



Suncoast Jewish Alliance

Newsletter

June 2025



The International Atomic Energy Agency declared on June 12th that Iran was not complying with its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. Overnight on June 13th, the Israel Defense Forces launched **Operation Rising Lion** to systematically weaken Iran's capabilities to destroy Israel. Nuclear facilities, military leadership, and missile production sites were targeted and many have been demolished.

The Suncoast Jewish Alliance stands steadfastly with the Jewish State of Israel and for sustainable peace in the Middle East. On June 15th, the Alliance held an emergency Zoom discussion just for Alliance members to respond to our immediate concerns. Board member Professor Uzi Baram and Alliance President Norm Olshansky provided a concise, history overview and then moderated the discussion. Many of us shared what is happening to dear family and friends living in Israel.



Participants in the Alliance discussion following recent Israel and Iran attacks



Rabbis Michael Shefrin and Mimi Weisel, Sarasota School Board member Tom Edwards, Julie Friedman, Robin Taub Williams, Don Friedman, Marty Goldstein, Norman Olshansky, and Reverend Wes Bixby

In late April, seven Alliance members attended a vigil at Payne Park sponsored by The Gathering, one of our collaborating groups. Rev. Wes Bixby dubbed the vigil “A Moral Moment” as it brought together people of different faiths and others whose “differences” render them vulnerable to the vagaries of recent public policy proposals.



Julie and Norm staffed the first shift at the Jewish Federation Israel

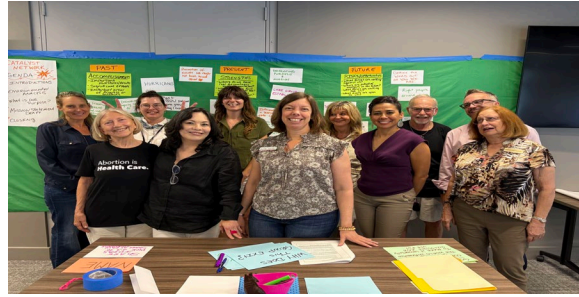
The Alliance had a strong presence at the Israel Independence Day celebration (*Yom HaAtzmaut*), May 4th at the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee. Dozens of participants stopped by our table to chat. We recruited new members and three young people volunteered their skills.



Robin Taub Williams hosted the April 20th Living Room Conversation

We continue our popular small group discussions - Living Room Conversations – and potluck dinners for our members in our homes. Some topics: Rules of War, our families’ experience with immigration,

personal safety and current events. On June 22nd (sold-out) Dr. Bruce Abramson, New College of Florida, will focus on The STOP Woke Act of 2022 and its impact on higher education. The August 3rd LRC will feature Tom Baugher of the Secure Community Network. Look for the flyer next week and be sure to reserve your spot early. Let us know if you would like to host an LRC gathering.



Norm and Julie at a Catalyst planning session held at the Gulf Coast Community Foundation

The Alliance is involved with several interfaith and nonprofit organizations that share our values. The Catalyst is an outgrowth of SRQ Strong whose mission is to foster trauma awareness and healing through education, action and leadership.



Following the killing of two Israeli embassy staff in Washington D.C. and the attack on Denver's *Run for their Lives* the Jewish Federation sponsored an online briefing on heightened security measures. Tom Baugher, the Federation security director and former FBI and counter terrorism expert, was joined by local and County law enforcement representatives in the briefing at which Alliance members also participated.

ISRAEL AT WAR - DAY 620

Norm's List is a weekly, free newsletter with selected items of interest to the Jewish global community that may not have appeared in the general press. To subscribe or to receive a sample copy, send a request to: suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com.



JULIE FRIEDMAN | Suncoast Jewish Alliance

Julie Friedman is one of the founders of the Suncoast Jewish Alliance and has been a major influence and contributor to the development and growth of this new organization. From the start, she contributed her organizational skills and knowledge of the community to make the Alliance one of the fastest growing groups in our region. She was elected by the membership to take on the leadership role of Vice President and is responsible for membership oversight, recruitment, educational programs, and website development. Through her contacts in the Jewish and general community, the Alliance has developed partnerships with multiple organizations to advocate on issues of concern to the Jewish community. Her volunteer activities are not just focused on the Alliance, she also serves in significant volunteer roles at Temple Beth Shalom and with United Way of South Sarasota County.

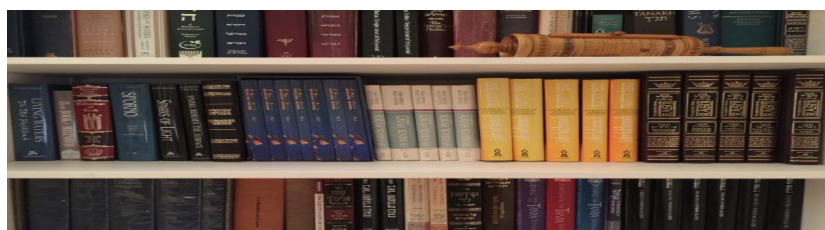
Our own Vice President, Julie Friedman, was recognized by the Jewish Federation as one of our community's outstanding volunteers. See this feature in the June-July 2025 *Jewish News*.



We continue to engage with Sarasota-Manatee synagogues as well as Jewish and non-Jewish groups for joint programming. More such meetings are planned over the summer. You are invited to participate in these meetings as our representatives. If you would like a meeting or presentation at your synagogue or group, let us know.



Alliance members are active participants and supporters of *Run for their Lives* and *Save The Hostages*. On Saturdays, meet at the Sarasota Farmers Market at 10am. On Sundays at 5:30pm, meet at Main Street and Orange Avenue in downtown Sarasota. Wear a red t-shirt or purchase a *Run for their Lives* shirt at run4lives.org. The group walks for 20 minutes holding posters of the hostages, Israel and American flags.



Please visit SuncoastJewishAlliance.org. We recently added a reading list with suggested sources to deepen your knowledge of the issues that Jews have faced and continue to challenge us.

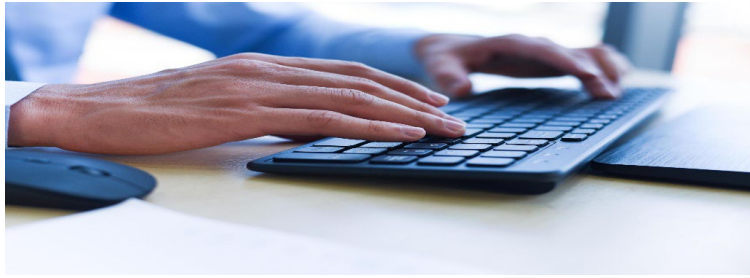


Would you be interested in helping with public relations, recruiting new members, fundraising, writing letters, managing social media, being a speaker at an Alliance membership program, joining our leadership team, meeting with public officials, making signs and banners for rallies, helping with registration, refreshments and/or other tasks at events? We will welcome your volunteer efforts!

The Alliance board of directors meets monthly. We are looking for additional members to step up and participate on our leadership team, on the board and on our committees. How about you?



The Alliance maintains a strictly nonpartisan position; we have members from all major parties. We address issues related to safety in the Jewish and larger community and avoid 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.



Alliance members regularly submit letters to the editor on policy related to schools, immigration, Israel, antisemitism and violence. If you would like your letter to the editor posted on the Alliance website, email it to suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com. Remember to address policy concerns and do not attack individuals.

The Alliance has kept our membership fee low at just \$18/year/person. At *Chai*, membership for a friend or relative is a thoughtful gift. Donations help us with marketing, communications and website development.



Do you do Facebook? Find us and add your comments at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1945583362510611>.

There is strength in numbers – at rallies, when giving testimony, when writing op-eds and letters to the editor, and when planning with other groups that share our values. We urge you to add your strength to the Suncoast Jewish Alliance. Stand up, speak out on issues related to Jewish values and ethics and share your efforts with us.