

Fall 2019 Newsletter



Hillel Jewish
Life on
for Utah Campus

The Hillel Effect

Building Jewish leadership and community on the journey

Many of the stories in the Torah are narratives of journey. College students, too, are on a journey-- intellectually, physically, spiritually, and more.

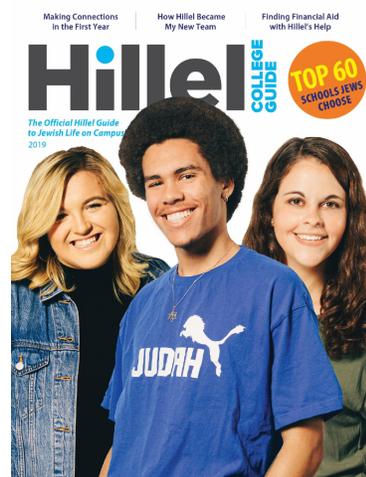
"The journey in between what you once were and who you are now becoming is where the dance of life really takes place."

Dr. Barbara DeAngelis

Hillel's network of dedicated student leaders, professionals and volunteers have encouraged generations of young adults to celebrate Jewish learning and living, pursue social justice (tikkun olam and tzedek) and connect to their peers and the global Jewish people. By participating in life-changing trips and campus initiatives, students learn to make a meaningful impact on the future of the Jewish people and the world while they grow intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

Hillel engages with and inspires the leadership of more Jewish college students than all other endeavors combined. We know that 90% of Jews in the United States go to college, and with a rich and diverse Hillel network, we are proud to part of serving them at more than 550 colleges and universities.

Of the students we impact, 94 percent say being Jewish



will continue to be important to them after graduation.

“While we can know that all of us are on a journey, we cannot know where the journey will ultimately lead,” said Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky. However, the effect of participation in Hillel on student lives has been analyzed.

Hillel for Utah sees that effect on students’ Jewish identities first hand. More and more students, Jewish or not, connect weekly with each other over bagels in the union at the University of Utah. Students who weren’t confident in their Jewishness are finding friends and fulfillment in the celebration of Shabbat through the Jew It Yourself (JIY) and regular Shabbat programs, Israeli Jewvie (movie) Nights, Israeli game, and cooking nights with Talia Goldberg, Utah’s community schlicha, and more.

“We have 154 Jewish students in the database with almost 100 engaged this fall semester,” reports Kayla Dworsky, a sophomore at the University of Utah who is vice president for Hillel’s engagement. “We are already close to meeting our annual goals for breadth and depth of engagement.”

Excellence in student engagement is when 70 percent of the Jewish undergraduate population is engaged at least one time each year and 30 percent is engaged at least six times or in a high-impact activity each year.

Executive student leaders receive an award for their leadership commitments made possible by the United Jewish Federation of Utah. Hillel for Utah students work as camp counselors at the JCC. They teach in the religious schools at local synagogues. They raise money for the campus food bank and work at the Jewish Family Services food bank. They go to Israel on Birthright, contribute to Jewish social media outlets, seek careers in the Jewish nonprofit world.

Hillel for Utah is truly inspiring tomorrow’s Jewish leaders.

The photo above is the cover of the Spring 2019 Hillel College Guide featuring (left to right) Hillel for Utah’s Chloé Laverson, Noah Shufutinsky from George Washington Hillel, and Jordyn Zimmerman, Ohio Hillel and Chair of the International Hillel Student Cabinet.

All About the Balance

Student leader Michael Palmer combines service and growth



Michael Palmer has been known to annoy authority figures.

“If I don’t believe they are using their power to help others, I call them out on it.” But, Michael balances speaking truth to power with a lifelong commitment to tikkun olam and striving for personal growth.

Born in Florida to Jewish parents, he was adopted at birth and raised by a single Jewish mom. They moved to Birmingham, AL where he attended Jewish day school and was known as the kid who delivered the kiddush cups. When the Palmers moved to Salt Lake City, Michael was 12 years old. They made friends and connections here through Congregation Kol

Ami, he was confirmed, and got his first taste of politely asking politicians to explain their

actions on a confirmation trip to Washington, DC and again at aUCAIR rally for clean air where a team of Escalades escorted politicians to attend. He got stammered replies.

This Eagle Scout finished high school at Rowland Hall St. Mark's in Salt Lake City where he tried his hand at all kinds of diverse activities: dancing, cross country, track, and baseball. Fast, but not much on hand-eye coordination, he was the kid who would extend practice to hit a bucket of balls when missing a pitch. So, that happened quite often. Despite his insistence on putting in the extra effort, he was voted Most Valuable Teammate at the end of the season. Michael is a sophomore at the University of Utah majoring in statistics and minoring in computer science. And of course, he's also found balance in acting classes and improv.

Michael makes the extra effort. "If you don't try, keep pushing yourself, you don't grow," he said. So, Michael tries it all: gymnastics, fencing, acting. He even has a patent for wheelchair brakes he designed in a Bench to Bedside medical equipment competition.

He balances his personal drive with a strong sense of service--cleaning yards and doing some home maintenance for the aging in the community so they can live independently for longer. He's involved in an improv group that performs stories for a local daycare. Michael tutors students towards bar mitzvah. He serves the homeless when he can, has participated with HEAL Utah, and on local political campaigns. and is a teaching assistant at Congregation Kol Ami's religious school. Michael coordinates community service and tikkun olam for Hillel. It's the perfect niche for him.

Michael organized the Hillel Rockathon during Sukkot when students spent 24 hours rocking in chairs in Hillel's sukkah, collecting pledges for the FeedU Pantry, talking to people about the project, and the holiday of Sukkot. Hillel students raised \$1375 for the on campus food pantry. "There was a sense of urgency to raise the money," he said. "When we presented the check to the FeedU Pantry, I noticed the food stockpile consisted of mostly canned green beans and marshmallow Peeps. I was really happy with the support of the Jewish and campus community as well as the fireman's brigade of support for all of us in Hillel. Though I spent an ill-advised night shift in the rocking chair, I knew we were making a difference for our fellow students."

"It's easy to just care about yourself. By taking action, you learn empathy. And you just might improve the world in some small way."

The logo for the online magazine 'Alma' is displayed in a large, dark teal, serif font. The word 'alma.' is centered within a light gray rectangular background.

Hillel Students with Chutzpah

Anxiety, being Jewish in Utah, and choosing to be Jewish with your mother are a few of the topics of personal essays submitted from Hillel for Utah this fall to an online magazine billed as "Jewish, feminist, and with lots of chutzpah."

Students Chloé Laverson and Rachel Malaga, joined the college ambassador program of the online magazine, Hey Alma, this fall. As Alma Ambassadors, Chloé and Rachel encourage

world, especially from places you don't think of as particularly Jewish, like Utah," said Molly Tolsky, editor of Hey Alma. "As someone who's only lived in major cities with large Jewish populations, it's been incredibly enlightening to me on a personal note to hear more about what it's like to seek Jewish community and connection in places where that's a bit harder to find. I'm so grateful that our college ambassador program has brought these new voices into the fold."

followers to the magazine through social media and provide content while serving as a sounding board and learning more about how digital media works. Elana Fauth, Utah's Springboard Ezra Fellow, published an essay on the site earlier this year. This year, the Alma Ambassadors are composed of 89 students from around the world (Canada, Israel, Greece, Spain, England, and 21 US states, 74 different schools, and all different Jewish backgrounds.

Alma is a Hebrew word meaning "a woman of childbearing age who has not had kids." Launched in 2017, Alma has evolved from a publication for "ladies with chutzpah," to a publication for anyone. According to their website, Hey Alma's audience cares about Jewish pop culture, what's happening in the news, as well as identity, feminism, and more.

"One of the unexpected joys of Alma has been hearing from Jews all around the country and

You'll want to read these pieces from our talented Utah chutzpahniks:

[I Got a Double Mastectomy While in College--I Couldn't Have Done It Without My Dad](#)

[I'm Tired of Having to Prove Myself as a Sephardic Jew](#)

[What It's Like Being Jewish in Utah](#)

[Converting to Judaism With My Mom Strengthened Our Relationship](#)

[How Judaism Saved Me From My Anxiety](#)

Hey Alma is one of the brands of 70 Faces Media--the largest and most diverse Jewish media organization in North America. Their brands include Kveller, JTA, My Jewish Learning, alma., The Nosh, and Jewniverse.

Learn more about the Alma Ambassador program [here](#).

Fall into Hillel

Fall semester with Hillel kicked off with **The BIG Schmooze** where we welcomed more than 40 new and returning students with everything BIG: oversized food, games and FUN!



Hillel students said they wanted more regular **Shabbat** programming. With the leadership of our Springboard Ezra Jewish Education Fellow, Elana Fauth, Hillel for Utah delivered: **BBQ Shabbat, Shabbat 101, Harvest Havdallah, Shakshuka in the Sukkah** (thanks to our hosts Diane and Art Warsoff), **Wellness Shabbat, Friday Night Lights, and Jew-It-Yourself (JIY) Shabbat.**



BBQ Shabbat with a tropical theme above; and at left, Noah Gottlieb shows off his shakshuka chef skills during Shakshuka Shabbat in the Sukkah.

Hillel celebrated **Rosh Hashanah** with a brisket dinner hosted at the home of Alysse and Kevin Morton. Springboard Ezra Fellow Elana led students and parents in the blessings for the new year.



New programs launched this fall included **Tuesdays with Talia** (community schlichathank you Federation) with Israeli game night and cooking and conversation for spring.

Jewvie Night, featuring Israeli movies and discussion led by Dr. Maera Shreiber (Utah professor of Middle Eastern Studies).



Above, Hillel President Eli Wolk (left) and Community Service Chair Michael Palmer (right) present a check for \$1375 raised through the Sukkot Rockathon to the director of the Feed U Pantry.



Max Kaufman and Bennie Okamoto rocking out for awhile in the sukkah.

When you combine a sukkah on the University of Utah campus with the mitzvot of spending the night in the sukkah and tikkun olam, you get Hillel for Utah's amazing **Rockathon**! Hillel students pledged to rock for 24 hours straight in the sukkah in return for raising money for the FeedU campus food pantry! The fundraising event was fueled by pizza and snacks, midnight video games, studying, card games, morning pancakes, and a playlist of any song with the word "rock" in it with a steady stream of Hillel rockers. We also met about ten new Jewish students in the 24-hour period!

The winning team jumped for joy upon being the first Hillel group to find their way through the corn maze during **Harvest Havdalah** at the Cross E Ranch north of Salt Lake City on a gorgeous Shabbat afternoon in November.



Programming VP Sarah Miller (at left) gets festive for Hillel's annual **Latkefest**. This year's event featured a dreidel tournament, cookie decorating, menorah making, and lots of latkes, of course!

jlfutah

Jewish Learning Fellowships

What are the qualities of a good friend? What is the difference between love, lust, and intimacy? What professions speak to our passions? Ten Hillel students will discuss some of life's big questions this spring as Hillel for Utah welcomes its first ever cohort of Jewish Learning Fellows.

"This Hillel fellowship aims to create long lasting relationships between students, Torah, and the world around them," said Elana Fauth, Springboard Ezra Fellow. Fauth coordinates the JLF program. She explained that students will explore together over a ten-week seminar, facilitated by two Jewish educators-- Fauth, and Lauren Fredman, the JCC's Bernie Camp director.

"Our program centers around Jewish texts--anything from ancient Torah, medieval midrash, to modern commentaries. We hope they will learn how to consume Torah in an accessible way, and to apply it to their everyday.

Students who meet the participation requirements for the JLF program receive a financial award at the end of the sessions.

The Life's Big Questions seminar is the first in three courses offered. The other two are "Sex, Love, and Romance: Toward a Postmodern Jewish Ethic," and "Judaism as Art: A Search for Congruity." lives!"

HillelWell For Utah

A HillelWell microgrant enables Hillel for Utah to focus on promoting positive mental health practices through a Jewish lens. We kicked off our wellness initiative this semester with a "Wellness Shabbat." During this Shabbat, Fauth led students in a guided meditation and stress ball making.

With this grant, she has planned a series of Rosh Chodesh evenings this spring. (Rosh Chodesh marks the move from one Hebrew month to the next). By celebrating Rosh Chodesh together, students can come and decompress from the month before and prepare for the month ahead through discussion, meditation, breathing exercises, and other self care practices.



Hillel for Utah is where the Jewish future begins.

“Because of the amazing people I’ve met at Hillel for Utah, I feel like I’ve been able to find my place in a community and feel proud of my Jewish heritage.”

Ella Abramson, University of Utah Class of 2022

By supporting Utah’s only Jewish campus organization, you assure students gain valuable leadership experiences, build their network of friends, and are inspired to have a positive experience with Jewish life and learning.

A gift of *any amount* to Hillel for Utah is an investment in the Jewish future!

- Give \$36 and sponsor a student for our Winter Shabbaton.
- Give \$54 and sponsor a student participating in a community service overnight trip.
- Give \$200 and sponsor an entire Shabbat.
- Give \$500 and sponsor our spring service trip for International Good Deeds Day.
- Give \$1800 and sponsor our Passover Seder.

[Make your gift online here!](#)

Raising Kvell

Updates on Hillel for Utah students and alumni



Former Hillel for Utah president, **Maggie Burke**, is loving her job at Cornell Hillel! She's an innovation specialist focusing on Freshman engagement and large-scale programming. She recently planned a warm and welcoming Freshman Shabbat meal in the residence halls and an ice skating extravaganza complete with fuzzy socks and hot cocoa! In the upcoming months, she will bring some of Hillel for Utah's adventurous spirit to Cornell through outdoor programming. When she's not

creating Jewish life on campus, she's playing clarinet in the Cornell Wind Symphony, hiking through Ithaca's gorgeous gorges with her new friends, and shopping at the farmer's market.

Rebekah Freed is in graduate school getting her PhD in Educational Psychology, or Learning Sciences, at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She teaches undergraduate courses about the science of learning and researching how to help students maximize their learning outcomes through strategies. Rebekah has also presented at conferences in America and Europe, and published papers under her advisor, preparing to be a research and teaching professor. She still participates in the Jewish community at UNC, with Hillel, Chabad, Moishe House, and DurhamISH.



Jessica Garcia has begun student teaching second grade at Parkview Elementary School in Salt Lake City. She's a senior at Westminster College.



Adèle Gor-man was promoted to senior associate at Goldman Sachs in Salt Lake City.



After graduation from Westminster, **Cassie Kerrigan** worked as a Medical-Telemetry Oncology nurse at St. Mark's Hospital in Salt Lake. In March of this year, she was trained as a Charge Nurse for her unit and did that until June when she moved to Longmont, CO. Now she's working at Boulder Community Hospital as a Medical-Surgical nurse and hopes to move up to the Progressive Care Unit within the next few months.



Former Hillel President **Sofie Lahaye Landau** and former Vice President **Elias Landau** met through Hillel For Utah and were married at La Caille in Salt Lake City in October. Hillel alumni **Josh Zweighaft** and **Cassie Kerrigan** were at the reception while **TK Stark** and his wife **Eve** were in the wedding party. Hillel changes lives.



Current junior **Chloé Laverson** continues her work in digital marketing with Hillel International remotely from Utah. Chloé, the vice president for communications at Hillel for Utah, was recently elected the vice president for marketing of the University of Utah Panhellenic Council. She is a member of Phi Beta Pi sorority.

Sophomore **Jacob Olson**, Hillel's Historian, was elected warden for his fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, at the University of Utah.





Merritt Ruthrauff is working at Clearwater Analytics in downtown Boise.

Rachel Savage, traveling in Ecuador, climbed an active volcano in Cotopaxi. She continues dance instruction and mentoring with after school programs, troubled youth programs, rehab centers, and the YMCA in Salt Lake City.



Alli Skinner **אלי ויימן** married Daniel Vaiman in Utah in November. אלי is studying for a master of public health degree at Westminster College.

Look closely in season three of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* to see **Tori Sicklick** working as a background actor!
Tori is living the actor life in New York City.
She's pictured at left at the table.



University of Utah junior **Camille Voth** is headed to Israel for her Birthright trip this month. Cami will be traveling with students from the University of Arizona.

Joshua Zweighaft is studying for his MBA through Villanova University.

Student Board 2019-2020

This year's engaged and energetic group of leaders are delivering another dynamic year for Hillel for Utah. Our board members hail from all over the United States, CA, NJ, TX, WA, and UT, bringing a diverse arsenal of talent with them!

Eli Wolk

President

University of Utah, Class of 2021

Kayla Dworsky

Vice President for Engagement
University of Utah, Class of 2022

Chloé Laverson

Vice President for Communications
University of Utah, Class of 2021

Sarah Miller

Vice President for Programming
University of Utah, Class of 2021

Aimee Klein
Westminster Liaison
Westminster College, Class of 2022

Rachel Malaga
Israel Programming
University of Utah, Class of 2021

Jessica Mauer
SLCC Liaison
Salt Lake Community College, Class of 2020

Jacob Olson
Historian
University of Utah, Class of 2022

Michael Palmer
Outdoor and Social Justice Programming
University of Utah, Class of 2022

Adam Weinstein
Israel Programming
University of Utah, Class of 2022

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.

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President, The Samuel Bronfman Foundation
and Adam R. Bronfman Family Foundation; Founder and Chair

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Assistant Professor of Management, Westminster College; Secretary

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Eli Wolk
Hillel for Utah, President, 2019-20

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