

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Gun Violence and Youth Activism: A Panel Discussion featuring David Hogg,  
Parkland Student and Co-Founder of March For Our Lives  
Thursday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m.**

Hogg will join a panel discussion with local youth activists to focus on solutions to end gun violence and how youth can take immediate action to help end this epidemic

**EVANSTON, IL, February 19, 2019** – Thrust into the world of activism after the largest school shooting in American History, survivor David Hogg has become one of the most compelling voices of his generation with his call to “get over politics and get something done.” **On Thursday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m. Beth Emet The Free Synagogue hosts a free panel discussion for youth and community members interested in ending gun violence and becoming activists for positive change.**

One year ago, on February 14, 2018, David Hogg’s life changed forever. As a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, he lost friends, classmates and teachers. A total of 17 people were killed when a lone teen gunman sprayed bullets from a high-powered military assault rifle. David’s eloquent responses to America’s largest school shooting immediately placed him in the national and international media spotlight. Committed to becoming an agent for change, he resolved that no other young person should have to experience the tragic impact of gun violence. He joined with friends from high school to co-found March For Our Lives, now one of the world’s largest youth-led movements. Five weeks after the shooting, March For Our Lives mobilized one of the biggest demonstrations in the nation’s history.

After sharing his story and lessons learned from the past year, Hogg will join a panel with Evanston Township High School student, **Mollie Hartenstein**; Chicago Public School student and participant in the **Since Parkland** project, **Jimmy Rodgers**; and Violence Prevention Coordinator of the BRAVE Youth Leaders at St. Sabina, **Lamar Johnson**; to focus on solutions to end gun violence and how youth can take immediate action to help to end this epidemic. The panel will be moderated by **Nina Vinik**, Director, Gun Violence Prevention and Justice Reform Program at The Joyce Foundation.

Interviews and photos may be available upon request. Contact Susan Baum at [sbaum@bethemet.org](mailto:sbaum@bethemet.org) or 847-869-4230 ext. 300.

*Beth Emet The Free Synagogue is a diverse, multigenerational Reform community with a dynamic approach to Judaism. Our congregation seeks to create a spiritually vibrant, socially conscious, intellectually challenging, and deeply caring environment firmly rooted in Jewish tradition and values.*

###

# Panelists Biographies and Headshots

## Gun Violence and Youth Activism a Panel Discussion featuring David Hogg



### David Hogg

Thrust into the world of activism by the largest school shooting in American history, Parkland survivor David Hogg has become one of the most compelling voices of his generation. His call to “get over politics and get something done” challenges Americans to stand up, speak out and work to elect morally just leaders, regardless of party affiliation. Passionate in his advocacy to end gun violence, David’s mission of increasing voter participation, civic engagement and activism embraces a range of issues.

On February 14, 2018, David’s life changed forever. As a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, he lost friends, classmates and teachers. A total of 17 people were killed when a lone teen gunman sprayed bullets from a high-powered military assault rifle. David’s eloquent responses to America’s largest school shooting immediately placed him in the national and international media spotlight. Committed to becoming an agent for change, he resolved that no other young person should have to experience the tragic impact of gun violence. He joined with friends from high school to co-found March For Our Lives, now one of the world’s largest youth-led movements. Five weeks after the shooting, March For Our Lives mobilized one of the biggest demonstrations in the nation’s history. Speaking before an estimated 800,000 protestors in Washington, D.C., David declared, “The sun shines on a new day—and it is ours!” Since then, David’s activism has taken him around the country, meeting with impacted families and diverse communities to deepen his knowledge of gun safety and the politics of ending gun violence. With his younger sister, Lauren, also a student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, he co-wrote #NeverAgain, a New York Times best-seller. David and Lauren also contributed to the best-selling book, Glimmer of Hope: How Tragedy Sparked a Movement, a compilation of writing from the founders of March For Our Lives.

A prolific voice on social media with more than a million followers, David uses his platform to promote civic engagement, activism, and voting. As a speaker, he informs, challenges and energizes, empowering his generation to resist apathy and become catalysts for positive social change. “People call us snowflakes,” he once tweeted. “What happens when snowflakes vote? That’s called an avalanche.”



### Mollie Hartenstein

Over the course of the last year, Mollie Hartenstein has dedicated herself to aiding the youth-led anti-gun violence movement that was taken the country by storm. After participating in the ETHS walk out on March 14, 2018, Mollie was inspired to inform and educate her community about the impacts of gun violence, both nationwide and in neighboring communities in Chicago’s south and west sides. Mollie began her activist career by being a member of the FAN Fellows who put on an event in May 2018 entitled “Building Communities: A Discussion About Gun Violence” that featured a panel of gun violence activists. Soon after she joined forces with other Evanston student activists to speak at local rallies, fund bus rides to peace rallies, and raise money for anti-gun violence nonprofits, both local and national. In October of this year Mollie worked with other student activists and the Democratic Party of Evanston to give students from Parkland, FA, Rep. Schakowsky, Fr. Micheal Pflieger, and other Evanston students a platform to showcase the national student movement against gun violence. Currently, Mollie is working with students throughout the northern suburbs to create a wide-ranging student activist coalition and

communicating with local and state legislators regarding the influence of the gun lobby in Evanston and Illinois.

### **Jimmy Rodgers**



Jimmy is a 15-year-old sophomore at Westinghouse College Prep High School in Chicago. He is active as a writer with Free Spirit Media and recently participated as a student journalist with The Trace, as part of a project to report on every child killed by guns since Parkland ([www.sinceParkland.org](http://www.sinceParkland.org)). Jimmy lives in Garfield Park with his mother and brother.

### **Lamar Johnson**



Lamar Johnson is Chicago native of the south side, ordained minister and activist for social justice. 2012, he organized The BRAVE Youth Leaders: the violence prevention youth council at the Faith Community of St. Sabina dedicating every day his work as it's violence prevention coordinator in the South Side's Auburn Gresham neighborhood under the mentorship of Father Michael Pflieger. Lamar has organized and been a part of many demonstrations and initiatives advocating for peace and justice in Chicago and the U.S.; while as coordinator of The BRAVE Youth Leaders, mentoring and training youth ages 6-24 to be leaders, public speakers and peacemakers empowering them to be ambassadors for social change and peace in Chicago and across the nation. He dedicates his life to youth empowerment, black liberation and unity for all.

### **Nina Vinik**



Nina leads Joyce's grant making in support of evidence-based policies and practices to reduce gun deaths and injuries, improve police legitimacy and build police-community trust, and reduce mass incarceration in the United States. Under Nina's direction, Joyce has funded some of the nation's most significant research into the impact of state prevention strategies. She also has focused on developing broad stakeholder coalitions to advocate for policies to keep our communities safe.

Prior to joining the foundation in 2008, Nina, an attorney, served as Legal Director of Legal Community Against Violence (LCAV), a non-profit organization providing legal and technical assistance in support of gun violence prevention policy efforts nationwide. Her other experience includes serving as Director of the Litigation Assistance Partnership Project of the American Bar Association's Section of Litigation, Fair Housing Project Director of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc., and Legal Director of the ACLU Foundation of Florida, Inc. She also practiced law at the firm of Jenner & Block in Chicago.

Nina earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and received her law degree from the University of Chicago.