



**Jewish
Disability
Awareness,
Acceptance,
and
Inclusion
Month**

Program Guide

#JDAIM2020 | @Inclusioninnova

Editor: Shelly Christensen, MA, FAAIDD
shelly@inclusioninnovations.com

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Please use the Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month logo on all of your communications & events

JDAIM on Social Media and Resources

JDAIM on

#JDAIM2020

#JDAIM

#jdaim



JDAIM Guide

ShabbaTTogether

Community For All



Free Resources for JDAIM and Beyond

Jewish Learning Venture's [Whole Community Inclusion](#) has created three years of lesson plans based on Jewish values about disability inclusion to use for pre-K through grade 12 during JDAIM. They've also created a downloadable [coloring book](#)!

[Matan](#) has created JDAIM specific lesson plans for students in grades K- 2, 3-5, and middle school day and congregational programs. Lesson plans guide educators in fun learning experiences that highlight inclusion and belonging through Jewish values.

The [Jewish Federation of Greater Washington DC](#) has many activities that cover different aspects of inclusion in synagogues and agencies including Jewish values, community advocacy, inspiring and empowering adults and teens, employment, and advocacy with and by children.

[Gateways](#) has free resources for Shabbat and Jewish holidays that are effective when working with all types of learners. These are organized by units, like as holidays, and type, like social stories.



JDAIM 2020—We All Belong!

With JDAIM 2020 we advance the two pillars of an inclusive community—the Spirit of Belonging and the Structure of Inclusion. Belonging is something that we all want in our lives—including people living with disabilities and mental health conditions. Inclusion focuses on what our organizations can do to foster that sense of belonging.

People with disabilities and mental health conditions and those who love them just want what everyone else wants—**to belong!**

JDAIM 2020 is going to be big! New communities and organizations internationally are participating. The first JDAIM in 2009, began with four communities. In 2020 hundreds of organizations will expand awareness, acceptance and inclusion. The promise of JDAIM now continues the rest of the year as congregations, organizations, and communities embrace the meaning of belonging as a universal desire.

Inclusion isn't only a Jewish concern. Many faith communities have joined the movement. I'm honored to be involved with a new initiative, modeled on JDAIM, called Community for All! C4A will be recognized on the last weekend of JDAIM, February 29-March 1. You'll find info on page 20 about [Community for All](#) and for [ShabbaTTogether](#), the Ruderman Chabad Inclusion Initiative's second annual celebration in conjunction with JDAIM on February 8 and 9.

As you bring JDAIM to your organization and community, ask yourself, "What does **belonging** mean to me?" After you've thought about it, ask the same question at all your JDAIM events, and listen with an open heart to peoples' responses.

May we see the day when ALL people feel that precious sense of belonging in Jewish life.

B'Hatzlacha,

Shelly Christensen, MA, FAAIDD

Speaker, Author, Consultant

Co-founder of JDAIM with the Jewish Special Education International Consortium

www.inclusioninnovations.com

Author [From Longing to Belonging](#)—*A Practical Guide to Including People with Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions in Your Faith Community*



What is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month?

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified effort among Jewish organizations worldwide to raise awareness and foster acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities and mental health conditions and those who love them. JDAIM is a call to action for all of us to act in accordance with our Jewish values, honoring the gifts and strengths that we each possess. Established in 2009 by the Jewish Special Education International Consortium, JDAIM is observed each February.

Mission Statement

The mission of Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month is to unite Jewish communities worldwide to raise awareness and champion the rights of all Jews to be accepted and included in all aspects of Jewish life like anyone else.

Why You Should Participate in JDAIM

- Raise awareness of how people with disabilities and mental health conditions have been regarded by Jewish and secular society and how that impacts our own actions.
- Underscore the importance of choosing one's own Jewish journey.
- Encourage Jews around the world to become genuinely empathetic and welcoming toward people with disabilities and mental health conditions.
- Urge Jews to welcome people with disabilities and mental health conditions into their communities and personal lives.
- Include people with disabilities and mental health conditions in *all* aspects of communal life.
- Advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and mental health conditions.
- Support people with disabilities and mental health conditions to make their own decisions about how they want to belong to their Jewish community.



JEWISH DISABILITY ADVOCACY DAY

ON CAPITOL HILL, WASHINGTON DC SPONSORED BY THE JEWISH DISABILITY NETWORK

The Jewish Federations
OF NORTH AMERICATHE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE.
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.Religious
Action
Center
of Reform Judaism

United States Jewish Disability Advocacy Day February 4, 2020

Join Us in Washington, DC

Now in its 10th year, [Jewish Disability Advocacy Day \(JDAD\)](#) is an extraordinary day dedicated to education and advocacy on disability and inclusion issues of great importance to the Jewish community. JDAD is presented by the Jewish Disability Network, chaired by the Jewish Federations of North America and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

This impactful day includes:

- ⇒ A symposium with leading analysts on key issues relating to disability and inclusion
- ⇒ Expert briefings on timely advocacy issues to raise with Congress and advocacy training
- ⇒ Lunch with key Members of Congress who will discuss disability issues
- ⇒ Advocacy visits on Capitol Hill with key policymakers

What Does JDAD Accomplish?

JDAD is the seminal gathering for the Jewish community to raise awareness about disability and inclusion public policy issues. Participants learn about cutting edge legislation and programs for people with disabilities and their families while acquiring advocacy skills and meeting with policymakers and other advocates. Most significantly, JDAD demonstrates to Congress that disability and inclusion issues are a key priority for the American Jewish community.

Who Participates?

Professionals, lay leaders, volunteers, advocates, educators, and students from Jewish organizations and diverse communities from around the U.S. convene for JDAD on Capitol Hill.

NEW! EREV JDAD February 3, 2020

[RespectAbility](#), [Jewish Federations of North America](#), [Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism](#), and the [Edlavitch DCJCC](#) are offering an optional networking dinner the evening before JDAD. At the **Erev JDAD** program, attendees will:

- ⇒ Network with leading national voices in the disability field
- ⇒ Discuss some of the most vexing challenges facing people with disabilities
- ⇒ Engage in facilitated, topic-themed discussions to learn about resources for problems facing their communities
- ⇒ Brainstorm solutions together.

Please click [here](#) for more information about Erev JDAD and to register. **Space is limited.**



Inclusion Through a Jewish Lens

A human being mints many coins from the same mold and each one is the same, but the Holy One, blessed be God, strikes us all from the mold of the first human and each one of us is unique. Therefore, every single person is obligated to say, "The world was created for my sake."

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

- Having a disability or mental health condition must never be used as a reason to exclude someone from meaningful participation and contribution to this wonderful place we call "The Jewish Community." Everyone has gifts to share as well as needs for comfort and community.
- Inclusion is the opportunity for every person to participate in meaningful ways in the life of the Jewish community. How do we know what is meaningful and important to another person? We open our doors, we ask, listen and we take the journey together.
- We do not do things **for** people with disabilities or mental health conditions. We do things **with** people with disabilities and mental health conditions. JDAIM is a time to teach our organizations that inclusion is simply treating people as individuals, not as a group of "those" people whose needs can be met through special programs or occasional visits to synagogues. ***Just like you, people with disabilities can and must make decisions about how they participate in Jewish life.***
- Inclusion is not an end. It leads to belonging.
- Recognizing Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month is only the first step. What your organization does in the next eleven months will determine your commitment to ensuring that all people feel that they belong.
- What is it that we "get" when we belong to the Jewish community? What is it that we "give" when we belong?



JDAIM Planning Tips

- Establish a planning group for JDAIM. Invite:
 - Your inclusion committee
 - Representatives from other committees
 - Clergy and professional staff
 - People with disabilities and mental health conditions and family members.
“Nothing about us without us!”
- Determine what you can accomplish during JDAIM.
- Brainstorm activities and programs. Ask how each activity will have an impact **AFTER JDAIM**.
- Use #JDAIM and #JDAIM2020 to share on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest
- Display a banner or placard in your lobby announcing Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month. Include the JDAIM [logo](#))
- Holidays! Depending on the calendar Tu B’shevat or Purim fall during JDAIM. There’s a seder in that—or a Purim spiel. Be creative!
- Make JDAIM the springboard for what you can do the rest of the year! See the JDAIM Reads section starting on page 10 for a new book on how you can create a more inclusive and accepting community.
- Collaborate on a Jewish community-wide event for JDAIM. Films, book clubs, and Havdalah gatherings are just a few ideas. A list of favorite films begins on page 17.



6 Practical Ways to Recognize JDAIM in Your Synagogue

1. Announce page numbers often. Describe the prayer book and commentary by color and size, in addition to name. Use a manual scoreboard to show page numbers.
2. Invite people with disabilities and mental health conditions ahead of time to participate in a service. Honor them by being called to the Torah and help them practice the blessings. Ask people and their family members to offer a *d'var* Torah, carry the Torah, light Shabbat candles, and lead the *Kiddush*.
3. If your *bimah* is not accessible, move the reading desk to the main level of the sanctuary so the Torah itself is accessible to all.
4. During this month, engage in conversations about inclusion in Torah study and sermons. Extend the discussion to your board and committee meetings.
5. Use social media to promote inclusion. Post about your events, quote text that resonates with Jewish values about inclusion. YouTube a short Torah commentary about inclusion.
6. Provide prayer books and Torah commentaries in accessible format (i.e. Braille, large print, audio versions).

6 Events and Programs for JDAIM

1. Host a congregational Shabbat dinner. Invite all members of your congregation, as well as other members of the Jewish community to join you. Put requests for accommodations on the invitation. Continue the Shabbat celebration with a unique *Erev* Shabbat service recognizing that we are all created in the Divine Image—*B'zelem Elohim*.
2. Host a congregational *Havdalah* service with family-friendly activities or Movie Night. Advertise this to your entire community and encourage people with disabilities and their families to attend. We've included some favorite films starting on page 17 of this guide.
3. Coordinate a program for parents of children with disabilities to bring them together and minimize isolation. Invite a speaker from Jewish Family Services to lead a parent education group. Provide childcare.
4. Lunch and Learn following Shabbat morning services. Invite a speaker to discuss employment, housing, or policy issues around disability and mental health conditions.
5. Start a book group and read one of the 2020 JDAIM Reads! selections. We've included the 2020 selections and favorites from JDAIM past starting on page 10.
6. Discuss inclusion at Torah study, staff, board, and committee meetings, and from the *bimah*.



6 Community-Wide Opportunities

1. Hold a community-wide event such as:
 - ⇒ Resource Fair
 - ⇒ Keynote speaker
 - ⇒ Conference with workshops
 - ⇒ Film screenings
 - ⇒ Concert featuring performers who have disabilities
 - ⇒ Art exhibits by artists who have disabilities
2. Create a community calendar of events that are open to the public.
3. Publicize all of the Jewish organizations that welcome and support people with disabilities and their families including housing, recreation, vocational and educational with links to those organizations.
4. Offer training to building committee chairs and staff on the Americans with Disabilities Act and what to look for to provide accessible spaces.
5. Gather representatives from every Jewish organization to convene an inclusion roundtable that will meet regularly after JDAIM to discuss the needs and work toward building capacity in the community.
6. Publish a list of resources and promote on your community website and individual websites.

Accommodation Statements

Accommodation statements belong in all of your written and electronic communications, on the front page of your website, invitations to events, and notices about programs you offer.

These statements invite individuals to tell you about their needs in order to participate. Always include contact information and a due date for requests to be made.

If you require an accommodation in order to participate in (the meeting/services/event, etc.) please contact (name of individual who is responsible for taking requests, if applicable) at (phone and email) by (due date to make the request.)

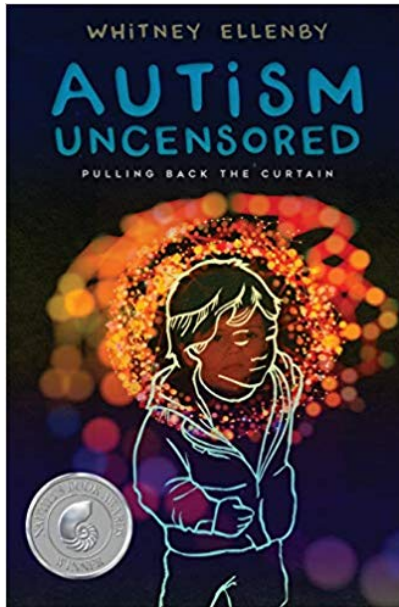
We welcome and support children, teens, and adults with disabilities, mental health conditions, and their families and caregivers. We make every effort to ensure our programs, equipment, and facilities are accessible. Please phone or email us if you have any questions or would like to request an accommodation.

Additional language may be added to state that requests for accommodations made after the advertised date will be honored to the maximum extent feasible.



JDAIM Reads! 2020

JDAIM Reads! is a popular program, providing organizations and communities another avenue to raise awareness and educate people about a wide variety of disability and mental health related topics, family concerns, Jewish community inclusion, and history.



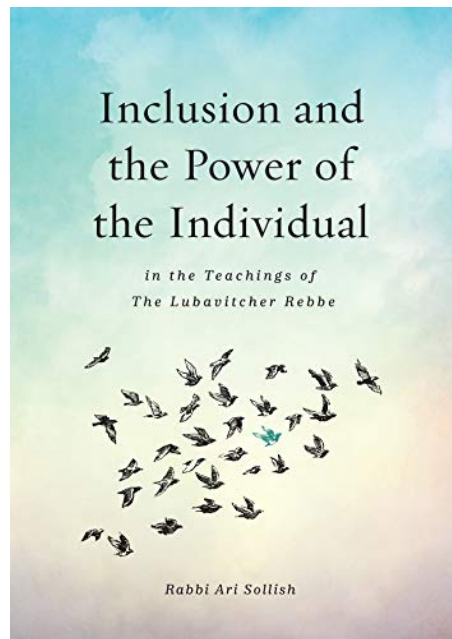
Autism Uncensored Pulling Back the Curtain Whitney Ellenby

Autism Uncensored goes where no other book dares--revealing the private disgrace and self-blame about having a "defective" child; the near disintegration of marriage; the failure of the traditional behavioral interventions; and the mercenary way in which service providers prey on parents' desperation for a cure.

It is a personal manifesto about how a socially integrated life is attainable regardless of whether a child overcomes the major limitations of Autism, sparking a new conversation which goes beyond simply accepting persons with Autism for who they are, but considers pushing them beyond their comfort zones to learn who they are capable of becoming. An unstoppable ride with jolting twists and turns, *Autism Uncensored* will leave you exhilarated, informed and still gasping for air.

Autism Uncensored has won several literary awards for nonfiction and parenting. Whitney Ellenby won the MOTH DC StorySlam. [View](#) Whitney's performance at the DC StorySlam, January 2019.



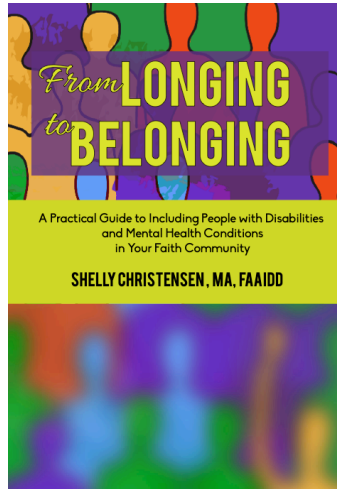


Inclusion and the Power of the Individual In the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Ari Sollish

At a time when expulsion was the norm, when people with disabilities were essentially locked out of "mainstream" schools, the workforce, and society at large, when families with loved ones who were not deemed "typical" often splintered due to social pressures and stigma, the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, advocated and called for inclusion. With love, compassion, and respect, the Rebbe drew in those whom society all too often pushed away.

The Rebbe's call for inclusion did not result from the latest medical studies, societal shifts, or external pressures; it came from within. *Inclusion and the Power of the Individual* tells a remarkable story of the Rebbe's perspective on, and advocacy for, inclusion by recounting his teachings, writings, and conversations on this topic throughout the four decades of his public leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. This is a book that will inspire you and affirm why we must uphold the values we cherish that guide belonging and inclusion.





From Longing to Belonging— A Practical Guide to Including People with Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions in Your Faith Community Shelly Christensen, MA FAAIDD and Co-Founder of JDAIM

All any of us want is to feel that we belong and that we matter. JDAIM co-founder and faith community disability inclusion movement leader Shelly Christensen will guide your synagogue or organization toward achieving meaningful participation with all people who just want to belong!

A perfect follow-up to JDAIM!

“From Longing to Belonging is truly the bible that guides us to create the sacred space where we all belong. Using personal and professional stories, Shelly illuminates the need for and the ease to which an organization can open its doors to becoming a more welcoming community.”

***Elaine G.F. Hall, Award-winning author, Now I See the Moon, Founder of The Miracle Project®
Featured in the HBO films Autism The Musical and Autism The Sequel***

Shelly Christensen has created an invaluable "how to" guide for faith communities with *From Longing to Belonging*. The book speaks to the personal challenges and possibilities of a parent of a child with disabilities and how that translated into a call to action for faith communities. The book stands on a powerful faith-based foundation—that key to all people is the basic need to belong and feel valued just because they exist. *From Longing to Belonging* is an essential tool.

Rabbi Richard F. Address, D.Min, Director: Jewish Sacred Aging

[Also available on Kindle](#)



Previous JDAIM Selections

Each of these books have been chosen as JDAIM Reads selections and tell amazing stories that entertain, inspire, and promote great discussions.

Little Gate Crasher—the Life and Photos of Mace Bugen

By Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer

Mace Bugen was 43 inches tall with an average-sized head and a torso set on small, twisted legs—but that didn't mean he was a pushover. In truth, he was smarter than most. Over the years, he learned to effectively turn what society in those days called a handicap into a powerful tool he could use to his advantage. Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer's [The Little Gate Crasher](#) is a memoir of her amazing Great-Uncle Mace Bugen, an unstoppable spirit, first generation Jewish American, self-made millionaire, celebrity gate-crasher. Mace's unstoppable spirit defied the challenges of his own physical limitations and society's prejudices towards people with dwarfism.

Ketchup is My Favorite Vegetable: A Family Grows Up with Autism.

By Liane Kupferberg Carter

How do you create an ordinary family life, while dealing with the extraordinary needs of an autistic child? Meet Mickey - charming, funny, compassionate, and autistic. In this unflinching memoir, Liane delivers a mother's insight into what really goes on in the two decades after diagnosis. If you've ever wondered how families adapt and adjust to a diagnosis of autism or any other disability, you must read Liane's masterfully written, open-hearted book, [Ketchup is My Favorite Vegetable: A Family Grows Up with Autism](#). You will never look at parenting any child the same way.

Following Ezra: What One Father Learned About Gumby, Otters, Autism, and Love From His Extraordinary Son

By Tom Fields-Meyer

[Following Ezra](#) will have you laughing and crying as author Tom Fields-Meyer engages you with his compelling memoir. The book is not about autism—it's about a family learning to adapt to the unexpected challenges and gifts of raising a child with a disability.

Life, Animated

By Ron Suskind

This the [real-life story](#) of Owen Suskind, who is the son of the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind and his irrepressible wife, Cornelia. This brilliantly crafted narrative—written by the father but shaped by his wife and children—isn't about autism or Disney, though you'll never view either one quite the same. It's the story of a family's resilience when their world is turned upside down. It's about perseverance and hope. A child disappeared into confusion, frustration, and silence. But deep inside his dark cave of isolation, he and his family began to dig for diamonds, working year by year on a most improbable project: to find a way each of us can learn to animate our lives.



Hope Will Find You by Rabbi Naomi Levy

How can I get my life off hold? When will my life really begin?

We all ask ourselves the same questions when we are struggling to move forward. As a rabbi, Naomi Levy frequently offered spiritual guidance to people seeking the answers. But when a doctor told her that her young daughter, Noa, had a fatal degenerative disease, Rabbi Levy's own insights could not prevent her whole life from unraveling. In [*Hope Will Find You*](#), Naomi Levy shares her journey and the wisdom she gained. She describes with humor and honesty how she came through a time of uncertainty and fear and learned how to stop waiting for life to begin. A natural and engaging storyteller, Levy has written a book filled with invaluable lessons for living in the present and for opening the door to an extraordinary future.

Now I See the Moon: A Mother, A Son, A Miracle by Elaine Hall

[*Now I See the Moon*](#) is the especially timely, painstakingly positive work of a children's film coach who recounts her adoption of a troubled Russian toddler and her long, tortuous, ultimately enlightening journey to treat his nonverbal autism. Hall was a successful "baby wrangler" for Hollywood feature films, former actress, 40-something wife and active in her Jewish faith. You will be moved by Hall's spiritual and emotional journey of resilience and tenacity as she raises her son Neal and helps others believe in their own possibilities.

Elaine is "Coach E," the founder of The Miracle Project, which is featured in the award-winning film, "Autism the Musical" and the new film, "Autism the Sequel."

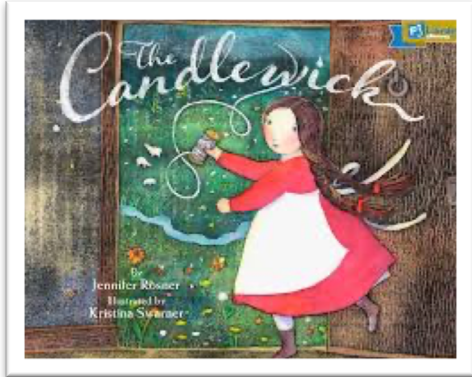
Front of the Class: **How Tourette Syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had** by Brad Cohen

As a child with Tourette syndrome, Brad Cohen was ridiculed, beaten, mocked, and shunned. Children, teachers, and even family members found it difficult to be around him. As a teen, he was viewed by many as purposefully misbehaving, even though he had little power over the twitches and noises he produced, especially under stress. But [*Front of the Class*](#) is not about self-pity. Brad Cohen's unwavering determination and fiercely positive attitude conquered the difficulties he faced in life. His relationship with BBYO and Hillel provided opportunities to just be himself and to develop his talents on the road to the person he is today— a teacher, assistant principal, husband, father and author. "Front of the Class" is a Hallmark Hall of Fame Film.



JDAIM Reads for Children

The Candlewick



Written by Jennifer Rosner

Illustrated by Kristina Swarner

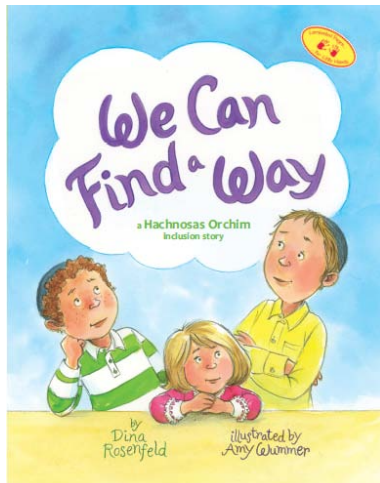
The Candlewick is a story of friendship and kindness. The two main characters, Ruthie and Bayla, clearly care for each other. As they live some distance from one another, Ruthie travels to Bayla's home for an extended visit.

Ruthie's friend Bayla is deaf, but Bayla has come up with ways to communicate with the hearing world. When Ruthie visits Bayla and realizes Bayla can't hear her doorbell, Ruthie thinks of another idea to help her stay connected to the world around her.

We Can Find a Way

Written by Dina Rosenfeld

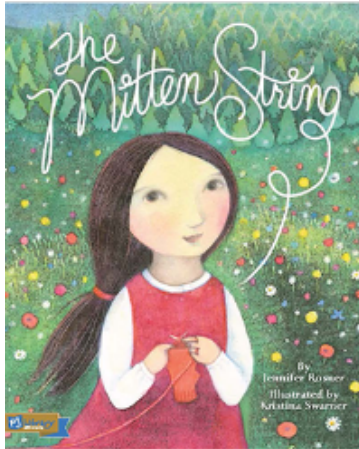
Illustrated by Amy Wummer



Hachnosas Orchim means inviting guest bus—but it also means making sure that those guests feel comfortable and included. In *We Can Find a Way*, Eli, Zev and Leah look forward to hosting a celebration for their Bubby's birthday. However, meeting the needs of every guest requires sensitivity and lots of creative thinking.

Two of the toddlers have food allergies. What kind of treats work for them? Their uncle is using a wheelchair. He can't use the front steps. One cousin has difficulty being at crowded, noisy events. How will Eli, Zev and Leah find a way to include everyone? Children ages 3-6 will love the suspense and the positive attitude of the main characters.





The Mitten String

Written by Jennifer Rosen

Illustrated by Kristina Swarner

When her family invites a deaf woman and her baby to stay, Ruthie, a talented knitter of mittens, wonders how the mother will know if her child wakes in the night. The surprising answer inspires Ruthie to knit a special gift that offers great comfort to mother and baby—and to Ruthie herself.

An original folktale about a girl who knits, a deaf woman, and a piece of blue yarn. The Mitten String begins the story that continues in The Candlewick.

“I Have a Question” Book Series

By

Meredith Englander Polsky MSW, LCSW, MS

Arlen Grad Gaines, MSW, LCSW-C, ACHP-SW

How do you answer those difficult questions? These books address precisely that in a manner that young children will understand. Not just for children with disabilities—but for any child with questions about difficult events in their lives.

I Have a Question about Death

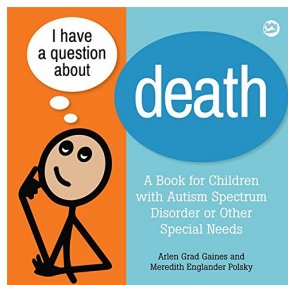
A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs

"What does it mean when someone dies?" "Why did someone I love have to die?" This book asks questions like these that a child might have about death before offering answers. It uses straightforward text and clear illustrations to explain what death means specifically to children with ASD and other special needs aged 5-11.

I Have a Question about Divorce

A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs

Considering questions a child might have about divorce, this book gently offers answers to them using straightforward text and clear illustrations. Perfect for children aged 5-11 with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other special needs, or for concrete or visual learners.



JDAIM Film Recommendations

This year we invited a number of people to share their favorite films for JDAIM. Their comments are in italics. The films offer diverse perspectives on living with a disability or mental health condition. Let us know on our [JDAIM Facebook](#) page what films you are screening this year!

[Float](#) animated short 7 minutes. Appropriate for all ages. Disney/Pixar. Available on Disney Plus
We all have special gifts to share with our communities. Each and every one of us.

Dr. Madelaine Werier, co-founder of JOIN- Jewish Ottawa Inclusion Network

[Shoelaces](#) (Israel) *The ending is worth a discussion about better choices for a person's future.*

[Wedding Doll](#) (Israel) *another well-made Israeli film.*

[Anita](#) (Argentina). The story of a young woman with Down syndrome who lives a happy, routine life in Buenos Aires, meticulously cared for by her mother. One morning everything changes when Anita is left alone, confused and helpless after the nearby Argentine Israelite Mutual Association is bombed (the deadliest bombing in Argentina's history). As Anita wanders through the city, she learns not only to care for herself, but touches the lives of those around her. *Anita is my all-time favorite film. The main actress has Down Syndrome.*

**Elliot Fix, Past Chair of the JCC Jewish International Film Festival Committee, Rochester, NY.,
Curator of the Jewish Film Series at the Everett Jewish Life Center
Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY**

[Front of the Class](#) is about a young man who has Tourette's Syndrome. *While the movie is not particularly Jewish, the book has more Jewish themes, including how participating in BBYO was really helpful for the main character.*

We showed [Wonder](#) a few years ago, which is not Jewish, although in the book the main character's grandmother is Jewish. We framed the movie with the inclusive message of JDAIM, of course. I really liked being able to show a family movie for JDAIM and haven't really found another one that I thought would fit as well.

Rachel Delman Turniansky, Director, Disability and Inclusion Services, Louise D. and Morton J. Macks Center for Jewish Education, Baltimore

[Hors Normes](#) (The Specials) (France) The story of two men, educators of children and adolescents with autism. The tale of Bruno and Malik, two friends who have lived for twenty years in a different world: that of autistic children and adolescents. With the support of two non-profit organizations, they train young people to care for people with severe autism. They create an exceptional association, removed from the traditional environments, for extraordinary characters. *Hors Normes* closed the Cannes Festival. In French with English subtitles.

Carly Goodman, Coordinator of Community Inclusion, Federation CJE , Montreal



[Fourteen-and-a-Half Collisions](#) (Germany) A documentary. Sensitive insights into an unusual wheelchair basketball team in Hamburg – and an unusual friendship. After a terrorist attack, 24-year old Asael becomes a wheelchair user. In the summer of 2017 he leaves his home in Israel to try his luck in Hamburg as a wheelchair basketball pro with the BG Baskets. The team consists of nine international top players and lives in the grounds of a casualty hospital. One of them is Ali, an Iranian. Through the sport, he and the Israeli Asael become close friends. *This film touches multiple topics, the athletes are talented and Asael story is compelling.* With English subtitles.

[Extra Innings](#) Set against the enchanting backdrop of 1960's Brooklyn, Extra Innings tells the story of David Sabah, a young man who is caught between pursuing his dream of playing baseball and staying devoted to his Syrian Jewish family that is afflicted with mental illness, but a tragic loss makes reconciling the two worlds impossible. *Based on a true story this is a powerful story that addresses mental health issues. There are scenes that are difficult to watch and not appropriate for all ages. This film can open up a needed discussion about mental health and the avoidance of talking about mental health issues within the Jewish community.*

**Lisa Handelman, Community Disability Inclusion Specialist,
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington**

[Autism the Musical](#) Follow The Miracle Project founder, Coach E—the amazing Elaine Hall—and the kids and their families on a journey of discovery and community in this powerful and joyful testament to the spirit within each one of us. [Autism The Sequel](#) follows the lives of the original stars of Autism The Musical, who are now young adults. Autism The Sequel will air on HBO in April and will be at various film festivals. Contact elaine@themiracleproject.org for a screening near you. *The heart of these films is the cast. They will charm and educate audiences, helping find a space where everyone is valued just for being who they are.*

Shelly Christensen, co-founder of JDAIM, author of *From Longing to Belonging—A Practical Guide to Including People with Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions in Your Faith Community*

[Music Within](#) chronicles the true story of Richard Pimentel, a brilliant public speaker with a troubled past, who returns from Vietnam severely hearing-impaired and finds a new purpose in his landmark efforts on behalf of Americans with disabilities.

Karina Szulc, BMTA Inclusion Manager, Calgary Jewish Federation

Jewish Short Films

[USCJ Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Promoting Inclusion for All](#)

[Ruderman Chabad](#) Inclusion Initiative “We All Belong,” feat. 8th Day

The following films are recommended by Rebecca Wanatick, Manager, Community Inclusion & Program Services, Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ.

Children and Teens

[Dolphin Tale](#) A lonely and friendless boy finds and untangles a hurt dolphin that is caught in a crab trap. He becomes very attached to the dolphin when the tail must be taken off to save the dolphin's life. The boy believes the dolphin would be able to swim normally if it was given a prosthetic tail.



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[The Point](#) A father tells his son a bedtime story about young Oblio, who believes that having no point in the fantastical kingdom of pointed heads and things, still has a point.

[The Mighty](#) The story of a strong friendship between a young boy with Morquio's syndrome and an older boy who is always bullied because of his size. Adapted from the novel, *Freak the Mighty*, the film explores a building of trust and friendship.

[A Teen's Guide to Understanding and Communicating with People with Autism](#)

This video is a guide geared towards teens, described by experts as "Not your typical dry educational presentation." "Speaks to students of all ages."

Teens and Adults

[Angst](#) is a documentary designed to raise awareness around anxiety. The filmmakers' goal is to help people identify and understand the symptoms of anxiety and encourage them to reach out for help.. The film and corresponding materials provide tools, resources and above all, hope.

[Life Animated](#) A coming of age story about a boy and his family who overcame great challenges by turning Disney animated movies into a language to express love, loss, kinship and brotherhood

[Keep the Change](#) When aspiring filmmaker David is mandated by a judge to attend a social program at the Jewish Community Center, he is sure of one thing: he doesn't belong there. But when he's assigned to visit the Brooklyn Bridge with the vivacious Sarah, sparks fly and his convictions are tested. Their budding relationship must weather Sarah's romantic past, David's judgmental mother, and their own pre-conceptions of what love is supposed to look like.

[The Peanut Butter Falcon](#) The Peanut Butter Falcon is an adventure story set in the world of a modern Mark Twain that begins when Zak (22), a young man with Down syndrome, runs away from the nursing home where he lives to chase his dream of becoming a professional wrestler by attending the wrestling school. Through circumstances beyond their control Tyler (32), a small-time outlaw on the run, becomes Zak's unlikely coach and ally.

[Praying with Lior](#) Lior has Down syndrome and has spent his entire life praying with utter abandon. Is he a "spiritual genius" as many around him say? Or simply the vessel that contains everyone's unfulfilled wishes and expectations? As Lior approaches Bar Mitzvah different characters provide a window into life spent praying with Lior. The movie poses difficult questions such as what is "disability" and who really talks to God? Told with intimacy and humor, *Praying with Lior* is a family story, a triumph story, a grief story, a divinely-inspired story.

[My Hero Brother](#) A group of young Israelis with Down syndrome embark on a demanding trek through the Himalayas with their siblings. As they deal with physical and emotional challenges, unresolved conflicts come to surface and heartwarming friendships develop.

[Deaf Jam](#) Follow Aneta Brodski, an Israeli-born teenager living in Queens as one of the first deaf youth to participate in a major poetry slam event.

Do you have a coordinated initiative in your community or organization? Let us know on the [JDAIM Facebook](#) page





ShabbaTTogether February 8 and 9, 2020

Chabad Communities are celebrating [ShabbaTTogether](#), A Global Shabbat of Disability Inclusion and Mental Health Awareness on February 8 and 9. Hundreds of Chabad communities around the world and on 6 continents are planning events and programs for a global Shabbat of unity focusing on Disability Inclusion and Mental Health Awareness. ShabbaTTogether presents a beautiful opportunity to celebrate the message of Torah and *Chassidut* - that each and every person is holy and valuable, an integral and celebrated member of our nation and community. Visit the [website](#) for practical resources you can use for JDAIM, or anytime and to learn more about ShabbaTTogether.

The Ruderman-Chabad Inclusion Initiative (RCII) is coordinating ShabbaTTogether.



Community for All February 29-March 1

[Community for All](#) (C4A) is an interfaith awareness campaign started in Norfolk VA by Faith Inclusion Network. It's built on the success of JDAIM.

C4A is a unified effort among faith communities and disability organizations to raise awareness and foster acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities and those who love them.

