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HINDA INSTITUTE

Everybody Deserves a Second Chance

Kislev 5787 *Winter 2026*

Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman, Director
9401 Margail, Des Plaines, IL 60016
(708) 374-7711 Fax (847) 296-1823
info@hindahelps.com www.hindahelps.com

CHANUKAH

The Power of Education to Preserve a People

The Hebrew word *Chanukah* shares its root with *chinuch*, meaning education. This connection reveals a deeper message of the Chanukah story: the struggle was not only to preserve a people, but to protect the knowledge, values, and traditions passed from one generation to the next. The Greeks understood that education was the key to Jewish survival. By forbidding Torah study and imposing their own culture, they sought to change not just what Jewish children learned, but who they would become. Yet, even under persecution, Jewish parents and teachers continued teaching in secret. According to tradition, children hid their Torah learning beneath the appearance of playing dreidel. Their determination reminds us that even in the darkest times, the light of learning and our Jewish identity cannot be extinguished.

The Talmud teaches, "Be vigilant with the children of the poor, for from them Torah will emerge." Education should never be a privilege reserved for those with advantages. It is a pathway to opportunity, dignity, and a different future. Research confirms that education also greatly improves the lives of those detained,including strengthening economic stability and employment prospects, building confidence and problem-solving skills and reducing the likelihood of returning to prison. A major 2018 meta-analysis found that people who participate in correctional education are 28% less likely to return to prison. Education can do more than change an individual's circumstances; it can break cycles of hardship and transform the future of an entire family.

At Hinda Institute, we believe everyone deserves the opportunity to begin again. Through our Reentry Education Program, peer support training, and opportunities for personal growth, we help individuals rediscover their abilities, rebuild their confidence, and see possibilities beyond their past. Like the Chanukah candles, every opportunity to learn adds light where there was once darkness. When we invest in education, we do more than teach a skill or open a door—we help restore hope, rebuild lives, and illuminate a brighter future for the next generation.

This Chanukah let us remember that lighting a candle is an act of hope, and education ensures the light continues.

WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY AND HEALTHY CHANUKAH





FROM SETBACKS TO NEW BEGINNINGS

Congratulations, Isaac Yampolsky, on Your Acceptance to Graduate School!

Sometimes the hardest part of incarceration isn't serving the sentence. It's coming home and trying to rebuild a future that suddenly feels out of reach.

For Isaac, education had always been central to his life. Isaac had just been accepted into a master's program and was ready to take the next step. But incarceration changed everything. Despite his education and abilities, finding steady employment became a constant struggle. He could find work for a while, but moving forward and building the future he had envisioned seemed almost impossible. His dreams hadn't disappeared, but he didn't know how to reach them.

Hinda helped him believe that his story wasn't over. Through Hinda's support groups, educational programs, and community, Isaac found acceptance, encouragement, and people who understood his struggles. He began to see that his past did not have to define his future. He eventually joined Hinda's Peer Support Training Program, transforming his own experience into an opportunity to help others navigate similar challenges.

And now, a dream once thought lost is alive again! With Hinda's encouragement and advocacy, Issac has been accepted into a local master's degree program. He hopes to focus his studies on justice-system-impacted populations and improving opportunities for people who are rebuilding their lives after incarceration.
Issac's journey is a powerful reminder that reentry is about more than finding a job or a place to live. It is about restoring hope, rediscovering potential and helping someone believe that their future is still waiting for them.

Congratulations, Isaac! Your next chapter is just beginning. We are proud to walk beside you.

CHANUKAH LIGHT FOR EVERYONE

Bringing Joy to Children Who Need It Most

For Katie, this Chanukah was different. Daddy wasn't home. She was living with her grandparents, who were struggling to make ends meet amid mounting legal bills. She missed her father, her old home, and the feeling that everything was okay. More than presents, she wished her family could be together again. When a Chanukah package from Hinda arrived, Katie was overjoyed, immediately opening it and eating the cookies! For a little while, she could forget her worries and simply be a child, experiencing the joy of Chanukah. For children with an incarcerated parent, the holidays can bring loneliness, financial hardship, and the pain of an empty seat at the table. These invisible victims of incarceration deserve to feel remembered, included, and loved. Through our partnership with the Decalogue Society, generous benefactors, and dedicated volunteers, Hinda delivers Chanukah packages filled with gifts, treats, and menorahs, and hosts an annual celebration that brings families together. Our chaplains also bring the light of Chanukah behind prison walls, sharing menorahs, doughnuts, and holiday treats with incarcerated parents and loved ones. This year, the number of children receiving gifts has doubled. Please donate to our Chanukah program. Your generosity can bring a child joy, a reason to smile, and the comforting reminder that they are not forgotten or alone.

In the News

EVERYBODY DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE!

Each year, Hinda raises $300,000 to rebuild lives through free education, counseling, legal guidance, prison visitation, and crisis support. Thanks to our fundraising teams and generous supporters! On Nov 22 and 23, please donate and be part of the impact.

DONATE ♥ **www.hindahelps.com/SecondChances**

- ***STAY CONNECTED:*** *Check out our new link for upcoming advocacy opportunities, jobs, and more! www.hindahelps.com/stayconnected*
- ***Thank You to Our Amazing Packing and Delivery Volunteers!***
- ***Bring Light into Your Life*** *– December 2: Discover the meaning of Chanukah with Rachmiel Drizin.*
- ***Chanukah Party*** *– December 6: Join us at 9361 Potter Rd., Des Plaines!*
- ***Movies with Mike*** *– December 16 & 23: Join Movies with Mike for Ushpizin, a touching comedy about faith, incarceration, and unexpected guests.*

HINDA EDUCATION PROGRAM

Learn, Grow, Rebuild — Exciting New Courses to Inspire Hope and Empower Yourself!

At Hinda, Reentry education is about much more than learning facts. It is about understanding ourselves, knowing our rights, developing practical skills, and discovering new possibilities for the future. The results speak for themselves - 93.5% of participants surveyed reported that they were coping better with life as a result of Hinda's education program. What began with just three participants 3 years ago has grown into a thriving national program serving more than 100 unique participants over the past four years, with an average of 25 people attending our monthly classes. Our courses combine three essential elements: psychosocial education to understand and overcome personal challenges, practical legal education to understand civil rights and navigate complex systems, and skill-building opportunities to help participants move forward professionally and personally. Thanks to the hard work and creativity of our education team; Karlene, Breanna, Mike, David, and Abby and Education Committee (Marc, Mindy, Sarah), this year's curriculum is especially exciting. We've brought together recognized experts, experienced practitioners, and people with lived experience to create a program with something for everyone.Here's a taste of what's coming!

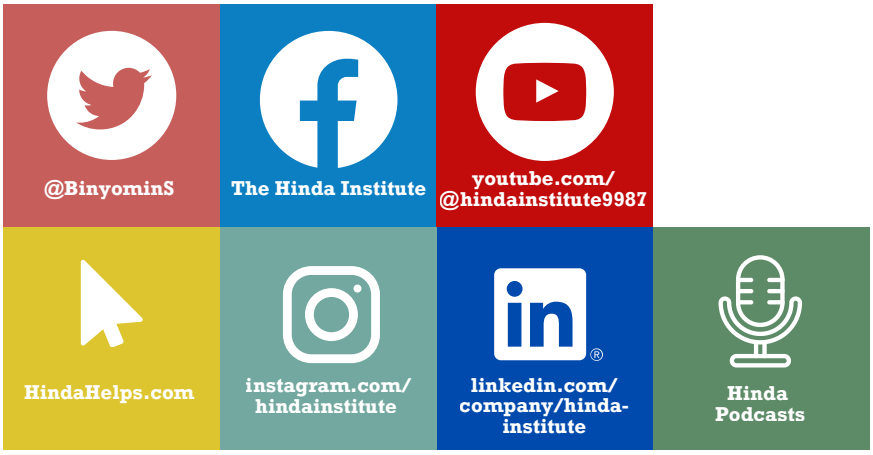
- **The Criminalization of Poverty: When Being Poor Becomes a Legal Disadvantage** – Poverty does not create crime, but it can make navigating the criminal justice system much more difficult. Legal fees, expert witnesses, bail, fines, and the loss of employment can have devastating consequences for people with limited resources. After incarceration, the challenges continue: accessing Medicaid, securing housing, finding food assistance, and obtaining the support needed to rebuild a life. Join leading legal experts explore inequities. Including: SNAP and Medicaid Changes – Understanding Public Benefits | Alyssa Meurer Tenants' Rights: Renting With a Record – Overcoming Housing Barriers | Jim Garfield, Parole Violations: Navigating Parole – Understanding Parole Challenges | Alan MillsTenants' Rights: 14-Day Letter – Advocating for Repairs | Jim Garfield, Civil Rights for People Experiencing Homelessness – Understanding Legal Protections | Kyle Voils
- **More Than a Criminal Record: The Power of Mitigation – Beyond Criminal Histories** | Prof. Chris Miner, Criminal Justice professor, formerly incarcerated activist, and community organizer, Mitigation Specialist at Champaign County Public Defender
- Coming later this year, Hinda will also host a practical hands on workshop to help our clients **seal their criminal records**.
- **Who Gets to Tell Your Story? Taking Back Your Narrative – Reclaiming Your Voice** | Elizabeth Phillips from Emerge Career
- **Your Voice, Your Power: How to Influence Criminal Justice Reform Advocating for Change** | Katrina Baugh, FAMM
- **Navigating Life Beyond Incarceration – PICS in Professional and Community Settings** and Jumpstarting Your Personal Growth: Become a Superhero in Your Own Life. Overcome Professional Challenges, Find Healing, Growth and Transformation | Dr. Stephanie Kutzen, Adjunct professor in Trauma and Addiction at University of Illinois at Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work, extensive experience in reentry counseling.
- **From Despair to Repentance – Participate in a Hands-On Restorative Justice Workshop** | Professor Elaine Leeder, MSW, MPH, PhD, is Professor Emerita of Sociology and Dean Emerita of the School of Social Sciences at Sonoma State University, over 30 years in transformative prison work in Restorative Justice (need to apply)
- **Reclaiming Your Future: From Incarceration to Purpose and Possibility – Rebuilding Your Life** | Join interactive dialogues and brainstorm with others who have lived history. You are the expert!
- **Free, But Not Really? Navigating Parole** – Understanding Parole Realities
- **Computer Tech Skills** – Get a free laptop! Improve your skills through hands-on learning and one on one tutoring. (need to apply)
- **Finding Spirituality, Finding Yourself: Holidays at Hinda** – Find meaning in the Jewish holidays Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Chanukah

NEW!

- **PODCASTS WITH NIGHTMARE SUCCESS**
  - **The Other Side of Reentry: A PICS Family Podcast** – Exploring Family Perspectives (David G. and sister)
  - **Stolen Years: The Roosevelt Myles Story of Wrongful Conviction and the Fight for Justice** – A Documentary Podcast | Roosevelt Myles
- **MOVIES WITH MIKE**

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The Hinda Institute
9401 N Margail
Des Plaines, IL 60016



We now have the ability to charge your credit card on a one-time or monthly basis!

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Name: _____

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Enclosed is my gift of:

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- ☐ $360 ☐ $54
- ☐ $180 Other: $_____

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