

Malya Levin might be only 34, but as the senior staff attorney at the Weinberg Center for Elder Justice at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale and the co-founder of Alliance Community Reboot (ACRe), a Jewish farm-based community in southern New Jersey that draws many young adults, she powerfully impacts both the elderly and her contemporaries in unique ways.

Levin is the daughter of Arthur Kurzweil, a popular figure in the Jewish Renewal movement, but the family kept an Orthodox home in Brooklyn and then Passaic, N.J. She worked in Jewish education before attending law school. “I saw entering the legal profession as a natural extension of my work as a teacher,” Levin said. “I wanted to help people, especially those



belonging to vulnerable populations, understand their rights.”

Although she first worked with children, Levin felt frustrated by her legal capacity to help them, as children don’t have the same full legal rights in society as adults. “I could achieve a lot more professionally on behalf of the elderly population by directly advocating for them and their full legal rights,” said Levin, who began

interning at the Weinberg Center in 2011 before transitioning to her current, full-time position. There, she helps clients correct injustices done to them such as eviction, neglect or abuse or financial and material exploitation. Because in cases of elder abuse the perpetrators are often the victims’ own family members, the cases can involve complex family dynamics and charged emotions. Levin, however, remains inspired by her clients.

“It’s rewarding to see my clients’ desire to change the course of their lives, even at advanced ages when society tells us it’s too late for people to start over,” Levin said. “Whether they’re 70, 80 or even 90, my clients choose to make often difficult changes to improve various aspects of their lives. We can all learn from them.”

Outside of work, Levin, along with her husband, William, co-founded ACRe, a reimagining of the farm collective that William’s great-grandparents founded when they emigrated to the U.S. from Russia in the 1880s.

“The original settlement was similar in ethos and actuality to a kibbutz, but William and I view ACRe as a community hub centered on values of Jewish community and sustainability and inspired by the spirit of the original settlers,” Levin said. “We are trying to reimagine its original spirit and give modern people the opportunity to connect through farming.”