



## **Suncoast Jewish Alliance**

### **Newsletter**

**April 2025**

**Working Together for a Stronger Community**

**Welcome to our first newsletter. We want to keep our members informed of recent activities. We thank you for your support and encourage you to share what we are doing with others. The more members we have, the more influential we can be in the community.**

**Happy and Healthy Passover!**



Lisa Barzel, Uzi Baram, Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee Board Chair Deb Kabinoff, Norman Olshansky, Julie Friedman, David Kaufman, Robin Taub Williams

Alliance board members attended a legislative breakfast meeting sponsored by the Federation with our Florida State Representatives in March. After presentations by the panel moderated by Deb Kabinoff, Federation Board President and Shep Englander,

Executive Director, we brought concerns about two issues to the representatives' attention:

- A proposed bill that will put more religion in the schools and if passed, would be a major violation of church-state separation.
- Concern over the appointment of an antisemitic individual to be a trustee at the University of West Florida.



We are most grateful to the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee for their acknowledgement of the Alliance as one of their collaborating groups. The Jewish Federation has awarded the Alliance a grant that will allow us to place ads in their publications to increase our visibility in the Jewish community.



Robin Williams opposing illegal deportations while another friend echoes the need for nonpartisanship

Alliance representatives have testified about immigration issues at the Sarasota County Commission and also about issues that affect our schools and education at the Sarasota County School Board. We participate in rallies across the region in support of Jewish values and ethics and against antisemitism. On April 5<sup>th</sup>, Alliance members rallied in Sarasota and Venice along with thousands of other concerned citizens across the county who protest the recent harmful actions by the federal administration.



The Alliance regularly submits letters to the editor on issues related to immigration, Israel, antisemitism and potential deportations. Check them out on our website *Kvelling*

tab. If you would like your letter to the editor posted on the Alliance website, submit it to the Alliance, attn: Norm Olshansky, President.



Members of the Alliance Board have met with several Sarasota area Jewish congregations to form collaborations and to discuss joint programming. More such meetings are planned in the near future. We are pleased that seven local rabbis have joined the Alliance. If you would like meeting or presentation at your synagogue or group, let us know.



Karen and Paul Kade host a Living Room Conversation  
with Sarasota South County Alliance members

The Alliance hosts small group discussions - Living Room Conversations - with only our members in homes throughout our region. Some of the topics are the Rules of War, our own families' experience with immigration, and current events - Ripped from the Headlines. We welcome your suggestions for future topics and for members' offers to hold these meetings of 12 to 16 people in your home. Each of the Living Room Conversations is facilitated by Alliance members who are knowledgeable about the selected topic.



The Alliance has already held two very interesting programs in partnership with Florida Humanities: Florida/Israel Relationship presented by Professor Uzi Baram, formerly of New College, and the History of Jews in Florida: Centuries of Stories, presented by author Marcia Jo Zerivitz.



Rabbi Mimi Weisel and Rabbi Jennifer Singer

Prior to the November 2024 elections and referendums, the Alliance sponsored an interactive program on Jewish Views on Reproductive Rights. Our esteemed presenters were Rabbi Jennifer Singer and Rabbi Mimi Weisel, both of whom are Alliance members.



David Kaufman and 53 motorcyclists from the Suncoast area.

The Alliance is proud to be one of the main supporters and sponsors of the annual motorcyclist Ride4Israel which supports the Israeli Red Cross (Magen David Adom). Motorcycles were festooned with Israeli flags, and most of the cyclists were non-Jewish who care about Israel.



Norm Olshansky and Uzi Baram rally for the release of still-held Israeli hostages of October 7, 2023



Alliance members are active participants and supporters of the weekend Save The Hostages rallies in Sarasota.



The Alliance is engaged in meetings and presentations with multiple local and national organizations that have similar missions and interests that align with our Jewish values and ethics. These include nonprofit organizations (such as the League of Women Voters), and faith groups (such as The Gathering). Many of these organizations list the Alliance among their collaborators on their websites as the Alliance website includes them. The number and scope of our collaborators continue to grow.



The Alliance board of directors is an active group that meets regularly to guide the issues the Alliance will address, to implement programming and to strengthen our capacity to meet our mission and principles. You can read these on our website as well as see the board photos. We are looking for additional members to step up and participate on our leadership team, on the board and on our committees.

The Alliance maintains a strictly nonpartisan position and we have members from all major parties. We address issues related to safety in the Jewish and larger community and stay away from doing anything that might give the impression that we are taking partisan positions. We speak out on public policy or actions that run counter to Jewish values and ethics. We do not support individual candidates.

The Alliance has kept our membership fee low: just \$18/year per person and \$36 per couple. We welcome additional contributions that will help us with marketing, communications and website development. We are printing materials that will help us with recruitment, programming, marketing and education about the Alliance.

Thanks to you and our friends, the Alliance now has well over 130 paid members; 200 more people individuals follow us on our Group Facebook Page:

**Suncoast Jewish Alliance / <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1945583362510611>**



From [suncoastjewishalliance.org](http://suncoastjewishalliance.org) home page

We encourage you to visit [SuncoastJewishAlliance.org](https://SuncoastJewishAlliance.org). There you can submit ideas and questions, renew and supplement your membership in support of our activities, and see what we have been up to. Check out the *Kvelling* tab for examples of members' letters to the editor and editorials. The website is updated regularly.

There is strength in numbers – at rallies, when giving testimonials and in our efforts in our communities. We urge you to volunteer your talent and time to strengthen the Suncoast Jewish Alliance. We encourage Alliance members to stand up and speak out on issues related to Jewish values and ethics.