



Hillel students took a break from studying together to light the hanukkiah in the U's student union

Counting on Relationships

Friendships and connections through Hillel impact the Jewish future

Measuring Excellence, one of Hillel International's strategic projects, helps more than 120 local Hillels, including Hillel for Utah, to understand the impact they are making on students. By tracking key interactions, we better understand the role Hillel engagement plays for students to:

- * see the centrality of Judaism in their lives
- * increase their knowledge and connection to Jewish life
- * have strong Jewish social networks
- * increase their Israel engagement and connection

Utah works to engage 70% (now at 80%) of the Jewish undergraduate population at least once a year. And we strive for 30% (now at 27%) of the same group who is engaged six or more times or has a high impact experience (student leadership and Birthright trips among those). By tracking and qualifying our interactions, we can determine the "Hillel Effect" from student surveys.

Almost 100 students studying in Utah have expressed interest in Hillel and we estimate about 275 Jewish students attend a Utah college or university. Student Engagement Fellows reach out to students to get to know them individually, listen to their Jewish stories, and assure that everyone is welcomed to Hillel programs.

It takes 50 hours to make a friend.

According to a University of Kansas study, it takes 50 hours to make a friend. In the fall semester, we have tracked 458 interactions with interested Jewish students at the University of Utah, Westminster, Salt Lake Community College, and even the few Jewish students at BYU. Add to that the countless hours spent building relationships with students, community members, and university administrators, it's clear why the data shows Hillel for Utah is on target to meet or surpass our engagement goals this year. Hillel for Utah has strengthened relationships with administrations at the University of Utah, community partners, diverse student clubs, and adjacent campuses. As Anti-

Semitism has increased on colleges and universities locally and nationwide, Utah's Jewish students know they have a community of support against hatred on campus.

“The more Torah, the more life!”

Student engagement climbs when Hillels have a Jewish educator on staff, have low student to staff ratios, and can increase their program investment per student. Hillel for Utah has an opportunity to build on this level of successful student impact through a Springboard Ezra Fellowship. Named for the biblical scribe Ezra who brought the Torah to the marketplace and translated it so that people could understand, recent college graduates trained in pluralistic and experiential Jewish education techniques infuse relevant Jewish learning into their work as an engagement professional on a local campus for two years.

“The more Torah, the more life,” said Hillel President and CEO Eric Fingerhut. In that spirit, Hillel for Utah announces a **Chai Campaign** to raise \$18,000 for each of the next two years to bring a Springboard Ezra Fellow to Utah's Jewish students. And a substantial pledge has already brought Hillel for Utah closer to reaching that goal! Want to know how you can help make a difference in Utah? [Contact Dana Tumpowsky](#).

Hillel gives students the chance to meet other Jewish students, provides a space to explore their connections to Judaism and Israel, offers a safe zone to be Jewish and build Jewish relationships with each other and the community. Utah's Jewish students are counting on that.



Hillel for Utah's Alex Bochner spent the fall of 2017 traveling around the American West in a van with Westminster College students and professors. On the expedition, they learned important lessons about the environment, land use, native sovereignty, and more.

Alex's story is one of four student features in the new **Hillel 2018 College Guide**—the official Hillel guide to Jewish life on campus. You can sign up for a print copy [here](#).

[Read Alex's story here](#)

Yearning to be Jewish Again

Maggie Burke, Hillel for Utah's student president, offered this testimonial showing the power of Hillel at the Sukkot Reception in October.



I became a bat mitzvah right before I moved from Seattle to small-town Utah. On my first day of high school, I looked at the students around me. I had a sudden, sinking realization that I was different: my clothes and the way I spoke were different, but as I talked with people more and more, I realized that the most important difference between us was my religion. Then, during the first terrifying months of freshman year

of college, I missed out on making friends because I wasn't part of their culture. I didn't know what to do, so I changed how I dressed and how I spoke. That wasn't enough, so with no small amount of guilt, I also shed my Jewish identity in favor of fitting in. For almost five years, I became somewhat of a secret Jew, and I told no one but my closest friends that I had ever practiced Judaism.

I thought I was doing just fine during this whole religious masquerade until I found Hillel in my sophomore year of college. I celebrated Pesach with the Hillel community, and I couldn't sleep that night after I returned home from the Seder. I kept thinking about all of the new friends I'd just met and favorite Passover songs I'd sung and as I lay there thinking, a realization crashed over me—the realization that I yearned to be Jewish again. I desperately wanted to sing Jewish songs and eat Jewish food and just be in the company of other Jews.

I love when students approach the Hillel table at the beginning of every year and tell me that they're "not really Jewish" because I know exactly how that feels. Like these students, I used to be unsure of my Jewish identity and hesitant to tell people that I was Jewish. However, Hillel has made me proud.

My pride developed from laughter and snowball fights at Hillel's Shabbaton, from bagels every week with my new friends, and from learning my connection to the Jewish people while standing at the Western Wall on my unforgettable Birthright trip. This year alone, I've been awed by how much Hillel has grown and how tight-knit our multi-campus community has become. I am especially proud of the tremendous resilience and renewed energy that students in our community have shown in the wake of anti-Israel campaigns on the University of Utah's campus.

The Jewish holidays I celebrate each year with my friends, the adventures we take to connect with Torah and enjoy new experiences, and the pride I have in myself as a Jewish person is all because of Hillel. Without Hillel, many of us may have ended our Jewish journeys after our b'nai mitzvah, or after our graduations from high school. Many of us would have thought Judaism was just our family's buried history, and we may have never explored Jewish culture further.

When new members of Hillel come to our table and introduce themselves, they *think* that they're just spreading cream cheese on a bagel and making a few friends. What they're really doing, is building their Jewish identity and strengthening our Hillel community.

Maggie is a senior psychology and criminology major at the University of Utah. She is an accomplished clarinetist who says she enjoys feeling a part of the power of sound an orchestra creates. Maggie plans to pursue a doctoral degree in psychology to become a therapist working primarily with adults and couples in clinical practice.

Fast Forward through Fall

The Big Schmooze, Hillel's opening event (check out the video below), launched a semester of energy and community building and expansion, friendraising and fundraising, and celebrating Jewish holidays, while facing challenges on campus and nationally.

The **BIG**
SCHMOOZE!

[See the video here!](#)





Hillel students including **Emma Suransky** and **Lucy Allen** (pictured above), headed out to a local farm to pick apples, peaches, pears, and plums before the High Holidays. The farm also hosts a beehive--no one got stung. Among the fruitful conversations, Utah Hillel students began 5779 with lots of apples and honey.

Above, students shared Shakshuka in the Sukkah. The event was hosted at the sukkah of **Diane** and **Art Warsoff**. Local Israeli **Zoe Calahorra**, taught students how to make three different kinds of shakshuka while they learned more about Israeli culture. This event was sponsored by the Israel on Campus Coalition.



At left is a Facebook post by member **Adam Weinstein**. After the murder of Lauren McLuskey on the Utah campus with the Pittsburgh shootings following shortly after, Hillel and other students at the U appreciated the addition of six therapy dog teams for Bagel Tuesday. That evening, **Rabbi David Levinsky** of Temple Har Shalom in Park City led a vigil for the victims of Pittsburgh and others with Hillel students and students from the Muslim Student Association at the University of Utah.



Sukkot Simcha--Hillel's first fundraising event!

Hillel International CEO joins Hillel for Utah Founder with alumni and student leaders to raise awareness for Utah's emerging Jewish campus community



Former and current student leaders are pictured above: (l-r) **Adam Bronfman, Mara**



Eric Fingerhut, President and CEO of Hillel International, joined a gathering of friends, parents, Hillel alumni, and administrators and faculty from local campuses, and members of the Jewish community at a Sukkot Fundraising Reception hosted by **Adam and Cindy Bronfman**. Fingerhut is pictured here with student leaders, **Eli Wolk and Chloe Laverson**.

Kushner, Eli Wolk, Chloe Laverson, Maggie Burke, Sofie Lahaye, Elias Landau, Leah Weisgal, and Dana Tumpowsky.

Alumna **Leah Weisgal** and current president **Maggie Burke** shared their stories of inclusion and connection through Hillel. Maggie's remarks are in the enewsletter--Leah traveled back to Salt Lake City from Denver to speak at the event. Fingerhut, spoke of Hillel for Utah's emergence and momentum (among 550 Hillels around the world). Hillel for Utah Founder and Board Chair **Adam Bronfman** passionately explained the value of providing a Jewish campus community to students in Utah. The evening more than quadrupled our donor base.



Invest in the Jewish future

Today's college students are searching for a Jewish community filled with celebration, creativity, and leadership opportunities. At Hillel for Utah, we strive to make Judaism relevant and meaningful for all while building a strong Jewish campus community. Your gift to the organization or to the Chai Campaign for an Ezra Springboard Fellow means you have strengthened Jewish life on campus in Utah now and for the future.

Invest in tomorrow's Jewish community today.

Please contact Dana Tumpowsky, 801-581-0098 for more information.

[Make a gift online](#)

Raising Kvell

Hillel students and alumni making a difference in the world



This past summer, **Becca Goldstein**, at right in the photo above, took her off-road triathlon passion to a new level and traveled to Svendborg, Fyn, Denmark for the ITU Triathlon Multisport World Championships to represent Team USA in Off Road/Cross Tri. The race began in the Svendborg harbor with a 1000 m swim followed by 27 km mountain bike and a 10K trail run. Becca came away with a bronze medal for her age group and 9th overall for women in the Age Group Category. Becca carried the momentum from the race in Denmark to Xterra Off road



During the fall semester, **Chloe Laverson**, Hillel's social media maven, learned music, blocking, and dance numbers to culminate into a musical theatre ensemble final. "Being a musical theatre major, my finals aren't tests, but performances." Chloe had a large solo in this audition-only class, where she sang and danced the role of Hildy in "Ya Got Me" from *On the Town*. *Chloe is the dancer pictured on the right in the photo above.*



Mara Kushner, a senior on the Westminster Cross Country and Track Team, turned in PRs (personal records) averaging 22 minutes consistently in 5K races this fall. Mara traveled with her team to Montana, as well as north to Logan, UT and south as far as BYU.

Mara's dedication to running, no matter the

triathlon nationals at Snowbasin Resort this fall and came away with an age group win, a personal record, and 5th overall for women. Becca is a University of Utah grad student studying biomedical engineering. She has been involved with Hillel for Utah since its inception seven years ago.



A few of Hillel's student leaders had the opportunity to attend the first **Northwest Hillel Leadership Retreat** at the Solomon Schechter Camp in WA in October. They joined with other Hillel student leaders, Hillel rabbis, and professionals. **Maggie Burke, Alex Bochner, Mara Kushner, Chloe Laverson, Eli Wolk** and **Aimee Klein** learned their leadership compasses, wellness techniques, and celebrated a hiking Shabbat and Havdalah together with student leaders from University of Washington, Western Washington, and Portland Hillels.

Rachel Malaga (at right) performed in the University of Utah's production of "Big Love" by Charles Mee this fall—a successful run with five sold-out shows. Fifty brides flee their fifty grooms and seek refuge in an this modern remake of one of the world's oldest plays, *The Danaids* by Aeschylus. The work explores the hunger for independence, the burden of tradition, and the shape and size of love. Rachel played the role of Eleanor, a houseguest at the Italian villa.

weather conditions, inspires all of us to reach our personal best.



Joshua Stefano is studying finance with a minor in economics at Westminster College. He is engaged to Allison Allred and they have a new Australian

Shepherd puppy named Winston. Joshua is an inheritor service specialist at Morgan Stanley



Tyler Israel headed to Israel on his Birthright trip this month.



Pictured below, **Jeremy Dormitzer** is engaged to **Nicole Lacount**. The Westminster alumni live in Boston.



Tori Sicklick is rounding out the cast in the ensemble of the White Plains Performing Arts Center's holiday production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Performances of the musical at the

Westchester, New York venue begin December 21 and continue through January 13, 2019. The show is based on the classic 1991 Disney animated film.



Board of Directors

Hillel for Utah is honored to have members of our community to help strengthen the Hillel for Utah organization by serving on the Hillel for Utah Board of Directors.

Susan Arsht, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Management,
Gore School of Business at Westminster College

Adam R. Bronfman, President, The Samuel Bronfman Foundation
and Adam R. Bronfman Family Foundation;
Founder and Chair, Hillel for Utah Board of Directors

Stephen R. Morgan, Executive Director, R. Harold Burton Foundation and
President Emeritus, Westminster College

Dana Raucher, Executive Director, The Samuel Bronfman Foundation
Dana Tumpowsky, Executive Director, Hillel for Utah
Maggie Burke, President, Hillel for Utah

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