



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (7.1.2023 – 6.30.2024)



Overview

In its third year, NEW LEHRHAUS is continuing to grow and offer stellar programs to a large community of learners in the Bay Area and beyond. With the diminishing of Covid restrictions, we were able to offer more programs either in person only or as a hybrid, the most successful of those being a Moroccan-style Hanukkah party in partnership with Urban Adamah and a Christmas Day Fiddler on the Roof Singalong with Chinese dinner, each with 120 attendees.

Highlights

1. Our website had 33,600 visitors this year, consistent with FY 22-23 numbers. A new website with more robust and stable features will launch in July 2024 and provide new opportunities, such as a “Members’ Portal” where New Lehrhaus members have access to free program registrations and will be cultivated as deeply engaged participants and donors.
2. Our weekly e-newsletter subscribers list has grown to over 2,650 subscribers, up from 2,200 a year ago. Our goal for FY 2024-25 is to grow the list to 3,000, which we view as an optimal-size audience.
3. Registration for programs held steady at 3,820, compared to 3,875 last year (over 9,500 registrations since inception) in a year when we expected a drop as extraordinary demands have impacted people’s attention due to October 7th and the Israel-Gaza War and the impending US elections.
4. Similarly, actual attendance has kept up as well with 2,800 attendees, compared to 2,770 last year.

5. We have **offered 74 different programs** over the course of the year including one-session presentations, multi-session courses (usually 4 sessions), and year-long language classes, Talmud Circles, and Zohar Commentaries on Parashat HaShavu'a.
6. A special 6-part series addressed the crisis of October 7th and the Gaza War with in-depth "Behind and Beyond the News" topics, with 826 registrants and 530 attendees.
7. Many people continue to access video recordings of our programs, whether they missed a session or just found an interesting topic while perusing our website. Nearly 5,000 have watched our videos this year and over 15,500 have since inception.

Sample programs include:



Ladino Language, History & Music



Designing Sacred Spaces



Jews and Superheroes



What Happened on Purim



Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza

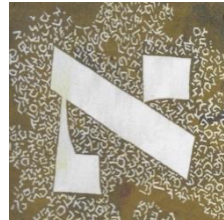


Shabbatai Zvi



"Off the Derekh?"

The Heretic in the Room



Cover of Robert Alter's translation of the Hebrew Bible

Bible Now: Kohelet



Jews and the Fitness Movement

The Response from the Community

Enthusiastic responses from students and event participants follow most of our programs with 86% rating the program they attended as "excellent" or "very good." We have received numerous emails thanking us for resurrecting Lehrhaus and offering stellar programs.

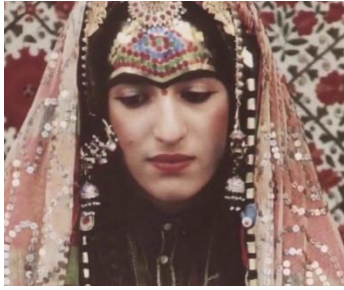
The responses to our 8-part series, "Walking the Valley of the Shadow" on Jewish ways in death and mourning were particularly heartfelt and moving as participants thanked us for opening up conversations about very challenging topics and providing Jewish teachings, practices, and wisdom on these as well as practical guidelines on how to approach them.

Community Partnerships

We have partnered with numerous organizations in the Bay Area Jewish community from several synagogues and JCCs to Urban Adamah, The Jewish Community Library, KlezCalifornia, Frank [Senior] Residence, The Graduate Theological Union, The CJM, the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, and JFCS East Bay among others.

Our outreach to younger, more diverse audiences has focused on our "Lehrhaus Alehouse" program – events at places like the Beer Baron in Rockridge and Manny's Café in San Francisco, as well as other young adult hubs such as BASE-Bay. Through these programs and online communications (Instagram, GatherBay) we have reached over 350 people under 45 this year: a good start.

Sample Programs:



The Jews of Afghanistan,
@ Manny's Café



Exploring Hasidism; Jewish Views of Suicide
@ BASE-Bay



How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple
@ Beer Baron

We have placed an emphasis on serving our communities in some outlying areas such as Morgan Hill and Pleasanton, and have also continued to attract participants from outside the Bay Area, from Sacramento to New York, Israel, and Europe.

Programs and Teachers

We have offered a rich array of programs of outstanding quality with excellent teachers, drawing heavily from Bay Area Jewish Studies faculty as well as from academic institutions throughout the US and in Israel, and from among community rabbis, Jewish educators, artists, and leaders. We have offered several programs focused on pressing current issues in addition to our series on October 7th and the Gaza War, e.g. climate change and immigration.



October 7th & The Israel-Gaza War



The Ground on which We Walk



Welcoming the Stranger

Our Participants

- 86% of participants rated the program/s they attended as “excellent” or “very good.”
- 88% said that as a result of their participation in a given program, they are “very likely” or “likely” to attend another New Lehrhaus program.
- 60% of our students are veteran Lehrhaus Judaica/HaMaqom students. The newcomers have been very enthusiastic, far exceeding our expectations.
- 70% of students who did not self-identify as “already deeply engaged in Jewish life” responded to the statement “As a result of this program (or other New Lehrhaus programs), I am more likely to participate in another Jewish life experience” with “very likely” or “likely.”
- How participants self-identified:
 - Unaffiliated: 29%
 - Intermarried: 21%
 - LGBTQ: 13%
 - Sephardi/Mizrachi: 4%
 - BIPOC: 5%
 - Disabled: 12%

Former Soviet: 2%

Israeli: 3%

Not Jewish: 11%

- We have increased the number of programs geared to younger, more diverse audiences, at Urban Adamah in Berkeley, BASE and Beer Baron in Oakland, and Manny's Café in San Francisco. We are in the early stage of building a regular audience for these programs, with a total of 280 participants this year.
- Our social media has been managed by a new PT staff member - Social Media and Growth Manager. We now have 125 followers on Instagram and post regularly on various local message boards and Jewish-interest virtual groups.

Finances

Donations:

Three (3) "Mega Donors" contributed a cumulative sum of \$60,240

Nineteen (19) "Lamed Vavniks' Circle" (donors of \$1,000 & up) donated (cumulative) \$21,000

All board members contributed a cumulative total of \$10,575

135 individual donors' combined gifts: \$16,670

Grants:

We received \$183,000 in foundation grants in FY 23-24, two of them are restricted: \$10,000 for our "Walking in Valley of the Shadow" series and \$18,000 for a new website

Endowment Distribution: \$64,640

Tuition Income: \$54,600

In-kind Services: Executive Director and pro bono teachers: \$75,100

Board of Directors

Board Co-Presidents: Rabbi Judy Shanks & Prof. David Biale

Board members: Rabbi Raphael Asher (through 05/24), Rabbi Julie Bressler, David De Nola, Maxine Epstein (beginning 05/24), Sue Fishkoff, Katherine Haynes, Prof. Rachel Gross (beginning 05/24), Rabbi Yoel Kahn, Dr. Eitan Lev Kensky, Janis Plotkin, Fred Rosenbaum (through 05/24)

Dr. Ellie Shapiro, David Waksberg

Staff

Rachel Biale

Executive Director

Jim Mavrikios

Program Manager

Elle Aviv Newton

Social Media & Growth Manager