

Join **Moment Magazine** on an unforgettable
Jewish Heritage Adventure to

MOROCCO

Led by

Nadine Epstein, Editor in Chief and CEO

Tanya George, Chief of Operations

Aviva Meyer, Travel Coordinator

April 22 – May 3, 2023

(As of 11/2/22)

Join Moment Magazine for the adventure of a lifetime in Morocco! We'll explore the ancient Jewish communities, meander through the medinas, savor the spices and flavors of the local cuisine and soak up the culture from Casablanca to Marrakech to Essaouira and beyond!



Day 1: Saturday, April 22, 2023: DEPARTURE

- We depart on our overnight flight to Morocco.
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Day 2: Sunday, April 23, 2023: CASABLANCA

- We arrive at **Casablanca International Airport**, where we are met by an Ayelet Tours representative.
- We drive toward the city of **Casablanca**, Morocco's cosmopolitan economic and business capital. Originally, a Phoenician and Roman city, Casablanca is home to the largest Jewish community in the Arab world.
- **The Glory of Moroccan Jewry:** We walk through Morocco's rich Jewish heritage at the **Jewish Museum of Morocco**, the Arab world's only Jewish museum. According to legend, Jews arrived in Morocco as early as 800 BCE. By 1948, the Jewish population had grown to an estimated 350,000 and was the largest, and arguably most integrated Jewish community in any Muslim country. The museum includes displays of traditional Jewish-Berber clothing and a feature on goldsmiths, a common Jewish occupation in Morocco.
- **Mellah of Casablanca:** The mellah was a former Jewish quarter similar to a European ghetto. It tantalizes the senses with a sea of women in brightly colored djellabas carrying and selling fruit and vegetables throughout the cramped, narrow streets. While Jews no longer live in the mellah, kosher butchers are found in the old market.
- **Boulevard Mohamed El Hansali:** We stroll down the boulevard with its exotic bazaars, **Mohammed V square**, the new **Medina Royal Palace** and **Anfa Hill**, the meeting place of Roosevelt and Churchill at the Casablanca Conference during World War II.
- After our beautiful city tour, we check into our hotel with time to refresh and enjoy an early **welcome dinner** together at a nearby restaurant featuring local flavors. We'll hear from our tour educator about Morocco's once large and thriving Jewish communities, discuss why Jews left Morocco en masse beginning in the 1950s, and find out about the Moroccan Jews of today.



Overnight in Casablanca



Day 3: Monday, April 24, 2023: CASABLANCA TO FEZ

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we begin at **Bet El Synagogue**, where we view the beautiful stained-glass windows and architecture and learn about the rich history of this synagogue that many consider the center of Judaism in Casablanca.
- We stop by the **Fhal Jewish bakery** to sample the delicious treats!
- Next, we visit Casablanca's Jewish old age home, **Home Des Vieux La Villa**. While here, we meet residents and connect with the elderly Jewish community members who receive full residential, medical and dental care, as well as social facilities. The home has also been a refuge for elderly who come from the provinces who can no longer take care of themselves.
- **God's Throne Upon the Water:** Fast-moving Casablanca is also a city of faith, as we'll experience at the **Mosque of Hassan II**. This modern mosque has room for over 100,000 worshippers. It is perched dramatically over the ocean to reflect a verse in the Koran that "God's throne was built upon the water." Over 6,000 master craftspeople created its hand-carved marble walls, retractable roof and the tallest minaret in the world at almost 700 feet. See if you agree with the builder's patron, King Hassan II, that this is a monument that Casablanca will be proud of "until the end of time."
- Enjoy lunch on your own.
- **"The Athens of Africa, The Mecca of the West":** We depart for **Fez**, one of the great medieval cities of the world. It gained its nicknames due to its scholars (both Muslim and Jewish), spirituality, trade and culture. In the 12th and 13th centuries, Fez was among the world's most populated cities and the home of the Marinid kingdom. We'll learn about the kings, communities and creativity that drove Fez as we experience the beauty and liveliness of the city today.
- We stop for a tasting at the **Les Celiers de Meknes Winery** along the way.
- Upon arrival, in Fez, we check into our hotel and refresh before **dinner** together this evening at **Dar Hatim** in the Old Jewish Quarter.



Overnight in Fez



Day 4: Tuesday, April 25, 2023: THE MYSTERIES OF FEZ

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **A Thousand Years and More – Jewish Life in Fez:** Despite suffering from periodic persecutions, Fez’s **Jewish Quarter** was home to brilliant scholars, poets and innovators. We’ll travel back in time to the Golden Age for Jews in Fez from the 8th to 12th centuries, when the community included some key figures in the Jewish world, including Rabbi Moses Maimonides (the Rambam), the great philosopher and religious thinker. We’ll also find out why the name for a Jewish Quarter comes from the Arab word for salt. Our tour will include a visit to the **Ibn Danan Synagogue**. Although recently restored, this is one of the oldest and most important synagogues in North Africa.
- **Finding Fez:** Fez’s **medina** is a dense maze of alleyways and streets and the largest car-free pedestrian zone in the world. Don’t worry, our tour educator knows the way through this UNESCO World Heritage site that still includes many buildings, mosques and gates from the 12th century. Our visit will include:
 - **Local craftsmen:** Catch a glimpse of the craftsmen at work in their shops as they weave, embroider, carve and chisel using ancient techniques.
 - **Madrasa Bou Inania:** Fez contains some of the finest Islamic architecture in the world. This madrasa (Islamic religious college) was established in 1351 and is famed for its minaret and geometric decorations. It is one of the few Islamic sites in Morocco that is accessible to non-Muslim visitors.
 - A stop for lunch on own.
 - **University of Al-Karaouine:** Believed to be the oldest continuously operating university in the world and founded as a mosque, today, non-Muslims can view it only from the outside. In the 12th century, the Rambam (Moses Ben Maimonides) studied medicine and philosophy here.
 - **Najjarin fountain:** A traditional public fountain located in the center of Al-Najjarin Square.
- We continue to the **“Arabian house”**, a gathering place for craftsmen still working in the old oriental tradition.
- **The Scent of Fez:** Fez is known for its leather goods and its great stretch of tanneries that give the city its distinctive smell. We’ll visit the **Chouara Tannery**, where traditional ways of making leather are still practiced.
- Time to relax or explore then enjoy dinner on own.



Overnight in Fez



Day 5: Wednesday, April 26, 2023: FEZ – MEKNES - RABAT

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart for the “holy city” of **Moulay-Idriss**, noted for its breathtaking scenery.
- **Rome-ing Around Morocco:** You may not have expected to find a superbly preserved example of a Roman town in Morocco, but be aware, this country is full of surprises. In the 2nd century CE, it was a wealthy, Latin-speaking city and an important outpost of the Roman Empire. We’ll visit the impressive mosaics, temples and arches of this UNESCO World Heritage site and gain insights into the richness of Morocco’s history even before Islam and the Arabic language arrived.
- **City of a Tyrant:** We continue to the imperial city of **Meknes**, located on a fertile plain north of the Middle Atlas, and the former residence of the Sultan. We’ll examine the superb architecture of Meknes created during the long reign of Moulay Ismail, with its skillful blend of Islamic and European influences. At this finely decorated **mausoleum**, we’ll also consider the less attractive characteristics of “Moulay the Bloodthirsty” who is said to have ordered the city walls to be decorated with the heads of 10,000 of his enemies.
- **Wives and Horses:** While the Torah warns that a king should not acquire extra horses, a multitude of wives, or excessive amounts of silver and gold, Moulay Ismail took a different approach. He is believed to have had 2,000 wives and concubines who bore him 867 children, although he seems to have been fondest of his 12,000 horses. We’ll visit the **Royal Stables** where each horse had its own individual groom-slave.
- We stop for **lunch** together at a local restaurant.
- **The Kings and the Jews:** We continue to **Rabat**, the modern capital of Morocco, also known as the white imperial city. Our tour of Morocco’s royal capital will allow us to experience the huge role, historically and currently, that the king plays in Moroccan life. We’ll walk around the walls of Rabat’s **Royal Palace**, the primary (although certainly not the only) residence of the current king, Mohammed VI, and ask whether modern Morocco is an autocracy, a democracy or something in between.
- **“There are no Jewish citizens, there are no Muslim citizens; they are all Moroccans” – Mohammed V.** Next, we visit the magnificent **mausoleum of Mohammed V**, Morocco’s king during World War II, and hear why Moroccan Jews today believe that he should be recognized as one of the Righteous Among the Nations for helping to stop Nazis from deporting Morocco’s Jews to the death camps of Europe. His burial building is considered an architectural masterpiece. Also buried here is his son, **Hassan II**, who ruled over Morocco during the so-called “Years of Lead” (1961-1999). We’ll visit his tomb and hear about this period of conflict, human rights abuses and assassination attempts on the king’s life. It was during Hassan’s reign that most of the country’s Jews migrated to Israel, Canada and France.



- **A Treat for the Eyes:** We make our way up to the **Kasbah des Udayas**. This citadel is the oldest part of Rabat, dating back to the 12th century. Sitting high above the river and the Atlantic Ocean, it features gorgeously decorated gates, blue and whitewashed homes and French-influenced gardens.
- Later this afternoon, we check into our hotel and refresh before **dinner** together at the excellent **Golden Fish** restaurant in our hotel.

Overnight in Rabat

Day 6: Thursday, April 27, 2023: DISCOVERING MARRAKECH

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Early this morning, we depart for **Marrakech**, city of palm trees and gardens at the edge of the Sahara Desert. Jews have lived in Marrakech since the first century. Marrakech sees a lot of Jewish visitors, including many flocking from Israel to experience its unique culture and Jewish history.
- We stop for lunch on our own en route.
- **Marrakech – An Oasis:** As we get ready to arrive in Marrakech, your tour educator will discuss why so many people over the centuries have been drawn to the city.
- **Royal Splendors:** We tour the **medina** (walled city) of Marrakech, one of Morocco’s four imperial cities, also known as the Red City for the red walls that surround it. The medina is a thrilling, multifaceted area which includes:
 - **Bab Agnaou** – A huge, superbly decorated gate allowing entrance into the royal city.
 - **The Saadian Tombs:** The tombs provide lavish insights into the wealth and power structure of the Saadian dynasty that ruled Morocco from 1549 to 1659. The greatest of their kings, Ahmed al-Mansour, is buried in the magnificent Chamber of 12 Pillars in a tomb made from Italian marble and gilded with pure gold. Less exalted princes and rulers from the dynasty are buried nearby. The royal wives, chancellors and the king’s Jewish advisers were “relegated” to graves in the still impressive gardens.
 - **Bahia Palace:** Built in the late 19th century by Morocco’s leading artisans, many consider this to be the finest palace built anywhere in the world during this time. Certainly, its architecture, gardens and design render it a remarkable achievement of Moroccan culture. Among its features is a harem, where vizier Abu Ahmed’s four wives and 24 concubines lived.



- **A Square That's Hip:** The **Djemaa El Fna Square** is an enormous market and a thrilling experience. According to one theory, its name means “the assembly of the dead” and refers to the public executions that used to take place here. Today this square teems with life. Locals gather to shop, talk and to eat some of the best street food in all of Morocco. There’s always something going on, so get ready for a daily carnival of snake charmers, street vendors, musicians, storytellers and acrobats.
- Following our tour, we check into our hotel and have time to relax and refresh.
- This evening, we enjoy **dinner** together.

Overnight in Marrakech

Day 7: Friday, April 28, 2023: THE OURIKA VALLEY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we depart for **Ourika Valley** in the High Atlas Mountains, where we see the special relationship the Moroccan Jewish community has with the Ourika Valley.
- Next, we visit the grave of the tzaddik, **Rabbi Shlomo ben Hensh**, where the first Berber and Moroccan Jews have visited for generations for prayer and special requests. We hear the story of **Hananiyah Elfassie**, one of the last Berber Jews, who devoted his life to protecting the grave and preserving Rabbi Hensh’s memory.
- We stop to enjoy **lunch** at a local restaurant.
- We return to Marrakech and have time to shop in the souk!
- This evening, we join together for **Kabbalat Shabbat** at the **Marrakech Beit El Synagogue**, followed by **Shabbat dinner** with members of the Marrakech Jewish community.



Overnight in Marrakech

Day 8: Saturday, April 29, 2023: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Shabbat Shalom!** Free morning – attend services on own at **Slat el Azama**, explore on own, or just relax and take in our exotic surroundings!
- Join together for **lunch buffet at the famed La Mamounia** hotel nearby.
- **The French Connection:** Morocco is a melting pot of identities and influences ranging from its indigenous Berber tribes to more recent visitors including the French, who ruled over much of the country from 1912 to 1955. We’ll spend time in the **French Quarter** and visit **Majorelle Garden**, designed by the French painter and botanist Jacques Majorelle. The garden and buildings took him 40 years to create, but you will think it was time well spent as we wander along paths by sparkling pools shaded by gorgeous trees and plants from around the world.



- We meet again at sundown for a special **Havdallah**, followed by **dinner at Angsana Si Said** or similar.
- **Optional:** Attend a **Moroccan fantasia show** (separate cost).

Overnight in Marrakech

Day 9: Sunday, April 30, 2023: MARRAKECH TO ESSAOUIRA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- **A Land of Indigenous People:** We begin our day with a stop at a local **Berber village**, an indigenous people of North Africa, to learn about their unique culture.
- **Savor the Flavors of the Atlas Mountains:** We continue to **Amizmiz**, a small town outside of Marrakech, to participate in an **organic cooking class and lunch with Chef Tarik**.
- **Essaouira:** This afternoon, we travel to **Essaouira**, an easy to navigate city. Although originally Portuguese, Essaouira was fortified by a French-influenced architect named Vauban, and also formed the settling ground for a large Jewish population, which is why the city has an eclectic, multicultural feel. The town was once over thirty percent Jewish and contained over thirty synagogues, some dating back to the eighteenth century.
- **Good for the Skin, Body & Soul:** Upon arrival, we see many Argan trees, important to the region both economically and ecologically. At the **women's cooperative of Argan oil**, there will be an opportunity to learn about the wide-ranging applications of the oil from cosmetics to medicines.
- We continue to our hotel for check-in and time to relax before we join together again for **dinner** this evening at a restaurant featuring traditional **Gnawa music**.



Overnight in Essaouira

Day 10: Monday, May 1, 2023: DISCOVERING ESSAOUIRA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Rabbi Chaim Pinto:** The seaport city of Essaouira is still synonymous with the famed rabbi and remained his home all his life. Every year on the anniversary of Rabbi Pinto's death, Jews from around the world pilgrimage in the week preceding Rosh Hashanah and pray at the rabbi's grave situated in the **old Jewish cemetery** adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean.
- We stop to have lunch on own.
- This afternoon, we enjoy time at leisure to shop, relax or explore on our own! We suggest checking out the **Bayt Dalkira Jewish Museum**.
- This evening is also at leisure to continue exploring and enjoying dinner on own.

Overnight in Essaouira



Day 11: Tuesday, May 2, 2023: RETURNING TO CASABLANCA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we travel up the coast to **Casablanca**, stopping for several photo opportunities along the way (possible stops include the Oualidia beach, and the Portuguese city of Eljadida).
- Upon arrival, we check into our hotel, then enjoy a festive **farewell dinner** at the famous **Rick's Cafe**, recalling all that we have experienced together on this journey.

Overnight in Casablanca (for those not on the extension)

Day 12: Wednesday, May 3, 2023: UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our flight back to the United States, landing later today.

OR UP YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN EXTENSION TO

TANGIER & CHEFCHAOUEN



Please note that Moment Magazine is not a sponsor of the Tangier & Chefchaouen extension.

Day 11: Tuesday, May 2, 2023: ONWARDS TO TANGIER

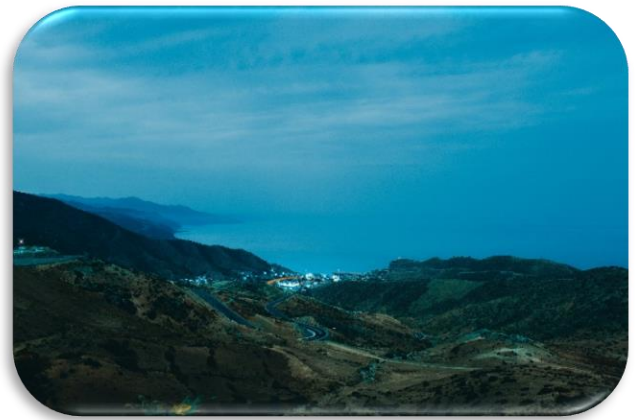
- After the main group farewell dinner, we transfer to the Casablanca airport for our **non-stop flight to Tangier**, departing at 10:35pm and arriving at 11:55pm.
- Upon arrival, we are met by a local Ayelet Tours representative and transferred to our hotel to check in.

Overnight in Tangier (for those on the extension)



Day 12: Wednesday, May 3, 2023: TANGIER, INTERNATIONAL CITY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Tangier Jewish Heritage Tour & Community:** The first Jews migrated to **Tangier** (once known as Tanja or Tingus) after the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem and settled among the Berbers. A second wave of migration from the Jews living in the Iberian Peninsula began with the 1492 Alhambra Decree and expulsion. This second wave of immigration changed Moroccan Jewry, as they largely embraced the Andalusia Sephardic liturgy, creating a population of Moroccan Jews that gained a primarily Sephardic identity. The Moors and the Jews intermixed in Tangier, living peacefully side by side. In 1856, Tangier had become the largest port in Morocco. During this time, the Jewish community of Tangier flourished and established schools, hospitals, charitable works and businesses. By 1925, Jews were assigned three out of the twenty-six seats on the Legislative Assembly offering them significant political power. After World War II, the Jews of Tangier enjoyed prosperous and cosmopolitan lives as they were minimally impacted by the war and offered protection by Mohammed V who referred to them as “Moroccans and not only Jews.” At its peak in the 1940s, there were 22,000 Jews in Tangier and Morocco’s Jewish population exceeded 350,000. Immigration after the foundation of the state of Israel has diminished the numbers, but today there remains a small but vibrant community in Morocco which counts approximately 2,000 – 2,500 Jews.
- On our **Tangier Jewish heritage tour**, we start our morning by visiting Tangier’s **Jewish sacred sites** and then continue seeing the highlights of **old Tangier**. The synagogues, cemeteries, monuments and communal institutions of Tangier show how important the city has been to the Jewish community over the centuries.
- Behind a non-descript door, located on Rue Synagogue is the **Moshe Nahon Synagogue**. This last remaining operating synagogue in Tangier is monumental and lavish, ranking among one of the most beautiful synagogues in Morocco. Built in the 1870’s, the Nahon Synagogue remained as a working place for Jewish prayer until it fell into despair in the late 20th century. Then in 1994, it was renovated revealing intricately covered carvings that are illuminated by stunning hanging synagogue lamps and Jewish artifacts. At one time, there were over 20 synagogues in Tangier. On Rue des Synagogues, there are many former synagogues. One of them, Temple Benatar, has been restored and is superbly decorated.
- Historically unlike Morocco’s other Imperial cities, Tangier did not have a formal Jewish **mellah**. Instead, it had an unprotected Jewish quarter and we’ll stop by for a short visit.



- We continue to the **Jewish cemetery** (“the old cemetery”) in Tangier, featuring more than one-thousand graves, some of which date back to the 16th century. There are many important individuals buried here. Owned by the Tangier municipality, the Jewish cemetery is open to the public and has caretakers who oversee it. While the cemetery has somewhat fallen to ruins with a combination of erosion and water issues, the tombstones have been digitized to offer those interested the opportunity to search the remains there online. The tombstones are in Hebrew, Portuguese and French.
- We’ll enjoy the vantage point of the **Colline de Bella-Vista** then drive to see the **Grand Socco**, a popular nighttime square close to the **Mosque of Sidi Bou Abib** and the link between **Ville Nouvelle** and the medina.
- **Optional:** Visit the **American Legation Museum**, located in the oldest American consulate in continuous use. Since 1829/1923 when Tangier was established as an international city, there were many Moroccan Jews that served as American proteges, placing them beyond the law of the Sultan.
- Next, we enter the old **medina** at Rue Es-Siaghinie, the busiest part of this Roman medina, lined with cafes and bazaars, a Spanish church, jewelers’ shops and an arts center displaying works depicting Tangier’s social history. Walk **Petit Socco**, which was once the heart of the medina where businessmen and bankers frequented cafes, hotels, casinos and cabarets that have since relocated to Ville Nouvelle.
- We move on to visit the **Grand Mosque**, built on the site of a Portuguese cathedral.
- We stop to enjoy **lunch** in the Jewish cercle Chez Rica.
- Walking north, we visit the **Kasbah**, decorated with mosaics, ornamental stucco and woodcarving.
- We continue to the **Cave of Hercules**, the point of intersection of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and enjoy the 4km of sandy beach bordering Tangier. To enjoy the tranquility of the coastline, we suggest the east side of the bay.
- Evening at leisure and dinner on own.



Overnight in Tangier



Day 13: Thursday, May 4, 2023: CHEFCHAOEN

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we drive to **Chefchaouen** to experience the old town's famous Jewish-inspired blue-washed buildings. Originally built as a fortress in the 15th century, the town is picturesquely nestled in the Rif Mountains. We see the **octagonal mosque** and **Spanish ruins**, then explore the **medina** and the winding alleys of this charming village, reminiscent of an Andalusian village in Spain.
- Next, we visit the **Plaza Uta El Hammam**, the **Ras el Maa** and the wash houses, where locals handwash their laundry.
- We return to Tangier and have a chance to freshen up before dinner on our own this evening.



Overnight in Tangier

Day 14: Friday, May 5, 2023: LEISURE IN TANGIER

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Transfer on our own to Tangier airport for flights home, landing later today.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!!

**Itinerary subject to change*



Moment Editor-in-Chief & CEO: **Nadine Epstein**



Award-winning journalist Nadine Epstein is editor-in-chief and CEO of *Moment Magazine*, founder and executive director of the Washington, DC-based Center for Creative Change, founder of the Daniel Pearl Investigative Journalism Initiative for young reporters, and founder and editor of MomentBooks. She reported for the *City News Bureau of Chicago* and the Chicago Bureau of *The New York Times*, then later covered the U.S.-Mexico border and rural America. After a Knight-Wallace Fellowship at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, she taught in the Masters Program in Journalism there. She holds degrees in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania and was a University Fellow in the political science doctoral program at Columbia University. Epstein has written and edited books including *RBG's Brave and Brilliant Women: 33 Jewish Women to Inspire Everyone*, *Elie Wiesel: An Extraordinary Life and Legacy*, contributed to anthology collections including *Racing in the Streets: The Bruce Springsteen Reader* and *The Late, Great Mexican Border: Reports from a Disappearing Line*, and co-wrote the short documentary *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with Maya Healer*. She is also an artist, the creator of the iShadow Project and cofounder of TheMomentGallery.

Moment Chief of Operations: **Tanya George**



Tanya George is a development professional with more than 30 years of experience working with nonprofit organizations. Since 1999, George has worked as a consultant for various groups including Justice at Stake, the ARAVA Institute for Environmental Studies, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance and Wider Opportunities for Women. From 1988 to June 1999, George served as Vice President for Development for Partners of the Americas, a private voluntary organization that carries out technical assistance and training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to that, she was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Tunisia and served as the Peace Corps Desk Officer for Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen.

Moment Tour Leader: **Aviva Meyer**



For more than 30 years, Aviva Meyer has worked with government and non-profit organizations in the US and Israel focusing on education, poverty, social justice, democracy and international peace. She has extensive experience as a development professional, program manager, educator and travel coordinator. She has worked for the Israel Ministry of Education, the US Head Start Program, the Center for Law and Social Policy as their Development Director, Project Interchange in DC as their Executive Director and as Acting Director for Americans for Peace Now. She was the Associate Director of the New Israel Fund for more than a decade where, in addition to development and management responsibilities, she organized educational trips to Israel for Congressional staff and leaders of the American Black and Hispanic Community. Over the past 20 years she has organized educational trips to Israel and other countries in the region (Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan) for various organizations.

