

In Pursuit

צדק צדק תרדוף

Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof. Justice, justice shall you pursue. Deuteronomy 16:20

The TBA Tzedek Committee provides opportunities for social justice learning, dialogue, and action to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Our commitment to *tzedek* (justice) is covenantal and rooted in a Torah of *b'tzelem elohim* (we are all made in the image of God), and *chesed* (compassion for each other).

Temple Beth Abraham, Nashua, NH

Disability Rights & Inclusion

July 2022

This month's *In Pursuit* explores issues of Disability Rights and Inclusion in the local Jewish community and the general public. Health, education – Jewish and secular, access, Jewish ritual, resources and more are included here. But first, a few words from Rabbi Jon on the US Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v Wade*.

A message from Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett regarding the recent US Supreme Court *Dobbs* decision

To anyone who wants a rabbi to talk to about reproductive care and decisions, and any decisions related to possibly ending a pregnancy: I am here and will always be here for you. To anyone fearing what the *Dobbs* decision might portend about marriages and relationships and contraception and discrimination, for you or for people you care about, I am here for you. I am here as a rabbi you can speak to in confidence without fear,

no matter the law or the climate. I will continue to teach and advocate for our rights to live by Jewish understandings and commitments, as protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to our Constitution. This is especially important in our region, where Jews are often not represented in public deliberations. Abortion under many circumstances, contraception, and marriage equality are part of Jewish living and law as understood in Conservative Judaism.

Individually, as Jews, we ought to make our decisions in light of our *responsibilities*.

By law, as residents of the U.S., the free exercise clause of the First Amendment ought to protect these decisions as our *rights*. --- Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett

Listen to a recent panel discussion at Temple Beth Abraham with Rabbi Robin Nafshi (Temple Beth Jacob, Concord NH), Rabbi Leora Kling Perkins (Temple Emunah, Lexington MA), and Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett. Moderated by Sheryl Rich-Kern of Temple Beth Abraham. Listen here: [Reproductive Rights and Judaism](#)

See also the **Abortion and Jewish Values Toolkit** from the National Council of Jewish Women: [NCJW Toolkit](#)

With *Roe v. Wade* overturned, disabled people reflect on how it will impact them

Shruti Rajkumar, NPR, 25 June 2022

The landmark 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion nationwide, was overturned by the Supreme Court on Friday June 24. Though the court's decision will impact everyone, disabled people, especially those with multiple marginalized identities, will be disproportionately impacted for a number of reasons, such as health care inequities, sexual violence, poverty and the loss of autonomy that they have historically experienced.

The loss of bodily autonomy has a deep history within the disability community, said disability activist Emily Ladau. As apparent in present-day issues such as forced sterilization and conservatorships, disabled people are stripped of their right to make choices for their own bodies. Ladau recalls many moments in her life, especially in medical situations, in which she felt that her body was not fully her own and that she didn't have a role in her own care. Read more here: [NPR Article](#)

Including Samuel and My Disability Roadmap: Films by Dan Habib

Before his son Samuel was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, photojournalist, and NH resident, Dan Habib rarely thought about the inclusion of people with disabilities. Now he thinks about inclusion every day. Habib's 2007 award-winning documentary film, *Including Samuel*, chronicles the Habib family's efforts to include Samuel in every facet of their lives. The film honestly portrays his family's hopes and struggles, as well as the experiences of four other individuals with disabilities and their families. *Including Samuel* is a highly personal film that captures the cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion. Learn more about *Including Samuel* here: <https://including.samuel.com/film>.

Rent the film on Amazon here: [Including Samuel](#)

In *My Disability Roadmap*, Samuel Habib, 21, wants to date, leave home, go to college. But he drives a 350-pound wheelchair, uses a communication device, and can have a seizure at any moment. Determined to find his path forward, he seeks out guidance from America's most rebellious disability activists. Will they empower him to launch the bold adult life he craves? This documentary short premiered May 17, 2022, with a feature length film coming in late 2023. The entire lead cast on this project - and the majority of the production and outreach crew - are people with disabilities.

Watch the documentary short here: [My Disability Roadmap](#)

Dan Habib is also a project director at UNH's Institute on Disability. In 2012, Habib received the Champion of Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association, and in 2012 he received the Justice for All Grassroots Award from the American Association of People with Disabilities. Habib delivered a widely viewed TEDx talk titled "Disabling Segregation" on the benefits of inclusion to students with and without disabilities. Watch his 2014 TEDx talk here: [YouTube TEDx talk](#)

Disability Inclusion in the Jewish Community

Zoom recording of a discussion by Tamar Davis and Sandy Gold of Gateways: Access to Jewish Education Southern New Hampshire Jewish Men's Club, 13 February 2022.

Tamar Davis, CEO of Gateways: Access to Jewish Education, shared her personal experiences as both a person with a disability and the parent of a child with a disability. Tamar and Sandy Gold, Gateways Director of Professional Development, discussed Gateways' mission and some of the successes they have had in making Jewish education more inclusive and accessible, as well as sharing some common strategies for increasing inclusivity and awareness.

Learn more about Gateways: Access to Jewish Education here: <https://jgateways.org/>.

Download the Zoom recording here: [Men's Club program](#)

***Praying with Lior*, 2008 Documentary**

Winner of multiple awards, *Praying with Lior* asks whether someone with Down syndrome can be a "spiritual genius." Many believe Lior is close to God - at least that's what his family and community believe - though he's also a burden, a best friend, an inspiration and an embarrassment, depending on who is asked and when. As this moving and entertaining documentary moves to its climax, Lior must pass through the gateway to manhood - his Bar Mitzvah. Watch the trailer here: [Trailer](#) Available on Netflix.

Best Wheelchair Friendly Trails in New Hampshire

Explore the most popular wheelchair friendly trails in NH with trail maps, driving instructions, detailed reviews and photos from hikers, campers and nature lovers. Find information here:

<https://www.alltrails.com/us/new-hampshire/ada>. Links to more accessible outdoor areas:
[AMC Wheelchair Accessible Trails](#); [Crotched Mountain Accessible Trails](#); [Accessible Trail in Ossipee](#)

10 Books to Celebrate Disability Pride All Year Long: [Book List](#)

For Families: How to Talk To Your Kids about Disability

Nadine Silber, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 9 May 2018

Hi. I'm Nadine and I've been waiting for this moment for nearly my whole life. Really. I mean it. I finally get to talk to THAT kid's parents – the one who wasn't nice to me and the one who was – because they both had an impact on my life. I was properly diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum when I was in law school. When I was a little girl, autism was a rare diagnosis and never one that anyone would think to give to a girl, especially one who could speak – well, speak most of the time. Things are different now and people understand that girls can be autistic too, even if we are still very often misdiagnosed first.

People didn't miss the fact that I was Neurodiverse, though, even though they didn't know why. Even though most of my differences were on the inside, sometimes they showed on the outside. For example, I flapped my hands a lot. Some people flap because they have so much joy inside that it just fills them up and spills out. Other people, like me, flap because it soothes them when they feel overwhelmed. Different autistic people – different reasons for flapping. Read more here: [Talking to Your Kids about Disability](#) Learn about Neurodiversity here: [What is Neurodiversity?](#)

Tzedek Committee News: Nashua Pride

Kelly Zakar



Kelly Zakar and Judy Carr representing Temple Beth Abraham at Nashua Pride table

On June 25, TBA's Tzedek Committee was a sponsor of the Nashua Pride Festival, the culmination of this year's celebration of Pride. This annual event began with Rabbi Jon's d'var Torah on Saturday the 18th, addressing LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Judaism. On Friday the 24th, Liz Macedo led a Kabbalat Shabbat service outside in our tent, which included readings and songs written or adapted by Queer-identifying Jews. On Saturday, congregants and friends walked in the Nashua Pride Parade, leading with a Temple Beth Abraham banner. Of those who marched, Marsha Feder, Deb Carp, and others shared how they

were welcomed with eager waves and smiles as they walked the parade route. Following the parade, the Tzedek Committee staffed a table with resources and a reading list along with many books available for browsing.

TBA members Judy Carr, Kelly Zakar, Liz Macedo and Deb Carp were surprised at how many stopped by to talk. Some didn't know that there was a synagogue in Nashua, and were interested to learn more. They spoke to a woman who had relocated to the Manchester NH area from Maine and was eager to share her experiences with a lesbian rabbi, and the creation of queer Jewish communities in rural Maine. Another person spoke about wanting to get more involved with a Jewish community, and maybe joining a congregation. A hearty Yasher Koach ["more power to you!"] to all involved. We are proud to be a shul that is a welcoming and safe community for LGBTQ+ congregants and their families.

Read more here: [Tzedek Committee and Nashua Pride](#)

To learn more about the work of the TBA Tzedek Committee, contact us here:
tzedek@tbanashua.org Committee co-chairs are Laura Hegfield and Liz Macedo. Send newsletter comments or suggestions to editor Fern Blood at feblood@comcast.net.