

**jewfro**

## Taking My Tales To Sunny Florida

To my old friends in South Florida:  
Boychick Ben here. Writing to say “Thank you!” and “See you soon!” (And, no, it’s not just you — people use a lot more exclamation points than they used to. F. Scott Fitzgerald said they were like laughing at your own joke; I blame the Facebook.)

Thanks: Even if my column is intended to skew “millennial,” I know that many of my most engaged readers are of an era where jewfros were a political statement, and vinyl and suspenders were purely practical.

Heading your way: I’m excited to join you for the JCC’s SAJE in the Sun (Seminars for Adult Jewish Enrichment). What’s on my mind as I prepare for the panel on “Detroit: America’s Comeback City”?

**Repairing the World.** *Under way!* The volunteer energy of Detroiters (both city residents and Detroiters in spirit) never ceases to amaze me. The drivers of our good work in education and food justice are eight Repair the World Fellows who dedicate a year of their lives to service inspired and informed by Jewish values. Because I have to set them free each summer, I need your help finding the next crop. Got a grandchild (or any millennial mentsh) between 21 and 26 years old? Send them to werepair.org — en route to Southwest Detroit. (To boot, this summer will be Summer in the City’s 15th.)

But enough about me. I asked some of my heroes what they’d like to share with you, in particular:

**Live6 Alliance**, whose mission is to enhance quality of life and economic opportunity in Northwest Detroit: “Tell

us your stories! As much potential as Livernois and 6 Mile (did anyone ever call it McNichols?) have for commercial development, we believe it can be even richer as a cultural corridor. We want to weave together generations of narratives about the surrounding neighborhoods. Sanders seems like a logical place to start”

— Lauren Hood



**Ben Falik**

**Global Detroit:** “Over the past year, Jewish consciousness was drawn to the growth in the number of refugees fleeing terror and violence, especially persecution stemming from their religious and ethnic identities. Understanding that our Jewish survival is predicated on the end of ethnic and

religious persecution and the triumph of peace and tolerance, we Jews play a unique role in welcoming immigrants and refugees to America.

Global Detroit is working with partners in the refugee resettlement community, state and local government, and workforce and entrepreneurship areas to make Metro Detroit a leading region for immigrant and refugee attraction, retention and welcoming. It is a pathway that will revitalize our city and community and build long-term prosperity. And, for me personally, it is rooted in the Jewish immigration experience of my grandparents who fled Eastern Europe in the nick of time.”

— Steve Tobocman

**Bethel Community Transformation Center**, a new group (I’m a board member) based at the old Temple Beth El on Woodward Avenue: “I envision this phenomenal historic structure as a testament to the strength and resilience of individuals who, in the face of despair and hardship,

outlasted and overcame the many challenges of their time. Through faith, collaboration and community, a new precedence was established and a new hope was carved.

It is upon this hope that we will continue to build; in honor of this legacy, providing renewed hope for people of all races and cultures in the city of Detroit and beyond.”

— Pastor Aramis Hinds

**Detroit City Moishe House:** “After six months of searching, we are excited to have a home in the historic Indian Village. The house creates a Jewish anchor on the East Side, a space for Jewish young professionals to explore the city of Detroit in meaningful ways. Everything we do is driven by the same values that have guided the Jewish community for generations — a tenacious pursuit of togetherness and collective well-being. It’s just that the borders of our community have grown. We’re excited to strengthen our connection with Jewish peers, but also to pursue racial and economic justice for our broader Detroit community.”

— Hayley Sakwa

**Yad Ezra**, on Giving Gardens, its new greenhouse: “As volunteers learn to bring food from soil to table, we strengthen resilience in our community with knowledge inherited by our bubbies and zaydies. We’ll learn shtetl skills, like preserving our harvest through biblical-age pickling methods, and understand what these processes look like in our modern food system — a system that simultaneously produces waste and food insecurity.”

— Carly Sugar

**Yours truly, Ben**

*P.S. If any locals have messages they want me to bring to the Sunshine State, I will make sure to store them safely in the overhead compartment. \**