The Avi Schaefer Fund is proud to announce the

2019 Avi Schaefer Leadership Retreat Cohort III

Eloise Diaz Bahrmasel
Engagement Strategist and Entrepreneur

Danielle Natelson
Jewish Communal Professional and Educator

Maia Ferdman
Human Relations Advocate, City of Los Angeles

Vinnie Pine
Real Estate Professional and Travel Enthusiast

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Bridging the divides

Chelsea Garbell
Policy Analyst and Interfaith Activist

Eli Reiter
Educator, Storyteller, Writer and Bridge-builder

The Avi Schaefer Leadership Retreat is an annual opportunity for a select cohort of diverse and emerging Jewish leaders to engage in, study, and discuss some of the most important contemporary issues involving Israel and the contemporary Jewish world.

Suzanne Greene
Professional Schmoozer. Retired Badminton-Player. Aspiring Minimalist.

Arianna Skibell
Journalist and Writer

In partnership with the Shalom Hartman Institute and Resetting the Table.

Evan Gottesman
Associate Director of Policy & Communications, Israel Policy Forum

Ari Hoffman
Writer and Lawyer

Meredith Lewis
Curator of Stories for Jewish Families

Shira Telushkin
Writer and Producer

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About our Participants

Eloise Diaz Bahrmasel

Chicago, Illinois

Eloise D. Bahrmasel is an Engagement Strategist and Entrepreneur, using the principles of human centered design and systems thinking to solve problems and create impact driven solutions. Ellie has leveraged this skill set to advance collaborative initiatives in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors with partners domestically and abroad. Her portfolio includes work with The Kennedy Forum, Comcast NBC Universal, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Ellie's current vehicle for change is her consulting practice, Telos Strategy Group, where she works with clients to design strategies, narratives, and experiences for impact. Previously, Ellie co-founded New Founders, a PAC that organized over 300 emerging grassroots organizations to coordinate efforts with established organizations, like Planned Parenthood, the Democratic National Committee, and Center for American Progress. She facilitated the build and launch of the EveryElection app for New Founders, which connects contact information to election date, allowing individuals to mobilize their personal networks to vote in local elections.

Ellie is a fierce advocate for women's rights and a champion and civic engagement. She authored the Illinois Say No More letter and co-organized the eponymous community that led to sweeping legislative reform on sexual harassment in Illinois. Her work extends beyond Illinois' borders. She recently joined the BMW Herbert Quandt Responsible Leaders Network, a global community of leaders striving to solve the world's most pressing challenges. She's also a Schusterman REALITY Global fellow, and a delegate to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Young Diplomats Seminar. She has previously held local elected office.

A lifelong Chicagoan, she resides in the city's Albany Park neighborhood with her husband, Matt Altstiel and her rescue dog, Ozzy.

Maia Ferdman

Los Angeles, CA

Maia Ferdman believes in the power of identity to bind together communities, and the power of communities to effect positive change. In her role as Human Relations Advocate for the City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, Maia pursues intergroup peace-building through community engagement, dialogue, and policy development. This may include facilitating dialogues on police-community relations, organizing interfaith programming, or developing initiatives for youth around human relations. Prior to working with the City, Maia was a Program Coordinator for Global Jewish Experiences and Fishel Fellow with The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, in partnership with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Through this fellowship, Maia worked with Jewish communities in India, Israel, across Europe, and in Los Angeles. Maia is an avid reader and writer, intricate doodler, and proud sister of two younger brothers. She holds a B.A. in Global Studies and an M.A. in Latin American Studies from UCLA.

Chelsea Garbell

New York, NY

Chelsea Garbell is an MPA candidate and Lisa Ellen Goldberg fellow in International Policy and Management at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service, and she currently serves as a graduate researcher for the New York Southeast Asia Network. She has previously held positions at the Asia Society Policy Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations' Religion and Foreign Policy Program, the Of Many Institute for Multifaith Leadership, the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life, and spent a year teaching English in Samut Sakhon, Thailand. Chelsea is actively involved with the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, the New York Muslim Jewish Advisory Council, the Muslim Jewish Interfaith Coalition, and the Planned Parenthood of New York City Activist Council. She serves on the boards of American Jewish Committee ACCESS Global and KAHAL: Your Jewish Home Abroad. Chelsea graduated summa cum laude from New York University where she studied media, culture, and communication.

Evan Gottesman

New Brunswick, NJ

Evan Gottesman is the associate director of policy and communications at Israel Policy Forum, a non-profit dedicated to promoting a secure and sustainable two-state solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. At Israel Policy Forum, Evan hosts the organization's podcast, Israel Policy Pod, and writes for and edits the Israel Policy Exchange blog. Previously, Evan taught a course on international relations at Rutgers University and helped conduct research for the book The Syrian Conflict: The Role of Russia, Iran, and the US in a Global Crisis. He has been published by Foreign Policy, Haaretz, The National Interest, The Diplomat, The Jerusalem Post, World Policy Journal, and ETH Zürich's Center for Security Studies, and cited in VICE News, The Times of Israel, The Forward, and JTA. Evan received his BA from Rutgers University, where he studied history and political science and graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa member in 2017. There, he wrote his senior interdisciplinary honors thesis on the community politics of Israel's Russian-speaking minority. As an undergraduate, Evan was also a member of the inaugural Hillel International Student Cabinet and the Lloyd C. Gardner Fellowship in Leadership and Social Policy.

Suzanne Greene

Brooklyn, NY

Suzanne grew up on the North Shore of Long Island. Suzanne was one of five Jews in her public high school of twelve hundred students. Being a minority, Suzanne sought out Jewish community, becoming active in USY and studying abroad in Israel in High School. Her time spent in Israel motivated her to return often, studying abroad at Tel Aviv University and volunteering as a pre-school teacher on Kibbutz Ketura for four months.

Suzanne graduated from Binghamton University with a degree in Political Science and began her career at AIPAC, working in fundraising in NYC. Suzanne worked as a consultant in political fundraising before accepting a dream position - transitioning from a community member to working full time with the founding Rabbinic couples of Base. Base builds vibrant Jewish community committed to pluralism and founded upon three core values: hospitality, learning, and service.

At the deepest level, Suzanne identifies as a woman, a Jew, and a liberal. It is in issues related to these three identifiers that she spends her energy. She is particularly interested in creating welcoming spaces for converts and children of converts to Judaism, as well as Jews in partnerships with individuals who do not identify as Jewish. Suzanne also is passionate about interfaith work, recently traveling to Essouira, Morocco with the Muslim Jewish Interfaith Coalition and often participating in bridge-building Christian/Jewish text studies. In her free time, she enjoys strength training, cooking, and making use of her New York Public Library card.

Ari Hoffman

Washington, D.C.

Born and raised in Great Neck, New York, I spent a year at Yeshivat Har Etzion before completing my B.A. and Ph.D. at Harvard University, all in English Literature. My book monograph, This Year in Israel: The Israel Novel and Why it Matters, is forthcoming from S.U.N.Y. Press. I have written for The Wall Street Journal, The New York Observer, Tablet Magazine, The Jerusalem Post, The Lehrhaus, and other publications. In the coming year I will join Wilkinson Walsh +Eskovitz as a litigation associate and clerk for Judge Hanan Melcer of the Israeli Supreme Court. I am also a huge Yankees, Jets, and Knicks fan. Prior to joining the ASR this summer, I will spend two weeks as a FASPE Ethics Fellow in Berlin and Krakow.

Meredith Lewis
Northampton, MA

Meredith Lewis currently serves as the Director of Content, Education, and Family Experience for PJ Library in North America. In that role, she manages the creation of books and other new content, oversees PJ Library's role in the field of Jewish education, and serves as the chief "knower" of families for the PJ Library enterprise. Previously she worked at 70 Faces Media (MyJewishLearning.com and Kveller.com). There she served in a variety of roles including managing editor, interim executive director, and chief operating officer and helped lead My Jewish Learning into a merger with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Meredith has also worked as a writer, youth group director, and teacher. She holds an MPA and an MA in Hebrew and Judaic Studies from New York University, and a BS in Journalism from Northwestern University. She recently completed a graduate certificate in Early Childhood Technology at Tufts University and is a Wexner Field Fellow. Meredith and her husband Ben live in Northampton, MA with their two children, Ari and Micah.

Danielle Natelson
Los Angeles, CA

Danielle has spent more than a decade working at the intersection of leadership and learning across the Jewish communal landscape, most currently as the Design Strategist at UpStart in Los Angeles. For six years, Danielle cultivated relationships with students, community partners, and stakeholders at Hillel at UCLA, resulting in the engagement of nearly 2000 Jewish students annually. There, she piloted a new strategy for training leaders, launched pluralistic Jewish learning environments, and scaled immersive experiences to reach broad audiences. Additionally, Danielle has leveraged her passion for music and Israeli dance to enrich Jewish communities through the arts in her work with Camp Ramah, the Bureau of Jewish Education, and synagogues and Jewish day schools in Orange County.

Danielle's intersectional identity has positioned her to contribute to the efforts of diversity, equity and inclusion in the Jewish community, earning her a selection in the second cohort of Bend the Arc's Selah Leadership Program for Jews of Color. An alumna of UC Berkeley, Hebrew University, Pardes, and other fellowships, Danielle is a proud learner and relishes opportunities to immerse in our rich tradition.

Danielle enjoys the camaraderie that comes from cheering on her favorite sports teams, welcoming in Shabbat with friends old and new, and using her singing voice to connect with others. Whether it's karaoke or her High Holiday quartet, in the car alone or with a chorus at camp, music has always been Danielle's ultimate key to meaningful connection.

Vinnnie Pine
Chicago, IL

Vince Pine is a Vice President with Millennium Properties, specializing in selling, buying and leasing all types of commercial properties throughout the Chicagoland area. Before joining Millennium Properties, Vince worked as an attorney focused on all aspects of commercial real estate. He assisted a variety of businesses in the leasing, acquisition and sale of over $1 billion of transactions. His clients ranged from large, multi-national private equity firms to REITs to individual investors.

Vince grew up in the Chicagoland area and attend Indiana University before graduating from the University of Illinois College of Law magna cum laude. While at Indiana University Vince studied abroad at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before spending time volunteering in Kiryat Gat with troubled teens. During his time at Hebrew University, a large amount of his study was dedicated to the politics and history of the region, as well as current social and economic issues within the region.

Traveling is one of Vince's favorite past times, having visited North America, South America, Asia, and Europe, he hopes to visit Australia, Africa, and Antarctica in the near future.

Eli Reiter
New York, NY

Eli Reiter is a NYC-based educator, writer, and storyteller. He has taught high school English for five years, STEM to students K – 12, and personal storytelling for people eight to eighty.

His essays has appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, Tablet, Slate, and the Daily News, among other outlets. His issues cover Jewish poverty, education, technology, and politics.

As a storyteller, he is a three-time winner The Moth Storyslam and the host of the Muslim-Jewish storytelling show. He has taught storytelling in a variety of places, from schools and museums to homeless shelters. He is also the founder of the intentional community Shtibel, which brings Jews from all backgrounds together to explore the more intellectual sides of Judaism. He is passionate about intra-faith and interfaith dialogue. He believes that with enough sharing of narratives, we can better understand one another and build a more just society.

He hosts retreats for young Jews to build a wider pluralistic community. He has also led two Birthright groups, with the goal of creating meaning and offer different options for young Jews to connect to their lineage in their own way.

Arianna Skibell
Washington, D.C.

Arianna Skibell is a Jewish writer and journalist. She recently completed a year as a Dorot Fellow in Israel, where she studied Zohar, taught audio storytelling in the South Hebron Hills and produced a radio piece for the show Israel Story. Before Dorot, Arianna worked as a reporter on Capitol Hill for E&E News, covering Congress and climate change. She holds a masters degree in journalism from Columbia University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Emory University with a joint degree in psychology and linguistics.

Shira Telushkin
New York, NY

Shira Telushkin is a religion reporter based in New York, where she writes on minority faith groups, food trends, and the occasional corset shop. Her reporting has brought her to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Myanmar, and across the United States, and her work has been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and TheAtlantic.com, among other publications. She is a regular contributor to Tablet Magazine, where she writes "Thou Shalt," a weekly Jewish advice column, and for three years produced their popular Unorthodox podcast. Shira holds an M.Div from the Harvard Divinity School and a B.A. in Religious Studies from Yale University.

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