



Celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month in May

May 23, 2017 By [EJP](#)



Photo courtesy NMAJH

By Ivy Barsky

Lupus. Hepatitis. Malaria. Childhood leukemia. These are just a few of the many diseases for which Gertrude Elion developed life-saving drugs. While her name is on 45 drug patents, there are many who are not aware of the accomplished chemist.

This month, all are encouraged to learn more about Elion and other American Jews in honor of Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). The nationwide celebration recognizes the invaluable contributions

these individuals have made to the fabric of our nation's history, culture, and society, with this year's iteration focusing on the medical research field.

Alongside JAHM's Founders, Board of Directors, and Advisory Committee – who represent venerable institutions such as the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, American Jewish Historical Society, Jewish Women's Archive, and more – we have created or are currently developing tools to ensure the long-lasting impact of JAHM.

In addition to the government-sponsored [website](#), all are welcome to explore www.JAHM.us for lesson plans, book lists, stories of notable American Jews, a calendar of nationwide events, a historical timeline, and ways to submit your own materials and ideas. Tune into JAHM's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for fun facts, and share your own content exploring and honoring the history of Jews in this country using the hashtag [#JAHM](#).

At NMAJH, we are pleased to have produced more than 35,000 copies of a JAHM 2017 brochure, titled *Medical Pioneers: A Salute to Research Scientists*, which has been distributed across the nation to both Jewish and non-Jewish contacts and organizations. The brochure, also available [online](#), highlights stories of three noted researchers – Gertrude Elion, Eric Kandel, and Mathilde Krim – and ideas for celebrating JAHM 2017. Indeed, NMAJH shares in [Jack Gottlieb's enthusiasm](#) for expanding JAHM's impact, and we are excited to have already implemented some of his excellent suggestions while continuing to work toward others.

So, how will *you* celebrate JAHM? Perhaps by visiting [an institution](#) specializing in Jewish history and culture? Diving deep into [stories](#) of American Jews? Or even just starting a conversation at your dinner table tonight about the choices, challenges, and freedoms experienced by American Jews today? By recognizing JAHM, you help honor our country's cherished values of inclusion, acceptance, and religious freedom – values we must never take for granted.

Ivy Barsky is CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of the National Museum of American Jewish History and Advisory Committee Member for Jewish American Heritage Month.