the J Springfield

Fall 2026 Adult Programs

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

In-Person Classes
Drop-In Activities
Gallery Exhibits
Jewish Life and Learning
Health and Wellness
Visual and Performing Arts
Special Events

the J Springfield Life Lessons

The William & Margery Sadowsky Center for Adult Learning

In-Person Classes

American Sign Language

THURSDAYS: OCTOBER 1 – NOVEMBER 5
6:30 – 8:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Have you ever wanted to learn how to communicate using American Sign Language (ASL)? In this fun, six-session class, you will learn the basics of signing and begin having simple conversations in ASL. You will learn the ASL alphabet and build everyday vocabulary you can start using right away.

INSTRUCTOR: Michael Bergenheim is a dedicated educator who has taught high school History, Civics, and English at the Willie Ross School for the Deaf since 2023.

COST: $125 JCC members, $150 general public

Creative Knitting Explorations

TUESDAYS: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
SESSION I: SEPTEMBER 8, 22, 29, OCTOBER 6, 13, 20, 27
SESSION II: NOVEMBER 3, 10, 17, DECEMBER 1, 8, 15, 22
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

This intermediate knitting class is designed for those who have mastered the basics and are looking to refine their skills, tackle more intricate patterns, and develop advanced techniques. Get your questions answered, become inspired by others' work, and make friends in a creative, welcoming environment!

INSTRUCTOR: Mollie Plotkin is an experienced knitter and designer who has taught knitting at the Springfield JCC for many years.

COST: $70 JCC members, $90 general public

Telling Your Story through Writing

MONDAYS: SEPTEMBER 28 – NOVEMBER 16
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Do you have stories just waiting to be written, but you're not sure how to start? Join our supportive, low-pressure writing class which will help you get in touch with the writer inside of you. The idea is to explore with a writer's eye, gain confidence, and experiment with fiction and non-fiction. Sessions will include ideas to get your creative juices flowing, techniques to write clearly and effectively, and guidance from a professional.

INSTRUCTOR: Robert Chipkin has taught writing at Western New England University and other area colleges. He has a long professional career as a writer, editor, and columnist at the Springfield newspapers and MassLive.

COST: $130 JCC members, $150 general public

Drone Warfare and Innovations that Have Changed History

MONDAYS: OCTOBER 26 – NOVEMBER 23
3:00 – 5:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Can it be that during our time we are witnessing the biggest change in warfare since the invention of gunpowder? Does drone warfare make superpower big money warfare obsolete?

We will examine the current ongoing wars and try to answer the question of how some of the world's military superpowers are being held at bay by much weaker adversaries. We will also look back to pinpoint past tectonic shifts in warfare: oars to sail, sails to steam, flags to telephone, trumpet to radio, musket to rifle, muzzle to breach-loading, piston to jet power, and many more.

INSTRUCTOR: Stuart Greene, the Springfield JCC's retired Director of Health and Wellness, is a retired Captain of Artillery and received three Bronze Star Medals for heroism in combat and a Purple Heart for wounds received.

COST: $130 JCC members, $150 general public

Mah Jongg Classes

Bam! Crack! Dot! Learn to play this fun, social, and thought-provoking game.

INSTRUCTOR: Adena Falk has been playing Mah Jongg for many years and loves sharing the wisdom of the game and the joy of connecting with new people. She believes Mah Jongg is a lifetime game where everything you need to know about life can be learned at the table with family and friends.

Beginner **Mah Jongg**

EVENING: MONDAYS, NOVEMBER 2 – 23
6:30 – 8:30 PM
DAYTIME: TUESDAYS, NOVEMBER 3 – 24
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

A four-week introductory course designed for absolute beginners. Participants will learn the fundamentals of American Mah Jongg, including tile identification, gameplay structure, the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) card, and basic strategies through guided play and practice hands. Daytime and evening options!

COST: $150 JCC members, $175 general public

Intermediate **Mah Jongg**

EVENING: MONDAYS, NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 14
6:30 – 8:30 PM
DAYTIME: TUESDAYS, DECEMBER 1 – 15
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

If you have been eager to take your game to the next level, this class is for you! This three-week intensive is perfect for anyone who has completed a Beginner Mah Jongg class or for experienced players looking to brush up on their skills and strategies. You'll advance your understanding of the game while sharpening your play. Please remember to bring your 2026 NMJL Card.

COST: $115 JCC members, $130 general public

About Life Lessons

Life Lessons: The William & Margery Sadowsky Center for Adult Learning is the result of support from the Jewish Endowment Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and a very generous donation to the JCC INFund from the Sadowsky family.

Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts

POWERED BY THE JCC INFUND

Hebrew Language for Beginners

WEDNESDAYS: SEPTEMBER 30 – NOVEMBER 18
1:30 – 2:30 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

This introductory course teaches the Hebrew alphabet, including letter recognition, pronunciation, and the sounds each letter makes. Students will practice writing in both print and script, learn to read simple Hebrew words and phrases, and build a strong foundation in reading and writing. Basic conversational Hebrew is also introduced, helping students gain confidence using everyday expressions in a supportive environment.

INSTRUCTOR: Yael Hoffman is a dedicated Hebrew educator and native Hebrew speaker who was born and educated in Israel.

COST: $140 JCC members, $160 general public
All materials are included.

Israeli Dance

WEDNESDAYS: OCTOBER 21 – NOVEMBER 25
6:30 – 7:30 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Learn the basics of "rikudei am" (Israeli folk dancing) in this six-week course featuring a mix of classic folk dances and modern humorous dances. No experience necessary.

INSTRUCTOR: Rebecca Schnaper is the Education Director of B'Yachad Springfield. She has been involved in Israeli dance since the age of 11, when she first discovered it as a camper at Camp Ramah.

COST: $100 JCC members, $120 general public

HOW TO ENROLL

Register for a class or event online at springfieldjcc.org or in person at the JCC. All programs require pre-registration, even those that are free, unless listed as Drop-in Activities. If you need help navigating your JCC account portal through our website, please call or stop by the Business Office.

Watercolor for Beginners

TUESDAYS: OCTOBER 6 – NOVEMBER 10
1:00 – 3:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

This course is designed for those brand new to the medium and for those with some watercolor experience who wish to further explore introductory watercolor techniques and fundamentals of color mixing. You will experiment with "wet on wet," "wet on dry," and the use of various brushstrokes and tools to achieve texture and depth in your painting. Each week, a new technique will be presented as you learn to paint rocks, trees, skies, and simple landscapes.

INSTRUCTOR: Andrea Mackin has been painting in watercolor for over 15 years and teaching online and in person since 2019. She is an active member in the New England Watercolor Society.

COST: $125 JCC members, $150 general public
Plus cost of supplies (list will be provided)

Journeys with **Aquarelle Pencils**

THURSDAYS: NOVEMBER 5 – DECEMBER 17
6:00 – 8:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Aquarelle (watercolor) pencils are a travel-friendly option for people on the go. Whether going for a hike locally or traveling abroad, a set of aquarelle pencils and a watercolor sketchbook is a fun way to capture beauty around you.

INSTRUCTOR: Jim Rosenthal worked as an ophthalmologist in Springfield for over thirty years. He is a stone sculptor with a background in painting, woodworking, and glass art. Jim's watercolor sketchbooks have become lasting mementos to relive his travel experiences.

COST: $125 JCC members, $150 general public
All supplies are included.

Do you have ideas for classes you'd like to see or activities you'd like to explore? Thinking of forming a group on a specific topic? Please email us at info@springfieldjcc.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Intro to **Improv**

TUESDAYS: OCTOBER 13 – DECEMBER 1
6:00 – 8:30 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Whether you're interested in acting, comedy, public speaking, professional development, or simply trying something new, Intro to Improv provides a fun, supportive environment to build confidence, creativity, communication, and quick thinking. You will learn the fundamentals through games, scene work, and instructor feedback. The eight-session course concludes with an Improv Showcase on December 3 for friends and family.

INSTRUCTOR: Tom Roché is a teaching artist with experience in theater, improvisation, stand-up comedy, sketch comedy, writing, directing, and performance. His classes foster creativity, confidence, collaboration, and a willingness to take creative risks in a fun, supportive environment.

COST: $220 JCC members, $245 general public

Paint & Sip Night

Age: 21+

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 6:30 – 8:30 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join us to paint fall-themed art on an 11" x 14" canvas! No art experience required. You'll be guided step-by-step by your instructor, Nina Chrisanthopoulos, of Create and Paint Fun. She has been an artist her whole life and enjoys sharing her love of art through classes and events in the local area.

COST: $50 JCC members,
$60 general public

All supplies, including wine, are included!

Bookbinding Workshop

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 6:00 – 8:00 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Explore the basics of bookmaking and learn how to create a hand-bound pamphlet-stitch journal or sketchbook. You'll get comfortable with beginner tools and materials, practice folding and preparing pages, learn the pamphlet stitch, and leave with a finished handmade book of your own.

INSTRUCTOR: Cate Dembkowski is a mixed-media artist and elementary art teacher who loves working with a wide range of materials to tell stories and express ideas.

COST: $75 JCC members, $90 general public

Special Events

Hearing **Their Stories**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

POSTPONED

Writers from Bob Chipkin's "Tell Your Story through Writing" course will read selections from their recent works. Support arts and culture in your community! Light refreshments will be served.

COST: Free for JCC members, $5 for general public

Concert: Four Roads to Freedom

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: BOMBYX CENTER FOR ARTS AND EQUITY, FLORENCE, MA

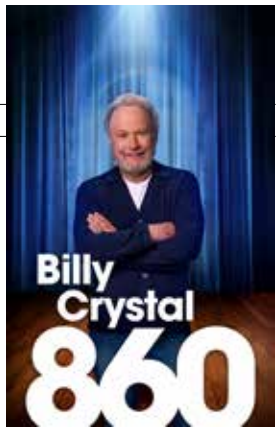
Enjoy music from four powerful social justice movements, featuring Black Civil Rights anthems, Irish Rebel music, South American Nueva Canción confronting political repression, and Yiddish labor songs from the early 20th century.

Co-sponsored by the Springfield JCC. Purchase tickets on Bombyx website.

"860" on Broadway and NYC On Your Own

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

LOCATION: IMPERIAL THEATRE, MANHATTAN



This intimate, comedic solo piece, named for his exact street address, reflects on the 46 years Billy Crystal and his family lived in his Pacific Palisades, CA home. Price includes center front mezzanine seat, round-trip transportation, and driver gratuity.

COST: $240 JCC members, $260 general public

NYC ON YOUR OWN: Purchase round-trip transportation only and visit museums, shop, and explore all that the city offers.

COST: $65 JCC members, $80 general public

Holiday Gift Fair

FREE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Support local artisans and celebrate the holiday season at the JCC's Gift Fair! Featuring a variety of local vendors offering unique clothing, jewelry, accessories, and more! Join us for convenient, one-stop shopping for your holiday gifts!

COST: Free and open to the public!

Health and Wellness

SHINE Medicare Counseling

FREE

WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS
OCTOBER 16 – DECEMBER 4
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

The SHINE Program provides free and unbiased health insurance information, counseling, and assistance to Medicare-eligible individuals and their caregivers during the open enrollment period. SHINE counselors are trained and certified by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

THE SHINE PROGRAM
Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone

Available on Wednesdays and Fridays by appointment only. To reserve your spot, contact the JCC Welcome Desk by calling 413-739-4715.

COST: Free

Women's **Self Defense**

Age: 14+

THURSDAYS: OCTOBER 29 – NOVEMBER 19
6:00 – 8:00 PM

FREE

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Build confidence and learn practical self-defense skills in this four-week course for women and girls ages 14+. Participants will develop awareness, prevention strategies, de-escalation techniques, and basic physical self-defense skills in a supportive and empowering environment. No prior experience is necessary.

INSTRUCTOR: Captain Eleni Barbieri serves as the Director of Training for the Springfield Police Department and has more than 20 years of law enforcement experience. She is passionate about education, community outreach, and empowering women through practical training, leadership, and personal safety.

COST: Free

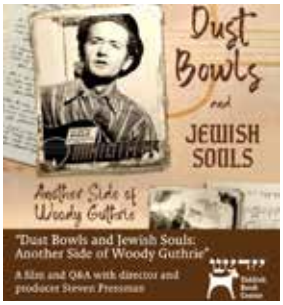
Registration is now open for fall programs!

Visit springfieldjcc.org or scan the QR code.

Film: **Dust Bowls and Jewish Souls**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2:00 PM

LOCATION: YIDDISH BOOK CENTER, AMHERST



Many know Woody Guthrie as the quintessential Oklahoman balladeer who wrote "This Land Is Your Land," but few are aware that Jewish culture had a significant hand in shaping his private life and career. Live Q&A with director Steven Pressman to follow the film screening.

Presented by Yiddish Book Center and co-sponsored by Springfield JCC.

Joel Chasnoff: Hebrew is Magic

FREE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join comedian and *Israel 201* author Joel Chasnoff for this interactive conversation about the hidden life lessons embedded in Hebrew words. Together, we'll discover how ancient Hebrew wisdom can help us live more ethical lives, be better parents, strengthen our marriages and relationships, and navigate life's biggest questions. No Hebrew knowledge required — just bring your curiosity.

COST: Free

Sponsored by Temple Beth El, Springfield JCC, and Sinai Temple.

Mega Challah Bake with Chabad Women's Circle

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 7:00 PM (Doors open at 6:30 PM)

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join women from all over Western Massachusetts and experience the magic of challah making. The Mega Challah Bake will include a live demonstration and participants will be provided with all the ingredients and toppings to make a personal challah. Participants will leave with their own challah and a recipe booklet.

Co-sponsored by the Springfield JCC. Purchase tickets on LYA website.

An Evening of Remembrances, Featuring Sora Vigorito

FREE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: ACADEMY OF MUSIC, NORTHAMPTON

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: LONGMEADOW HIGH SCHOOL, LONGMEADOW

Sora Vigorito was a young girl when she was taken to Auschwitz-Birkenau and subjected to horrific medical experiments by Dr. Joseph Mengele and his team. Her identical twin sister, Channa, did not survive. Sora's powerful testimony is a story of unimaginable loss, resilience, and the enduring power of faith and memory.

COST: Free

Presented by Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and co-sponsored by Springfield JCC.

Exploring **Contemporary Issues**

MONDAYS: OCTOBER 12 – NOVEMBER 23
6:00 – 7:00 PM

FREE

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join us for a thought-provoking exploration of some of the most difficult issues created by the rapid advancement of technologies and radical changes in society from the perspective of Torah's fundamental principles. Topics include Artificial Intelligence, IVF and cloning, drones, and social media.

COST: Free

Great Books in Judaism

WEDNESDAYS: OCTOBER 14 – NOVEMBER 25
9:30 – 10:30 AM

FREE

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join us for a survey of many of the great books of the Tanach (Bible) and the Oral Tradition (which includes Mishnah, Midrashim, Talmud, Philosophy, Kabbalah, and the great works of the Medieval period, among others). This class will present an overview of each book and then students will analyze representative selections from each.

COST: Free

INSTRUCTOR: Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe is Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Torah in Longmeadow, MA and Dean of the Institute of American and Talmudic Law based in New York, NY. *Offered in partnership with Congregation B'nai Torah.*

SAVE THE DATE

Memorial Scrolls Trust

Fourth Annual
Ruth and Fred Weiss z"l
Lecture

Honoring Our Torahs and Making Jewish Life Sacred

Featuring
Sarah Hurwitz

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
1:00 – 4:00 PM
LOCATION: TEMPLE BETH EL, SPRINGFIELD, MA

Join us for an inspiring New England Memorial Scrolls Trust Torah reunion, featuring award-winning author Sarah Hurwitz, who will deliver the Fourth Annual Ruth and Fred Weiss z"l Lecture.

The Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST) is a UK-based organization that cares for 1,564 Czech Torah scrolls that survived the Holocaust. Some 1,400 have been loaned to communities around the world. There are over 100 MST scrolls in New England, six of which are in Western Massachusetts. This gathering will provide a unique platform to remember Kristallnacht, reflect on the resilience of these sacred scrolls, and reaffirm our communal commitment to remembrance and education.

SPEAKER: Sarah Hurwitz was the head speechwriter for First Lady Michelle Obama from 2010 to 2017. She was also a senior speechwriter for President Barack Obama and the chief speechwriter for Hillary Clinton during her 2008 presidential campaign. She authored the widely acclaimed book, *Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life — in Judaism* and subsequent bestseller, *As a Jew: Reclaiming Our Story from Those Who Blame, Shame, and Try to Erase Us.*

Gallery Exhibits

Richard Harper: Flowers and Their Friends

FREE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC, ADULT LOUNGE

Local photographer Richard Harper will exhibit a collection of photographs illustrating the interplay of flowers and their surroundings. Experience the beauty of flowers through captivating photography that reveals their color, texture, and delicate details.

Join us for the OPENING RECEPTION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15,
4:00 – 6:00 PM

Sadie & Eli Gurvitch Memorial Adult Art Exhibit

FREE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18 – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC, ADULT LOUNGE

Sponsored by the Lepow-Gurvitch family in loving memory of Sadie and Eli Gurvitch, this annual art exhibit highlights the creative efforts of non-professional artists aged 55+ throughout the Pioneer Valley who wish to exhibit their work. The exhibit is dedicated primarily to Sadie Gurvitch, who in her 60s, developed a strong interest in art and painting.

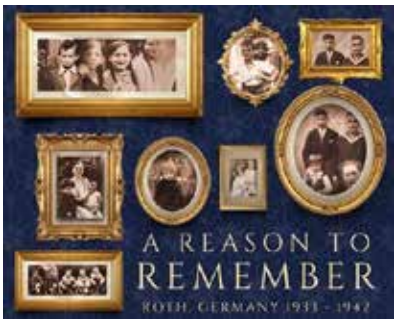
Join us for the OPENING RECEPTION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18,
1:00 – 3:00 PM

A Reason to Remember: Roth, Germany 1933 — 1942

FREE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC, YOUTH & FAMILY STUDIO

This exhibit, which originated at the former Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center, is based on the personal stories of five Jewish families who lived in a rural German village before and during Nazi rule. The exhibit is appropriate for students in sixth grade and up.



Join us for the
OPENING RECEPTION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1:00 – 3:00 PM,
featuring a special presentation by exhibit co-author Deborah Roth-Howe, who is the daughter of a survivor of Roth.

Adult Discussion Group

FREE

SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
(OCTOBER 8, NOVEMBER 12, DECEMBER 10)
1:00 – 2:30 PM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Join us for friendly and thought-provoking conversations on a wide variety of topics. Come explore, connect, and make the most of this monthly group. All are welcome.

FACILITATOR: Saul Finestone is a retired educator, longtime JCC member, and a two-time winner of the Longmeadow Citizen of the Year award.

COST: Free

Prose and Cons: Nonfiction Book Discussion Group

LAST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
(OCTOBER 28, NOVEMBER 25, DECEMBER 30)
3:00 – 4:30 PM

FREE

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Are you a nonfiction reader who enjoys thought-provoking conversations? Participants may volunteer to prepare, in advance, a 10-minute review of a nonfiction book they have enjoyed. Wide-ranging subject areas such as biographies, U.S. and world history, science and nature, economics, and philosophy would be most welcome. Reviews will be followed by brief discussions. If you like to read substantive nonfiction books that spark discussion and challenge perspectives, this is the place for you!

FACILITATOR: Buntzie Churchill served for 23 years as President of the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia. For a decade, she hosted "WorldViews," a daily radio show, interviewing experts on a variety of international issues.

COST: Free

Offered in partnership with the World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts

Mah Jongg Open Play

SUNDAYS: OCTOBER 4 – DECEMBER 27
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
TUESDAYS: OCTOBER 6 – DECEMBER 29
5:00 – 8:00 PM
THURSDAYS: OCTOBER 8 – DECEMBER 31
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Drop in to play Mah Jongg at your convenience! The JCC now offers morning, evening and weekend open play hours. Advanced beginners and above are welcome to join, even if you have not had formal lessons but know how to play. We provide game sets and a comfortable meeting space. Please bring your own NMJL card.

COST: Free for Springfield JCC members.
$5 drop-in fee for the general public.

The JCC now has its own TeamReach account! Team Reach is a free app that allows you to find other like-minded Mah Jongg players looking to play a game. Search for the JCC using the group code "SJCC1160." The app can be downloaded on iPhone and Android devices.

Parkinson's Disease Support Group

FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
(OCTOBER 1, NOVEMBER 5, DECEMBER 3)
1:00 – 2:30 PM

FREE

LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

Looking for others who share your concerns and experiences? Are you interested in getting tips and resources while building comradery? Join our Parkinson's Disease Support Group for people with Parkinson's Disease and their care-partners. Sessions will start with everyone together before breaking up into two respective groups. Come for the information, stay for the companionship!

FACILITATORS: Corrie Trattner (OT, Ed.D, OTR) and Elizabeth Martin (M.A., SLP-CCC).

COST: Free

Sponsored by the American Parkinson's Disease Association.

Veterans Day Breakfast

FREE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 9:00 – 10:30 AM
LOCATION: SPRINGFIELD JCC

All veterans are invited to attend a breakfast hosted by the JCC in recognition of their service. This gathering offers an opportunity to connect with fellow veterans in a welcoming and supportive environment. Veterans are also welcome to bring a guest if they choose.

COST: Free

the J Springfield
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

413-739-4715 springfieldjcc.org