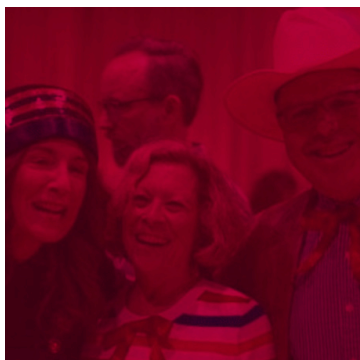
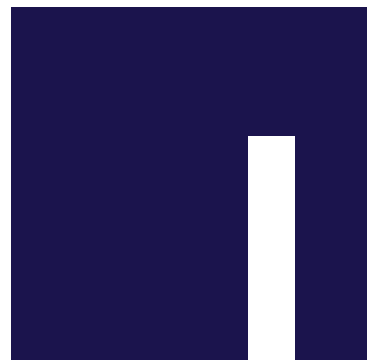




Germantown
Jewish Centre



Community of **Communities**

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



Our Leadership

DEAR VALUED MEMBER,

The strength and vibrancy of the GJC community has been a source of comfort in the painful and tumultuous days since October 7. The diversity that is one of the proud hallmarks of GJC presented special challenges as our members had many different ways of responding to the horrors of October 7 and its aftermath. I am gratified that our community has found many ways to support each other and our extended family in Israel. One immediate and lasting response has been increased security measures, most notably the presence of a security guard whenever the building is in use. We responded spiritually with prayer and meditation gatherings, the addition of special prayers for Israel and for release of the hostages, and special recognition for two assigned hostages. We publicly proclaimed our solidarity with Israel through statements and events. We increased our understanding through an ongoing series of informational programs presenting diverse perspectives from some of our members and outside experts. We completed a successful fundraiser for Magen David Adom to purchase an ambulance. We organized forums for members to listen, talk with, and support each other.

Not long after our informative Charry weekend on antisemitism, GJC unfortunately experienced directly the ugly scourge of antisemitism, with the first of two bomb threats. I am grateful to Nina Peskin for her competent crisis management during these incidents, in collaboration with our security consultants and the Philadelphia Police.

Yet even as we dealt with these difficult and unprecedented attacks on Israel and threats to our community, we continued to flourish as a congregation. Our membership is stable and our financial situation is solid. Our Early Childhood Program and Religious School have never been stronger, as they continue to attract and warmly embrace and educate the younger generation. We welcomed a diverse array of inspirational leaders for our Friday night services this year, and our shabbat morning minyanim continued to flourish.

I appointed an ad-hoc committee that has been considering ways to make our building, services, and programming accessible to the broadest range of people, including those with disabilities. The Accessibility Committee's work has already resulted, in collaboration with the House and Design Committee, with recommendations that are being acted on to create an ADA-compliant entrance ramp to our main entrance, and a new sukkah that will be much more accessible to those with limited mobility. Another ad-hoc committee has been addressing ways we can build community across our different shabbat morning prayer groups. GJC proudly supported the launch of the Shtetl 2.0 organization, dedicated to supporting vibrant and connected aging in place in Northwest Philadelphia.

We completed a successful fundraising campaign for a new roof and solar panels, whose installation was completed in March, and by the time you read this, should be providing clean, cost-free electricity for about half of the electrical needs of our education building. GJC's Tikkun Olam initiatives included educational programs on climate change and racism, as well as support of refugees, both hands-on with a newly adopted refugee family, and through advocacy for humane refugee policies.

We bade a temporary farewell to Rabbi Zeff as he began a well-deserved and overdue sabbatical and welcomed Reba Carmel onto our staff as our Visiting Rabbi until Rabbi Zeff's return in September. I am especially grateful to Executive Director Nina Peskin for her steady leadership during this very challenging year. And I appreciate the rest of our exceptional staff for their dedication in ensuring the smooth operation of our complex and wonderful community.

B'SHALOM

David Mosenkis

President, Germantown Jewish Centre

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

David Mosenkis, President

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Jennifer Paget, VP of Administration

Alisa Kraut, VP of Education

Amy Schragar, VP of Community Building

Burgandy Holiday, VP of Belonging

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Steven Wade, Assistant Treasurer

Beth Stearman, Assistant Treasurer

Neysa Nevins, Recording Secretary

Diane Ajl, Corresponding Secretary

Dr. Dan Livney, Immediate Past President

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Adam Zeff - Senior Rabbi

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 diversity of people and incorporate multiple perspectives to form a vibrant community in which we can both find our place and appreciate the places of others. As a community, we share the vision of living a rich, varied, and multi-layered inclusive Jewish life. We join with one another to study, sing, pray, to elevate our spirits and to raise our voices for justice. That which we do best together, transforms both our members and the greater community that participates in and is affected by our actions.

With the outbreak of violence in Israel and Gaza, our communities came together in prayer and participated in diverse, interactive programming designed to elicit dialogue and understanding. The eloquence and passion of our ongoing programs which centered on the war provided a unique atmosphere of trust and relationship building within our multiple communities.

We witnessed robust learning this year at all levels under our roof. Our very youngest members know our building as if it is their second home and at the end of a long week of friendship and learning fill our Sanctuary with song heralding the coming of Shabbat. A notable number of teens who began in ECP celebrated their Brit Mitzvah and this year's Confirmation class are from second and third generation GJC member families. Opportunities for adults to engage with theology, rabbinic thought, the weekly Torah portion filled KBM's calendar this year as did multiple learning opportunities from our constituent groups. Joyful and creative musical Kabbalat Shabbat services highlighted our community's commitment to joyful prayer.

With all that we have accomplished this year under often trying circumstances, we are thriving. To continue to do so 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 flourish 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.

**Reba Carmel,
Visiting Rabbi**

Our Community

484
Member
Households



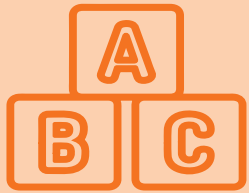
99
Children Enrolled

in Religious School, Teen
Tuesday, and Confirmation

1 Building Walkthrough
with Approximately
100 Members

1

Stop the Bleed Training
with approximately 25 people



130

Early Childhood
Program Students

450

People
Attended

5

Public
Community
Events

53
Employees



\$331,870

Raised in the
High Holiday Appeal



7,500

People Participated
in over

230

Programs

3

Security/Emergency
preparedness trainings
with approximately

250

members and staff



200+

Member Households
of more than 20 years

4

Dedicated Shabbatot
highlighting reproductive justice, disability
awareness and activism, refugee justice,
and veterans and security

50
New Members

GJC received two major bequests from long-time members this year. One was from Howard Spodek, z"l, for (\$162,000) and one from Eileen Leibowitz, z"l, (\$250,000). We are deeply grateful to these two members of our community for their incredible generosity and for sustaining our future.



Our Connection to Israel

Introduction by GJC President, David Mosenkis

GJC members have always had many ways of relating to Israel. Over the years, we have had programs that presented diverse perspectives on controversial issues, and programs that focused on less controversial aspects of Israeli culture and society. Since October 7, the differences among our members' perspectives on Israel has presented special challenges in how we have responded as a community. We have sought to learn from each other, find common ground, respect differences, and strive toward a relationship with Israel that reflects the deep convictions of our members and strengthens our bonds as a community. This is no easy feat, but what synagogue has a better shot at being a place where people who disagree can be in community together? I trust that GJC will continue to build on its successful legacy as a diverse congregation that has stayed rooted in Jewish tradition, while grappling in bold, thoughtful, and innovative ways with the challenges of a changing world.

GJC offered our community times to gather and process our response to the war in these ways:

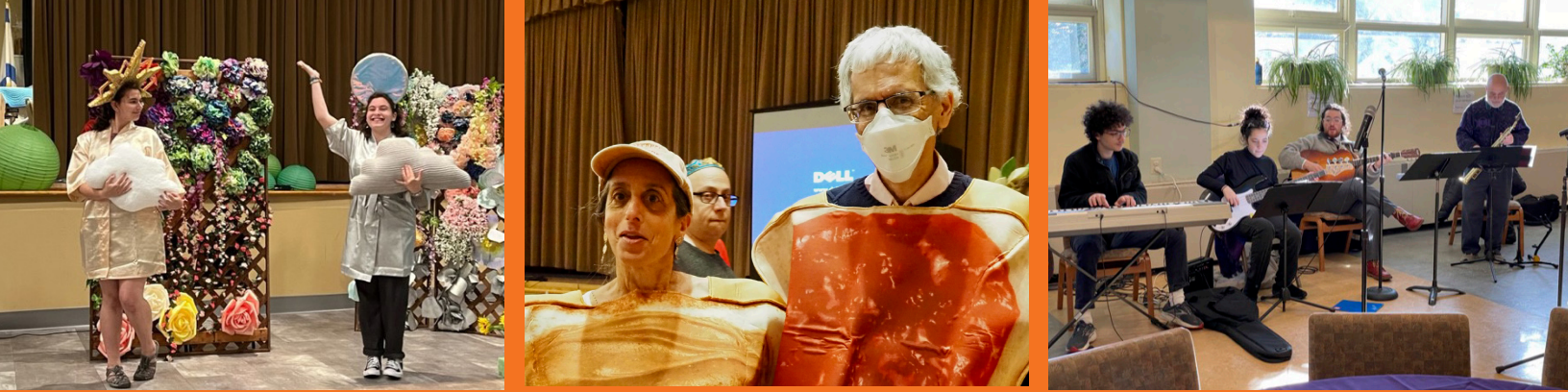
- Two were held for the community to grieve
- Six listening sessions held by various subcommunities with 122 participants including adults and teens
- One for college students to share their experiences on campus
- One for parents of college students
- One for students who were experiencing antisemitism
- One meditation on peace in Israel and Gaza

The following presentations were offered throughout the year:

- Oct. 29: "War in Israel and its Implications for the Region" with Yossi Shain, former member of the Knesset
- Jan. 10: "A Series of Reports from Israel No. 1" with Josh Peskin
- Jan. 23: "My Personal Journey and Current Work in Israel" with Sigal Kanotopsky of the Jewish Agency for Israel
- Feb. 4: "A Series of Reports from Israel No. 2" with Rabbis Fredi Cooper, David Goodman, and Beth Janus
- Feb. 20: "What's Happening on Campuses" with a panel of Hillel representatives
- March 9: "Testimony: Firsthand Accounts from Israel" with Gal Horev and Esther Marcus
- March 10: "Poems for Our Days" with Rachel Korazim
- March 17: "A Series of Reports from Israel No. 3" with Joan Stern
- April 4: "Israel's Democracy - Threats and Opportunities" with Yuval Yavneh of the New Israel Fund
- Yom ha-Atzma'ut Dinner & Program: Poetry Reading and Discussion with Adi Keissar

GJC Ambulance Fund

- GJC launched a campaign to support the first responders of Magen David Adom, Israel's Red Cross, who serves the needs of Israelis of all backgrounds. Thanks to more than 260 donors, we raised the \$115,000 needed to purchase an ambulance that will identify Germantown Jewish Centre as the donor.



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
- Kol Zimrah - a musical kabbalat shabbat service
- An array of kids and family services

STUDY

We had a wonderful year of learning in Koleinu Beit Midrash! We offered thirteen different classes, and 188 people learned in our Beit Midrash. Studying Torah together gives us the opportunity to connect with others and to bring the wisdom of our tradition into our daily lives.

In two classes, our clergy offered tools for grappling with the challenges of the war (and other challenges too): Both/ And Thinking with Wendy Smith and Rabbi Adam Zeff, and Theology in a Time of Tragedy with Rabbi Reba Carmel. Our first co-sponsorship with Women of GJC, Shabbat Liturgy Through a Woman's Lens, taught by Rabbi Beth Janus, helped people make meaningful and new connections to our liturgy, and we hope to continue the collaboration. GJC's many member rabbis and cantors had an opportunity to study Talmud together in our first Clergy Study Group, and we offered our first intergenerational class, Trans Halakha, co-sponsored with Teen Tuesday and taught by nationally-known educator Laynie Soloman. We convened two weekly Torah study groups, offered several one-time talks by people who are leaders in their fields, and much more!

We capped off the year with an all-night study session for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot, joining with our sister congregations Mishkan Shalom and P'nai Or to study Torah until sunrise!

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! holiday events
- SukkahFest
- Jewish Arts & Movement children's programs
- Weekly meditation
- Security trainings

GROUPS:

- Women of GJC
- Men's Club
- Hazak

ACTIVITIES

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



Our Youth and Families

GINAT SHABBAT OVERHAUL

Lyndall Miller breathed new life into the weekly Ginat Shabbat services for families with children under 6 years old. Working with ECP teacher, Sydney Toussaint, Lyndall updated the service she created several decades ago to the delight of the 15 families who have been attending on a semi-regular basis. The highlight of the service is always the parsha story that is told with puppets, props, and scenery - all invented and constructed by Lyndall.

FAMILY SHABBAT

The Charry Minyan continued to welcome in children and families for five Family Shabbat Services. This year, most of the services were led by Youth and Families Director, Morah Abby Weinberg. Each service included parts led by children and parents and highlighted in a different grade. There was ample time for multi-generational schmoozing and connecting over a kiddush with everyone's favorites: pizza bagels and ice cream sandwiches!

TEEN-LED YOUTH PROGRAMS

This year amazing GJC Teen Youth Group continued to flourish under the leadership of teacher Bridget Seigel-Fultz, President Dasi Weinmartin and Vice President Sadie Wade. Teens organized potluck Sukkot and Hanukkah parties, participated in a city-wide Youth Summit on Gun Violence, slept over in the synagogue, delivered JRA boxes in Northwest Philadelphia - and much more!

INTENSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TEACHERS

We were very lucky this year to be able to send four RS teachers, and the Director, to participate in the Makom Community's local Jewish Placemaking Accelerator. The Accelerator program gives teachers and education directors from four selected congregations in the Greater Philadelphia area roughly 20 hours of professional development, including monthly seminars, coaching, congregational school observation, and a visit to Makom's Lab School. Teachers were able to learn new ways of inspiring students with the wisdom of Judaism while making it relevant to their world. We are especially grateful to the Schwartz family for the financial support to take advantage of this opportunity to improve our school!

YOUNG FAMILIES

GJC families with children under six years old became organized under the leadership of Rabbi Megan GoldMarche. Megan brought together a group of ECP and other parents to ensure that the GJC programming for their families met their needs and was well communicated. There is now a clear calendar of 1-2 events per month specifically for this age group and much enthusiastic participation by parents and kids!

HAVDALAH POTLUCKS

The Religious School Committee of Parents resumed their efforts to organize Havdalah Potlucks for each grade hosted by families in that grade. These potlucks are wonderful community-building opportunities and allow parents and kids to get to know each other in a low-key, fun environment with good food and fun. Thank you to the following families for hosting this year.

- Julia and Josh Rolf (Gan/Alef)
- Erin Schmit and Dane Menkin (Gimel)
- Miriam Goldberg & Jeffrey Alexandar (Bet)
- Jules Lipoff (Dalet)
- Anna Morin (Hei/Vav)



Our Pride

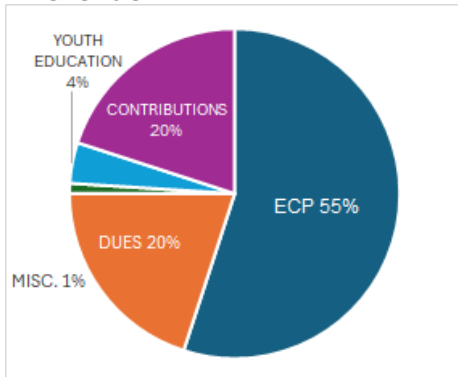
- Thank you to Michael Beer for his generous support in making PRIDE weekend possible!
- Thank you to the Harold & Renee Berger Family Engagement Endowment Fund for supporting the Friday Night PRIDE Family & Kids JAM!
- At GJC, being a home for LGBTQ Jews is one of the core ways we fulfill our mission of embracing and celebrating diversity. We learn from Torah about God's love for all of humanity, how all of us, in all of our fabulous differences, are created in the image of God. In the vision of Torah, there are no exceptions—we are all bathed in divine love. We learn from those around us about the love that two human beings can have for each other, the beautiful variety of loving relationships that can lift up and transform the lives of individuals. And we learn from living in community with each other about how the diverse forms of love we see around can enrich our lives and open our hearts to each other and to the divine impulse to love that is implanted in each of us. This is the essence of embracing LGBTQ pride in our community every day: to open ourselves to love and be loved, knowing that we are reflecting divine love in the love we show each other.



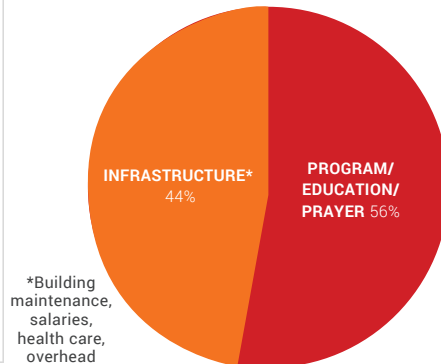
Our Responsibility

BUDGET

Revenue



Expense



Revenue Total = \$3,752,100

Expense Total = \$3,581,715

BUILDING FUND

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

BUILDING PROJECTS AT GJC

- The Women of GJC's annual Building Beautiful campaign this year helped fund a 10' X 24' shade sail for our playground, as well as a renovation of the picnic area with new picnic tables. These new additions will provide much-needed shade for the ECP children and a nice place to enjoy lunch or a snack.
- Howard Spodek was a long-time member of GJC and an active member of Dorshei Derekh. Howard's deep connection to the GJC community and the value he placed on the synagogue prompted him to leave an extremely generous, unrestricted bequest of \$162,000. When we were notified about this gift, much care and consideration was given to Howard and what was important to him. We know that Howard deeply loved gathering with the GJC community, and that justice and equity issues, including accessibility, were important to him. Therefore, the lay leadership determined that we would use the bequest to fund two projects: a new sukkah and a ramp to the office entrance.
- We are deeply grateful to Howard for prioritizing GJC in this way, and his gift will go a long way to enriching our community.

OUR NEW INITIATIVE

- After decades of discussion and effort, the GJC community in Northwest Philly now has an eruv. An eruv is a boundary that symbolically extends a private area into the public domain. An eruv makes it permissible by Jewish law to carry personal items within that area on Shabbat. Such items include keys, bags, babies, and even strollers. Beyond the halakhic significance of the eruv, it is a physical manifestation of the existence of a vibrant and engaged Jewish community. It is a real asset in attracting new residents to our neighborhood and a testament to the dedication of GJC and its members to supporting Jewish life in Northwest Philadelphia. A map of the eruv boundaries is available on the GJC website. It includes roughly the area between Stenton Avenue, Willow Grove Avenue, the Wissahickon Creek, and Washington Lane.
- Our eruv would not have been possible without the efforts and leadership of Rabbi Zeff, Rabbi Carmel, and the members of the Eruv Committee. The process was daunting and complicated. It required mapping the area to be enclosed using current utility poles, soliciting cooperation from PECO to permit the addition of small tubes and tube caps to the poles for the eruv, and getting official recognition from City Council and the Mayor. GJC is grateful to Rabbi Zeff, Religious Committee Chair Neil Actor, Charlie Miller, and Denise Wolf for their energy and efforts in bringing this to fruition. Going forward, the eruv will be inspected by volunteers before Shabbat to make sure it is intact. GJC will also be responsible for making any necessary repairs. The information on the status of the eruv will be posted on the GJC website.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LEADERSHIP DONORS:

NEDIV LEV

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

ROSH PINAH

Louie Asher
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Evelyn Eskin & David Major z"l
Rachel Falkove
Helen & Michael Feinberg
Rabbi Dayle Friedman & David Ferleger
David Hahn & Barbara Weiss
Myra Jacobsohn z"l
Hillary & Rabbi Judd Kruger
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Katie & Geof Margo
Steven Peitzman
Beth Rosenbaum & Noel Eisenstat
Rina & Ivan Rosenberg
Beth Stearman
Joyce & Erik Videlock

FOUNDATIONS

Anonymous**
Wolfe Family Foundation
Julius and Ray Charlestein
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Our People

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 Alisa Kraut, VP of Education
 Amy Schrage, VP of Community-Building
 Burgandy Holiday, VP of Belonging
 James Manchester, Treasurer
 Steven Wade, Assistant Treasurer
 Beth Stearman, Assistant Treasurer
 Neysa Nevins, Recording Secretary
 Diane Ajl, Corresponding Secretary
 Dr. Dan Livney, Immediate Past President

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 Jared Jackson
 Lesley Carson
 Rebecca Stern
 Jeanne Calloway
 Richard Goldberg
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 Lizanne Berger
 Deborah Franklin
 Jake Kriger
 Ivan Wolnek

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 House & Design Committee – Sherman Aronson & Leslie Pontz
 Investments Committee – James Manchester
 Leadership Development & Nominating Committee – Helen Feinberg
 Early Childhood Program Committee – Paige GoldMarche & Lisa Caissie
 Religious Committee – Neil Actor
 Religious School Parent Committee – Jeanne Calloway & David Kanthor
 Tikkun Olam Coordinating Team – Elliott Seif
 HAZAK – Helen Feinberg & Coleman Poses
 Men's Club – Jim Meyer
 Women of GJC – Rhonda Mandel & Debbie Stern

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 Rose Beck
 Elaine Dushoff
 Carol Kaplan
 Ned Kripke
 Barbara Lissy
 Dr. Elizabeth Richman
 Dr. Charles Schleifer
 Dr. Martha Schleifer
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 Daniel Bacine ('89-91)
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 Marcus Kaplan ('94-96)
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 Dveera Segal ('98-00)
 Hershel Richman ('00-02)
 Helen Feinberg ('02-04)
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 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)
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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
 Jared Jacobson – Program and Membership Coordinator
 Gloria Geissler - Finance Director
 Eric Word - Facilities Director
 Rebecca Paquet - Operations Coordinator
 Annika Hegamin – Administrative Assistant
 Caroline Hicks – Youth & Families Administrative Assistant
 Cece Schocken – ECP Administrative Assistant

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 Kyle Fowler
 David McCoy

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 Mykle Bradford
 Amira P-Nut Brown
 Niya Browning
 Esmeralda Castillo
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 Felicia Crowell
 Sharon Curran
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 Tina Easley
 Avery Finch
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 Kay Hickcox
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 Amotz Kohlmeier
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Religious School Teachers

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 Daniella Forstater
 Bridget Seigel Fultz
 Karen Kripke
 Asia Irgang Laden
 Ariel Silverman
 Esther Sitrin
 Amy Spitofsky
 Dasi Weinmartin

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



**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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