

Proclamation

“Jewish American Heritage Month” originated with a 1980 Joint resolution of Congress “to authorize and request the President to issue a proclamation designating “Jewish Heritage Week.” On April 24, 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first “Jewish Heritage Week” proclamation.

In 2006, both Houses of Congress passed resolutions urging the President to proclaim the national observation of a month recognizing the Jewish-American community. Since 2006, Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden have all issued proclamations for “Jewish American Heritage Month” encouraging the people of the United States to learn more about Jewish heritage and the contributions of Jewish people throughout the history of our nation.

In 1790, President George Washington expressed his support for religious freedom for Jewish Americans in a letter to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, affirming that the newly founded United States would give “to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance”, and offered his wishes that “the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants.”

Today, Jewish Americans of many backgrounds, traditions, and identities, including generations of immigrants, represent a diverse and vibrant community that has helped shape American history, culture, and society. Through profound achievements across literature, music, science, education, government, law, the arts, and more, Jewish Americans have enriched the civic and cultural fabric of communities across the nation, including here in the City of Alameda.

Jewish Americans have also contributed significantly to public service and civil rights, standing in solidarity with other communities to advance equality, justice, and democratic values.

Since our Nation’s founding, more than 1,000,000 Jewish-American men and women are estimated to have served in the United States Armed Forces, participating in every major American conflict, and reflecting the bravery and valiance of Jewish-American service members, including those that made the ultimate sacrifice, to defending the Constitution, freedom, and the American way of life.

The history of Jewish Americans includes both remarkable achievements and periods of hardship, including discrimination and antisemitism, reminding us of the importance of vigilance, remembrance, and education.

The City of Alameda recognizes the importance of honoring Jewish heritage, celebrating diversity, and standing firmly against antisemitism and all forms of hate. We affirm that education and awareness are among the most effective ways to combat antisemitism and hate, and commit to working to ensure the safety, security, and dignity of Jewish Americans in all aspects of their lives, including the workplace, college and university campuses, synagogues, and at home.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, hereby proclaim May 2026 as

Jewish American Heritage Month

in the City of Alameda, and call on elected officials, faith leaders, and community members to condemn and counter all acts of antisemitism, and uplift Jewish stories and voices, I also encourage all residents to learn about, celebrate, and honor the rich history, culture, and contributions of Jewish Americans, including by participating in these activities presented by the Alameda Free Library:

Jewish American Heritage School-Age Storytime

Tuesday, May 12, 4:30pm-5:30pm, Bay Farm Island Library

Stories, discussion, and craft activities exploring Jewish American identity with educator Natalie Abber.

Celebrating Irving Berlin Saturday, May 16, 2:00pm-3:00pm, Main Library

Family sing-along celebrating America's beloved songwriter with songs, activities, and stories. This program is presented alongside Ms. Jenn from Temple Israel of Alameda.

Film Screening: Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire

Thursday, May 28, 4:00pm-5:30pm, West End Library

PBS documentary exploring Elie Wiesel's life, writings, and fight against injustice. Free copies of *Night* available while supplies last.

Live Performance: Vocolot

Sunday, May 31, 2:00pm-4:00pm, Main Library

A cappella vocal ensemble blending folk, jazz, and cantorial traditions. Multilingual performance promoting peace and reconciliation.

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor

