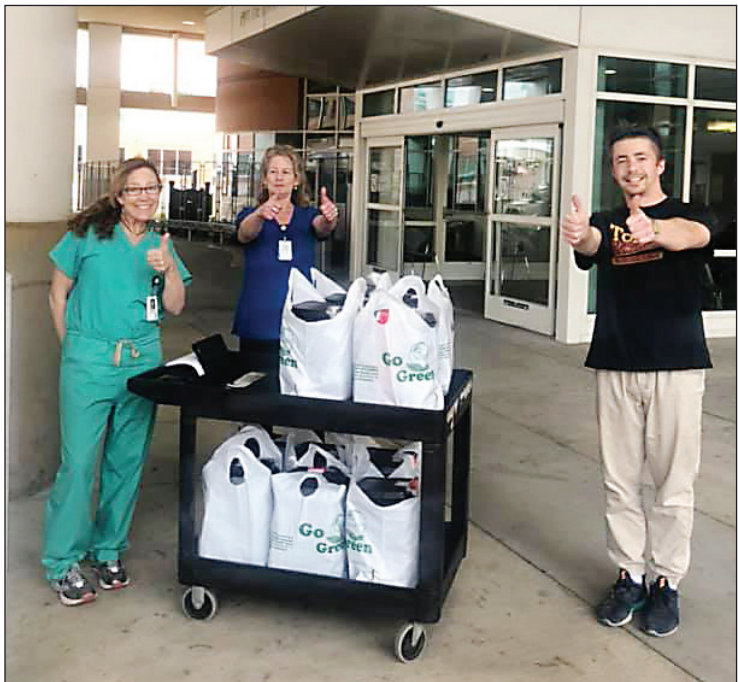


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On the front lines in Denver

Food deliveries to first responders



Denver Health ICU first responders from the intensive care unit give a thumbs-up sign after receiving a meal from Feed the Front Lines, initiated by Denverite Nathan Schweid.

By CHRIS LEPPEK
IJN Assistant Editor

Many have discovered in the past few weeks that watching the news might best be something taken in small measures. Whether delivered via the internet, the television or in print, the news these days is almost uniformly a chorus of despair and fear — death tolls climbing, infection rates soaring, ventilators and protective equipment insufficient, first responders overworked and hyper-vulnerable to the coronavirus themselves. Like so many others, Nathan Schweid, a youthful member of the Denver Jewish community, found

himself vulnerable to the strangely addictive — and not necessarily good — habit of indulging in too much bad news. “I was finding myself becoming

‘Give them something to eat!’

obsessed with the news,” he told the **INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS** last week, adding that he found the saturation coverage overwhelming and discouraging. Until he had an idea. Rather than surrender to hopelessness and woe, he decided to do something. “I eventually saw that there was an opportunity to help,” he says. “I realized that this would be the perfect outlet for me to spend my time and energy.” In less than a week, he realized that it was succeeding beyond his wildest dreams.

Schweid’s idea is beautiful in its direct simplicity. Realizing the incredibly hard work that medical first responders — paramedics, nurses and doctors — are doing to keep up with ever-increasing numbers of coronavirus patients, not to mention the risk of exposure they face daily, he decided to do something to bring a touch of comfort and pleasure to their arduous and perilous days: Give them something good to eat. On March 27, he set up a non-

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ZOOM *bris*

By LARRY HANKIN
IJN Associate Editor

When eight-day-old Ezra Samuel Knaster was welcomed into the covenant with his *bris milah*, there were only four people in the room, including Ezra. Ezra’s virtual *bris* — via Zoom — was another sign of the strange times of social distancing and quarantine. It was also a statement that no matter the obstacles, nothing can stop some revered rituals of Jewish life. Ezra’s parents Melanie and Brandon Knaster knew that they were having a boy before he was born March 26, so they planned on having a *bris*, on his eighth day of life — health permitting — with all the usual elements of such a celebration. That meant a large guest

A *bris* with four people in the room

list, honors for family members and, of course, food. By mid-March, the COVID-19 pandemic started changing life as we knew it in Colorado and elsewhere with suggested, then mandated, social distancing. Melanie and Brandon began to worry how they were going to make a *bris* for their soon-to-be born son. When the social distancing guidelines became so restrictive that not even a gathering of 10 people was allowed, the Knasters realized they would need to have a *bris* with only the baby, the *mohel* and themselves in the room.

BRIS
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Rep. Rose in National Guard

NEW YORK (JTA) — New York Rep. Max Rose has deployed with the National Guard to help set up field hospitals in the city, among the hardest hit in the nation by the coronavirus pandemic. Rose, a freshman Democrat representing Staten Island and parts of southern Brooklyn, is the first member of Congress to serve in the military during the crisis. He’s a captain in the Army

ROSE
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Comforting the sick at Rose



Rabbi Jeffrey Kaye, head of chaplaincy services at Rose Medical Center, must remain outside intensive care units holding patients with COVID-19.

By ANDREA JACOBS
IJN Senior Writer

Rabbi Jeffrey Kaye, Rose Medical Center’s director of chaplaincy services and its Jewish chaplain, creates space in an unending day to describe his sacred work in the midst of a pandemic. His faith-based resiliency in one of the worst moments in recent history is so moving that it encourages the heart to face another day — no small feat for too many. Kaye initially expresses his gratitude to Rose and its staff: the doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, respiratory therapists, team leaders and a host of others. “They are our unsung heroes,” he says

repeatedly. Pre-COVID-19, Kaye woke up “excited and energized to welcome my multiple roles and the opportunity to touch and interact with

It’s COVID — and all the rest, too

patients, families and staff.” Every night he returned to the arms of his family with a sense of fulfillment. Over the past couple of months, the mounting awareness of America’s vulnerability to COVID-19 swept through the hospital, which monitored conditions in Colorado and the US, and adopted CDC precautions. As things worsened over the last

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Anti-Semites exploit the virus

By CNAAN LIPSHIZ
JTA

PARIS — Anti-Semitism has plagued French society for centuries, flaring up in times of crisis — especially during epidemics. In the 14th century, for instance, Jews were massacred in France during the Black Death epidemic after they were blamed for spreading the disease by poisoning water wells.

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NEWS: Denver initiative

‘Feed the Front Lines’

Nathan Schweid raises funds to purchase restaurant meals, delivers to first responders

FEED FRONT LINES
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profit called Feed the Front Lines and set up a Facebook page to raise funds for it.

The idea is to purchase meals-to-go from hard-pressed Denver restaurants, forced by the state’s stay-at-home order to close their dining rooms, and bring them to medical first responders in the places where they work.

The idea caught on immediately.

‘Everyone is looking for some outlet to help, and this has proven to be an awesome way for people to do that’

On April 3, a week after opening up on Facebook, Feed the Front Lines had raised more than \$12,000 in donations, mostly from people living in the metro Denver area. So far, more than 250 contributors have joined the effort.

“We’ve now served almost 300 meals,” Schweid says. “There’s been some very quick traction and it’s been awesome to see.”

At first, the enthusiastic response was a surprise to Schweid, who has virtually no experience in charity work, food service or medicine, the three fields involved in Feed the Front Lines.

The 25-year-old is, rather, a businessman, the owner and founder of the Junk Trunk, a Denver-based firm that collects and hauls off things that people no longer want. The son of Joe and Melissa Schweid of Denver, he is a Denver native and graduate of Denver Jewish Day School

and CU, where he studied political science.

He loves the entrepreneurial aspect of starting a new business just as much as the physically demanding and hands on nature of the work itself, Schweid says.

“It’s been a perfect fit,” he says of his vocation, “and it’s taught me so much about business and about myself.”

The Junk Trunk is still functioning despite the economic erosion caused by the pandemic.

“The business is still very much



Nathan Schweid, founder of Feed the Front Lines

er non-profit organizations doing similar work and got hospital contacts.

He also had friends working at two Denver hospitals who helped coordinate the effort by setting up times for meals to be delivered and ensuring that the deliveries were conducted according to safety and social distancing guidelines.

So far, Feed the Front Lines has made such deliveries to first responders at Denver Health and Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center, “and I plan on working with more and more hospitals,” Schweid says.

The program has purchased meals from six area restaurants, “and they’ve been giving us awesome, awesome discounts. It’s cool because restaurants are going through such a difficult time themselves.”

Depending on the hospital and on the day, he says, donated meals have included breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The first beneficiaries were members of the “huge system” at Den-

ver Health, including 120 paramedics and emergency command personnel.

The paramedics are busy and exhausted, Schweid says, and deal constantly with the stress of uncertainty.

“Their shifts are 10 hours long and they often work overtime. They’re receiving 320 calls a day. They’re unsure when the peak of the virus will come and they’ll need most hands on deck. They just don’t know what’s next.”

On April 3, Feed the Front Lines delivered breakfast to staffers at Presbyterian-St. Luke’s, including nurses and doctors working in the hospital’s ICU and pediatric ICU sections, the COVID-19 unit and emergency room.

Often, the first responders find it difficult to dedicate enough time to enjoy a meal the normal way, Schweid says.

“They often take a couple bites, go back to work and then come back in half an hour.”

Such challenges notwithstanding, he adds, the first responders are genuinely grateful for what’s being done for them, over and above the nourishment of a good meal.

“It brings them a mind shift to be able to sit down and enjoy a meal,” says Schweid, “and it’s such a contribution to lift the spirits of everyone there.”

“I told the nurses the other day that we had over 250 people who had contributed. That just blew them away; it really impacted them big time.”

Like so much else going on during the pandemic, Schweid has no idea how long it will be possible, or necessary, for Feeding the Front Lines to go on.

At present, he’s taking it one day

at a time.

“Our goal now is to be able to provide 50 meals a day through April, but hopefully more. I’d like to see it go up to 100 per day. We’ll see how our budget grows.”

Nor has he yet figured out a way to publicly give recognition to its present and future contributors. “I’m thanking everyone individually on Facebook,” says Schweid, who hopes that this method will be sufficient, at least at present.

He is confident, however, that the simple act of giving and the satisfaction of participating in the effort will help people feel better.

“So many people have so much uncertainty right now,” he says. “This is such a feel-good story in so many ways.”

He hopes that Feed the Front lines will not only feed first responders, but feed hope itself, for the responders, for the restaurants who are preparing the meals and for those seeking to help them both out.

It is certainly doing that for him, Schweid says.

“I think it’s really important to know that there is good being done right now,” he says.

“And it’s a cool thing to be able to rally a community,” he says of the program’s supporters.

“I learned that at Denver Jewish Day School,” says Schweid, who attends services at BMH-BJ. “I learned the impact just a couple of people can have on a community, lifting people’s spirits, even if it’s just temporary.”

Those who want to help fund Feed the Front Lines may visit: <https://www.facebook.com/donate/2485093135084690/>.

Chris Leppek may be contacted at IJNEWS@aol.com. ■

BDS: ‘Boycott Israel . . . except for vaccine’

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The founder of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel said that if Israel invents a vaccine for the coronavirus, those who reject normalization with Israel by boycotting it may still be given the vaccine.

Omar Barghout made the comments in a Facebook live Arabic-language webinar Sunday, April 5, “BDS and Anti-normalization: The most important strategies to fight against the deal of the century, even in the time of COVID-19.”

Barghout said that Israel should

not be allowed to use the coronavirus crisis to maintain relations with the Palestinian Authority and with other Arab states.

He also said, according to the Jerusalem Post: “If you use medical equipment from Israel — it’s not a problem. Cooperating with Israel

against the virus — to begin with, we do not consider it normalization.”

The same is true of other medical breakthroughs, he said. “If Israel

finds a cure for cancer, for example, or any other virus, then there is no problem in cooperating with Israel to save millions of lives,” he said.

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From the healthcare workers who are working tirelessly to care for the infirmed to the grocery store clerks who are filling the shelves so we have the supplies that we need, your newspaper is highlighting the good works that are being done for our community.



Rep. Max Rose deploys to the National Guard

ROSE
From Page 1

National Guard and will serve as an operations officer on Staten Island.

Rose served as an active duty officer in Afghanistan in 2012-13.

Rose made the announcement of

Rose was on active duty in Afghanistan, 2012-2013

the April 1 deployment the previous day in a tweet.

“There is no doubt in my mind that as the greatest city in the world, we will overcome this,” Rose tweeted.

In a statement on his congressional website, Rose said:

“Like many Guardsmen and women across the country, I am leaving my day job to serve our nation. Unlike them, I will be able to return to it in order to vote if needed.”

This is the first time Rose has been deployed to the National Guard



Rep. Max Rose

since he was elected to Congress in 2018. He was last called up in 2018 for training exercises. He left the campaign trail for the two-week training.

The House is expected to be out of session until April 20, though votes dealing with coronavirus crisis relief could be called during the next three weeks. ■