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THE BRONFMAN FELLOWSHIP Announces Its 37th Cohort

Outstanding High School Students from Diverse Jewish Backgrounds Selected to Study Together in America and Israel and Join a Dynamic Community of North American and Israeli Leaders

May 2023 -- The Bronfman Fellowship has selected its [37th cohort](#) of intellectually curious 11th-graders from across North America, among them the founder of InvestNow Clubs, a nonprofit which brings investment clubs to schools in historically disadvantaged communities; a published author whose historical research has been featured in publications such as Scholastic's Best Teen Writing; the founder and cohost of a podcast focused on political and social issues and how they apply to young people; and the founder of Good For Good, a club where students and faculty examine mass incarceration and read and respond to poems written by incarcerated individuals.

The 26 Fellows, who come from a broad spectrum of the Jewish community, will participate in a transformative, free Fellowship-year experience beginning with a summer in the U.S. and Israel, where they explore a rich, complex tapestry of Jewish texts and ideas in conversation with one another and a faculty team of leading rabbis, educators, and artists. They also interact with a group of Israeli peers who were chosen through a parallel selection process as part of the Israeli Fellowship, *Amitei Bronfman*. The new class of Fellows will join a vibrant, lifelong alumni community that includes some of today's most exciting Jewish writers, thinkers and leaders.

[The Bronfman Fellowship](#) was founded in 1987 by Edgar M. Bronfman, z"l, formerly CEO of the Seagram Company Ltd. and a visionary Jewish philanthropist. Mr. Bronfman passed away in December 2013.

"Edgar Bronfman would have relished the opportunity to get to know this year's Fellows," said Becky Voorwinde, Executive Director of The Bronfman Fellowship. "They are a passionate, inquisitive, talented and incredibly bright bunch. I look forward to seeing them challenge and inspire one another and their communities throughout their lives."

Adam R. Bronfman, president of The Samuel Bronfman Foundation, said he was "impressed and heartened" by the new cohort. "The energy, diversity and intellectual firepower of this group speak to my father's belief that young people can change the world in ways that previous generations couldn't have envisioned," he said. "My father treasured the Fellowship as an investment in the Jewish future, and I am proud to continue his work. It brings me joy to witness the magic that happens when Jews from all backgrounds come together to access Jewish wisdom and have important conversations. I look forward to getting to know the 2023 Fellows personally, and to joining some of those conversations myself."

Following a competitive application process, the 2023 Fellows are from 13 states and Canada, and represent a wide range of Jewish backgrounds, including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Just Jewish and secular/culturally Jewish.

The Fellowship promotes the study of Jewish texts, traditions, history and culture as a way for Fellows to expand their perspectives and engage with one another and the world. The Fellows will study with an esteemed faculty, including Hannah Kapnik Ashar, Director of Faculty, a fellow in Hadar's Advanced Kollel and at The Center for Rabbinic Innovation; Arielle Rivera Korman, Community Manager, co-founding director and the founding executive director of Ammud: Jews of Color Torah Academy and a Rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary; Rabbi Megan GoldMarche, Executive Director at Tribe 12; Dr. Evan Parks, faculty member at Columbia University; Dr. Ariel Picard, a teacher and research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute; and Rabbi Dr. Micha'el Rosenberg, faculty member at Hadar.

The Bronfman Fellowship alumni community includes some of today's leading Jewish cultural creators, deep thinkers, moral voices, and community builders. There are now over 1400 Bronfman Fellowship alumni across North America and Israel. Among them are 9 Rhodes Scholars, 4 former Supreme Court clerks, 20 Fulbright Scholars, 37 Wexner Fellows and 29 Dorot Fellows. Leaders of note among Fellowship alumni include Daniel Handler, a.k.a. Lemony Snicket, author of the best-selling *Series of Unfortunate Events* children's books; Matti Friedman, author of *The Aleppo Codex*; and Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum, Rabbi and co-founder of the pluralistic Jewish community, the Kavana Cooperative, in Seattle. Others include Judy Batalion, author of *The Light of Days*; Anne Dreazen, Director for Egypt, Israel and the Levant at the Department of Defense; Itamar Moses, Tony award-winner for *The Band's Visit*; and Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz, Director of Tefillah and Music at Hadar Institute. Alumni also include entrepreneurial Jewish leaders who have founded organizations like Keshet, Sefaria, and YidLife Crisis; and serve in central leadership roles at major organizations like The Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, the Jewish Women's Archive, Central Synagogue, Hillel International and The Foundation for Jewish Camp, to name a few.

Our Israeli alumni have also ascended to positions of influence in government, civil groups, the private sector and cultural institutions. Israeli alumni include attorneys at the State Justice Department, noted journalists, successful filmmakers (including a Tribeca Film Festival winner), political advisers to Members of Knesset, members of elite IDF units and university lecturers.

About The Bronfman Fellowship

The Bronfman Fellowship, the flagship program for outstanding young Jews, taps 26 North American teenagers at a formative point in their lives, the year before college, when an intense, immersive experience will have the most impact. The Fellowship is an opportunity unlike any other: a space where young people who want to see the world through a lens broader than their own can explore issues with depth, candor, and joy, while forming friendships to last a lifetime. Fellows wrestle with major issues in contemporary Jewish life, meet some of today's most influential figures, and expand their perspectives as they build community with those representing different backgrounds, worldviews, and approaches to Jewish life and practice. The year begins with a five-week summer study program that takes place in the U.S. and Israel and includes an encounter with a parallel cadre of outstanding Israeli teenagers. Programming

continues throughout Fellows' senior year of high school with a series of lively in-person and virtual seminars, gatherings, and projects. Upon graduating high school, the Fellows join an alumni community that has become a model for lifelong engagement, as Bronfman alumni continue to exchange ideas and inspire one another to contribute their talents, vision, and creativity to the Jewish community and the world.

The Fellowship, founded in 1987 by Edgar M. Bronfman, z"l, reflects Mr. Bronfman's early and impassioned belief that for the Jewish people to thrive, Israeli and American Jews from a variety of backgrounds must be engaged in open and creative discourse with one another. The alumni embody Mr. Bronfman's vision that young people who are enriched and energized by their Judaism are poised to contribute not only to Jewish life, but to improving the world.

For more information about The Bronfman Fellowship, including how to apply, please visit www.bronfman.org.

Contact Information

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Following is a list of 2023 Bronfman Fellows. Pictures available upon request.

California

Burlingame, CA. Jackson Flagg is a junior at Design Tech High School, a public charter school located in Burlingame, California. He was raised in an interfaith household and currently serves as a madrich and Hebrew tutor at his local synagogue, Peninsula Temple Shalom. Jackson is also interested in investing and takes finance-related courses at his local community college. He researches companies for stock pitch competitions and leads the Design Tech Financial Literacy club. Additionally, Jackson is a founding student council member and was elected as a representative in the first year that the council was implemented at Design Tech. Jackson is also a volleyball player and currently plays for a club team. He is captain of Design Tech's newly created boys' volleyball team.

Los Angeles, CA. Rustin Kharrazi is a 16-year-old living in Los Angeles, California. He attends Palisades Charter High School, a public school in the Pacific Palisades, where he is heavily involved in ASB Leadership, hosting the school's "Leadership Show" for the student body. He is part of a number of other school organizations such as California Youth & Government, where he practices debate and mock government with teens around the state, California DECA, where he competes in entrepreneurship events, and a number of theatre productions, including 'Matilda The Musical'! Rustin is a Persian Jew, with both of his parents having immigrated from Iran. He has grown up in a reformed Jewish household with a more cultural than religious tie to Judaism. He is excited to embark on a transformative experience through the Bronfman Fellowship where he hopes to gain a new perspective on his connection to being Jewish and on life as a whole.

Los Angeles, CA. Rami Melmed is a junior at Shalhevet High School in Los Angeles. He is an aspiring musician who enjoys playing bass at music venues and charity events around Los Angeles. He co-founded The Rif, the Shalhevet band, and co-directs the Teen Minyan shabbat service at his synagogue, B'nai David Judea. He founded Noteworthy LA, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing instruments and musical instruction to underserved children and teens in Los Angeles. He is also a pickleballer.

San Diego, CA. Raphael Delgado is a 16-year-old junior at The Bishop's School in La Jolla, California, where he regularly performs in theatrical productions and choral concerts and plays varsity volleyball. Highly dedicated to his studies, he takes a special interest in the humanities and loves exploring philosophical topics in all of his classes. Outside of the classroom, he is an avid singer. He has participated in regional and state-wide honor choirs and a choral festival at Carnegie Hall, holds a singing position as a choral scholar at All Souls' Episcopal Church's choir in San Diego, and leads his school's very own barbershop quartet. As a student leader at his school, he has served on student government since 8th grade and currently represents the student body on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Advisory Board and other decision-making bodies. Currently, he attends Congregation Dor Hadash in San Diego.

Connecticut

New Haven, CT. Rebekah Oppenheimer is a conservative Jew from New Haven, Connecticut. She's a boarding student at the Hotchkiss School, but is currently spending her junior year abroad studying in Rennes, France. Rebekah is the News Editor of the Hotchkiss Record, plays on the varsity soccer and ultimate frisbee teams, and is heavily involved with Hotchkiss's community service organization and Hillel.

Illinois

Chicago, IL. Miriam Niestat attends Kenwood Academy High School in Chicago, Illinois, where she is a member of the women's lacrosse team and plays trumpet in the jazz band. Miriam serves as president of Kenwood's Best Buddies Chapter and is an officer of Youth and Government. She is a current fellow in the Jewish Women's Archive Rising Voices Fellowship, for which she writes blog posts and engages in meaningful conversations with peers about Judaism and its many facets. Miriam is a member of Chicago's Jewish Council on Urban Affairs' Youth Organizing Caucus and is passionate about social justice.

Kentucky

Lexington, KY. Akiva Himelhoch is a junior in the Math, Science, and Technology Program at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Lexington, Kentucky. He attended the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School through 6th grade in Potomac Maryland. He celebrated his Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Ohave Zion in Lexington.

Massachusetts

Brookline, MA. Maor Baker attends Gann Academy, a pluralistic Jewish high school. At Gann, he is co-captain of the varsity cross country team, where he earned all-league honors in the Massachusetts Bay Independent League. He also performs as an attorney for the Gann Mock Trial team -- they are competing in the Massachusetts Bar Association Mock Trial State Championship on March 28th. He co-founded and leads Gann Academy's partnership minyan, a traditional minyan with more inclusive opportunities. Outside of Gann, Maor is an Act & Impact Ambassador for the New England Israeli-American Council (IAC), working on Israel advocacy and teen engagement.

Sudbury, MA. Mason Klein is a 17-year-old from Sudbury, Massachusetts. Mason has been enrolled at The Rivers School in Weston since sixth grade. In addition to a rigorous course load, Mason is involved in sports and music, and serves in multiple leadership roles on campus. While at Rivers, Mason founded Good For Good, a club where students and faculty examine mass incarceration and read and respond to poems written by incarcerated individuals. This work supports an educational program provided by Washington D.C.-based organization Free Minds. Good For Good also has virtual discussions with former inmates, which offers an opportunity to broaden the understanding of the U.S. prison system. Mason plays soccer and lacrosse at Rivers and is a member of the Honors Big Band, where he plays drums and participates in the Pit Orchestra. Mason is a member of Congregation Or Atid, a conservative egalitarian synagogue in Wayland, MA. During his freshman year, Mason participated in the Jewish Teen Foundation of Greater Boston operated through Hebrew College. As a Sophomore, Mason was selected as a Diller Teen Fellow for the Boston cohort, a year-long international leadership development and identity program. Mason is honored, grateful, and excited to participate in the Bronfman Fellowship this summer and into his senior year!

Maryland

Baltimore, MD. Noa Rone is an 11th grade student at Beth Tfiloh High School in Baltimore, Maryland. Passionate about faith and bridging the religious divide in her city, Noa founded B'more United, an inter-faith teen service corps aimed to unite Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Baltimore teens in service and friendship. Noa also established and leads the Stronger Together: Women Empowerment Club at her school, a club dedicated to strengthening and uplifting women in her community. Noa's commitment to justice, politics, and policy work has made her a strong leader and captain of her school's mock trial and Model UN teams. She is also an artist and a devoted volunteer at Imadi, a Maryland organization supporting chronically ill children and their families. Noa has earned awards including the Principal's Award, multiple Model UN Awards, mock trial circuit champion, and has been selected as a Baltimore Diller Fellow and a Bronfman Fellow.

Missouri

Chesterfield, MO. Benjamin Kruger, a member of the Bnai Amoona congregation in Saint Louis Missouri, has been chosen as a 2023 Bronfman fellow. Benjamin attends Parkway Central High School and serves as the Junior year class President. When he's not running varsity track, or

playing Lou Fusz club soccer, Benjamin finds himself playing the piano. He is a contributing writer for the *Jewish Light* and loves to write articles about his experiences in Israel. As an alum of the program Cultural Leadership, he participated in a transformational journey over the summer across America to learn about oppression and prejudice through the lenses of the Black and Jewish experiences. Benjamin considers *Top Gun* to be one of the greatest cinematic masterpieces of all time, and finds time spent cuddling with his cat to be of significant value. With the heart of a poet and the mind of an academic, Benjamin truly is a commendable young man.

Saint Louis, MO. Danielle (Dani) Wasserman is a junior at University City High School in Saint Louis, Missouri. She is a Conservative Jew and belongs to Congregation B'nai Amoona. She is passionate about improving financial literacy knowledge in low income communities and is the founder of InvestNow Clubs, a nonprofit which brings investment clubs to schools in historically disadvantaged, lower income communities. She also works at McDonald's every week taking orders in the drive through and is interested in observing the operational efficiencies of McDonald's. In her free time, she enjoys playing tennis and piano, and learning about U.S history.

Nevada

Reno, NV. Max Grinstein is a junior at The Davidson Academy in Reno, Nevada, and he is also dual-enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno. He has a long-time interest in the topic of prison journalism and has worked as an editorial intern since 2021 at the Prison Journalism Project. Max is just completing his two-year term on the Nevada Youth Legislature where he held the position of vice-chair, and he is the founder and co-editor of his school's newspaper, *The Phoenix Focus*. In his free time, Max loves historical research, and his resulting writing has been published in Scholastic's Best Teen Writing 2022 (about the first uncensored prison newspaper, *The Angolite*); *The Concord Review* (about the diplomatic history of the island of Corfu); and *The History Teacher* and *The Texas Historian* (about the Fifth Circuit Four, a group of federal judges who helped to desegregate the South).

New York

Brooklyn, NY. Sasha Foer attends Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, New York. This spring semester, he is attending The Mountain School in Vermont. He is the creator and host of the podcast "So Passes Life," founder and president of his school's chess club, plays the violin, and is on the varsity basketball team. During the summer he has interned at the podcast "Israel Story" for the past two years, as well as worked at the bookstore Shakespeare and Co in Paris, and interned at Fishkill Farms.

Brooklyn, NY. Talia Kantor Lieber, from Park Slope, Brooklyn, is a student at The Dalton School; a dancer and choreographer; and a student journalist. She spent the summer of 2021 asking red state colleges if they would pay abortion related travel expenses, compiling a report that drew national attention. Her other interests include dialogue facilitation and the history of education. She loves reading novels, going to concerts and walking around New York City. A member of

Congregation Beth Elohim, Tali is looking forward to immersing herself in the Bronfman Fellowship and leaving her smartphone behind.

Brooklyn, NY. Aviyah Ravin is a student at Friends Seminary where she is the leader of the Jewish Culture Club as well as the leader and co-founder of the Mixed Affinity Group. Over the summer she was an intern at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office where she assisted State's Attorneys by conducting legal research, preparing memos, partnering with counsel regarding case management and procedural requirements, and aiding courtroom proceedings. Her Jewish identity is very important to her and over the years she has been a camper at Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake, a student at Hannah Senesh Community Day School, and a congregation member of Park Slope Jewish Center.

Brooklyn, NY. Rivka Tamir is a junior at The Abraham Joshua Heschel School in New York City. She lives in Crown Heights and is an active member of the local Jewish community. She is part of the orthodox minyan at her school, belongs to Romemu Brooklyn, and is passionate about intergenerational engagement through the Dorot program, focused on connecting Jewish elders and teens. Rivka is very active in her school life; she serves as a Vice President of the student government, a peer advisor to underclassmen, a regular writer for her school's newspaper, as well as a competitive member of both Mock Trial and Debate. Outside of school, she pursues Jewish learning with the Shalom Hartman Institute Teen Fellowship Program. Rivka is passionate about civic advocacy, working on drives for voter pre-registration, informational programs on voting rights, and alongside The Civic Spirit Student Delegate Program to garner civic engagement among teens. This past summer she participated in the SDNY Summer Justice Institute, earning recognition as the winner of its mock trial competition. She is a proud alum of Luria Academy of Brooklyn and Eden Village Camp.

New York, NY. Odelya Bergner-Phillips is a junior at Hunter College High School. She is co-captain of the mock trial team, last year's New York State Champions, managing editor of the official school newspaper, a writing mentor, and a member of the Jewish Cultural Awareness Club. She is the daughter of Israeli parents, one of them a former kibbutz member, and has been raised secularly and culturally Jewish. She is very interested in politics, which she has studied in summer courses, as well as having worked on political campaigns. She is a music and theater lover, and, whenever possible, performs singing, plays guitar, and participates as an actor or a member of the production team in creating shows.

New York, NY. Julia Sprung attended Jewish day schools in New York City until the age of thirteen, at which point she made the great leap to secular education. Now, she attends the Brearley School, a secular, private, all-girls school in Manhattan. At school, she leads the Jewish affinity group and edits a book review publication inspired by the London Review of Books. Next fall, she will be a captain of her school's Cross-Country team; she is also a highly enthusiastic member of her school's Classics Club. When not puzzling over Taylor polynomials or the origins of Hungarian nationalism, she can be found running through hallways or doubled over in laughter. Sometimes, though, she just perches on her bed with a good book.

Vestal, NY. Ellie Friedman is a junior at Vestal High School. She is co-captain of the VHS Mock Trial Team, plays varsity tennis, and runs varsity track. She attended Hillel Academy, African Road Elementary and Vestal Middle School. She is a member of Temple Israel. She has attended Camp Ramah in the Rockies, where she spent six weeks in the Jewish Outdoor Leadership

Institute. With help from the Johnson City Senior Center and the Vestal Public Library, Ellie founded Between the Lines, an intergenerational book discussion group. This project followed her participation in Civic University's Youth Collaboratory Fellowship Program. She was also a Rising Voices Fellow, a program of the Jewish Women's Archive in Boston.

White Plains, NY. Hannah Mani-Abraham. From Greenburg, New York, Hannah Mani-Abraham is an eleventh grader at The Leffell School in Hartsdale. At her school she is a captain of the varsity track team and will be a captain of the varsity soccer team this fall. Hannah has attended sleep-away camp for seven years, three of which have been at Ramah in the Berkshires. She is a conservative Jew and an active member in her synagogue, Beth El of New Rochelle, where she reads Torah, is the Vice President of Israeli Affairs on the USY board, a teacher's assistant at the religious school, and a teen mentor for younger Torah readers. Hannah is also a Teen Leader in HaZamir, an international Jewish choir. In her free time, Hannah enjoys learning to drive, reading, cooking, watching movies, and spending time with her family and friends.

Oregon

Eugene, OR. Merav Lafer-Kirtner (she/her) is a student, poet, and coder from Eugene, Oregon. She contributes to and works as an editor for jGirls+ Magazine and as an associate editor at her school newspaper, the *Axe Magazine*. She taught herself the basics of coding (in Python), and enjoys reading ancient Greek tragedies (as well as modern fiction and poetry). She was the teen member of her local synagogue and the youth member of her local library board. In her free time, she likes to spend time with her friends and recently took up knitting.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA. Nathan Kahana, a student at The Haverford School for Boys in Philadelphia, participates in numerous extracurricular activities. Besides taking part in his school's Classics Club, Jewish Student Union, Debate Team, Cross Country team, and Human Relationships Seminar, he has attended Morasha Kollel, an intense summer program devoted to the study of Jewish legal texts. He is also an active member of his neighborhood's Orthodox Jewish institutions.

South Carolina

Fort Mill, SC. Daniel Shames is a reformed Jew from Fort Mill, SC. He grew up near Belmont, NC and is a member of Temple Emanuel. Daniel is a Junior at Fort Mill high school, and he loves science and math. He also volunteers at Fort Mill's EMS station as well as Piedmont Hospital in Rock Hill, SC.

Texas

Houston, TX. Joshua Danziger is a junior at the Emery/Weiner School in Houston, Texas. He is passionate about understanding the greater world and his role in it. Joshua founded and cohosts The Young Perspective podcast where he discusses political and social issues and how they apply to people his age. The Young Perspective has published over 115 fifteen-minute episodes and has over 9000 listens to date. Joshua shows particular concern for the rising rates of antisemitism in the US. In response, Joshua established the Jewish Security Alliance to train Jewish teens in active shooter and antisemitism preparedness. He has trained 100+ teens in Houston and is expanding his training to cities around the country including Dallas, Hartford, and Cleveland. At school, Joshua is responsible for multiple leadership positions. He works to represent the student body as High School Vice President and continues to compete in the Model United Nations Club. Joshua has won multiple best and outstanding delegate awards at national competitions for his debate and communication skills in Model United Nations. He is the founder of his school's annual Model United Nations conference where he gathered 126 students from 4 local schools to compete. Joshua continues to be involved in his community participating in multiple youth groups, attending summer camps, and volunteering at his community center called Aishel House.

Canada

Nanaimo, BC. Samuel Zambilowicz is dedicated to social justice and environmental stewardship, and has a demonstrated belief and commitment to compassion and pluralism. He is an accomplished, nationally-ranked rock climber; an entrepreneur and founder of a rock-climbing chalk company; and in his spare time manages to be an accomplished pianist. Sam is thrilled to join a group of extraordinary future leaders this summer as part of a lifetime network.