

# 'DORE L'DORE

*From One Generation of Commodores to the Next*

October  
2016/5777



## A Successful Few Months at Vandy Hillel

Caleb Hausman, Student President



The beginning of the year is always an exciting time at Hillel, and this year has been no exception. All of our student leaders have created dynamic new opportunities for members of our community to get involved in Jewish Life. Highlights include our first-ever Jewish food festival, planned by our Programming Board, where students made home-cooked Jewish staples such as challah, knishes, and matzah toffee, and the other 50 students in attendance tasted all of the dishes and selected a winning dish. Our Religious Life Board also recently started a new Tuesday Schmoozeday series of conversations with local experts in Jewish life and history. Our first session included a lively discussion of the history of Jewish humor with Dr. Judy Klass, who teaches in Vanderbilt's Jewish Studies program. Finally, we had another successful evening with our bi-annual Falafel at Midnight event, where Dore for Israel handed out t-shirts and falafel, giving the roughly 225 students in attendance a taste of Israeli culture late on a Saturday night.

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We had a fun and engaging High Holiday experience as well. On Rosh Hashanah, we provided dinner and our unique Rosh Hashanah Seder to nearly 400 students between the two nights of the holiday. We also had a great community of students come together for services during the days of Rosh Hashanah, with over 60 students attending on the first day alone. This year, we implemented a new "Express Service" program, where students had the chance to participate in one of many streamlined 50-minute Rosh Hashanah services held throughout the day, in order to help students who could not miss classes for the traditional service the opportunity to still have a meaningful Rosh Hashanah service option. We also held these services on Yom Kippur, and hope to continue building additional opportunities for students to get involved in Hillel in accessible ways.

This year, we are cultivating an even stronger and even bigger Hillel community, helping more and more students connect to Jewish life at Vanderbilt. Be it through social programming, religious programming, or Israel-related programming, we want everyone to feel at home at Hillel. We have gotten off to a great start this semester, and we are excited to see where we go in the months ahead.

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## Vanderbilt Hillel Welcomes New Staff to Campus

Ari Dubin, Executive Director

Last Spring, Vanderbilt Hillel received the unique honor of being named the recipient of two different Fellowship programs run through Hillel International. The Jewish Agency Israel Fellow and Springboard Innovation Fellow initiatives provided our campus energetic, skilled new staff that have already begun changing the face of our Jewish community.

Max Ryabinin, as Vanderbilt's Escoll Family Jewish Agency Israel Fellow, is primarily focused on promoting Israel on campus. He works with our Israel groups. Max comes to us from Beit-Shean, Israel. Max was born in Donetsk, in the former Soviet Union and made Aliya with his parents in 1993 when he was 4 years old. Max served his country for three years in the IDF. Max graduated from the IDC Herzliya, Lauder School of Government, Strategic

and Diplomacy with a cum laude degree in Government. Max is an Argov Fellowship in Leadership and Diplomacy alumni. For the past three years Max volunteered as an instructor in the "Aharai" (follow me) youth movement. Aharai encourages and prepares the Israeli youth for a meaningful military service.

Springboard Innovation Fellow Zoe Kress areas of responsibility include Hillel's Jewish educational and religious experiences, our Senior Initiative, and women's programs. Zoe was born in China and raised in New Jersey. She graduated from the Joint Program between Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary where she majored in Psychology and Jewish Gender and Women's Studies respectively. In college, Zoe was actively

involved with Hillel, interned at various non-profit organizations including the American Jewish Committee and the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and taught Hebrew School at Congregation Rodeph Shalom.



## Our First Jewish Food Festival

Dara Kotek, VP of Programming



On September 28<sup>th</sup>, the Hillel Programming Board held its first ever Jewish Food Festival and Cook-off. The event featured chefs from our very own Vanderbilt Hillel community showing off their cooking skills and whipping up some of their favorite Jewish dishes and treats. At stake for the winner was the grand prize of a permanent spot at the front of the line for Shabbat dinner for the rest of the semester. The competition was tough. Dishes ran the gamut



from fresh hummus and shakshuka, to hand-folded potato knishes, to sweet and salty matzah toffee.

The festival was open to all Vanderbilt students. This allowed us to introduce some of our peers to a delicious part of our culture, and give others a taste of home around the holidays. Over 80 attendees filled the Hillel auditorium, eager to try the creations of their classmates. Upon arrival, each student was given two tickets and encouraged to try all of the delicious Jewish dishes available and then vote for their top two favorites.

So who came out on top? The Challah for Hunger team was crowned the winners for their submission, mini challah knots. Vanderbilt Challah for Hunger is a Hillel-affiliated student organization that meets bimonthly to bake and sell fresh challah on campus. Proceeds from the challah sales go towards fighting hunger both in Nashville and nationwide. "We put a lot of work into making our challahs as fresh and delicious as possible and we love coming up with unique flavors for our customers." Said sophomore, and Challah for

Hunger Vice President, Sammy Silberberg. "We are so glad that people are



enjoying our challahs and that they did so well at the food festival!" Congratulations to the Challah for Hunger team and all of the incredible participants in the Jewish Food Festival and Cook-off!



## Welcoming the Jewish New Year

Zoe Kress, Springboard Innovation Fellow

Vanderbilt Hillel continued our strong tradition of providing a High Holiday experience that is engaging and fulfilling. Professor Phil Ackerman-Lieberman of the Jewish Studies and Law Department and Religious Studies Department at Vanderbilt University led beautiful Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services at Hillel. From leading intriguing discussions throughout the services to guiding our students in a Tashlich service at Centennial Park, Professor Ackerman-Lieberman made our holidays more meaningful. A crucial member of our High Holiday services was Kayley Romick, a senior at Vanderbilt. Throughout Rosh HaShanah, Kayley acted as our lay Rabbi and head *gabbai*, among many other roles. Our High Holiday services also would not have been possible without our many students who read Torah or Haftorah, blew Shofar, and gave *divrei*



*torah*, or words of Torah, throughout Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

In addition to our traditional, full length services at Hillel, new to this year was our High Holiday Express services. High Holiday Express was specifically designed to accommodate Vanderbilt's academic pressures. For students who had exams, study groups, or lectures throughout the High Holidays, our express services provided students with a

full service experience in fifty-minutes. Our express services were held at various times throughout the day at both Sarratt and Commons in order to make them most accessible to our students.

Special to our campus, is our program, Ringing in the Rosh: Your All Inclusive Rosh HaShanah Dinner Experience both nights of Rosh HaShanah. Ringing in the Rosh combines Rosh HaShanah services, dinner, and discussion into a unified experience. Our student-lead dinners varied in theme from first-year student's dinner to senior dinner, Greek dinners, and beyond. The brisket was delicious, the discussion was thought-provoking, and the shofar was blasting. With nearly 400 people in attendance over the two nights of Rosh HaShanah, we are thrilled to have given so many students ways to connect to the holidays.



## Senior Reflections

Grant Hansell, Student Intern



Before I even moved into my first year dorm, I went to Move-in Shabbat at Vanderbilt Hillel because that's what I thought I was supposed to do.

As an active Jewish student in high school, getting involved in a Jewish youth group, I had just assumed that the natural next step in my Jewish journey was to participate in services and meals wherever and whenever they were offered on campus. Fast forward three years, and I'm still going to services and meals at Hillel, but for a completely different reason.

What many of us often forget is that there is no right way to be Jewish. When you get to college there is no one looking over your shoulder to make sure you go to High Holiday services or keeping tally on how often you attend Shabbat. This newfound freedom will liberate some and paralyze others.

While some students may love the idea that they no longer need to attend weekly Shabbat services, others may become lost without structure. But no matter where one may fall on that spectrum, Vanderbilt Hillel and the remarkable community is there to make you feel at home.

From Move-in Shabbat to Senior Send-Off, Jewish students at Vanderbilt have endless opportunities to get involved in Jewish life on or off campus over their four years in whichever way they see fit. With six student boards and 10 campus organizations underneath the Hillel umbrella, students are more likely to complain about being unable to fit everything they want to do in their daily schedule than being unable to find a way to express their Judaism.

But even more important than the opportunities to get involved is the people with whom you do it. Some of my best relationships on campus have formed because of my involvement with Hillel.

I can't even begin to express how fortunate I feel to be surrounded by such

genuine and passionate individuals. Hillel's innate ability to foster great relationships is just another way Hillel has made me feel at home on campus.

It's been awhile since that first Shabbat in August of 2013. Since then, my interests have changed, my career plans have changed, and the way I embrace and express my Judaism has changed more times than I can count. But what hasn't changed is that no matter who I am, how often I attend Shabbat, or what I choose to do while I'm here, Hillel has been there for me. As I begin counting down the long list of lasts in preparation for graduation in May, I know that my relationship with Hillel is not one that I'll check off and forget. Instead, I look forward to maintaining an amazing relationship in the future, whatever that may look like.



## Innovating Jewish Life at Vanderbilt

Rachel Gilfarb, VP of Religious Life

The Religious Life Committee has been very busy innovating religious programming at Vandy Hillel. Our board has been hard at work developing programs that allow for students on campus to explore their Judaism in different ways. For those who want a more traditional Jewish experience, we have renovated services with new, more familiar tunes, as well as Emily Groff playing the guitar to accompany our singing. For those who don't prefer services, we started our highly anticipated movie series. Once a month, we screen a movie that has some element of Judaism (be it in song, attitude, religiosity, etc.) for the Vanderbilt community. We provide pizza and a short Havdalah service in addition to the movie. We have had great feedback saying that it is "the perfect way to spend a Saturday afternoon." We kicked off the movie series with *Meet the Fockers* and followed it up with *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. We look forward to providing

Maggianos and Woodlands to accompany our movies in the future.

Another program series that was designed by the RLC this semester is our Tuesday Schmoozeday series. Once a month on a Tuesday evening, the RLC brings in members of the Vanderbilt or Nashville community to discuss a variety of topics over cookies and coffee. The first Tuesday Schmoozeday of the semester was centered around Jewish Humor and was moderated by Judy Klass, a professor in the Jewish Studies Department here at Vanderbilt. We discussed dark humor, vaudeville, Jewish stereotypes in humor, Jewish comedians, and modern Jewish comedy. Attendees were able to talk discuss topics on a personal level with Professor Klass, as well. This upcoming month, we are planning a Tuesday Schmoozeday consisting of a panel of influential Jewish women discussing intersections of Judaism and feminism

in their own lives. We look forward to having Rabbi Laurie Rice (co-head rabbi of Congregation Micah), Daniella Pressner (Principal of Akiva School, Nashville's Jewish Day School), Julie Sugar (Writer for Yiddish Pop, former Director of Jewish Student Life at Vandy Hillel), and Sophie Rapoport (Programmer at Event Brite, former Ritual and Tutoring Coordinator of West End Synagogue) make up the panel and discuss the intersections of Judaism and feminism.



## Big FYSH/Little FYSH

Jackie Eissman

A very successful program at Hillel this year has been our Big FYSH Little FYSH program. "FYSH" stands for "First Year Students of Hillel." First-years (Little FYSH) are paired with an upper-classman (Big FYSH) with similar interests and majors. The Big FYSH serves as a mentor to his or her Little FYSH by helping them to integrate into the Vanderbilt Hillel community, as well as to become acclimated with life at Vanderbilt in general.

This program has existed in prior years, but Lauren Silverman, Serena Deutch, Jackie Eissman, and Andrea Liberman worked hard to revamp this program to make it even more successful. We had a large turnout this year with so many successful Big FYSH Little FYSH pairings! Many Big FYSH have reported about their positive experiences with their Little FYSH matches.



FYSH mixer. This event took place at Hillel in September, and was a great opportunity for first-years to bond with their own Big FYSH, as well as to meet other first-years and other upperclassmen through our awesome speed-dating activity and cookie decorating.

At this point in the program, Big FYSH are getting together with their Little FYSH one-on-one or in groups, and are doing activities such as getting a meal, coffee, or

frozen yogurt together, and attending Hillel events together, such as Shabbat dinner every Friday night. We have such a dedicated group of first-years and upperclassmen, that we are sure that this program will continue to be a success throughout the year.

One new aspect that was added to the program this year was a Big FYSH Little

## Record Breaking Falafel at Midnight

Sara Starr, VP of Israel Affairs

On Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup> Dores for Israel hosted our event Falafel at Midnight! Falafel at Midnight is an event we hold every semester in Hillel. It is a fun way to engage with students about Israel and bring people into the building.

This year we had over 200 people swipe in, a record in recent memory. The free tank tops we gave out were all gone in the first four minutes of the event, and the food ran out in about 35 minutes. This was incredibly exciting as this high-level of attendance and excitement is what we seek to generate each year.

People came who we had never seen before, which

was really exciting as it is an incredibly fun way to show off DFI for the first time. We are really excited to see how the event continues to grow.



# VANDERBILT Hillel

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Zoe Kress, Springboard Innovation Fellow  
Max Ryabanin, Escoll Family Jewish Agency Israel Fellow to Israel  
Debby Wiston, Director of Operations  
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Evan Suzman  
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