabbi Daniel Kraus, director of community education at Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan.

"The future of Jewish dating isn't choosing between technology and people," Kraus told JI. "It's combining the best of both. There are many excellent dating apps today. But no single platform can serve every community equally well. Every week I meet remarkable young adults who are ready to build Jewish homes, yet many still struggle to meet the right person. The challenge isn't a lack of commitment. It's creating meaningful opportunities for the right introductions."

"The Well's model is especially compelling because it pairs the scale and intelligence of technology with the wisdom, intuition and personal touch of experienced *shadchanim* [matchmakers]," continued Kraus. "Technology broadens the possibilities. People bring the judgment that no algorithm can fully replicate."

The name itself, said Kraus, is "deeply rooted in Jewish tradition."

"Throughout *Tanach*, wells are places where lives change," he said. "Rivkah, Rachel and Tziporah each met their future spouse at a well. While the platform is new, the mission is timeless: to help more young Jews find one another and build the next generation of Jewish families."

The Well features two levels of profiles: public and private. The private one is only seen by Elli or a matchmaker. There's also a dashboard where matchmakers can discuss the profiles of their clients so they can make suggestions in addition to the ones Elli makes.

Names are drawn for users every Monday and Thursday — the days biblical Jews traditionally went to the market — and they have a certain amount of time to respond; they can say "pass" or can choose to start a conversation. They can also share someone's

profile with another user in their "village," which is the equivalent of Facebook friends.

"Some of that we're fine tuning to make sure we're not infringing on privacy," said Schwartz, adding that the platform uses vanishing pictures to ensure profiles aren't screenshotted and sent around.

Since dating apps first launched in the 2010s, they have instantly put hundreds of profiles at users' fingertips, making them the favored method for nearly half of Americans looking for love, according to a *Forbes Health* survey. But apps that claim credit for matches made five or ten years ago now face user burnout, with many people saying they prefer to meet in person rather than swipe through an endless pool of potential mates. Seventy-eight percent of users report dating app burnout, according to another *Forbes* survey conducted last year.

Addressing this, Schwartz said The Well also features an events section of the app that will advertise social gatherings for this demographic across the country. She described that as a "crucial" component.

Before officially going live, The Well hosted an invitation-only launch event Tuesday night at the swanky Bowery Hotel on Manhattan's Lower East Side, timed to coincide with Tu B'Av, drawing some 200 young professionals eager to mingle and learn about the app.

"What makes The Well stand out is that it rejects the culture of infinite swiping and disposable connections," Erez Kahan, a 35-year-old who works as a relationship manager in the family office space and attended the launch event, told JI. "Instead, by thoughtfully introducing just a couple of carefully considered matches each week, it encourages people to slow down, be present and give each connection the attention it deserves. It's a refreshingly human approach — one that values individualized care, quality over quantity and genuine intention over endless choice."

Kahan, a graduate of The Frisch School, a Modern Orthodox school in New Jersey, said he's particularly drawn to the symbolism behind The Well's name — something he expressed hope to experience through the app: "A chance meeting at a well became something guided by purpose rather than endless searching." ♦