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# JEWISH COMMUNITY VOICE

Published by the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey [www.jewishvoicesnj.org](http://www.jewishvoicesnj.org)

## Lions Gate welcomed Jewish educator Chai Respes at Black History Month lecture

Lions Gate residents packed Commons Hall on February 6 to hear moving personal experiences from Chai Respes, an educator of Judaism and a proud Jew of color.

“I am particularly honored to speak at Lions Gate this year because I want to recognize these residents who have lived through the challenges of discrimination,” said Chai. “Every day I work to create spaces for shared dialogue, to have the difficult conversations, and to help people come together to

support each other as allies so we can create positive change for everyone.”

Chai’s grandfather, Rabbi Abel Respes, was the first rabbi of color in Philadelphia. He founded Adat Beyt Moshe Congregation in North Philadelphia in 1951, and later moved it to Elwood, NJ. His uncle, Rabbi Gamliel Respes, continued the family’s work to educate others about the challenges faced by Jews of color in this region. Now Chai, the third generation, is currently a rab-

binic student at Rabbinical Seminary International, and carries on his distinguished family legacy to bring more inclusion and understanding to all through education and dialogue.

“The only way we can bring communities together to solve big problems is to start looking at people as ‘brothers,’ instead of labeling people as ‘others,’” said Chai. “Everyone has a responsibility to make the world a better place by advocating for ‘us,’ not just for



**The Respes family at Lions Gate: Tonia, Teo, Shai, Kobe, and Chai, with Sam Becker, and Meredith Becker, Lions Gate COO.**

themselves. I live by the motto, *l’dor v’dor*—making connections between generations. The

more we reach out to others, the more we discover a commonality among us all.” ▲