

WINTER 2026

VOLUME 3 NO. 2

NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN
GREATER ROCHESTER SECTION



NCJW GRS UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

- February 13 and 14 - Repro Shabbat
- March 1 - Community Purim Carnival at JCC
- March 15 - EpiPen Training
- May 3 - Hannah G. Solomon and Woman of the Year Recognition Brunch



*Check the NCJW
Greater Rochester
Section website
regularly for updated
information about
events and programs!
www.ncjwgrs.com*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello NCJW GRS Friends,

I hope you're all staying cozy and warm. I'm looking out my window as I'm writing. One minute ago, the sun was out, and now it looks like a blizzard. It must be winter in Rochester! Luckily NCJW GRS has been busy, helping the longer, colder days to pass more quickly. We held a New Member Event, continued work on our voting legislation campaign, got together for Lobby and Latkes, ran an online program with Joy Getnick about Understanding Jewish Experiences in Today's Changing World, and held a Shabbat Dinner.

And just like that it's time to celebrate Tu B'shevat, the holiday that marks the emergence of spring and reminds us that brighter, more hopeful days are coming soon. It's also an appropriate time for us to recommit to our work. As the trees we honor on Tu B'Shevat are strengthened by their roots, NCJW too is strengthened by our foundation. For over 130 years, our members' advocacy and volunteerism have powered NCJW GRS, strengthening individual rights and freedoms and improving the lives of women, children, and families across the Rochester community. We are looking forward to upcoming events, especially another EpiPen Training in March and our annual Hannah G. Solomon and Woman of the Year Recognition Brunch.

Thank you for the many ways you contribute your time, energy, and voice. We continue to count on your support as we look ahead and hope you'll stay engaged. We're always in the process of planning new opportunities to participate, so make it a habit to read our emails and check our website often. If you have ideas for future events, please let us know! Email ncjwgrs@gmail.com or ncjwgrspresident@gmail.com if you'd like me to give you a call to discuss. Feel free to give ideas to our board members too!

Wishing you all comfort and warmth as we wait for the warmer weather,

Dawn Wisset
President, NCJW Greater Rochester Section



HANNAH G SOLOMON AND WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2026

We are excited to announce this year's Hannah G. Solomon Award recipient Lindsay Tarnoff and our TWO recipients of the Woman of the Year Award Brenda Comisar and Cindy Finestone. Congratulations! We can't wait to celebrate with you! **Mark Sunday, May 3rd on your calendar now to save the date for the 2026 NCJW GRS Recognition Event!**



Lindsay Tarnoff, Founder of Laughing Gull Chocolates

Using her passion for chocolate combined with a desire to change the world, Lindsay started a chocolate company that makes the world a better place. She leads workshops, incorporating her knowledge and experience from visiting various cacao farms and her drive for finding a sustainable way to bring this commodity to our community. Lindsay sets a high standard for building community with intention and care, collaborating with Rochester small businesses to create local flavors that give back to organizations in Monroe County. [Visit Laughing Gull Chocolates](#) to learn more!



Brenda Comisar, NCJW GRS Board Member

Brenda has been a board member since July 2018. She has served as Financial Secretary and Treasurer and has co-chaired the Hannah G. Solomon and Woman of the Year Event for several years

Cindy Finestone, NCJW GRS Board Member

Cindy joined the board in July 2020. She is currently Vice President of Membership and has also co-chaired the Hannah G. Solomon and Woman of the Year Event for several years.

We're excited to be honoring our two event chairs together!





Don't like to drive at night? Don't like to drive in the winter? Don't drive at all?

We still would love to see you at NCJW GRS events and want to help you get there! Please send an email to ncjwgrs@gmail.com so we can add you to a list of members who need rides.

If you can provide a ride to someone, please email ncjwgrs@gmail.com so we can match up riders with drivers!

Thank you!

CAMPAIGN TO PASS NYS VOTING REFORM LEGISLATION

We continue working on the campaign that launched at our workshop with Heather Booth. In late November, a group of NCJW GRS members met with Assemblywoman Jen Lunsford to discuss the proposed package of bills for NYS Voting Reform Legislation. We learned a lot of information that will help us in future meetings with legislators. One outcome of our meeting was an action step to look for other organizations in New York State doing similar work. We've begun setting up conversations to discuss how we might work together with coalition partners as we continue this effort. Simultaneously, we're proceeding with additional meetings with local legislators. Please let us know if you are interested in participating by sending an email to ncjwgrs@gmail.com.



NCJW GRS meeting with Assemblywoman Jen Lunsford

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Community Connections Committee (CCC) continues to build and strengthen relationships within our local community and across the broader NCJW network. Please join us on March 15 as we host a second EpiPen training with Allergy Advocates of NY. Participants will learn how to recognize an anaphylactic reaction and what to do—and not do—in an emergency. This training will also recertify NCJW GRS to keep and use an organizational EpiPen, which will be available at all NCJW GRS events.

NCJW GRS will also host a table at the Community Purim Carnival at the JCC on March 1, where we'll engage children in a fun voting activity as they cast ballots for their favorite Purim themes. In addition, please support Love a Mensch Week (February 7–14) as we recognize and thank those who act with honor and integrity, regardless of circumstances.

If you have an idea for a project, would like to get involved, or want to suggest a community partner, please contact our chairs, Ellie Rosenbloom and Wendy Strauss, at ncjwgrs@gmail.com. Be sure to check the website and your email regularly for upcoming programs and opportunities to make a difference in our community.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The work of our Public Affairs Committee focuses on advocacy, a central piece of who we are. We encourage you to visit www.ncjw.org/act to take action on a variety of important issues. Speak up, and help move critical legislation forward! Opportunities to act are updated regularly, so check the page often. If you're interested in becoming a part of our committee, please contact Committee Chair, Lisa Waltzer by emailing us at ncjwgrs@gmail.com.



P.A.D. Project Providing Access and Dignity

NCJW[®]

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

In 2024, ten organizations (in addition to NCJW GRS) held events to assemble a total of 2350 menstrual kits (35,250 pads). These kits were distributed to twenty recipient agencies.

How can you help?

Sew Bags

Our menstrual kits are delivered in beautiful drawstring bags sewn by our volunteers. If you like to sew, please consider helping us make more bags.

Make Kits at Home

Assemble P.A.D. kits from the comfort of your home at a time that's convenient for you. We'll provide the supplies and instructions.

Collect Coupons

If you are a member of BJ's Wholesale Club and don't use the menstrual product coupons, please share them with us so we can purchase P.A.D. supplies for a lower price.

Donate Products

Use our [Amazon Wish List](#) to easily donate menstrual products to the P.A.D. Project.

For additional information and to volunteer, contact us at
NCJWGRS@gmail.com!



Meeting the Moment

NCJW Advocates

Take Action Today!



As extremist lawmakers continue to strip away our rights and freedoms, we must take action!

While it may feel overwhelming, the opposition is counting on that. Please prioritize your well-being. We need you in this work for the long haul.

Get to know your elected officials: They work for YOU!

- a. Find and contact your elected officials | USAGov
 - i. Sign up for their newsletters and follow them on social media
 - ii. Show up at town halls and other local events
 - iii. Call about the issues that matter to you
 - iv. Build relationships with your elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels

All politics start locally: Get involved in your community.

- a. Engage with your school board
 - i. Reach out to your parent teacher association and groups with like-minded individuals
 - ii. Attend school board meetings and speak up

Stay informed: Knowledge is power.

- a. Choose one to two news sources you trust and stick to them
- b. Follow NCJW on social media: Instagram Facebook, X, and Bluesky or NCJW GRS Facebook
- c. Set boundaries with media consumption — protect your peace

Amplify your voice: You are an expert on your community.

- a. Utilize NCJW's resources to make your voice heard
 - i. Use our LTE and op-ed templates to voice concern in the public square
- b. Show up, show your values
 - i. Show solidarity in public — attend rallies and vigils
 - ii. Wear your values — demonstrate to others what you believe in

Advocate through NCJW: Lean into your Jewish values.

- a. Utilize NCJW's Action alerts and reach out to members of Congress
- b. Check out NCJW GRS website and emails regularly!!

NEW MEMBER EVENT

Thank you to our Membership Chairs, Cindy Finestone and Rina Schnauffer, for hosting a wonderful evening for our newest NCJW GRS members. It was a warm and welcoming opportunity for us and new members to get to know each other, learn more about our committees, ask questions, and enjoy delicious snacks and socializing.

We're in the process of sending friendly reminders about membership renewals. Our annual membership begins at the start of our fiscal year on July 1st and continues until the following year on June 30th. If you aren't sure whether you renewed for 2025-2026, feel free to contact us at ncjwgrs@gmail.com. Thank you to all of our members! We value and appreciate your continued support!



LOBBY AND LATKES

Thank you to Donna Cohen for welcoming us into her home to celebrate Chanukah NCJW GRS style. We had the opportunity to light candles together, enjoy latkes, and participate in some advocacy for NCJW priorities. Thank you also to the NCJW GRS Public Affairs Committee for planning the evening!



NCJW GRS AT HEATHER BOOTH'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION





Renew Your Membership!

NCJW GRS annual membership begins at the start of our fiscal year on July 1st and continues until the following year on June 30th. If your last dues payment was made before July 1, 2025, it's time to renew. We can't make as big of an impact without you! Thank you for your continued support.

[Renew Your
Membership Here](#)

NCJW®

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

NCJW GREATER ROCHESTER SECTION

ncjwgrs.org

Power Your Voice With Us

Become a NCJW GRS member today.

NCJW GRS advocates for... abortion access;
NCJW GRS advocates for... equal rights for all;
NCJW GRS advocates for... a fair and independent judiciary;
NCJW GRS advocates for... gun violence prevention;
NCJW GRS advocates for... immigrant and refugee rights;
NCJW GRS advocates for... gender equity in Israel;
NCJW GRS advocates for... justice;
NCJW GRS advocates for... you!

JOIN NCJW GRS TODAY!

Becoming a member advocate with the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Greater Rochester Section (GRS) offers the opportunity to contribute to a long-standing tradition of community impact. By joining for \$54/year, you'll have the chance to:

- **Join a Network of Strong Women:** Become part of a powerful community of women and advocates who have been making a difference in the Rochester area for over 130 years. You do not have to be Jewish or a woman to join NCJW GRS!
- **Shape the Future:** Influence the direction of the NCJW Greater Rochester Section, focusing on the issues and initiatives that matter most to you.
- **Advocate for Policies:** Support and work towards New York state and federal policies that align with your values and priorities, making a real difference on both local and national levels.

Membership allows you to be actively involved in creating positive change and advocating for the issues that are most important to you!

Join Now!

NCJW TM | Greater
Rochester
Section
National Council of Jewish Women

February 13-14, 2026

Repro Shabbat takes place annually on *Parshat Mishpatim*, which contains the verses commonly referenced as the foundation of Judaism's approach to reproductive health, rights, and justice. Celebrate Repro Shabbat and the Jewish traditions it honors.



Sign up to participate at home

<https://www.jewsforabortionaccess.org/repro-shabbat-2026>

Attend Repro Shabbat Service Locally

**Temple Sinai
Friday, February 20th at 6:00**

**Participate in a Virtual Event
Hosted by NCJW NY Jews for
Repro NY**

**Wednesday, February 18th
12-1 pm**

**Event is free, but registration is required
ncjwny.org/event/reproshabbat2026**

NCJW

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

NCJW GRS PAD PROJECT IN ROCKLAND, NY

 **NCJW Rockland Section**
December 15, 2025 · 🌐

After months of planning, Rockland Section members complete the P.A.D. project (Providing Access and Dignity), packing and donating menstrual supplies to women in need. Thanks to the JCC Teen Leadership initiative for providing a grant! Many thanks to the [NCJW Greater Rochester Section](#) for the project idea!



THANK YOU, NCJW ROCKLAND SECTION!!

SHABBAT DINNER

After last year's success, we held another Shabbat Dinner, this time at Irondequoit Country Club. It was an evening for celebrating Shabbat together and being together. We're so grateful to those of you who ventured out on such a cold, snowy night!



UNDERSTANDING JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN TODAY'S CHANGING WORLD

We are grateful to Joy Getnick, Executive Director of Hillel at the University of Rochester, for spending an evening with us on Zoom. Joy presented a program that is based on a training she offers on campus called "Understanding Jewish Peoplehood." In today's challenging world it can be hard to navigate questions – at work, from friends – about Jewish identity, antisemitism, and Israel. Joy helped us better understand evolving Jewish identity and experiences to position us for more effective communication.



RAISING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE



NCJW GRS HAS RECENTLY SIGNED ON TO THREE MULTI-ORGANIZATION ADVOCACY LETTERS :

“We, the undersigned interfaith communities and organizations, write today to urge Congress and the White House to immediately return to the negotiating table to develop a bipartisan solution that ends the shutdown, funds the government, and ensures Congress’ appropriations decisions are adhered to. Equally urgent is our call for Congress and the Administration to immediately resolve the food insecurity and healthcare insecurity crises impacting 42 million people who use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and 24 million Americans currently enrolled in the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.” - *letter to Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins, and Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray*

“We are writing to express our deep concerns about the growing level of antisemitic activity within teachers’ unions, particularly since the Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023. Passage of New Business Item (NBI) 39 at the National Education Association (NEA) Representative Assembly this past weekend, which shockingly calls for the boycott of the Anti-Defamation League, is just the latest example of open hostility toward Jewish educators, students and families coming from national and local teachers’ unions and their members.” - *letter to Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Secretary, US Department of Health and Human Services and Dr. Mehmet Oz Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*

“The Jewish Abortion Access Coalition (JAAC) and Thrive: The Jewish Coalition to Defend Trans and LGBTQ+ Youth, on behalf of the # undersigned organizations, submit this comment in opposition to the proposed rules restricting access to gender-affirming care for transgender young people: CMS-2451-P (“Medicaid Program; Prohibition on Federal Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program Funding for Sex-Rejecting Procedures Furnished to Children”) and CMS-3481-P (“Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Hospital Condition of Participation: Prohibiting Sex-Rejecting Procedures for Children”). “ - *Communal letter to National Education Association President Becky Pringle*” - *communal letter to National Education Association President Becky Pringle*

ALLERGY AWARENESS + EPI PEN TRAINING

NCJW[®]

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

In partnership with:

★ LOUIS S. WOLK
JCC
ROCHESTER

Sunday, March 15 at 11AM
JCC

Learn the signs of anaphylaxis and how to treat it

Foods, insects, and environmental factors can cause allergic reactions anytime and anywhere. Learn how you can be prepared.

- Discuss who is at risk of anaphylaxis.
- Recognize early signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
- Learn how to implement the correct use of epinephrine for the treatment of anaphylaxis, including when epinephrine should & shouldn't be used.

Presented by:

Allergy NY
Advocates

Registration and
Additional Information:
ncjwgrs.org

Register to be placed in a
drawing for an Epi Pen holder!
Must be present to win.





Tribute Cards

Sending tribute cards to friends, colleagues, family members, or acquaintances is a meaningful way to express your sympathy, honor family and friends, and commemorate special occasions, achievements, and life cycle events.

We currently have only the larger cards available. They can be purchased for \$10.00 each or in packs of three for \$25.00. Your purchase helps support NCJW GRS projects, advocacy efforts, and programs.

To purchase cards to send on your own or to have a card mailed for you, contact Marilyn Fenster at NCJWCARDS@gmail.com. Tribute cards are also available for purchase at all NCJW GRS events.

WITH LOVE
& SYMPATHY



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

Welcome to our New Members!

Thank you for joining NCJW GRS! We're excited to work with you and appreciate your support!

Sarah Abbamonte

Silvana Bacman

Barbara Baron

Faith Ertischek

Shevah Faber

Ruth Fried

Deborah Gallant

Barbara Gertzog

Rachel Kest

Caroline Korn

Jacqui Lipschitz

Joanne Ouzer

Gail Pogal

Esta Richter

Wendy Rose

Hank Rubin

Noreen Salerno

Cynthia Stanley

Susan Zauderer



WELCOME

MAKE AN IMPACT!

*ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A WAY TO EFFECT CHANGE?
WANT TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED?*

Reach out to us at ncjwgrs@gmail.com! You can commit as much time and energy as you want by joining one of our committees, attending events, or participating in advocacy opportunities. Feel free to contact us with any ideas as well!



National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about NCJW GRS, please send their contact information to info@ncjwgrs.org and we will add them to our mailing list.