

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER DAN KALB AND MAYOR SHENG THAO

ADOPT A RESOLUTION IN CELEBRATION OF MAY 2023 AS JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND HONORING JEWISH AMERICANS WHOSE SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP IN OAKLAND CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE VIBRANT AND JUST CITY

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans have been an important part of the American story and have greatly contributed to all areas of American life and culture since our nation's earliest days; and

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2006, the Federal Government proclaimed May as Jewish American Heritage Month, stating, "As a nation of immigrants, the United States is better and stronger because Jewish people from all over the world have chosen to become American citizens," and, since then, proclamations in support of Jewish American Heritage Month have been made by Presidents of the United States and by self-selected local jurisdictions annually; and

WHEREAS, generations of Jews fled from state-sponsored violence to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their families, and these immigrants have made invaluable contributions to American society in support of equality and civil rights through their leadership, advocacy and achievements; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans have distinguished themselves throughout American history in many areas of society including, but not limited to, medicine, scientific research, the humanities and the arts; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans connect to their Jewish identity in a variety of ways, such as culturally, ethnically, religiously and by respecting Jewish ethics and values¹; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans are ethnically, racially, socially, politically and economically diverse, and around 25 percent of Bay Area Jewish households include a person of

¹ <https://jcrc.org/blog/bay-area-jewish-identity-survey/>

color, increasing to nearly 40 percent of households if the head of the household is younger than 35²; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, Jewish Americans faced a dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents—36% higher than in 2021—including but not limited to physical attacks, vandalism, verbal and physical harassment, and hateful comments posted on social media³; and

WHEREAS, The City of Oakland shares an obligation to condemn and combat antisemitism whenever it exists, to include Jewish Americans in all facets of civic life, and to stand with the Jewish American community against hatred and bigotry in our city, state and country; and

WHEREAS, members of Jewish community should continue and expand their actions to stand up and stand with members of all communities who have been subjected to bigotry, hate and violence; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for education and practices that are culturally competent when describing, discussing, or addressing the impacts of being Jewish in all aspects of American society, including discourse and policy; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month offers Oakland residents an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions and challenges, and history of Jewish Americans locally and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Oakland City Council would like to honor the following individuals/organizations for their contributions to a more vibrant and just Oakland; and

WHEREAS, District 1 Councilmember Dan Kalb hereby honors and recognizes **Lisa Shulman Malul**. Lisa has been an outstanding asset for our communities in her time as Executive Director at Rebuilding Together Oakland/East Bay, working to prevent homelessness and preserve communities by providing services to lower income older adults and nonprofits who serve our low-income residents in need of home-building modifications and rehabilitations at no cost to them. Older, disabled and other vulnerable homeowners served by Rebuilding Together Oakland/East Bay are often unable to perform or afford home maintenance, which is why they are so crucial to our community. Previously, Lisa was the Executive Director of the Action Alliance for Children, based in the East Bay, and Director of the Global Healthy Child Care Project, leading programs such as “Child Care and Equality: A Dialogue on the Societal Value for Care” and “Talk Reach Read,” to improve childcare and literacy rates. An attorney by training, we applaud her tireless community service work throughout her career, and are thankful that Oakland has Lisa Malul to help preserve and improve our community; and

WHEREAS, District 2 Council President Nikki Fortunato Bas hereby honors and recognizes **Talya Husbands-Hankin** and her work advocating and organizing with Love And Justice In The Streets to advance more equity and uplift the voices, organizing and policy efforts of our unhoused neighbors toward a world where Housing is a Human Right. Love And Justice In

² <https://jewsofcolorfieldbuilding.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Counting-Inconsistencies-052119.pdf>

³ https://www.adl.org/resources/report/audit-antisemitic-incidents-2022?utm_campaign=fcasblsq2023&utm_medium=email&utm_source=whole&utm_content=e01

The Streets is an all volunteer-run organization, committed to increasing the capacity of unhoused Oakland residents by providing direct material assistance to individuals and curbside communities. Their work focuses on rapid response, organizing and solidarity and amplifying the issues impacting unhoused communities. LJIS's Rapid Response work focuses on visiting encampments regularly to provide solidarity and material resources for unhoused Oakland residents as they endure hardship, encampment closures and the daily struggles of surviving without housing. They respond to the urgent needs such as an unhoused neighbor in need of a tent, food, medical supplies or other material assistance, they do their best to arrange for those material needs to be met as soon as possible. LJIS's organizing and solidarity work focuses on centering the voices of unhoused people in all organizing and policy conversations concerning homelessness. They collaborate with leaders from other East Bay organizations such as the Homeless Advocacy Working Group, the East Oakland Collective, the Western Regional Advocacy Project and the Village to ensure that unhoused community members are included in strategic organizing and policy efforts to address homelessness. LJIS amplifies issues by working to bring media attention to the systemic injustices that are perpetrated against our unhoused neighbors, connecting journalists directly to unhoused residents with the goal of amplifying their stories to shift public understanding of the crisis; and

WHEREAS, District 3 Councilmember Carroll Fife hereby honors and recognizes **Temple Sinai and Temple Sinai Social Action**. Starting in 1875 as the First Hebrew Congregation in Oakland, the congregation grew its first home on 14th and Webster which held 500 people. Although after a brief move to San Francisco in the 1890's, Temple Sinai has been a strong fixture in Downtown Oakland for over 100 years. Its current facility, which includes an expanded school wing, new clergy offices and a new chapel, opened in the summer of 2010. Since the late 1990s Temple Sinai has undertaken numerous Social Action projects, including an award-winning Literacy Program in Oakland's public schools. The Rabbis and congregants have taken part in a wide variety of other community activities. Sinai Social Action serves as a hub for the congregation's commitment to the pursuit of justice and repair of our world. The committee initiates and facilitates opportunities for congregants to provide direct service to those in need (tzedakah) and to work for social justice (tzedek) through educational and advocacy activities. Senior Rabbi Mates-Muchin focuses her efforts in serving our community through teaching, worship, pastoral care, social justice work, and encouraging the recognition of the vast diversity within the Jewish community. As the first Chinese-American Rabbi, she has lectured broadly on the changing nature of the American Jewish community and how established Jewish institutions can become more inclusive. District 3 is truly grateful for the many years of service and dedication Temple Sinai and the Sinai Social Action Committee has given to our community; and

WHEREAS, District 4 Councilmember Janani Ramachandran hereby honors and recognizes **Zac Unger**. District 4 is proud to honor Zac Unger for his dedicated service to uplifting public safety in Oakland as a firefighter, community leader, and labor organizer. Mr. Unger has academic credentials in environmental sciences, is an Oakland native, father, and author of two books, and serves District 4 residents as a firefighter paramedic in Station 24. He is a powerful voice of action for wildfire prevention efforts, and has worked in the Oakland Fire Department for over 25 years. Mr. Unger is also the President of International Association of Firefighters Local 55, and a strong champion for workers' rights and labor issues in Oakland and beyond. As an Oakland community leader and frontline hero, Mr. Unger works to bridge silos across advocacy spaces, and fight for an equity-driven Oakland that serves us all; and

WHEREAS, District 5 Councilmember Noel Gallo hereby honors and recognizes **Kenneth Lupoff**. Ken has worked for the communities of Oakland for more than twenty years,

serving as chair of one of the Fruitvale area's Neighborhood Councils, and then as executive director of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation where he worked to promote equity and inclusion outcomes at parks throughout Oakland, and later worked for Councilmember Gallo to serve the communities of District 5. As a Jewish American, Mr. Lupoff's work is driven by the Hebrew term "tikkun olam" which translates to "repair of the world". Currently Mr. Lupoff works as the Associate Director of Business Development for RDA Consulting and works to advance tikkun olam precepts as president of the board at Peralta Hacienda Historical Park and as one of several leaders of the Friends of Brookdale Park, where he supports a program to provide free tennis lessons to the youth of East Oakland; and

WHEREAS, District 6 Councilmember Kevin Jenkins hereby honors and recognizes **Rena Rickles**, Principal at the Law Offices of Rena Rickles. Rena spent her first six years as an attorney serving as Staff Council to the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations. After gaining that experience, she opened her my private law practice Rena Rickles, Attorney at Law. By 1989, her practice focused exclusively on Land Use cases. Working extensively with community involvement, interaction with leaders and decision makers, and broad networking; combined with her legal skills made her formidable and uniquely suited to obtain the best possible results in the most controversial disputes. Throughout the past forty plus years of representing clients in Land Use cases, Rena has been exceptionally successful for her clients with a win-rate - of over 95%! Rena's resumé lets you know that she has certainly done it all and done it well. In Rena's career she has served as a Small Claims Judge in the Oakland-Piedmont-Emeryville Court, and as a Commissioner Pro-Tem in the Small Claims Division of the Oakland-Piedmont-Emeryville Judicial District. She has represented the Industrial Relations Council, Department of Industrial Relations Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CAL-OSHA) in compliance hearings and so much more. Rena is highly recognized throughout Alameda and Contra Costa County as one of the most effective land use attorneys and has earned that reputation by maintaining active contact/relationships with decision makers and staff planners and through consistent uncompromising standards of professionalism. Her quiet nature underlays her goals of seeking win-win, creative solutions, which enable her clients to achieve their desired result without resorting to expensive and often lose-lose litigation. The strongest testimony to Rena's work, is that her business is composed almost entirely of referrals from past clients, other attorneys, elected officials and commission members familiar with her work. Rena continues to be a fixture in the community that she calls home; and

WHEREAS, District 7 Councilmember Treva Reid hereby honors and recognizes The **Bay Area Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL)**. District 7 is thrilled to uplift and honor JCL whose work is fostering opening books, opening minds, and opening doors for our children to reach their full potential. The National JCL was founded in Boston by Leonard Fein in response to President Clinton's 1997 America Reads initiative, to ensure that every student could read at grade-level by the end of 3rd grade. Twenty years later the Bay Area JCL has done just that, reaching approximately 19,000 children and training thousands of tutors to help struggling young readers become confident and excited about books and learning. After working with a JCL tutor for one school year, most children achieve a year of reading growth often advancing more than one grade level! After the first JCL was launched it grew to partner with 50 schools, along with after-school programs and family-serving organizations. The Bay Area Jewish JCL has provided District 7's New Highland Academy students one-on-one literacy tutoring—it also utilizes parent partnerships to create consistent, caring, 1:1 relationships that support space for emerging readers in under-resourced schools. JCL also has 17 tutors working with kids in Oakland at other OUSD school sites. JCL tutors create safe learning spaces structured to pique students' curiosity, which in turn

enhances self-confidence and academic growth. JCL continues partnering with stakeholders to ensure it serves the Bay Area as a community-connected, effective organization as it weathers the ever-greater impacts on the American education system

WHEREAS, At-Large Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan hereby honors and recognizes **Dev Noily**. Dev Noily serves as Senior Rabbi at [Kehilla Community Synagogue](#) on the Oakland/Piedmont border, in the Lisjan Ohlone territory of Huchiun. Kehilla's members are co-creating a joyful and liberatory Jewish community that lives in solidarity and mutuality with communities pursuing equity, justice and healing. The synagogue works closely with Love & Justice in the Streets, the [Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity](#), and the [Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails](#), among other social justice groups. Rabbi Dev is the co-founder of [Jews on Ohlone Land](#), inviting all non-Indigenous Jews who live Lisjan territory to join in the healing and transformation called for by the [Sogorea Te' Land Trust](#) and the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation, as we learn to live as good guests on this land. Rabbi Dev is one of the only transgender/non-binary rabbis serving a congregation as senior clergy; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Sheng Thao hereby honors and recognize Elana Metz. For nearly two decades, Elana Metz has served the City of Oakland as a fiercely committed social changemaker, educational leader, and school partner dedicated to the health, safety, and success of young Oaklanders. Elana currently serves as a co-founder and co-director of the Moving Forward Institute, which focuses on improving the emotional outcomes of our young people, and Metz also provides critical leadership as the Vice Chair of the Alameda County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission. Mayor Sheng Thao is proud to honor Elana for their work and dedication to the City of Oakland; and

RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland hereby declares the month of May as **Jewish American Heritage Month** in appreciation of the achievements and varied contributions made by local members of the Jewish community; and the Oakland City Council and the Mayor of Oakland call upon all residents to celebrate Jewish Americans who have helped to weave the fabric of our country and community, and support opportunities to learn more about Jewish American history and culture; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland will continue efforts to confront antisemitism and other forms of hate and bigotry impacting members of the Jewish community, support local education about the diversity of our Jewish American community, and integrate Jewish American culture into selected programs, activities, and ceremonies during the years ahead.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –
ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____
ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

