



**PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING MAY 2026
AS JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

South Orange has always been a community defined not just by its tree-lined streets and Victorian architecture, but by the people who fill it with meaning. Among the most enduring threads woven into the fabric of this village is the presence, partnership, and pride of our Jewish American neighbors, whose history here is inseparable from our own.

WHEREAS, the month of May is recognized as Jewish American Heritage Month across the United States, a time not simply to acknowledge, but to celebrate the extraordinary contributions Jewish Americans have made to the arts, sciences, business, law, medicine, public service, and the social movements that have shaped this nation; and

WHEREAS, South Orange's Jewish community has been a cornerstone of village life for generations, building houses of worship, leading in our schools, serving on our boards and commissions, opening businesses on South Orange Avenue, and showing up, again and again, as neighbors committed to the common good; and

WHEREAS, the values at the heart of Jewish tradition — tikkun olam, the repair of the world; tzedakah, justice and generosity; and the sacred obligation to remember, are not merely religious principles but civic ones, values that South Orange strives to live out every day; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish American story is one of remarkable resilience, a people who have faced persecution, displacement, and hatred across centuries and continents, and who have responded not with retreat but with creativity, scholarship, humor, and an unshakable commitment to building better communities; and

WHEREAS, at a moment when antisemitism is rising across our country and around the world, South Orange stands without hesitation on the side of its Jewish residents, not in sympathy, but in solidarity - because the safety, dignity, and belonging of every member of this community is not negotiable; and

WHEREAS, celebrating Jewish American Heritage Month is an act of civic pride and an affirmation that the diversity of our village, in culture, in faith, in background — is not a challenge to be managed but a strength to be honored.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that I, Sheena C. Collum, Mayor of South Orange Village, County of Essex, New Jersey, on behalf of the Village Council hereby proclaim May 2026 as **Jewish American Heritage Month** in South Orange Village, and call upon all residents to take time this month to learn, to listen, to celebrate, and to affirm that this village is a place where every person is seen, valued, and welcome.

Dated this 11TH day of May, 2026

HONORABLE SHEENA C. COLLUM
Mayor of South Orange Village