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jewishwisdomandwellness.org

Jewish Wisdom & Wellness festival integrates ancient learning with modern issues to offer new tools for growth and fulfillment

Thousands of Southern California participants expected at eight-day series of workshops, lectures, performances, movies and art exhibits

LOS ANGELES (April 21, 2015) – Jewish leaders and community members will explore the connections between Jewish wisdom and wellness during a citywide “Festival of Learning” devoted to a variety of notable subjects, including the wisdom of Jewish traditions on end-of-life decisions, movement as a healing art and a Jewish holistic approach to autism.

Jewish Wisdom & Wellness: A Festival of Learning (April 26-May 3) is co-hosted by **Cedars-Sinai** and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion **Kalsman Institute on Judaism & Health**. Rabbis, physicians, scholars, musicians and community members will take part in more than 95 free lectures, classes, musical performances and workshops across a broad stream of Jewish thought and practice.

The events will highlight important themes around wisdom, prayer, family and community. They will be held at Cedars-Sinai, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), synagogues, Jewish community centers, and other locations throughout the Los Angeles region.

“Jewish tradition has sustained our people for thousands of years and we want to share that wisdom with others.” said Joel L. Kushner, PsyD, director of the HUC-JIR Kalsman Institute of Judaism and Health. “After the experience of my father’s recent death, I wish I had been able to attend some of our workshops to help prepare me to face such difficult choices.”

The festival officially kicks off Sunday evening with “Glass Half Full: Jewish Responses to Life’s Challenges.” a panel discussion at Cedars-Sinai with four prominent Los

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Angeles rabbis, moderated by Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the *Jewish Journal*. They will address issues that include aging, infertility and optimism.

Some festival offerings:

- TorahTrek Hiking Retreat - The Center for Jewish Wilderness Spirituality
- Just Harvest: How Our Food-Buying Decisions Can Change the World - Netiya
- Counting the Days: Storytelling with East Side Jews
- Queer Bodies, Queer Text and Rockin' LGBTQ Identities – JQ International
- Green Burial is Jewish! Values and Options Around Our Final Disposition
- Angelina's 'Jewish Gene' - Sharsheret
- You Don't Have to be An Addict to be in Recovery - Beit T'Shuvah
- Oy Vey! Can I Be Orthodox and Gay? - Eshel
- What it Means to go to War, and What it Means to Heal Through Art: A Jewish Vets Perspective
- Biblical Sex for Our Modern Lives – Moshe House
- Sacred Conversations: Learning How to Have End of Life Conversations in Your Family and Facilitate Them with Other Families

The inaugural festival, two years ago, featured a wildly successful memorial tribute to the late composer and musician Debbie Friedman. This year's closing concert, "Soul Journey," brings together one of her spiritual offspring in the Reform Jewish world, Josh Nelson and Neshama Carlebach, daughter of legendary rabbi and musician, Shlomo Carlebach, who has also forged her own healing path with music. Carlebach and Nelson are each superstars in their own right and together they are electrifying.

"The idea that drives Jewish Wisdom & Wellness is that healing and spirituality are no longer confined to the periphery of Jewish life," said Jonathan Schreiber, Cedars-Sinai's director of community engagement. "In fact, these 95 events are proof that Judaism is a powerful resource that provides both hope and wellness to people in all stages of their lives."

To hear about the week's themes, click on the following videos: **glass half full**, **wisdom**, **healing**, **optimism**, **storytelling**, **Refuah LA** and **aging**.

Additional information is available at www.jewishwisdomandwellness.org.

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