

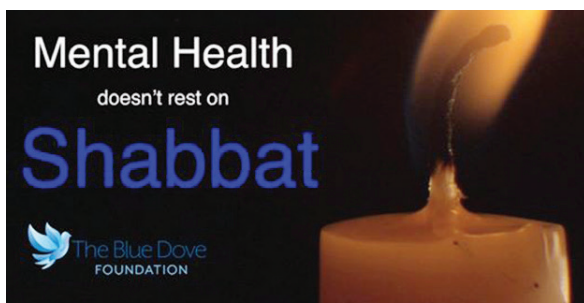
# Two Shabbats in May focus on mental health

May is Mental Health Month and an ad hoc group is organizing Mental Health Shabbat in KC. The theme is centered around a discussion of mental health in support of those striving toward recovery and those who love and support them.

On Saturday, May 11, Rabbi David Glickman will deliver a sermon on mental health during Shabbat morning services at Congregation Beth Shalom.

On Friday evening, May 17, families are welcome to sign up to host others at their Shabbat table or request to be a guest at a Shabbat dinner. Part of the discussion around the table will be about mental health. A resource guide with discussion questions and other mental health topics will be available.

The idea of Mental Health Shabbat came from The Blue Dove Foundation in Atlanta. It was created to help address the issues of mental health



and/or substance abuse in the Jewish community in Atlanta and across the country.

This KC effort is sponsored by Bike for the Brain, an event for mental health; Congregation Beth Shalom; Greater KC Mental Health Coalition/JFS; and MHAH (Mental Health Association of the Heartland).

Those interested in hosting a Shabbat dinner or being a guest should call Congregation Beth Shalom at 913-647-7281 or email rabbiassistant@bethshalomkc.org for more information.

If planning to host, be prepared to indicate how many guests you can accommodate. Those who are already hosting a Shabbat dinner and wish to have a resource sheet available may also contact Beth Shalom.

Contact Sheila or Ken Sonnenschein with any questions at ksonshine6@gmail.com.

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

One in five Americans will experience a mental health condition in a given year. May has been designated as Mental Health Awareness Month, calling attention to the importance of mental health treatment, support and services.

Jewish Family Services provides support for those dealing with mental health challenges through counseling and other resources. JFS is also home to the Greater Kansas City Mental Health Coalition, comprised of more than 25 organizations working together to counter the stigma often associated with mental illness.

If you or a loved one is experiencing mental health issues, visit [jfskc.org/services/counseling-and-mental-health](http://jfskc.org/services/counseling-and-mental-health) or call 913-327-8250.

# Renee Perelmutter appointed director of KU's Jewish studies program

The KU Jewish studies program has announced that Professor Renee Perelmutter has been appointed to the role of director beginning this summer. The term of appointment runs from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2024, at which time she would be eligible for reappointment. Perelmutter succeeds Professor John Younger, who retires this summer, having served as director of Jewish studies since 2013.

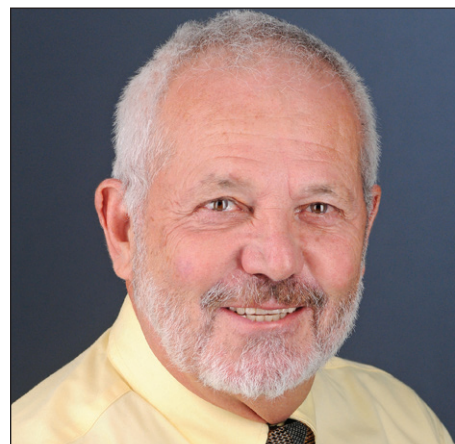
Perelmutter is an associate professor at KU and is jointly appointed between Jewish studies and Slavic languages and literatures. Prior to this appointment, Perelmutter served as director of undergraduate studies in both Jewish studies and in Slavic languages and literatures. Over the years, Perelmutter developed and taught a variety of courses on Jewish cultures and languages, including Narratives of Jewish Life, Jews and Slavs, Secular Jewish Culture, Jewish Folklore, Languages of the Jews, and others. Perelmutter enjoys advising and mentoring students, and these efforts have been recognized by the Michael J. Young award for undergraduate advising. Twice Perelmutter has been selected as a finalist for the K. Barbara Schowen undergraduate research award for supporting undergraduate research in Jewish Studies and beyond.

Perelmutter holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hebrew University, Jerusa-



Renee Perelmutter

lem, and a Ph.D from the University of California, Berkeley. Perelmutter's research focuses on Jewish languages and Jewish-Slavic language contacts, with a special focus on migration, discourse on religious topics and issues of language and gender. The professor's current book project examines Hebrew-Russian bilingualism in the speech of post-Soviet Jewish migrants to Israel. Perelmutter has also published on Jewish Russian discourse, Jewish multilingualism and humor, medieval translations from Hebrew into Slavic languages, and topics in Russian linguistics. An additional avenue for Perelmutter's productivity is creative writing, as a published author



John Younger

of fantastic literature working under the byline R. Lemberg. In recent years, Perelmutter's works have been a finalist for the Nebula, the Crawford and other awards for fiction and poetry, much of which explores Jewish and LGBTQIA+ themes. Perelmutter has brought some of this expertise to KU through teaching, advising and events: in 2018, for example, KU hosted Rena Rossner, a prominent Israeli literary agent and author of Jewish fantasy, as a part of the Symposium on Writing Jewish. Perelmutter is looking forward to further collaborations that can benefit Jewish studies, KU and the wider Jewish community.

Perelmutter succeeds Younger, who

worked to develop the Jewish studies program over the last five years. Younger oversaw the development of a major in Jewish studies at KU and made it possible for students to officially study abroad in Israel. He brought several speaking events to Lawrence including the Midwest Jewish Studies Association Conference in 2015; a five-speaker symposium highlighting the work of David Katzman in 2017; and a workshop/symposium on Jewish writing featuring Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg in 2018. Prof. Younger oversaw two Israeli Schusterman Visiting Assistant Professors, and made possible the hiring of Assistant Professor Rami Zeedan, a specialist in Israel Studies, who joined Jewish studies last fall. Perelmutter will continue the development of the Jewish studies Program by focusing on strengthening its foundations, supporting and further developing the Hebrew Language program, and aiding the development of its existing faculty, students and staff. Perelmutter also intends to focus on proactive student recruitment and outreach to Jewish studies alumni and the wider Jewish community. Perelmutter hopes to continue using connections in the literary community to bring prominent and emerging Jewish writers to the KC area.

For more information on the Jewish Studies Program, visit: <https://jewishstudies.ku.edu>.