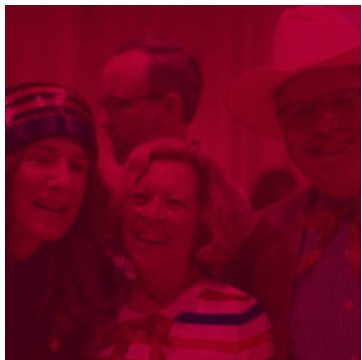
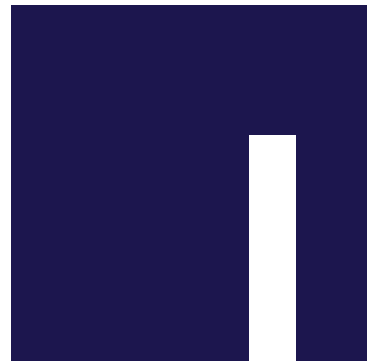




Germantown
Jewish Centre



Community of **Communities**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



Our Leadership

DEAR VALUED MEMBER,

During this year we finally and gratefully emerged from most of the restrictions brought on by the COVID pandemic. It was a joy for many of us to be together in person again for the High Holidays. The large tent we bought out of necessity for outdoor programming over the previous two years, turned out to be a desirable place for programs and informal meetings even after we could again gather indoors, and we are exploring plans for a more sustainable and attractive outdoor space in the future.

This year witnessed the launch of an exciting project to put a solar energy installation on the roof of the education building. The idea was brought forward and researched by GJC's Green Team, operating under the auspices of the Tikkun Olam Committee. As of this writing, fundraising is well underway, and hopefully by the time you read this, we will have signed a contract and scheduled the installation.

Our community's anti-racism journey continued this year with a variety of programming created not only by the Tikkun Olam Committee and GARLiC, but also Men's Club, Women of GJC, and Dorshei Derekh. These programs offered opportunities to increase members' awareness and skills in recognizing and responding to racial injustice out in the world, and also to focus inward toward ensuring GJC feels like a home to Jews of Color.

Our Early Childhood Program has continued to flourish, providing high quality care and education to hundreds of children each year, and providing GJC with a substantial net contribution to our operating budget. The ECP is now operating at maximum capacity, and its growth, combined with a modest increase in our Religious School, the full return of most activities to the building following a COVID lull, and a challenge in hiring maintenance staff, combined to present some challenges this year in finding spaces for all our activities. While some classes and programs took place in spaces that were not ideal, the constructive collaboration of our staff and volunteer leaders led to workarounds for this year, and plans for better solutions next year.

I want to appreciate our exceptional professional staff for their dedication in ensuring the smooth operation of our complex and wonderful community. I am grateful to Rabbi Adam Zeff, Student Rabbi Maria Pulzetti, Executive Director Nina Peskin, ECP Director Catherine VanVlack, Director of Youth & Families Abby Weinberg, Finance Director Gloria Geissler, Program & Membership Director Kate Lawn, Operations Coordinator Rebecca Paquet; Facilities Director Eric Word, and all of our fabulous staff.

B'SHALOM

David Mosenkis

President, Germantown Jewish Centre

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

David Mosenkis, President

Minna Ziskind, Senior Vice-President

Barbara Menin, VP of Administration

Alisa Kraut, VP of Education

Amy Schrager, VP of Community Building

Burgandy Holiday, VP of Belonging

James Manchester, Treasurer

Steven Wade, Comptroller

Beth Stearman, Financial Secretary

Jennifer Paget, Recording Secretary

Diane Aji, Corresponding Secretary

Dr. Dan Livney, Immediate Past President

SENIOR STAFF:

Adam Zeff - Senior Rabbi

Maria Pulzetti - Student Rabbi and Beit Midrash Director

Nina Peskin - Executive Director

Abigail Weinberg - Director of Youth and Families

Gloria Geissler - Finance Director

Catherine VanVlack - Early Childhood Program Director

Kate Lawn - Program and Membership Director

Eric Word - Facilities Director

Leonard Gordon - Rabbi Emeritus



Our **Leadership** continued.

GJC is a gathering place. Under our roof and through our programming and services, we bring together a wide diversity of people and incorporate multiple perspectives to form a complex tapestry in which we can both find our place and appreciate the places of others. As a community, we share a vision of a rich, varied, and multi-layered Jewish life, one that includes rather than excludes. We join each other to study, to sing, to pray, to enlarge our spirits and to raise our voices for justice, and what we do transforms both our members and the larger community that participates in and is affected by our actions.

To make our vision a reality requires the joint commitment of many people, including members, outside donors, and foundations who support our mission. We benefit from the ideas and feedback they share with us and through the financial gifts that they generously donate to us to allow us to continue to be here to serve this community for many years to come. We can only thrive and move forward because of this crucial support, and we are so grateful to all of those who provide it; you will see their names listed with pride and appreciation in the pages of this report.

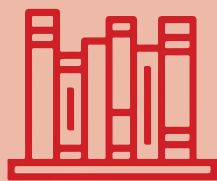
It is ancient Jewish wisdom that we cannot live our best lives alone. We need each other to become who we are. We are changed by interacting with each other, cheered by celebrating together, and comforted by the support of others in times of grief and trauma. Our children are shaped by the educational experiences they share and by the adults who teach and guide them to find their own unique Jewish paths. But when we are truly doing our work as a community, our impact extends beyond those directly involved. Our unique perspective on Jewish life reaches thousands in the larger Philadelphia community, and our embrace of diversity with respect for the differences among us provides a model for the future in a country that sadly remains deeply divided.

With your help, may we have the strength, the vision, and the resources to continue to spread the sacred meaning and deep connection we find in our vibrant vision of Judaism, lifting up our hearts, our community, our country, and our world.

Our Community

494

Member
Households



99

Children Enrolled

in Religious School, Teen
Tuesday, and Confirmation

420

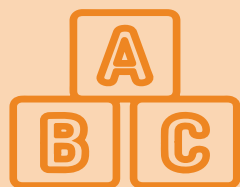
People Celebrated

Rabbi Zeff's 20th Anniversary

835

People Attended

21 musical services



128

Early Childhood
Program Students

53

Employees



\$298,835

Raised in the
High Holiday Appeal

4,009

People Participated
in over

117

Programs



\$287,846

Raised for
Solar Panels



200+

Member
Households

of more than 20 years

20

Families Joined



Our Offerings

PRAYER

GJC's vibrant and diverse prayer offerings create unique spiritual experiences for everyone.

Our services include:

- The Charry Service – led by our rabbis
- Minyan Dorshei Derekh – lay-led Reconstructionist minyan
- Minyan Masorti – lay-led traditional, egalitarian minyan
- Friday Night Musical Services with Rena Branson, Solomon Hoffman, Batya Levine, Kol Zimrah, Yehi Or, RRC Collective, Chana Rothman, and Steve Weintraub
- An array of kids and family services
- New offerings such as Coffee & Donuts with the Rabbinic Staff, Torah Study, and Family Shabbat
- Special Friday night Kol Zimrah and joint Shabbat service in honor of Rabbi Zeff's 20th anniversary at GJC

STUDY

- GJC's Koleinu Beit Midrash offers an exciting, traditional Jewish model for communal gathering, study, relationship building, spiritual inquiry, and creative expression.
- We had a wonderful year of learning in Koleinu Beit Midrash! We offered seventeen different classes and 184 people learned in our Beit Midrash. We had opportunities to learn how to read Hebrew, the ecological underpinnings of the Passover Seder, the medieval text about teshuvah, Tomer Devorah, traditional and new approaches to prayer practice, and much more!
- We capped off the year with an all-night study session for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot, joining with our sister congregations in Northwest Philadelphia to study Torah until sunrise.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

At the start of the pandemic, three volunteer congregants approached GJC's rabbis to find out how they could support our clergy and our community through the unknown journey we had begun. What emerged was GJC's Pastoral Care Team. Our team has transformed what mutual aid looks like in our community and has helped us to live out our community values, as we support one another through times of grief, joy, illness, job loss, and everyday life challenges. From reaching out to every congregant by phone for friendly check-ins to facilitating and participating in support groups, we have made clear that relationships and connection are at the center of our community.

PROGRAM

GJC has an extensive selection of programs offered year-round which serve to build and strengthen our connections with each other.

Our offerings include:

- GJC Celebrates! family programs
- SukkahFest
- Jewish Arts & Movement children's programs
- Security trainings

GROUPS:

- Women of GJC
- Men's Club
- HAZAK





ACTIVITIES

- Israeli dancing
- People of the Book
- Family havdalah gatherings
- Israel programs


Our Impact

Tikkun Olam “repairing the world”) is a core value of the GJC community, and our tikkun olam initiatives provide an entry for the pursuit of a more just world.

GJC:

-  Celebrated our fifth annual Pride Shabbat, with a “Through the Rainbow” musical service and drag show, and booths on topics ranging from LGBTQ banned books to trans information and inspiration.
-  Dedicated Shabbatot to highlighting reproductive justice, veterans, and refugees
-  Supported POWER, deepening our relationships in our interfaith network, connecting with those affected by injustice, helping make opportunities and resources available that many of us take for granted.
-  Held American Red Cross blood drives and supported refugee families.

AN UPDATE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF BELONGING AT GJC, BURGANDY HOLIDAY

-  During Yom Kippur 5783 services, I introduced myself to you all as the Vice-President of Belonging at Germantown Jewish Centre. Since then, congregational interest and engagement in programming has increased significantly. In announcing this very intentional move on behalf of the Germantown Jewish Centre, I have seen such enthusiasm and excitement for what is to come. Our vision has been to create a welcoming and joyful space where we can all feel we belong.

As you know, we have had programming across the last year to engage in this work of eradicating racism in our community. Since then, through the work of committees like the Tikkun Olam Coordinating Team (TOCT) and GJC’s Antiracism Leadership Committee (GARLiC), the efforts of Dorshei Derekh and the work of hard-working and highly motivated community members, staff, and visiting scholars, we are moving beyond vision into action.

Programming that allows us to connect to one another, and to people outside of our community have given us practice having hard conversations, which is a considerable part of moving toward ending racism. As a community, we have watched video presentations, had hard and deep discussions, listened to beautiful music at Pesach, and learned about multicultural Jewish identity, bias, racial justice work, and what reparations really means. We took a field trip to the Lest We Forget Museum of Slavery, an impactful and affecting collection of slavery artifacts and documentation, followed by conversation.

Our Granger services this year were wonderful, and our afternoon conversation with Ali Michael, author of *Our Problem, Our Path: Collective Anti-Racism for White People*. A dynamic speaker and thought leader, we were pleased for her return for our more in-depth discussion in April.

In the spring, a dozen of our Dorshei Derekh minyan members took part in “Reckoning Together a Reconstructionist Pilgrimage Toward Racial Justice.” The group traveled, and explored how to deconstruct racism in order to reconstruct Judaism. Our congregants visited sites such as the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, and the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, which looks at slavery, Jim Crow segregation and mass incarceration, juxtaposed with the resistance and struggle for justice and hope. This group of 200 people gave our congregants opportunity to help us all learn what it is to truly be in the work of anti-racism.

GJC is engaging in important infrastructure work of building an antiracist and inclusive community, with policies reflecting this. For example, GJC now observes Juneteenth, as a staff holiday commemorating the emancipation of African Americans. It also actively supports its staff in receiving training and implementing programming that teaches the children of the Early Childhood Program (ECP). You can see in the way the children engage one another, and also in the beautiful hallway and classroom decorations, that GJC is a place actively in the work of eradicating racism. We are so very proud of the work that Aliya Hart and the entire team in ECP has done to normalize and make the work of ending racism fun and interesting for our youngest members.

In order for our community to become a place where everyone who enters feels that they belong, we must have a welcoming spirit, willingness to be vulnerable, and self-awareness. The work we are doing as a community across generations is worthy of acknowledgment, and I cannot wait to see what we do in the years to come.

To build a community of belonging we need everyone, and I invite you to engage in all programming that sparks curiosity for you. If you have ideas for programming let us know about it, and if you want to be a part of making this work happen, do not hesitate to speak up to members of GARLiC and TOCT. Ending racism is a Jewish imperative at GJC.



New Initiative

GJC IS GOING SOLAR!

This year, we came together as a community to show our commitment to Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) by fighting global warming with clean energy. We will be replacing the roof on the education building with a new energy-efficient roof upon which 117 solar panels will be installed. These panels will generate 67,000 kWh of electricity each year, eliminating 58,000 pounds of CO2 discharge.

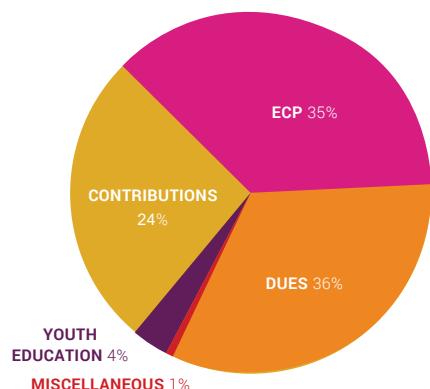
We celebrated reaching and surpassing our financial goal for the project with an outdoor concert and festival, featuring performances by ECP students, teen bands, and GJC band G'vanim.



Our Responsibility

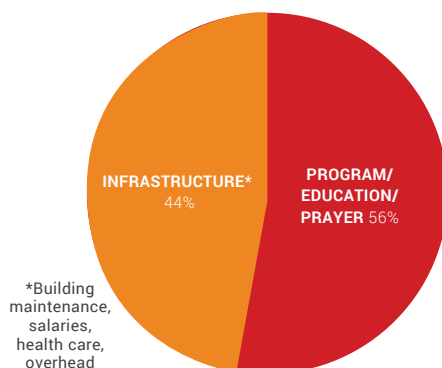
BUDGET

Revenue



Revenue Total = \$3,603,480

Expense



Expense Total = \$3,298,072

BUILDING FUND

- Our building fund collects roughly \$60,000 annually which is used for maintaining our communal home.

GJC'S LANDSCAPING PLAN UPDATE: Building Beautiful

- This year, WGJC chose as its Building Beautiful Project the creation of a rain garden in the area adjacent to our parking lot. A rain garden is a garden of native shrubs, grasses, perennials, and flowers designed to temporarily hold and soak in rainwater runoff from impermeable surfaces, such as our parking lot. Every time it rains, water runs off these surfaces, collecting pollutants along the way. The pollutant-laden water enters storm drains untreated and flows directly to nearby streams and ponds. Rain gardens collect rainwater runoff, allowing the water to be filtered by vegetation and percolate into the soil, recharging groundwater aquifers and filtering out pollutants. They add beauty, but more importantly, they serve to filter storm water runoff from our parking lot in a very environmentally responsible way and may even reduce our water bills.
- This year we collected over \$17,000 in support of this project, allowing us to contribute \$7,000 to the solar project.
- One of the GJC community's long-held goals has been to obtain a comprehensive landscape plan, and this year that goal has come to fruition. As with most major projects, it took a significant amount of time to move from the conception stage to completion, and spanned three presidents' (Chip Becker, Denise Wolf, and Dan Livney) terms. The process began in earnest during Chip Becker's presidency, when the House and Design Committee expressed the importance of having such a plan, rather than addressing our landscape needs piecemeal. Chip recognized that this was an opportunity to further a beautification project with the potential to boost community morale and provide positive focus for a capital improvement, which all our members would experience as a marked difference when coming to the site, as opposed to most of our building projects which are focused on maintenance and not nearly as engaging. Our House and Design Committee, who invested many, many hours (cumulatively, days!) in this years-long process, shouldered the bulk of the work. With feedback from staff, community stakeholders, and with broader community input, and synthesizing that input to determine our priorities (community gatherings, beauty, reducing storm water runoff, security, native plants, and historic preservation were the dominant themes), the committee put out a Request for Proposal to several firms, ultimately selecting Studio Bryan Hanes. They continued to stay deeply engaged from there, reviewing and re-reviewing plans over several months. Understanding that it would not be financially feasible to implement it all at once, the plan was designed with sections that can be implemented in stages as funding becomes available. GJC is very grateful to the members of the House and Design Committee who made this work possible. They are (listed alphabetically): Sherman Aronson, Caren Borowsky, Mark Fallon, Susan Pardys (co-chair) and Leslie Pontz (co-chair).

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LEADERSHIP DONORS:

NEDIV LEV

Marcy & Dan Bacine
Jane & Richard Baron
Eileen & Richard Bazelon
Peninah & Albert Berdugo
Harold Berger
Sarah Braun & Rabbi Shai Gluskin
Barbara Jaffe & Howard Langer
Connie & Sam Katz
Myra Kranzel
Jake Kriger
Chris & Steve Levin
Barb & Dick Menin, z'l
Sandy & Jim Meyer
Martha & Chuck Schleifer
Allyson & David Schwartz
Denise Scott Brown
Dveera Segal & Brad Bridge
Patty & Steve Segal
Stefanie & Alex Seldin
Elise Singer & Don Perelman
Susan & Ken Weiss

ROSH PINAH

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Marta & Chip Becker
Michael Beer
Evelyn Eskin & David Major
Rachel Falkove
Helen & Michael Feinberg
Rabbi Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger
David Hahn & Barbara Weiss
Myra Jacobsohn
Hillary & Rabbi Judd Kruger
Levingston
Katie & Geof Margo
Steven Peitzman
Beth Rosenbaum & Noel Eisenstat
Rina & Ivan Rosenberg
Beth Stearman
Betsy & Rabbi David Teutsch
Joyce & Erik Videlock

FOUNDATIONS

Anonymous
Wolfe Family Foundation
Julius and Ray Charlestein
Foundation



Our People

GJC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

David Mosenkis, President
Minna Ziskind, Senior Vice-President
Barbara Menin, VP of Administration
Alisa Kraut, VP of Education
Amy Schrager, VP of Community-Building
Burgandy Holiday, VP of Belonging
James Manchester, Treasurer
Steven Wade, Comptroller
Beth Stearman, Financial Secretary
Jennifer Paget, Recording Secretary
Diane Ajl, Corresponding Secretary
Dr. Dan Livney, Immediate Past President

Members at Large

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Donald Perelman
Dr. Deborah White
Rabbi Marsha Friedman
Latifa diPaolo McLeary
Jared Jackson
Lynne Jacobs
Dr. Neysa Nevins
Jeanne Calloway
Richard Goldberg
Yoel Solis
Ali Stumacher

Youth Liasons

Hadassah Weinmartin
Jared Nachimson

Committee and Auxiliary Chairs

Finance Committee – James Manchester
House & Design Committee – Susan Pardys & Leslie Pontz
Investments Committee – James Manchester
Leadership Development & Nominating Committee – Helen Feinberg
Early Childhood Program Committee – Miriam Goldberg
Religious Committee – Neil Actor
Religious School Parent Committee – Jeanne Calloway & Shana Teitelbaum
Chesed Committee – Peninah Berdugo & Gena Epstein
Tikkun Olam Coordinating Team – Andrea Moselle & Margaret Shapiro

HAZAK – Helen Feinberg & Coleman Poses
Men's Club – Dr. Richard Menin, z'l
Women of GJC – Nan Daniels & Rhonda Mandel

Honorary Board Members

Marcy Bacine
Rose Beck
Elaine Dushoff
Carol Kaplan
Ned Kripke
Barbara Lissy
Dr. Elizabeth Richman
Dr. Charles Schleifer
Dr. Martha Schleifer
Dr. Norman Schwartz
Stephen Segal
Joan Silver
Berel Sternthal

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Judah Labovitz ('85-87)
Curtis Pontz ('87-89)
Daniel Bacine ('89-91)
James Meyer ('92-94)
Marcus Kaplan ('94-96)
David Kraut ('96-98)
Dveera Segal ('98-00)
Hershel Richman ('00-02)
Helen Feinberg ('02-04)
Rachel Falkove ('04-06)
Joshua Goldblum ('06-08)
Howard Treatman ('08-10)
Christine Levin ('10-12)
Dr. Mitchell Marcus ('12-14)
Mathieu Shapiro ('14-16)
Charles Becker ('16-18)
Denise Wolf ('18-20)

GJC STAFF

Adam Zeff - Senior Rabbi
Maria Pulzetti – Student Rabbi and Beit Midrash Director
Nina Peskin - Executive Director
Abigail Weinberg – Director of Youth and Families
Catherine VanVlack - ECP Director
Kate Lawn - Program and Membership Director
Gloria Geissler - Finance Director
Eric Word - Facilities Director
Rebecca Paquet - Operations Coordinator
Melanie Hall – Administrative Assistant
Caroline Hicks – Youth and Families Administrative Assistant
Jared Jacobson – Program and Membership Assistant
Cece Schocken – ECP Administrative Assistant

Maintenance Team

Jose Toro
William Franklin
Charles Johnson
Shermell Mobley

ECP Teachers

Hannah Allen
Mykle Bradford
Amira "P-Nut" Brown
Esmeralda Castillo
Sarah Charlick
Felicia Croswell
Sharon Curran
Tina Easley
Avery Finch
Mark Fischer
Chloe Gropper
Aliya Hart
D'Anza Holden
Kiera Hollinsworth
Theresa Johnson
Jemma Kuhl
Kelly Ramos-Pagan
Layla Robinson
Dana Shaw
Al Snyder
Emarie Villanueva
Iyanna Williams
Terri Williams
Doris Young

Religious School Teachers

Liz Ben-Yaacov
Elissa Yaffe Cohen
Maya Orli Cohen
Tina Easley
Daniella Forstater
Anna Goldberg
Asia Irgang Laden
Karen Kripke
Lesley Pearl
Jordan Rosh
Ariel Silverman
Ayala Silverman
Esther Sitrin

**THANK YOU TO THE
HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS WHO
VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO
HELP OUR COMMUNITY THRIVE**



Our Youth and Families

BACK TO SHABBAT SCHOOL

For the first time since 2020, the Religious School students returned to “Shabbat School” during January and February, coming to GJC on Saturdays instead of Sundays. Students experienced Shabbat firsthand and learned about the benefits of stepping back from creating to enjoy the world just as it is.

FAMILY SHABBAT

The Charry Minyan welcomed in children and families for a special, one-hour Family Shabbat Service and Kiddush. During six Shabbatot during the year, Rabbi Zeff creatively engaged children of all ages in tefillah (prayer) and Torah while giving the young people opportunities to lead parts of the service themselves. There was ample time to schmooze and connect during the kiddush with everyone’s favorite pizza bagels and ice cream sandwiches!

TWO TRIPS TO THE JRA

As our pre-b’nei mitzvah families have done for many years, this year’s 6th grade families helped pack food boxes at the Jewish Relief Agency as part of their exploration of the significance of becoming b’nei mitzvah. Then, for Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, the Men’s Club helped organize a trip for all Youth and Families to the JRA. The group that went ranged in age from 7-70+. They cooperated beautifully to pack and deliver boxes to those in need.

TEEN YOUTH GROUP

This year was the wildly successful inaugural year of the GJC Teen Youth Group. Under the enthusiastic and skillful leadership of Morah Bridget Siegel-Fultz, over 15 teens enjoyed an array of programming from Teen Purim party to a visit with the Philadelphia Goat Project to an overnight in the synagogue! They organized a steering committee that is already planning a balance of fun, service-learning and educational programming for next year. (GJC members in 7th-12th grade are welcome to join!)

ENGAGING WITH ISRAEL

Teen Tuesday included two classes about the history and culture of Israel. First the Habonim Dror Shaliach (Israeli Emissary) taught a survey course of Israeli society, looking at Israel’s different immigrant communities, the history of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and key figures in Israeli politics and culture. Later, Andrew Davies, founder and leader of The Bible Players, challenged the students to create advertisements for Israeli cities, foods, female leaders and historic moments. Finally, in celebration of Yom HaAtzma’ut, the entire Religious School was rolling with laughter as we learned about Israel from the Bible Players performance of “Time Travel Through Israel.”

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM WORK

For the past three years, Director of Youth and Families, Abby Weinberg, has been privileged to study, one-on-one and in groups, with master educator, and founder of Makom Community, Beverly Socher Lerner. With Beverly, Abby has been studying a process called Jewish Placemaking which invites children and families to engage with Jewish wisdom in a way that promotes joyous, immersive, and effective Jewish education and community health. For the past year, Abby has been using these teachings to refresh the RS curriculum and make all Youth and Families programming more engaging for our current students and families. She is looking forward to rolling out the updated curriculum over the next few years.

**K'vod
habriyot**

Honoring Each Other

Kehilah

Community

**Klal
Yisrael**

The Jewish People

Torah

Learning

Kedushah

Holiness

**R'difat
Tzedek**

Pursuing Justice

**Mahloket
L'shem
Shamayim**

Conflict for the Sake of Heaven



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