



# VOICE OF SHAI

5779



SPRING 2019

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[WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG](http://WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG)



Dear SHAI Community:

Here we are in spring 2019, No Ruz 1398 just behind us, and Passover 5779 right ahead. How rapidly it all flies! Even as Passover reminds us of the exodus of the Jewish people from the bonds of slavery, the secular calendar reminds that it has been forty years since the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in the *enghelab* which caused a contemporary exodus and diaspora of our people. Like many of you, I often reflect back to the foresight and strength of all our families who struggled mightily to leave Iran and start anew here in the United States. SHAI's board and founders serve as a beacon of education and support as our community continues to face the opportunities and challenges of acculturation in the United States while fortifying our proud, three-millennial heritage of Persian Jewry.

This season, SHAI Young Families NYC held a huge festive Purim event for families with young children in partnership with the Iranian Jewish Center at Park East Synagogue. The Town of North Hempstead Senior Social Center was the site of a Celebration of Life and special Purim celebration for our matriarchs and patriarchs, which supplemented the weekly programming. SHAI also hosted Professor of religion and history Dr. Saba Soomekh in a fascinating and informative talk about Persian Jews' history and future held at Congregation Beth Hadassah. Once again, SHAI convened our annual panel on education with local schools at the public library, and a vital panel with Iranian Mothers Association, IMA, at Great Neck Synagogue regarding drug abuse and rehabilitation in the Jewish community. SHAI again sponsored the second annual Nassau County No Ruz commemoration at the County Legislature. SHAI spearheaded a magnificent No Ruz concert and art exhibit with UJA and Temple Beth-El.

This past winter, SHAI Young Professionals held another smashingly successful party in New York City which attracted hundreds of our young singles. It is remarkable that SHAI underwrites all the costs associated with these events and does not charge youth an entrance fee since SHAI is devoted to supporting our youth's socialization. Also this past winter, SHAI Young Families NYC held a fun Hanukkah event for families with young kids, participated in Champions for Charity to continue to raise our profile while doing not-for-profit work, and successfully applied for a United Jewish Appeal grant to engage and educate our teens in a day of learning and service with the Anti-Defamation League and Interfaith Nutrition Network on Martin Luther King Day. Other highlights included two beautiful concert performances by Israeli-Persian singer Maureen Nehedar at Temple Israel of Great Neck and at the Senior Center.

Whatever comes next, SHAI remains your Jewish Community Center without walls. SHAI partners with multiple synagogues, civic, and community groups as you can see from the list of events and partners above. Next, we look forward to coordinating with UJA on its Common Point Queens initiative, as you will read in the pages that follow. Always, your financial support for SHAI underwrites the critical year-in year-out needs of our need-based scholarship student applicants, campers, and the many attendees at the Town of North Hempstead Senior Social Center.

In the months to come, SHAI will embark upon an Oral History Project, launch a periodic series of presentations by medical doctors, support our matriarchs and patriarchs at the Town of North Hempstead Social Center, and march proudly in the Celebrate Israel Parade.

Take pride in our community and join us!

On behalf of the entire SHAI Board, my family, and myself, I extend to you our very best hopes for a healthy, joyous and peaceful Passover as we revisit exodus and our treasured Persian Jewish heritage this Pesach.

Be well,  
Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni  
SHAI



## 40 YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTION: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

This March, SHAI sponsored an educational event at congregation Beth Hadassah exploring the past, present, and future of Persian Jews by Professor Saba Soomekh of UCLA. She discussed emerging from a "suitcase" generation to the trauma, to the unique issues each generation faces in America, to the current diversity and engagement. Soomekh believes that 80 years from now the community will still be distinct if families prioritize Persian Jewish culture, language, arts, and literature. The full presentation is available online at

<http://www.shaiusa.org/15-shai-articles/73-videos>

The Great Neck News article is available at

[https://theislandnow.com/great\\_neck/soomekh-explores-persian-jewish-past-present-and-future/](https://theislandnow.com/great_neck/soomekh-explores-persian-jewish-past-present-and-future/)



## SHAI YOUNG FAMILIES NYC CELEBRATES PURIM

This Purim, SHAI Young Families along with The Persian Jewish Center of Manhattan and Park East Synagogue, sponsored a superheroes and princess themed children's program. The event included a puppet show, music, face painting, magic show, balloon blowing, make your own superhero and princess picture frames, a costume contest, Megilla reading, and dinner. Hundreds of adorable children enjoyed Purim together.



## SHAI AT TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD SENIOR SOCIAL CENTER CELEBRATIONS



SHAI Senior Social Center attendance continues to impress. In addition to regular weekly programs, they also take part in festivities. This past January, the Social Center celebrated Tu B'shvat Celebration of Life, and featured a concert by Arash. This March our matriarchs and patriarchs celebrated No Ruz and Purim with live music, prizes, and performances by North Shore Hebrew Academy students. Also in attendance were Town of North Hempstead supervisor Jodi Bosworth, Nassau County Legislator Ellen Birnbaum, Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Veronica Lurvey and Lee Seaman, and Receiver of Taxes Charles Berman and Clerk Wayne Wink. Photos courtesy of Town of North Hempstead.

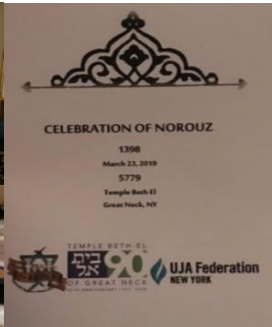




# SHAI'S NO RUZ ART EXHIBITION AND CONCERT

On the evening of March 23, SHAI united the community in the first-of-its-kind No Ruz celebration through a breathtaking art exhibit and live musical concert at Temple Beth-El. Guests socialized and enjoyed wine and hor d'oeuvres as they explored the two rooms full of art work by artists from the community. The art exhibit featured diverse art including Persian art, still life, modern, abstract, nature, and even a family tree dating back to 1700s! It also featured Mr. Harooni's extraordinary figurines made from seas shells from the Caspian Sea. The second half of the event featured an incredibly moving live concert with SHAI Board member Tania Eshagoff-Friedberg on the piano playing nostalgic Persian melodies along with a string trio ensemble and world-famous percussionist, and vocalists Cantor Raphael Frieder, Cantor Isaac Janfar, and Cantor Vlad Lapin. The night ended with the entire room breaking in applause and standing ovation that led to an encore. Marking 40 years since the revolution, our community was united in an awe-inspiring night of art, music, and celebration of No Ruz. The Great Neck News article is available at

[https://theislandnow.com/great\\_neck/hundreds-attend-persian-new-year-celebration-in-great-neck/](https://theislandnow.com/great_neck/hundreds-attend-persian-new-year-celebration-in-great-neck/)

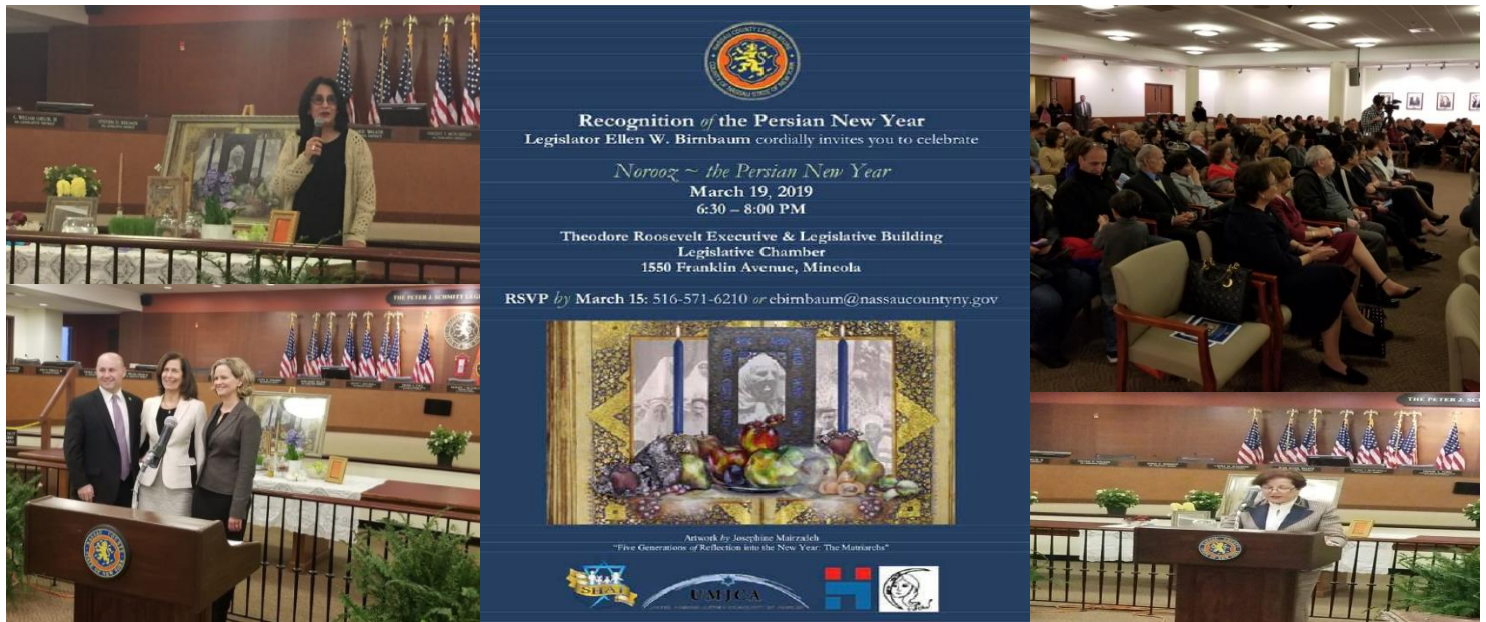




# SHAI SPONSORS SECOND ANNUAL NASSAU COUNTY NO RUZ CELEBRATION

On the evening of March 19, invited by Nassau County Legislator Ellen Birnbaum, over 150 Nassau County residents celebrated No Ruz, the Persian New Year, at the Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building in Mineola. The event

included a Haft Seen No-Ruz Ceremonial table, a musical performance, and poetry readings. SHAI sponsored traditional No-Ruz refreshments including fresh and dried fruits, nuts, and pastries.



## SHAI FEATURED ON MA VA SHOMA NO RUZ SPECIAL CELEBRATION



SHAI programs were featured in a No Ruz special airing of Ma Va Shoma on Wednesday, March 20 and Friday, March 22. The airing included a sit-down with SHAI president Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni in conversation with host Yafa Soleimani about SHAI's 27 years of service to the community, support for students, families, senior citizens, and Israel.

## SHAI IN THE COMMUNITY

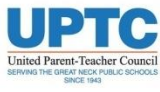


SHAI is delighted to participate in the launch of UJA's forthcoming initiative to offer a range of social services to the Persian Jewish community at Common Point Queens, the Samuel Field Y in Little Neck.



# SHAI CONVENES ANNUAL EDUCATION FORUM

On March 18, together with United Parent Teacher Council, SHAI convened its annual education forum. SHAI and UPTC have partnered for over a decade regarding subjects important to families with students of all ages and in all school settings. This year's event took place at the Great Neck Main Library and drew parents, adolescents, and children from public and private schools who attended to learn about what students are asking their school health educators, and how to address these tough topics. The forum discussed how to calmly and confidently respond to children's tough questions, start meaningful and regular conversations with children so they return for more, locate and use resources to stay current on youth topics like sexuality and social media, and infuse family values into conversations so children stay well-informed, healthy and safe. The event featured speaker Amanda Perez Leder, MPH. The panelists included Superintendent of Great Neck Schools Dr. Teresa Prendergast, and Health Department Chairs of Great Neck North and South Middle and High School, Michelle Sicurella, Jennifer Dipalo, Kathleen Mueller-Carpenter, and Jane Callaghan, respectively. A question and answer session followed the presentation.



**SHAI and UPTC PRESENT:**  
an educational forum for parents of teens

## How To Make The Tough Topics Easier

(What our kids are asking their health educators in our schools)

**Monday, March 18, 2019**  
**7PM SHARP\* - 9PM**  
**Great Neck Main Library**  
**Community Room**

**In this workshop, you will learn to:**

- Calmly and confidently respond to your child's toughest questions.
- Start meaningful and regular conversations with your children so they keep coming back for more.
- Infuse your family's values into conversations so children stay well-informed, healthy and safe.
- Locate and use resources (books, technology, etc.) to keep current on youth topics like sexuality and social media.

\*Question and answer session to follow panel discussion.  
To request translation services, please email [gsa@shai.org](mailto:gsa@shai.org)

\*Doors open at 6:45pm and program starts promptly at 7pm.

### FEATURED SPEAKER:



**AMANDA PEREZ LEDER, MPH**  
Director & Founder of CHAT (Communicating about Health and Tough Topics)

### PANELISTS:

**DR. TERESA PRENDERGAST, ED. D.**  
Superintendent,  
Great Neck Public Schools

**MS. MICHELLE SICURELLA**  
Health Department Chair  
North Middle School

**MS. JENNIFER DIPALO**  
Health Department Chair  
South Middle School

**MS. KATHLEEN MUELLER-CARPENTER**  
Health Department Chair  
North High School

**MS. JANE CALLAGHAN**  
Health Department Chair  
South High School

### PLANNING COMMITTEE:

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Superintendent, GNSPS

**DR. STEPHEN LANDO**  
Act. Superintendent for Secondary Education,  
GNSPS

**PARGOL KHADAVI**  
SHAI Educational Affairs Chair

**MICHELLE AHDOOT**  
UPTC President

**LORE BETH SCHWARTZ**  
UPTC Total Community Involvement Co-Chair



# SHAI SPONSORS SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND REHABILITATION PANEL

On March 11, SHAI together with Amudim and IMA, hosted a panel on substance abuse and addiction in the Jewish community at Great Neck Synagogue. The panel addressed how to be aware of substance abuse and addiction, how to prevent it within the community, and how to respond to it. Featured speakers were Clinical Director of Amudim Myriam Lankry, LCSW, Nassau County Police Department Commissioner Patrick Ryder and Inspector Christopher Ferro, and Vigilant Fire department EMT.

**JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF:**

# AWARENESS PREVENTION RESPONSE

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & ADDICTION 101  
WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES  
WHAT CAN WE DO?

**Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**  
8:00 pm

**Great Neck Synagogue**  
26 Old Mill Road,  
Great Neck, NY

**FREE ADMISSION**  
Men and Women are welcome  
Light refreshments will be served

For more information contact:  
Farangis Sedaghatpour 917-756-5320

**SPEAKERS:**  
Myriam Lankry, LCSW  
Clinical Director of Amudim  
Commissioner Patrick J. Ryder  
and Inspector Christopher Ferro  
From the Nassau County Police Dept.  
EMT Guest  
From Vigilant Fire Dept.

**"I was there, I have overcome"**  
A firsthand perspective

Amudim Community Resources provides support and comprehensive case management to those impacted by sexual abuse, substance abuse and addiction. Amudim is leading the battle for community education, awareness, and confidential intervention. IMA's mission is to empower families through enriching programs related to parenting, health, and social matters. IMA is dedicated to strengthen and support the community bridging a bond between the older and younger generation.





## SHAI HOSTS MAUREEN NEHEDAR CONCERT

On the evening of December 18, 2018, SHAI co-hosted a concert featuring Maureen Nehedar at Temple Israel of Great Neck. In her first visit to the U.S. in 15 years, Nehedar performed magnificent traditional Jewish-Persian music and poetry, in addition to new compositions in Hebrew and Farsi to a fully packed Sanctuary. Nehedar was born in Iran, and moved to Israel as an infant with her family after the revolution. By reviving poetry and texts from Jewish sources Nehedar writes her own modern original compositions, and integrates them into her concerts along with traditional Persian folk lyrics. Nehedar is the only composer in the world who performs traditional Persian-Jewish music and poetry.

Nehedar's moving performance at Temple Israel was not her final one. Nehedar did a special and beautiful performance for SHAI Senior Social Center. She also did a meet-and-greet in a private residence.



## SHAI YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CHANUKAH PARTY

On Saturday night December 15, 2018, SHAI Young Professionals hosted another successful Chanukah Party at VNYL in NYC. The event included free entry and an open bar with Kosher wine. A special thank you to Galil Foods for donating the Mighty Peanut Puffs and Zweet Candy, and Jacques Torres Chocolates for donating the chocolates.



## SHAI YOUNG FAMILIES CHANUKAH EVENT

On December 2, 2018 SHAI Young Families and The Iranian Jewish Center of Manhattan hosted a Chanukah Party at Dylan's Candy Bar NYC. Dozens of families enjoyed donut decorating, face painting, make your own frames, balloon blowing, games, music, pizza, and ice cream sundays. A special thank you to sponsor families Adelipour, Friedberg, Gohari, Kashi, Oved, Sabed, and Waxman.





**APPLICATIONS  
FOR  
NEED-BASED  
EDUCATION  
LOANS,  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
ARE AVAILABLE AT  
SHAIUSA.ORG**

To date, over 1.3 million dollars in SHAI need-based loans, scholarships have been awarded. 91 students received SHAI's need-based education loans, scholarships last year including colleges, graduate schools, and day schools. SHAI is now accepting applications for next year. Please visit [shaiusa.org](http://shaiusa.org) for the application and more information.

**SHAI  
SEPHARDIC  
DAY CAMP  
2019**

SHAI is now accepting applications for Sephardic Day Camp Summer 2019.  
Teens ages 12-14  
Weekly Field Trips  
Basketball & Football Clinics  
Zumba. Bowling. Swimming. Arts & Crafts.  
Edible Art Projects. Music. Jewish Learning.  
Drone Training and Competitions.  
Spots are limited! Apply at [www.shaiusa.org](http://www.shaiusa.org)

**SHAI'S MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY LEARNING EVENT**

On January 21, in memory of Martin Luther King and observance of Tu B'Shvat, SHAI in partnership with UJA Federation of NY, the Anti-Defamation League, Temple Israel of Great Neck, Temple Beth-El of Great Neck, and Congregation Beth Hadassah sponsored a Martin Luther King Day Learning event for teenagers at Temple Israel of Great Neck. Students ate together, and packed lunches for the needy together in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King.





**SEND YOUR  
EMAIL  
TO  
INFO@  
SHAIUSA.ORG  
TO JOIN  
OUR  
MAILING LIST**

***MARK YOUR CALENDAR!***

- ❖ May 13, 2019, Doctors series launches on Health and Wellness.
- ❖ June 2, 2019, Celebrate Israel Parade - March with SHAI!



- ❖ Visit [SHAIUSA.org](http://SHAIUSA.org) for more coming attractions, videos, pictures, and news.

**DONATE TO SHAI  
SUPPORT SENIORS, CAMPERS, STUDENTS  
& SINGLES  
AT  
[WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG](http://WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG)**