

# JEWISH GOPHER

APPRECIATION REPORT SUMMER 2024

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*report*



## SEMESTER IN REVIEW

- PROTESTS ON CAMPUS
- JEWISH ENGAGEMENT
- SPRING HOLIDAYS

## Responding to Antisemitism

Amidst the Israel-Hamas conflict, University of Minnesota students faced unprecedented challenges this past semester. The campus became a focal point for pro-Palestinian demonstrations, calls for divestment from Israel, and a ten-day encampment at Coffman Memorial Union that coincided with Passover.

These events left students feeling unsettled and vulnerable, particularly as protests escalated to incite violence with calls for intifada and chants of "from the river to the sea...". Unfortunately, the response from university leadership did little to assuage concerns.

The student's response to intense antisemitism was to intensify their connection and commitment to Judaism. Students were eager to engage in learning sessions, wrapping tefillin, hanging mezuzahs and much more. They flocked to Jewish social events for the sense of pride and camaraderie. When the encampment was disbanded, students gathered at Coffman for a pro-Israel rally, displaying their Jewish pride and dedication. Throughout the ordeal, the students embodied the phrase "Am Yisrael Chai"—despite all odds, the Jewish nation lives.



## I'm a Jew and I'm Proud!

The campus protests sparked a significant surge in Jewish education. During the recent semester, Rabbi Steiner led two lecture series: Sinai Scholars and Israel 101. Sinai Scholars is an 8-week introductory Jewish discussion course, while Israel 101 is a component of the JewishU program where students can earn credits. Both courses experienced unprecedented levels of enrollment and attendance.



- **Sinai Scholars Graduation**
- **Wrapping Tefillin**
- **Ladies Lunch & Learn**

## Semester Summary:

### A Gatsby Purim

Our lively Purim party themed around the roaring 20s was a resounding success! Students came together to listen to the megillah before heading to Blarney's for a costume-filled celebration. The following day, we held "Purim in an Hour," during which students completed all four mitzvot of the day: listening to the megillah, giving tzedakah, exchanging food gifts with friends, and enjoying a festive meal. Everyone who took part embraced the joyous spirit of the holiday.

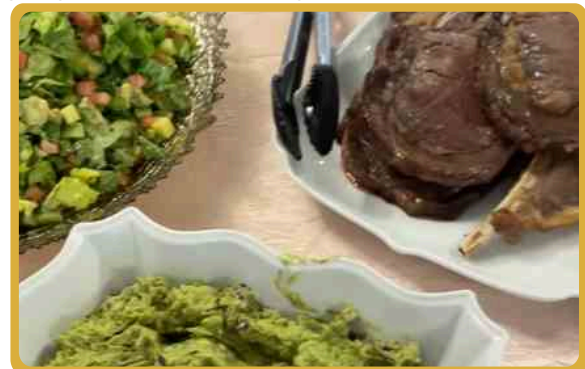


### Preparing for Passover

The lead up to Passover was almost as fun as the holiday itself! A few weeks before Passover, we ran a ladies resin seder plate making event with gorgeous results. In the days before the seders, students came to help Chavi in the kitchen. Passover was a lot of work, but not a chore, because we did it with friends. The real joy was sitting down at the seder with everyone to enjoy the fruits of our efforts.

### Passover on Campus

Passover marks the most bustling period at Chabad, and it's undeniably the pinnacle of our year! We had two engaging, interactive, and scrumptious seders, each drawing over 90 students. Our kosher for Passover meal plan received a fantastic reception, and we were delighted to provide free kosher for Passover food throughout the holiday to over 30 students. Nobody went hungry or unsatisfied after indulging in Chavi's magnificent feasts!



- **Before the Seder**
- **Students Lending a Helping Hand**
- **Passover Meal Plan**
- **Resin Seder Plate Making**

## Special Milestones

The Steiner family joyously marked two significant occasions alongside students, alumni, friends, and relatives. In March, Rabbi Yitzi commemorated his 40th birthday, with numerous attendees from various places coming together to express their appreciation for his impactful presence. Later in May, the family celebrated Mussi's bat mitzvah, where sixty ladies and girls joined in a cruise to honor her on this momentous day.



## Senior Spotlight: Lizzie Doman '24

Chabad has been my home away from home. I came to the University of Minnesota knowing nobody and immediately felt welcomed by Chabad. It has created stability for me throughout the past 4 years on campus. I felt so loved by the Steiner family and knew I had people that truly cared about me as soon as I arrived on campus.

Throughout my years at Chabad, I have been Shabbat Chair and a Girls Event Lead on the Board. Planning events for Chabad and bringing the community together was so special. My friends would always ask when the next event was so they could come join and learn about my culture. Chavi had even come to my sorority to talk about important holidays and educate all those interested in learning more.

By senior year I was at Shabbat every Friday night. During the last Shabbat of the semester I left a graduation party because celebrating Shabbat had become part of my ritual and was something I couldn't miss.

Overall, the impact Chabad has had on my college experience cannot be explained by words but rather by the warm feeling I would get each time I would walk into the Chabad house, and for that I am forever grateful.

## Nova Festival Survivor Gives Inspiration

We were honored to host Roi Assaraf, a Nova Festival survivor. His message of hope and resilience was inspiring to the nearly 200 attendees.



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