

# Our Community

**A quick reference for Mifgash 2026 participants to get to know each other better.**

## **OUR MIFGASH 2026 COMMUNITY: Connect with everyone!**

*Scroll down or click on a name to be taken to the full bios that appear below this table of contents. See a PDF of all attendees [here](#).*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>JCC   JCC Camp</b>
Andrea Aclabes	CEO	Salt Lake City (Wagner)
Smadar Bar-Akiva	Executive Director, JCC Global	JCC Global
Jeff Bicher	President & CEO	Montreal (Sylvan-Adams)
Zack Bodner	President & CEO	Palo Alto (Oshman)
Brooke Bowles	CEO	Birmingham (Levite)
Ryla Braemer	CEO	Toronto (Miles Nadal)
Dan Cardonick	CEO	Scranton
Melissa Chapman	Chief Impact Officer	Chicago
Joel Charnick	Chief Program Officer	Shalom Institute
Adam Chaskin	CEO	Jacksonville
Stephanie Chauss	CEO	Minnesota
Ronnie Conn	COO	Columbus
Scott Ehrlich	CEO	Fort Lauderdale (Posnack)
Whitney Fisch	Chief Program Officer	Cincinnati (Mayerson)
Sally Flinchbaugh	Deputy CEO	Palo Alto (Oshman)
Laura Friedman	CEO	Bridgewater, NJ (Birnbaum)
Rebecca Friedman	Executive Director	New Orleans
Paul Frishman	CEO	Miami Beach (Galbut)
Paul Geduldig	CEO	San Francisco
Sue Gelsey	CEO	Tenafly, NJ (Kaplen)
Mark Gesner	Executive Director	Tampa
Michael Goldstein	Executive Director	Scotch Plains, NJ (Central NJ)
Addie Goodman	President & CEO	Chicago
Lael Gray	COO	Foster City, CA (Peninsula)
Ivy Harlev	CEO	Wilmington (Siegel)
Carisa Heiss	CEO	San Antonio (Barshop)
Amy Holtz	COO/CFO	Tenafly, NJ (Kaplen)
David Jacobs	President/CEO	West Hartford (Mandell)

Tommy Jostad	Chief Financial and Operating Officer	Milwaukee (Samson)
John Kabot	Director of Inclusion	Palm Beaches (Mandel)
Bill Kaplan	CEO	Shalom Institute
Andrew Katz	Campus Director	Schenectady, NY (Ludwig)
Tara Kaufman	COO	Montreal (Sylvan-Adams)
Annie Keith	CEO	Charlotte (Levine)
Marcell Kenesei	CEO	JCC Budapest - Bálint Ház
Oded Kraus	CEO	Scottsdale (Valley of the Sun)
Jason Kunzman	President & CEO	Pittsburgh
Amy Lavin	CEO	Seattle (Stroum)
Eric Lightman	Executive Director	Allentown (Lehigh Valley)
Jill Madsen	CEO	Durham, NC
Ben Malczewski	Vice President	Toledo
Marni Mandell	CEO	Orlando (Roth)
Janel Margareta	Chief Impact Officer	Atlanta (Marcus)
Barrie McAlister	COO	Salt Lake City (Wagner)
Tara Ohayon	Chief Impact Officer	Dallas (Aaron)
Daria Pavlovski	Executive Director	KEDEM Jacobs JCC
Matt Perez	Chief Experience Officer	Austin (Dell)
David Posner	CEO, JCCs of the Capital Region	Schenectady, NY (Ludwig)
Arnie Preminger	President & CEO	Sunrise Camps
Lily Rabinoff-Goldman	President/CEO	Boston
Julie Rizzo	Chief Impact Officer	Charlotte (Levine)
Todd Rockoff	President + CEO	Tucson
Steven Rosenzweig	President & CEO	St. Louis
Anna Saul	Chief Advancement Officer	Wilmington (Siegel)
Leslie Sax	Chief Program Officer	West Hartford (Mandell)
Madeline Seltman	Chief Program Officer	NC - Durham
Daniel Septimus	CEO	Austin (Dell)
Mark Shapiro	President and CEO	Milwaukee (Samson)
Jordan Shenker	CEO	Foster City, CA (Peninsula)
Josh Shenker	COO	San Rafael, CA (Osher Marin)
Paige Silberfein	COO	Bridgewater, NJ (Birnbaum)
Larry Skolnick	CEO	Houston (Rubenstein)
Jim Sluyter	CEO & President	Kansas City
Michael Sophir	CEO	Denver (Staenberg-Loup)
Carly Stein	COO	Kansas City
Josh Steinharter	COO	East Bay, CA
Jo-Ellen Unger	COO	Jacksonville
Denise Wolf	Executive Director	Youngstown
Jennifer Wood	Executive Director	Augusta, GA



**Andrea Aclabes** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO

I.J. & Jeanné Wager JCC, Salt Lake City, Utah

Andrea Aclabes plans to retire this spring after serving in her current role for more than two decades. Previously, she served on the JCC board of directors for more than 20 years. Her JCC story began a lifetime ago, when her mother-in-law, a professor of early childhood education and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints told her that if she planned to put her children in preschool, the Jewish Community Center had the best program. Under Aclabes leadership, the JCC has navigated extraordinary growth and significant challenges, including recession, pandemic, capital construction, major disruptive university construction, and profound organizational change, and serving as its CEO has truly been the honor of her lifetime.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Other Executive Leadership Conferences

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Walk my dog while listening to fiction.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Serving as the director of the JCC is far more rewarding than being a lawyer.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Smadar Bar-Akiva** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
JCC Global

Smadar Bar-Akiva has been the executive director of JCC Global, a network of more than 1000 Jewish Community Centers, for more than two decades. In this capacity, she initiates, designs and implements global Jewish leadership programs and global partnerships and facilitates the global network. Previously, she worked for JCC Association of North America and for the Jewish Agency for Israel as an emissary at the Jewish Federation in Columbus, Ohio. Bar-Akiva holds a master's degree in contemporary Jewry and a bachelor's degree in international relations and English literature (both with honors) from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She is a graduate of Kolot Pluralistic Beit Midrash, the Mandel Leadership Institute, and a course at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Bar-Akiva is a certified coach and in her spare time, she volunteers as a mentor to NGOs. A proud mother of two, she resides in Tel Aviv. Among her hobbies are music, fitness, and creative writing.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Jeff Bicher** | 2–5 years in JCC Movement  
President and CEO  
Sylvan-Adams YM-YWHA, Montreal, Quebec

Jeff Bicher is the president and CEO of the Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA and teaches contemporary Israel at the Azrieli Schools-Herzliah. His passion for community started at Camp Massad, where he spent 27 seasons, 13 as the director. He served as director of

National Leadership Development at UIA Federations Canada and CEO of Hillel Montreal. Bicher is an alumnus of Spertus Institute and Concordia University. He was a fellow of professional leadership (Brandeis University), an iEngage fellow (Shalom Hartman Institute) and is a graduate of the inaugural Senior Educators Cohort of M2. He is considered an expert in Israel advocacy and engagement. Bicher previously served in many volunteer capacities, including board chair of Hebrew Foundation School. He chairs the Concordia University Pension Fund and Employee Benefits committees and is a member of the STRIVE task force on identity-based violence. His dedication to community is rivaled only by his love for the people that matter to him the most, his amazing family.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2022 | M<sup>2</sup>

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Read, spend time with family and friends, collect wine.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I sold vacuum cleaners door-to-door for a year

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Zack Bodner** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
President and CEO  
Oshman Family JCC, Palo Alto, California

Zack Bodner is the author of the book “Why Do Jewish? A Manifesto for 21st Century Jewish Peoplehood,” an Amazon #1 new release in Jewish Life and Religion & Philosophy. He serves as the President and CEO of the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto, California. Under his leadership, the OFJCC began hosting an annual conference, Zionism 3.0, that became The Z3 Project, a global effort to reimagine Diaspora-Israel relations. He holds a master’s degree in philosophy of religion and theology from Claremont Graduate University, earned a bachelor’s degree from Yale University, studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Stanford Business School’s program for Executives in Non-Profit Leadership. Bodner has been a MOTH storyteller and TEDx presenter, and he writes regularly for Jewish publications in the U.S. and Israel. He is a member of YPO, participated in the Executive Leadership Seminar at the Aspen Institute, and is on the advisory board of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford University. Bodner lives in Silicon Valley with his wife and three children.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Early Childhood Graduate | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2013 | Z3 Leadership Lab

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Writing, Traveling, Mountain Biking, Snowboarding, Wake Surfing, Spending time with family.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I can play the cowbell.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues.



**Brooke Bowles** | 2–5 years years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Levite JCC, Birmingham, Alabama

Longtime nonprofit leader Brooke Bowles is CEO of the Levite Jewish Community Center, where she oversees services and programs that serve Birmingham's Jewish and wider communities. Under her leadership, “The J” has built an increasingly diverse membership, and her collaborations with local agencies have extended The J’s benefits to an ever-widening audience, including marginalized communities. In 2007, Bowles founded Triumph Services, which was later recognized by the American Institute for Research as one of the three most effective service programs in the country for adults with autism. Bowles has resided in Birmingham for three decades and is involved with various community groups, including the Kiwanis Club. In her spare time, she and her husband, Shea, enjoy exploring the city and spending time with friends and family. Their blended family includes five daughters and one grandson.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2023

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Ryla Braemer** | Less than 2 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Miles Nadal JCC, Toronto, Ontario

Ryla Braemer is the CEO of the Miles Nadal JCC. She is an innovator and change professional and has dedicated her career to community building. She is excited to lead this diverse community built around principles of inclusion, accessibility, wellness, and belonging. Braemer holds a master's degree in adult education and community development from the University of Toronto. Previously, she was the vice president, Community Mobilization and Director, Israel Engagement, at UJA of Greater Toronto. She is married to Yacov Fruchter and is the proud mother of three children.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2025

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Reading, baking, spending time with family and friends.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I have never done a summersault!

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Dan Cardonick** | 11–20 years years in the JCC Movement  
CEO

Scranton JCC, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Dan Cardonick is the CEO of the JCC in Scranton, Pennsylvania, a position he has held for 16 years. Previously, he worked for Young Judaea/Hadassah for 13 years, first as an assistant regional director and regional director of New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania and, beginning in 2002, as the director of American programs, a national

role. He also served on the senior staff at Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake and Camp Tel Yehudah. Cardonick has extensive volunteer experience, and currently serves on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Northeast Pennsylvania and Jewish Family Service of Northeast Pennsylvania. He is a past president of the Executives Association of United Way Funded Agencies. He also served on the board of Temple Hesed of Scranton, a Reform congregation; as program and overall chair of the Small-Size JCC Cohort at the JCCA's Executive Leadership Forum in 2015 and 2016; and in 2007 was a co-chair of the national JEXNET Conference, the national Network for Experiential Jewish Youth Education. In 2005, Cardonick participated in the Kaplan Seminar for Emerging Professionals sponsored by the Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service at Brandeis University. Originally from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, he worked while growing up at the JCC Camps at Medford and for the Youth Department of the Katz JCC of Southern New Jersey. He is a graduate of Penn State University and holds a bachelor's degree in health policy and administration with a minor in gerontology.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | Kivunim 2010

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Listen to music, attend live music shows (especially ska shows), watch movies, exercise and most importantly enjoy time with my family, my dog and cats.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I auditioned for television commercials and movies from age 8-16, and was in a Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom commercial . I'm also a Philadelphia Eagles season ticket holder, and a huge fan of ska & punk music.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues.



**Melissa Chapman** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Impact Officer  
JCC Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Prior to joining JCC Chicago, Melissa Chapman was the CEO of the JCC East Bay for six years, where she led the master planning, design, and fundraising for a \$100 million capital expansion to build a first-of-its-kind Jewish Community Campus in Oakland, California. Earlier, Chapman worked in the Jewish Federation world for 23 years in a variety of roles in diverse communities, including three years as chief development officer for the Jewish Federation of San Diego County, five years as chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region, and 13 years with the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago as assistant vice president for campaign. She has served in leadership roles on multiple nonprofit boards and is a graduate of the Mandel Center for Leadership Excellence Fundraising University and the Leading Edge CEO onboarding cohort, and has a leadership certificate in combating antisemitism from Spertus Institute.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2019 | JCC Global

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Terrible TV.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I'm a certified aromatherapist.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues.



**Joel Charnick** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Program Officer  
Shalom Institute, Malibu, California

Joel Charnick's JCC starting at Camp JCA Shalom in 1988 as a camper, then as a CIT, counselor, TASC unit head, CIT director, tiyul (Teen Travel Trip) director, etgar (Israel Trip) director, and program coordinator. He returned to the Shalom Institute in 2001, where he was the director of Camp JCA Shalom for 20 years before he became chief program officer. Charnick graduated from the University of Arizona (go Wildcats!), attended graduate school at Colorado State University, and earned an MBA at American Jewish University. At AJU, he met his beshert, Rachel, and they were married in 2011. They have two children, Jonah and Lily, who are beginning their own camp journeys.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Exercise! Moving on the daily is routine. Enjoying the great outdoors, and cooking, especially grilling.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I once sang at Disneyland.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Meeting new people.



**Adam Chaskin** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Jewish Community Alliance, Jacksonville, Florida

Adam Chaskin joined the Jewish Community Alliance in 2018, with more than 20 years of diverse experience in leadership roles at nonprofit community organizations and universities throughout the United States. He served as executive director and program director with JCCs in New York and coached various nationally recognized basketball teams, including the U.S. National Maccabi team, and teams at Elon University, North Carolina A&T State University, University of North Carolina Greensboro, and Siena University in Albany, New York. He was drawn to the JCA by the opportunity to lead the number one Jewish community organization in the country. A graduate of the University of Michigan, with a bachelor's degree in industrial and operations engineering, he also earned a master's degree in physical education from Hamilton University. Chaskin is a certified graduate of The Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute, the FBI Citizens Academy, and multiple leadership programs in New York and Florida. He and his wife, Regina, live in the Mandarin area, and in his free time, he enjoys traveling and visiting with his sons, Grant and Noah.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Spend time with family.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was a Division I basketball coach for many years.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth.



**Stephanie Chauss** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Minnesota JCC

Stephanie Chauss spent 18 summers at the Milwaukee JCC’s day and overnight camps, where her love of Jewish community and service began. Before joining the JCC Movement as a professional, she served as senior vice president of operations for one of the largest YMCAs in the country. Her JCC story came full circle when she returned as a board member, board president, and co-chair of the steering committee that led to the merger that created the Minnesota JCC, and today, she’s honored to serve as its CEO. Chauss credits her parents—both devoted to Jewish organizations—for not only giving her those 18 formative summers but also a lifelong sense of home in the JCC community.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2024

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Time with family-spouse Michael and daughter Ida (15), extended family and lifelong friends. Cross country skiing and long walks; audio books and reading, happy hours and hosting Shabbat dinner.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Ronnie Conn** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
JCC of Greater Columbus, Columbus, Ohio

Ronnie Conn is the chief operating officer of the JCC of Greater Columbus. In this capacity, he oversees the early childhood education, cultural arts, and camp and youth services departments, along with other strategic initiatives. Previously, Conn spent almost a decade at J Los Angeles (formerly Westside JCC), where he most recently served as assistant executive director. He is passionate about JCC work and its ability to serve as the community’s town square. Conn received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from The George Washington University, a master’s degree in Jewish communal service from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Southern California. In 2016, he received the Mark Meltzer Young Professional Award from Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California, and in 2024, he received the Larry S. Moses Outstanding Young Professional Award from JewishColumbus and the Wexner Foundation. Conn is married to Melissa and is the father of two incredible children.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Other Early Childhood Program for Managers with Peter Blair

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Running, exercise, reading and travel.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was a stem cell donor through Gift of Life.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community.



**Scott Ehrlich** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
David Posnack JCC, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Scott Ehrlich has been a Jewish communal professional for 35 years, the last 16 as CEO of the David Posnack JCC in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Previously, he spent 18 years at the Michael-Ann Russell JCC in Miami, Florida. Scott has hosted two sets of JCC Maccabi® Games including both ArtsFest and JCC Maccabi Access. He is the Maccabiah Masters Tennis coach for the USA team at the last two Maccabiah Games. Ehrlich serves on several boards, including JCC Association of North America, Broward Counties Housing & Finance Authority, United Way's Community Leaders Council, and the executive board of the Nonprofit Executive Alliance. He is married to his amazing Ana and has incredible four kids.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Sports and travel.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I went to a Catholic University.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Whitney Fisch** | Less than 2 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Program Officer  
Mayerson JCC, Cincinnati, Ohio

Born and raised in the Jewish community of Marietta, Georgia, Whitney Fisch has spent more than two decades building engaged and thriving Jewish communities, developing leaders, and advancing mental health education. After graduating from The College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio, she began her career as the Jewish student life coordinator at the University of Georgia Hillel.

She later served as graduate and young professional program director for the Hillels of Illinois and as the director of outreach and education at the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs in Chicago, where she deepened her commitment to social justice and Jewish values. In 2008, her passion for Jewish learning led her to The Pardes Institute of Judaic Studies in Jerusalem for a year of immersive study. She went on to earn a master's degree in social work with a focus in community organizing and children and youth from the University of Michigan, where she was named a National Community Scholar. Over the following decade, Fisch served as a school counselor and education administrator, including a six-year tenure as the director of health and wellness at Milken Community Schools in Los Angeles. In 2020, she became executive director of Hillel at Miami University, where she led the organization through a period of significant growth and revitalization. During this time, she was also accepted into the prestigious Wexner Field Fellowship. Most recently, Fisch served as CEO of BaMidbar, where she led the organization through a successful acquisition by BeWell, the mental health and wellness initiative of the Jewish Federations of North America. This transition ensured that BaMidbar's legacy of promoting mental health and resilience in Jewish communities would continue on a national scale. In November 2025, Whitney began as chief program officer at the Mayerson JCC in Cincinnati, Ohio. She lives in Blue Ash, Ohio with her husband, three kids, and dog, George.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Reading, crafting, cooking, taking long walks

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was in a gospel choir in college -- even had a solo!

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth.



**Sally Flinchbaugh** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Deputy CEO  
Oshman Family JCC, Palo Alto, California

Sally Flinchbaugh is the deputy chief executive officer of the Oshman Family JCC and oversees the day-to-day operations of the agency, ensuring the organization and the community flourish.

She previously served as the COO, and before that, she was the executive director of the JCC of the East Bay for five years. Flinchbaugh earned an MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA, a master's degree in anthropology, and a bachelor's degree in human biology from Stanford University. She is a graduate of the Mandel Executive Leadership Program. She sits on the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce board and is a mediator for the Palo Alto Mediation Program. Flinchbaugh and her husband live in Palo Alto and have three young adult children.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Hiking, hanging with family and friends, traveling.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I spent the early part of my career working in and on Africa.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Laura Friedman** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement

CEO

Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater, New Jersey

Laura Friedman is a proud JCC lifer who has spent her entire professional career, more than 35 years, in the JCC Movement. She never worked anywhere else, because she never needed to.

The JCC has always been home. As CEO of the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center, Friedman leads with a deep belief in the power of community and the simple idea that people are better when they feel connected. She has watched the J grow from an idea into a place that serves thousands, and she remains deeply committed to making sure every person who walks through the doors feels welcome, valued, and supported. Friedman knows how fortunate she is to do work she loves alongside a staff and board she deeply respects and cares about. She believes community shouldn't be complicated, it should be welcoming, human, meaningful, and fun. When she's not at the J, she's probably still talking about it... even when no one is asking.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Camper and/or Staff | Kivunim 2013

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Love to read, cook and travel with my family.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Rebecca Friedman** | Less than 2 years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
New Orleans JCC

Rebecca Friedman took on the leadership of the New Orleans JCC in March 2025 after a decade of service on the board of directors.

With a background in management consulting, professional development, and communications, she has enjoyed applying her private sector experience to the JCC world and serving her hometown community. When she's not at the J, Friedman enjoys spending time with her husband, Aran, and children Lexie (17) and Eli (15) and baking (especially for JCC colleagues and events).

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2026

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Making cookies, reading, going for a walk with my husband, zoning out with a jigsaw puzzle.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I opened an at-home baking business before taking on the JCC leadership role.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth.



**Paul Frishman** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO

Galbut Family Miami Beach JCC on the Simkins Family Campus,  
Miami Beach, Florida

Paul Frishman is the chief executive officer of the Galbut Family Miami Beach JCC on the Simkins Family Campus, a position he has held since 2016. He has more than 40 years of experience working with JCCs across the country, including in North Miami Beach, Florida; Los Angeles, California; Scottsdale, Arizona; and Kendall, Florida. He holds a master's degree in education/administration and a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Miami, and is the recipient of a JCC Association Graduate

Scholarship. Frishman recently was honored as Professional of the Year by JPro Miami and is the immediate past chairman of the organization. He participated in JCC Association's prestigious Executive Development Training Program and serves as a co-chair of the continental leadership team of the JCC Maccabi® Games. He previously served on the continental governing body of the Games. He has hosted the JCC Maccabi Games twice—in Miami, where he served as Games director, and in Greater Phoenix. Frishman has a wealth of experience in both training and delivering quality customer service and is a graduate of the Disney Institute's customer service training program. He is proud to have learned as well

from Franklin-Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. He is a lead professional in the strategic planning and implementation processes and always helps lead JCCs toward overall professional excellence. Frishman has served six times as a co-chair of the All-Florida JCC Professional Conference. He recently participated in the Z3 Leadership Lab and Brandeis University and JCC Association's Executive Leadership Seminar on Israel and Antisemitism, and served on the planning committee for Mifgash 2024. Frishman is passionate about his current role in which he works closely with the leaders, professional staff, and members at the Miami Beach JCC, with the ultimate goal of creating a true "Center of Excellence." In his spare time, he enjoys fitness, cycling, playing guitar, movies, and spending quality time with family and friends. He and his wife Caryn have three children—Jaclyn, Aaron, and Lauren.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Leadership Training Institute | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Fitness, cycling, playing guitar, movies, sports, and spending quality time with family & friends.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Prior to my JCC career, I was a sportscaster and covered the University of Miami on both radio and tv - broadcasting 3 separate national football championships, and 2 NCAA baseball titles.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Paul Geduldig** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
JCC of San Francisco

Paul Geduldig has served as the CEO of the JCC of San Francisco since May of 2021. Under his leadership, the agency has emerged and rebuilt from the pandemic, developed a strategic plan, completed major campus renovations, and seen a 30% increase in fundraising. He is a bridge-builder and has forged partnerships with other Jewish organizations and local nonprofits while developing trusted relationships with their leaders. Before coming to the JCCSF, Paul was the CEO of the Peninsula JCC for five years and spent 11 years as the executive director of Temple Sinai in Oakland. In those roles, he oversaw \$20M+ worth of capital campaigns and construction projects. From 1999–2005, he also worked at the Marin JCC, overseeing programs for teens, families, and camps. Earlier in his career, Geduldig taught special education and worked summers as an outdoor adventure guide. The unifying theme throughout his career has been cultivating welcoming spaces and outstanding work environments in which people can learn, gather, and grow. He earned a master's degree in psychology from the University of Georgia, holds a bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and spent a semester studying abroad in Tel Aviv, Israel. He also serves on the board of directors for JIMENA (Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa).

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Early Childhood Graduate | Kivunim 2015

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Hiking, travel, watching movies, listening to music.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Sue Gelsey** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement

CEO

Kaplen JCC on the Palisades, Tenafly, New Jersey

Sue Gelsey is chief executive officer at Kaplen JCC on the Palisades. It has been her primary workplace since 1992, and she has served as chief engagement officer, chief operating officer, program director, day camp director, and youth director. Gelsey also served as the chief program and talent officer at JCC

Association of North America, overseeing signature programs and launching JCC Talent; as vice president of community services with an international fitness management company; and with various JCCs, universities, and community centers. Gelsey is the founder/director of Community Calls, an interfaith, inter-community coalition of organizations focused on strengthening relationships, disrupting tensions, and advancing change. She believes in the JCC's greatest potential as a home for joyful Jewish experiences, a welcoming home to the expansive Jewish community, a strong supporter of Israel and the local Israeli community, and a partner to the wider community, building bridges and disrupting tensions.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff| JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2026 | Other JCC Maccabi Continental Governing Body

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I love watching and following women's sports teams and athletes. I love to read, hike, be with friends and family.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I took a mixology course and worked as a bartender while in college.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Mark Gesner** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
Tampa JCCs and Federation, Tampa Florida

Mark Gesner, Ph.D., learned about community building and leadership early in life at large family gatherings in Brooklyn, New York, where his grandmother and great aunts inspired a sense of strength and belonging among all who entered. His upbringing, along with a good deal of international travel, helped shape Gesner’s career in nonprofit management and higher education. Prior to his current role as The Maureen and Douglas Cohn Executive Director of the Tampa JCCs, Gesner served as vice president of community engagement and innovation at Saint Leo University. During his tenure in higher education, Gesner focused his community and teaching efforts on social entrepreneurship, strategic partnerships, and mission-driven leadership. Earlier, Gesner served on the local, regional, and national level for Hostelling International—USA, an organization dedicated to educational travel and cross-cultural exchange. He is the co-author of “Your Life Is Your Message: Discovering the Core of Transformational Leadership.”

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Kivunim 2024

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Walk, travel, read, spend time with friends.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was on my high school bowling team!

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Michael Goldstein** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
JCC of Central NJ, Scotch Plains, New Jersey

Michael Goldstein started his JCC career in Central New Jersey as the director of teen and after school services. In 2007, he became one a co-director of Camp Yachad, and during nine years in that position, he oversaw tremendous growth, including the addition of performing arts and sports specialty camps. From 2014–2018, he served as chief operating officer with responsibility for all JCC day-to-day operations. Goldstein is a former professional musician with a master’s degree in musicology from Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, and he loves to play with the Shabbatones at weekly Camp Yachad Shabbat celebrations. He also creates music as his alter ego, "Part Time Baby," and has released two albums since 2024. He lives in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, with his wife, Carol, and their two daughters, Bess and Ella.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2018 | Middle Management Training Program (MMTP) | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Making music and surf fishing.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I once borrowed a bulldozer.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Informal conversations and community



**Addie Goodman** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
President & CEO  
JCC Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Addie Goodman joined JCC Chicago in March 2014 (a homecoming after being a lifeguard and swim teacher at the J in her early 20s) and was appointed as the organization’s first female CEO in 2018. Previously, Goodman was vice president of institutional advancement at Baker Demonstration School and held development roles at the YWCA Evanston/North Shore, Youth Job Center of Evanston, and Advocate Charitable Foundation. She holds dual degrees in English and Japanese from the University of Illinois and a master’s degree in Japanese from the University of Chicago. She serves on JCC Association of North America’s board of directors and is a trustee of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Goodman lives in Evanston with her husband, Sam, and their two dogs (and sometimes their four kids who come home now and again).

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2018

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Reading, walking and, lately, crocheting!

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

That I majored in Japanese is always a surprise, exactly what you need to be a great JCC exec!

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Lael Gray** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
Peninsula JCC, Foster City, California

Lael Gray is the chief operating officer at the Peninsula JCC in Foster City, California. Formerly, she was CEO of the Los Gatos JCC where in 2021 she led the merger of the JCC and Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley, creating Jewish Silicon Valley. Gray's early career was in marketing, and she entered the JCC field in 2003. Initially hired as the early childhood director at the Asheville JCC, she later became executive director in 2012. She is an American Leadership Forum of Silicon Valley fellow and serves on the board of Mosaic America. In her free time, Gray enjoys hiking and live music and has recently started to learn to paint with watercolors.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program| JCC Camper and/or Staff | Kivunim 2013| M<sup>2</sup>

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I try to get outside in nature whenever possible.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I have terrible stage fright.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Ivy Harlev** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement

CEO

Bernard and Ruth Siegel JCC, Wilmington, Delaware

Ivy Harlev joined the team at the Siegel JCC in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1998 and became the CEO in 2006. Harlev has worked in the JCC field for over 30 years, beginning her career with the JCC in Palm Beach County Florida, and then the JCCs of Greater Philadelphia. She attended the University of Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a master's degree in social work. Additionally, Harlev holds a certificate in Jewish communal service from Gratz College. She is also a 2005 graduate of the JCC Association's Executive Development Training program, EDTP-7. Harlev and her wife, Donna, have two grown children. Lea will turn 26 while we're in Atlanta at Mifgash and lives in California. Micah, 24, lives in Delaware. Harlev enjoys playing sports (lots of pickleball and tennis), volunteering, organizing, and spending time with family and friends.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Pickleball. Organizing. Anything that requires physically moving around.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I make creations using concrete as my medium.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Carisa Heiss** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Barshop JCC of San Antonio, Texas

Carisa Heiss has served as CEO of the Barshop JCC for the last two years. She previously was the development director from 2000 to 2016 and served as JCC Maccabi Games director when San Antonio hosted the Games in 2005 and 2009. Throughout her career, Heiss has focused on roles centered on fundraising, community engagement, and building awareness for local nonprofit organizations. A lifelong connection to the JCC shapes her leadership today. Since childhood, the JCC has been Heiss's home away from home—a place where she and her family have enjoyed sports and recreation, arts and culture programming, and the strength of an engaged, welcoming community. Her current favorite JCC moment is to step out of the administrative suite during a hectic day to see participants of all ages actively engaged, which serves as a powerful reminder of the JCC's impact within the community.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2024

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Boxing, reading, family time

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I've completed 10 half marathons.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Amy Holtz** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
COO/CFO  
Kaplen JCC on the Palisades, Tenafly, New Jersey

Amy Holtz is the chief operation officer/chief financial officer of the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades. Previously, she served as chief development officer at the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, where she also held the role of interim chief executive officer. Originally from Spring Valley, New York, she earned a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration at Ithaca College and a master's degree in healthcare management from The New School for Social Research. She began her career in hospital and insurance administration before transitioning to Jewish communal work. Holtz has held several leadership roles, including JCC camp director and interim executive director, and has stepped in as an interim synagogue administrator on multiple occasions. A dedicated lay leader as well, she has served in various volunteer positions across JCCs and synagogues, including vice president of fundraising and synagogue president.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Lay Leader

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Enjoying favorites sports of Basketball and Football or reading a good book at the beach.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**David Jacobs** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
President/CEO  
Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford, Connecticut

David Jacobs has spent 48 years in the JCC field, coming full circle from Hartford, Connecticut, to Walnut Creek, California, to Rochester, New York, and back home to Hartford. His career is a familiar JCC journey: teen worker, camp director, associate director, and CEO, shaped by years of learning and leading.

Working with multiple generations of members in one community for many years has been the greatest gift of his professional life. Jacobs has been shaped by an extraordinary network of colleagues across the movement. He carries deep affection, admiration, and respect for those who choose this work and for the role JCCs play in strengthening Jewish life and community every day. Jacobs is especially passionate about the arts and Jewish programming, partnership with volunteer and professional leaders, and fund development that helps communities invest in their future. As he nears 50 years in the Movement, Jacobs is beginning to imagine what a next chapter might look like—grateful, curious, and still very much in love with JCC life.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Camper and/or Staff | Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

When I am not working, I recharge through my love of the theater—especially trips to New York—and by collecting mid-century modern design, including a substantial collection of Kensington Aluminum pieces manufactured outside my hometown of Pittsburgh. And, of course, treasured family and friends.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I love Elsie, a sweet calico cat who took over my home in September. And she pays no rent.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Being excited about new ideas and programs.



**Tommy Jostad** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Financial and Operating Officer  
Harry and Rose Samson Family JCC, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Tommy Jostad is the chief financial and operating officer of the Milwaukee JCC, where he oversees financial services, human resources, operations, membership, and wellness. Previously, Jostad built a diverse career leading finance and operations teams across multiple sectors, including senior leadership roles at Allen-Edmonds Shoe Corporation in the United States and as director of operations in the Dominican Republic, as well as serving as a manager in assurance and transaction advisory services at Grant Thornton LLP. Outside of work, he and his wife, Maria, have three wonderful children. He is actively involved as a Boy Scouts of America leader; helps bring live music to the community through Summer Sounds, a 10-night summer concert series; and serves on the board of directors of the Cedarburg Cultural Center. A musician himself, Jostad values creativity, connection, and community both on and off the clock.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Camper and/or Staff | Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**John Kabot** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
Director of Inclusion  
Mandel JCC of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

John Kabot, M.Ed., is the director of inclusion for the Mandel JCC of the Palm Beaches. In this role, he developed an inclusion model in the early childhood and camp environments. Previously, Kabot oversaw the Broward County Special Needs preschool program and was a principal at schools specifically designed for children with disabilities.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Spend time with my family, workout, play hockey, and read.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I have been to all seven continents.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Bill Kaplan** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Shalom Institute, Malibu, California

Rabbi Bill Kaplan is the CEO of Shalom Institute, a year-round experiential Jewish and environmental education center in Malibu, California. He is in his 36th year with the organization. As a Jewish educator and rabbi, Kaplan uses nature, organic gardens, and biblical gardens creatively to teach Torah, Israel, Judaics, holidays, and more in a model he calls “Edible Judaism.” Kaplan also provides rabbinical services to Malibu Jewish Center & Synagogue as needed and officiates life cycle events. He has a bachelor’s degree from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut; an MBA in nonprofit management from American Jewish University; and rabbinical ordination from the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles. He is currently serving his third term on the board of JCC Association of North America and serves on the steering committee of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | Leckhu Lachem

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Walk, watch sports, exercise.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I worked in a sushi bar near UCLA off and on for 3 years.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Andrew Katz** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Campus Director  
JCC of Schenectady, Niskayuna, New York

Andrew Katz has nearly 30 years of experience in the JCC Movement, building a career rooted in youth development, community engagement, and organizational leadership. Katz

began his professional journey as a camp and after-school counselor while in high school, sparking a lifelong commitment to Jewish communal service. He later served nearly a decade as the Schenectady JCC's after-school and camp director, where he focused on program quality, staff development, and participant experience. Transitioning into JCC administration, Katz spent four years as a program director, followed by nearly two years as interim executive director. He currently serves as a campus director, a role he has held for almost six years, overseeing operations, programs, facility projects, community partnerships, and more. He holds an associate degree from Schenectady County Community College, a bachelor's degree in recreation management from SUNY Brockport, and a master's degree in organizational management from Springfield College.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Volunteer Co-President of local High School Athletics Booster Club

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Saw a taping of the David Letterman Show.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Tara Kaufman** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
Sylvan-Adams YM-YWHA, Montreal, Quebec

Tara Kaufman is a Jewish summer camp advocate and a lifelong camper at heart, shaped by the joy, values, and sense of belonging that camp creates. A Jewish communal professional for more than 25 years, she has dedicated her career to strengthening community, building meaningful connections, and helping Jewish life thrive. She is the proud mom of a 20-year-old and a 21-year-old, who inspire her every day. Passionate about staying active, giving back, and maintaining a positive attitude, she firmly believes that life is too short not to lead with purpose and optimism. In her role as chief operating officer at the Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA, she thrives on problem-solving, collaboration, and turning ideas into impact. She is motivated by the opportunity to make a difference, improve systems, and help both people and organizations reach their full potential.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JResponse

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Working out / walking / outdoor activities. Spending time with my family. Reading (for pleasure and professional Development). Sleep

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I can break an apple with my bare hands (not green).

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Annie Keith** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO

Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center, Charlotte,  
North Carolina

Annie Keith grew up in Western New York, and after attending college in North Carolina, she lived in Charlotte, North Carolina; St Petersburg, Florida; Knoxville Tennessee; and West Hartford Connecticut before returning to North Carolina, where she is now the CEO of the Levine JCC. Keith, a lifelong Catholic, found a special home at the Mandell JCC in Connecticut, where she and husband, Steve, raised their kids, Patrick and Allie, in a warm, comfortable environment. Keith loves finding time to make up and check off bucket list items, attend the theater, practice yoga in the woods, run to relive stress, and laugh with her family and friends.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Kivunim 2023

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Reading ,Yoga, Happy Hour, Fun with Family and Friends

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Was the first recruit & first team captain of the first women's soccer team at Brevard College in Brevard, NC

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Marcell Kenesei** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
JCC Budapest - Bálint Ház

Marcell Kenesei is a political scientist and Jewish communal professional with extensive experience in education, cultural management, and organizational leadership. He graduated from Eötvös Loránd University's Faculty of Law in 2007, specializing in international relations and 20th-century Middle Eastern history. In 2007–2008, he was a fellow at Paideia—The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden, where he pursued Jewish textual studies and organized an interfaith dialogue program for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian students in Stockholm. Kenesei later played a key role in establishing the Israeli Cultural Institute in Budapest, serving first in resource development and later as deputy director. In 2011, he joined Centropa, a Jewish historical and educational organization, where he went on to serve as director of Centropa Hungary, director of the Centropa Jewish Network, and deputy director of Centropa International until 2020. He is currently the director of JCC Budapest—Bálint Ház. In addition, he serves as president of the Kibic Jewish Community Forum Association, is a board member of Centropa and the Charity Taxi Foundation, and sits on the advisory board of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Meditate, do yoga, read, and I am a crossfiter.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I play the trombone.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Meeting new people.



**Oded Kraus** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Valley of the Sun JCC, Scottsdale, Arizona

Oded Kraus, MBA, is the chief executive officer of the Valley of the Sun JCC in Scottsdale, Arizona. He leads the organization with a hospitality-driven mindset, prioritizing exceptional member experiences, strong operations, and long-term financial sustainability. Kraus oversees strategic planning, fundraising, governance, and community engagement, positioning the JCC as a welcoming hub for Jewish life in the Greater Phoenix area. Prior to relocating to Arizona, Kraus served as executive director of the Katz JCC in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, where he led organizational growth, campus enhancements, and membership expansion. He holds MBA and bachelor's degrees in hospitality management, bringing a service-oriented approach to nonprofit leadership. He is deeply committed to building high-performing teams, cultivating strong lay partnerships, and creating meaningful experiences for individuals and families across all stages of life.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2021

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Jason Kunzman** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
President & CEO  
JCC of Greater Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Jason Kunzman is the president and CEO of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh having served as the agency’s chief program officer for nearly seven years. He previously worked on Pennsylvania’s rollout of Medicaid managed long term services and supports, and during a six-year stretch in the Washington, D.C. area, he worked with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and a health IT start-up company focused on improving medication adherence for the Medicare population. Before leaving Pittsburgh for D.C., Kunzman was the CFO and COO for a local foundation focused on improving patient outcomes and lowering the overall cost of care. With an MBA from the University of Baltimore and a bachelor’s degree in criminology from the University of South Florida, he also spent time as a forensic accountant and as a police officer in Baltimore County, Maryland. He is a graduate of the Mandel Executive Leadership Program, a recipient of the 2021 Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership Emerging Leader Award, and was a participant in the 2025 Young American Leaders Program at Harvard Business School.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2024

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Spending time with family and friends. Rooting for NY sports teams. A variety of fitness activities. Reading organizational management books and articles.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Attended the 2023 DEKA World Championships in Dallas, TX

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Amy Lavin** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Stroum JCC, Seattle, Washington

Amy Lavin, MBA, has been part of the Stroum Jewish Community Center of Greater Seattle for 50 years. Prior to leading the agency, Lavin built a mass participation cycling event that raises millions annually for cancer research at Fred Hutch, and before that, she was a marketing director at Microsoft. She has two young adult daughters in southern California, while she and her husband remain in Seattle.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Lay Leader | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2017

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Biking, hiking, baking, spending time with family & friends.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Eric Lightman** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
JCC of of the Lehigh Valley, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Eric Lightman is in his eighth year as the executive director of the JCC of the Lehigh Valley in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He has also served as the assistant executive director of the Rosen JCC in Orlando, Florida, and has worked at the Weinstein JCC in Richmond, Virginia, and JCC Rockland in West Nyack, New York. Lightman holds a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Maryland and master's degrees in nonprofit management and Judaic studies from New York University. He has participated in the JCC Merrin Teen Fellows and JCC Graduate Scholars programs and was the recipient of the Taub Fellowship at NYU. Lightman has also participated in the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership's Executive Leadership Program and Leading Edge's Leading Executives fellowship. A native of Rockville, Maryland, Lightman is married to Margo, a nurse practitioner, and is the father of three sons, Max, Eli, and Asher.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Merrin Teen Professional Fellowship | Other JCC Graduate Scholar

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I play golf, poorly.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am an archery instructor, and can solve a Rubik's cube in under a minute (but do not recommend doing both at the same time).

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Jill Madsen** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement

CEO

Jewish for Good at the Levin JCC, Durham, North Carolina

Jill Madsen, Ed.D., is CEO of Jewish for Good at the Levin JCC, an integrated organization that includes key community agencies such as Jewish Federation, Jewish Family Services, the Jewish day school and the Jewish Community Foundation. She has held this position for more than a decade. Madsen holds bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in education. She started her career in the classroom, working with young children at the Sabes JCC Early Childhood Center in Minneapolis, and then moved into administrative roles, blending her educational background with her love for strategic planning and program development. She has served as the director of Community Child Care Center at the University of Minnesota, a reading specialist and mentor for a public school in North Minneapolis, and director of education and then chief operating officer at the Sabes JCC. In addition to her work at Jewish for Good, Madsen has done extensive consulting and coaching in the areas of strategic planning and governance.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | Other JELI

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Hanging with my dogs Telula and Fenway, reading, baking, hiking, reading, swimming, and more reading.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Informal conversations and community



**Ben Malczewski** | 2-5 years in the JCC Movement

Vice President

Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo, Sylvania, Ohio

Ben Malczewski serves as the vice president of Jewish senior, family and social services for the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo. He previously had a 20-year career in public library leadership and administration. Heavily engaged in civic and community leadership, foundation work, education, and arts and culture generation, Malczewski plays an active leadership role on numerous local, regional, and national boards and organizational partnerships. He attended the University of Toledo, the University of Edinburgh, and Wayne State University, where his studies focused on literary criticism, film studies, and information and library science. Before entering librarianship, he was an AmeriCorps volunteer and social worker in the Pacific Northwest for three years, where he discovered his interest in civic planning, community and cultural education, and social justice, which led him into librarianship, public administration, and currently, social service and community center leadership. Throughout

his career, connecting all corners of the community with innovative, pitch-perfect services, resources, and programs has remained a passion. Successfully delivered, these community investments inspire memories and create positive experiences; they are indeed the tools of hope. They also connect people with new ideas, perspectives, and each other. In short, they generate community.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Executive Director Training Program (EDTP) | JCC Leadership Training Institute

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I have a high "engagement" motor and often relax by putting my energies and interests into community work and large-scale community arts & cultural event development and programming (I'm a longtime member of the Penguin Random House Advisory Board and develop author events). But when not doing things that resemble work, I love food/drink, travel, music, hiking, sports (of all kinds), cycling, skateboarding, collecting sports memorabilia, and most of all being and experiencing all of the above with my wife Danielle, daughter Lucie, and our dogs and cats.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

There may be too many: for one, people seem to be surprised that I skateboard, many others involve my background working with authors and celebrities (many stories there), I passed up first-run tickets to see Hamilton, I passed the Jeopardy test and was nearly a contestant, I've been in a few commercials, I've had a long freelance and publishing career that has provided me access to many unbelievable people and places - in an particularly notable 3 day stretch, I hosted a "multi-cam" 2400 person sold-out cooking show-style event with renowned international chef Jacques Pepin and his daughter Claudine, hosted them for appearances around the Michigan/Ohio Metro area, then shuffled off to Tuscany for a only-open-to-us Grand Opening sneak peak at a renowned Tuscan estate and winery - the chef only cooking for my wife and I and another couple - a very blessed, "pinch-me" moment.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Marni Mandell** | Less than 2 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Shalom Orlando Inc, Orlando, Florida

Marni Mandell is the CEO of Shalom Orlando, an integrated Jewish community center and Federation serving Central Florida. She is the founder of Friendraising for Success and has worked as a fundraising coach, helping nonprofit leaders and first-time founders build confidence and clarity in raising capital. Mandell brings more than 28 years of experience from the nonprofit and startup sectors and has played a key role in raising over \$100 million for mission-driven organizations and ventures. She has built and scaled startups, advised founders through early growth and fundraising, and led organizations through periods of transformation. After spending 15 years living in Israel, she returned to Orlando with a deep personal commitment to Jewish communal life shaped by her family's multigenerational involvement in the community. Her leadership focuses on culture, strategy, and sustainable impact, grounded in the belief that philanthropy is ultimately about relationships and shared purpose.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff| JCC Early Childhood Graduate.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I recharge by hanging out with my kids in the art room. We find random art projects on Instagram and try to recreate them, usually with mixed results and a lot of laughing. I also have a habit of picking up hobbies and going all in. Sometimes for two weeks, sometimes for two years, and then I move on when something else catches my curiosity.

And honestly, one of the things that fills me up the most is helping other people grow. Businesses, nonprofits, early ideas, it doesn't really matter. If I can be useful, help someone think more clearly, or move something forward, that's energizing for me in a way nothing else is.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I didn't learn how to ride a bike until I was 27, and that was only so I could do the Hazon Ride. I learned six weeks before the event, trained every day before it started, and then rode 120 miles over two days. And truthfully, I still don't like riding bikes.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Janel Margareta** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Impact Officer  
Marcus JCC of Atlanta, Georgia

Janel Margareta is the chief impact officer at the Marcus JCC of Atlanta, where she leads philanthropic strategy, storytelling, governance, and community impact. Over a 30-year career in Jewish communal leadership, she has raised more than \$300 million, including over \$100 million at the MJCCA, fueling transformational capital campaigns, endowments, and annual funds. Known as a master relationship builder and strategist, Janel translates mission into meaning—connecting donors, volunteers, and professionals to work that strengthens Jewish life and community well-being. Her leadership centers on building a culture of philanthropy rooted in trust, belonging, and measurable impact. She holds degrees in drama and speech communication from New York University, which explains both her storytelling chops and her comfort on any stage. A lifelong Jewish communal leader—starting by winning her yeshiva's kindergarten poetry recitation contest and growing to be a BBYO teen leader and —Janel believes deeply in legacy, innovation, and the power of community to transform lives, with heart, purpose, and just enough flair.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I love meditation, mindfulness and deep breathing. I also loves fuzzy blankets, cozy socks, amazing pajamas and a great book!

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I met Al Pacino on my first night at NYU and have been collecting great stories — and telling them — ever since.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Barrie McAlister** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
COO

I.J. & Jeanne Wagner JCC, Salt Lake City, Utah

Barrie McAlister brings extensive leadership experience gained through commercial property management, construction project management, facilities operations, and nonprofit organizational leadership. As chief operating officer of the I.J. & Jeanne Wagner JCC in Salt Lake City, Utah, she oversees health and fitness, aquatics, membership, rentals, and facilities and maintenance,

ensuring operational excellence and strong member experience. She recently led a complex \$8 million capital renovation and expansion project while maintaining uninterrupted operations. Security is an important focus of her role, and she partners with local law enforcement, SCN, and contracted security to strengthen preparedness and safety planning. Outside of work, McAlister enjoys traveling and hiking with her family and serves on the board of her local youth football league, continuing her commitment to community leadership and youth development. Paragraph locked by Jane E. Herman Outside of work, Barrie enjoys traveling and hiking with her family and serves on the board of her local youth football league, continuing her commitment to community leadership and youth development.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Early Childhood Graduate.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I recharges by traveling with my family, hiking, playing games together, and attending the many sporting events my children participate in.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Many people are surprised to learn that I spent nearly a decade in construction management, leading commercial projects and gaining hands-on experience in scheduling, budgeting, subcontractor coordination, and on-site problem solving. I consider this time one of the most formative periods of my professional career and credit this experience with building my operational discipline, resilience, and appreciation for teamwork in high-pressure environments.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Tara Ohayon** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Impact Officer  
Aaron Family JCC of Dallas, Texas

Tara Ohayon is a Jewish communal professional who has spent more than 25 years growing up in and giving back to the JCC community in Dallas. She currently serves as chief impact officer at the Aaron Family JCC, where she oversees a broad portfolio that includes early childhood education, camping, Jewish engagement, youth and family programming, cultural arts, senior engagement, sports and recreation, and the JCC Maccabi® Games. Ohayon's JCC story began early. She was a camper at the J at 3-years-old, held her first job as a camp counselor, and has built her career within the JCC Movement in Dallas. She was also a JCC Maccabi® athlete in the first-ever Team Dallas delegation, an experience that deepened her connection to Jewish peoplehood through sport and community. Those formative experiences continue to shape how she leads, with a focus on belonging, mentorship, and connection. She is the creator of JBohhood, a neighborhood based connector initiative designed to foster meaningful relationships and bring Jewish community closer to where people live. Ohayon believes deeply in the JCC as a central, welcoming home for Jewish life.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute | M<sup>2</sup> | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I like to walk, read, spend time with my family and watch the Dallas Mavericks!

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was family friends with the wrestling family, the Von Erichs.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Daria Pavlovski** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
KEDEM Jacobs JCC, Chişinău, Moldova

Daria Pavlovski is executive director of KEDEM Jacobs JCC in Chişinău, Moldova. Born and raised in Chişinău, Pavlovski has been part of the local Jewish community since childhood. Her professional journey reflects long-term engagement with the center from multiple perspectives — as a participant, counselor, professional staff member, and, since 2020, as its leader. Pavlovski assumed the role of executive director in September 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has led the organization through a period shaped by ongoing global and regional crises. In her current role, Pavlovski focuses on building a resilient and sustainable community organization that responds to evolving communal needs while remaining rooted in Jewish values. Previously, Pavlovski was actively involved in informal Jewish education and participated in a range of local and international initiatives. She holds a degree in economics.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Other JCC Global

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community

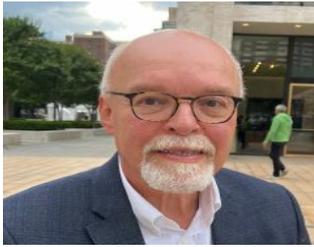


**Matt Perez** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Experience Officer  
Shalom Austin Dell Jewish Community Center, Austin, Texas

Matt Perez serves as chief experience officer at Shalom Austin, overseeing human resources, membership, health and wellness, athletics, and operations. Since joining the organization in 2024, he has been instrumental in shaping organizational culture and talent strategy, bringing a people-first, strategic approach that enhances the experience of staff, members, and the broader community. Originally from New England, Perez moved to Austin in 2022 and brings extensive leadership experience in people and culture. Prior to Shalom Austin, he served as director of human resources at United Heritage Credit Union and as vice president of people and culture at Kensington Investment Company, where he partnered with the owners to advance leadership development and organizational culture across multi-state operations.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Meeting new people



**David Posner** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO, JCCs of the Capital Region  
JCC of Schenectady, Niskayuna, New York

David Posner is the first CEO to lead two JCCs simultaneously—the Albany JCC and the Schenectady JCC. He has held the position since 2020. Previously he served at the EDCJCC, Syracuse JCC, Central Queens Y, and at JCC Association of North America. Among his achievements are the development of substantive program of activity for the start-up JCC that was the DCJCC; a capital campaign for the Syracuse JCC that added new spaces for membership value; and the Holocaust Remembrance Sanctuary of CNY. Achievements at JCC Association included the development of JCares, the buildout of JWB Chaplains Council®, and expansion of benchmarking. Posner is married to Amy, father of three adult children, and grandfather of five active boys

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

A former life as a physicist.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Arnie Preminger** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
President & CEO  
Sunrise Association (Sunrise Day Camps Association, Inc.),  
Oceanside, New York

Arnie Preminger, MSW, is founder, president and CEO of Sunrise Association, which each year better the lives of nearly 70,000 children with cancer and their siblings through 14 summer camps, 87 weekly in-hospital programs, and virtual content used by more than 200 hospitals worldwide. Prior to creating Sunrise, Preminger was president and CEO of the Friedberg JCC in Oceanside, New York, for nearly 30 years. He has written and lectured at major universities and numerous conferences on a wide-range of topics from health care to entrepreneurial work to social work and the Holocaust. Among his many recognitions, he was named the first Eyewitness News Hero by WABC TV in NY was awarded both the Bessie Pine Award for Excellence in Mentoring and the “Sofer” (Scribe) Award from the National Association of Jewish Center Professionals. He also has served as JCC Association’s “Scholar in Residence.” He and his wife, Bonnie, have five grown children and a gaggle of fun grandkids.

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

I am an amateur guitar player who strives to be better, a frustrated writer with not enough time to write, and an avid reader. But mostly I waste my free time watching too many movies. I love to travel and am currently working out daily so I can continue to lift up my 4 grandchildren as they continue to grow.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am an avid Beatles fan and the inspiration to create day camps for children with cancer actually came about at a benefit concert that I saw Paul McCartney perform at for a sleepaway camp for children for sick children. Recently my Board Chair met Sir Paul and told him about Sunrise and how it all started from my wanting to see him perform that night. He replied that this was one of the most meaningful stories he had ever heard in the course of his career.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Informal conversations and community



**Lily Rabinoff-Goldman** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
President/CEO  
JCC Greater Boston, Newtown, Massachusetts

Lily Rabinoff-Goldman joined JCC Greater Boston as president/CEO in July 2022. She began her career as a public school teacher in New York City and worked in several nonprofits committed to educational equity in New York and Boston.

Immediately before joining the JCC, she served as assistant head of school for teaching and learning at Gann Academy, a pluralistic Jewish high school in Waltham, Massachusetts, where she was also a teacher and chair of the English department. Throughout her career, Rabinoff-Goldman's focus has been on creating meaningful and inclusive educational and communal experiences, both formal and informal. Rabinoff-Goldman is a proud alumna of Brown University, where she earned a bachelor's degree and of Camp Ramah in New England. She also holds an MEd from Bank Street College of Education, an MFA from UMass Boston, and an EdD from Northeastern University. She lives in Newton with her husband, Rabbi Hillel Greene, and their two young children.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Kivunim 2023

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I read! I exercise. I cook. I hang out on the couch with my kids.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I bought my first car (a 1988 Oldsmobile Cutlass Cierra) with the earnings from my first job which was as a JCC lifeguard in Albany, NY as a high school junior.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Informal conversations and community



**Julie Rizzo** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Impact Officer  
Sandra and Leon Levine JCC, Charlotte, North Carolina

Julie Rizzo grew up in Los Angeles before attending the University of California, San Diego, followed by the University of San Francisco for graduate school. She moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2006 and the first thing she did was join the Levine JCC. Six years later, after spending a significant amount of time at the J, she became a staff member. Over the last nearly 14 years, she has held multiple positions including director of development and social action, senior director of member engagement, and chief impact officer. Rizzo and her husband have two sons, ages 18 and 20, both of whom first entered the workforce as lifeguards at the Levine JCC. Although Rizzo misses the west coast and her days at the beach playing volleyball, moving to the east coast was a wonderful decision for her family.

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Reading, hiking, walks with my dog or friends, and baking.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was a lawyer in my previous life.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Todd Rockoff** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
President + CEO  
Tucson JCC, Tucson, Arizona

Todd Rockoff is in the 40th year of his career in the JCC Movement. After completing a bachelor's degree in recreation, leisure studies, and education at the State University of New York at Cortland, he began his career at the Scranton JCC in Pennsylvania in 1985.

From 1995–2001, he served as the assistant executive director then executive director for the Calgary JCC in Alberta, Canada. Subsequently he served as the executive director at the Shaw JCC of Akron, Ohio, from 2002–2013. In 2013, Rockoff became the president and CEO for the Tucson J—where everyone belongs, and some people join. In the broader community, he chaired a leadership group of arts and culture CEOs in Tucson. Additionally, he serves on the advisory board of Community Recreation Magazine. Rockoff is also a member of the Southern Arizona Leadership Council. He is married to Jenni and has four adult children and seven grandchildren.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Enjoying Musical Theater, sports and wishing that the Cleveland Guardians can win a world series (or 2).

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I started working at the JCC in Rochester, NY in 1979 and have never received a paycheck from a place other than a JCC and never stopped working at a JCC since.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Steven Rosenzweig** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
President & CEO  
St. Louis JCC, St. Louis, Missouri

Steven Rosenzweig is president and CEO of the St. Louis J, a role he assumed in late 2024. Previously he was chief financial officer and chief operating officer and served on its board, bringing two decades of connection to the organization. Before returning to the J, Rosenzweig was chief financial officer of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for six years, leading the \$140M renovation of its historic home. Rosenzweig was also an adjunct professor for nearly 10 years at the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University, where he taught nonprofit finance, reflecting his commitment to developing future nonprofit leaders. He holds an MBA from Babson College and is a certified public accountant. He focuses on mission-driven impact, financial stewardship, collaboration, and community engagement. He lives in St. Louis with his wife, Avi, and their family.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2025

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Exercise and spending time with family & friends.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Fun Fact: I've officiated 4 weddings (ordained online)

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Anna Saul** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Advancement Officer  
Bernard and Ruth Siegel JCC, Wilmington, Delaware

Anna Saul is the chief advancement officer at the Siegel JCC, overseeing the membership, marketing, communications, fundraising, and development functions. She has been with the J since January 2016. Saul is passionate about finding creative ways to share information and make connections. In June 2025, she graduated from the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership's Executive Leadership Program. Prior to joining the J, she spent 10 years in the for-profit sector at Comcast Cable and Hitachi Consulting. Saul completed a joint bachelor's and master's degree program at Drexel University, where she studied business administration and higher education administration. She and her husband, Dave, have two sons, Noah and Shiloh. Saul is a big fan of dogs, music, and Russian cuisine (having been born in Belarus).

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Playing the piano, doing puzzles, and watching trashy reality TV.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was the lead singer of a heavy metal band.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Leslie Sax** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Program Officer  
Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford, Connecticut

Leslie Sax grew up in Selma, Alabama, in a community with only a handful of Jewish families and no JCC, and for many years she did not feel fully at home in her Jewish identity. She first experienced the JCC world when she enrolled her son in the early education program at the Mayerson JCC in Cincinnati, Ohio. In fact, with every move to a new city, Sax found her community at the JCC. After completing MBA and MPH degrees, with plans to work in healthcare, she returned to the JCC as a lay leader and later joined the professional staff as assistant director of the Rochester JCC. She went on to serve as a lay leader and interim executive director of the Providence JCC, and then as executive director of the Gordon JCC in Nashville, a role she held for 10 years. Sax joined the Mandell JCC as chief program officer in October 2023.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2013

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Hanging out at home and being with my children and grandchildren.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I was a chemist by training and love to cook.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Madeline Seltman** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Chief Program Officer  
Jewish for Good at the Levin JCC, Durham, North Carolina

Madeline Seltman is the chief program office of Jewish for Good in Durham, North Carolina. Originally from Pittsburgh, she came to North Carolina in 2009 by way of Massachusetts. She has been at the J for 15 years.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Crafting, reading, hiking, and time with friends.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Did a semester abroad in Madagascar and briefly had a pet lemur there.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Daniel Septimus** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement

CEO

Shalom Austin Dell Jewish Community Center, Austin, Texas

A fifth-generation Houstonian, Rabbi Daniel Septimus and his family arrived in Austin in 2014. He served as Texas Hillel executive director for just over two years and currently is CEO of Shalom Austin, the hub of Jewish life in central Texas. Beginning in July, Septimus will begin as the inaugural executive director of the Center for Jewish Peoplehood at JCC Association of North

America. Shalom Austin consists of four main branches: Jewish Community Center, Jewish Federation, Jewish Family Service, and the Jewish Foundation, which work together to comprehensively address the needs of Austin’s Jewish community in collaboration with area congregations, schools, and community organizations. Septimus and the leaders of Shalom Austin completed a \$40 million capital campaign to usher in a new era of connection and engagement on the Dell Jewish Community Campus. The major phase of construction, the newly expanded and renovated Dell Jewish Community Center, opened in April 2023. Substantial completion of the entire project was achieved in early 2025. Before coming to Austin, Septimus served at Temple De Hirsch Sinai, the largest Jewish congregation in the Pacific Northwest for seven years as associate rabbi and director of congregation learning, where he brought a holistic approach to congregational learning. Septimus graduated from Tulane University in 2002 and was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2007. He has also been awarded the prestigious Hartman and Schusterman Fellowships. Septimus, his wife, Amanda, and their three children, Talia, Jonah, and Ari, are active members of four local congregational communities.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Walking and watching movies!

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I enjoy folding laundry.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Mark Shapiro** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
President and CEO  
Harry and Rose Samson Family JCC, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mark Shapiro is president and CEO of the Harry & Rose Samson Family JCC in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Shapiro joined the JCC in 2005 as associate executive director, was named executive director in 2009, and named to his current position in 2014. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Shapiro studied psychology at Indiana University and is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Nonprofit Management program. Previously, Shapiro was part owner of Cool Runnings, a transportation brokerage firm with national operations. In 1993, Shapiro, a lifelong camper and counselor, became assistant director of JCC Camp Chi, a flagship program of the JCC Chicago. In 2002, he was named director of the Perlstein Resort and Conference Center, also part of JCC Chicago. In his current role, Shapiro has led the JCC through significant challenges, opportunities, and inflection points. His empathetic and innovative leadership approach has resulted in historic growth, sustainable recovery, and collaborative community success. He is a regular and accomplished guest speaker and spokesperson on such topics as fundraising, community partnership, social entrepreneurship, and executive management. Shapiro is married to his camp sweetheart, Sharon, and together they are the proudest parents of Carli and Sophie.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Leadership Training Institute | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Playing Softball, a round of golf, time with family and friends and a wonderful glass of bourbon.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I once owned a trucking company / transportation brokerage company called Cool Runnings.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Jordan Shenker** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Peninsula JCC, Foster City, California

Jordan Shenker is CEO of the Peninsula JCC in Foster City, California. Working in the JCC field for more than 35 years, he first served the JCCs in Portland, Oregon and Houston, Texas. At JCC Association of North America, he oversaw consultation and executive placement, and at the JCCs in Richmond, Virginia, and Tenafly, New Jersey, he led as CEO. Shenker earned an undergraduate degree in communications from Thomas Edison State College and an MBA from the University of Phoenix. He has been married for 36 years to his wife, Tracey, and they have three sons, two of whom also work in the JCC Movement. Last year, he became a Papa to their first grandchild. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with family, watching basketball—he’s an avid Portland Trailblazers and NBA fan—and regularly goes to the movies.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Merrin Teen Professional Fellowship

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Spend time with new granddaughter, family time. Puzzles. Watch basketball.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am 4th generation Oregonian

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Josh Shenker** | 6–10 years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael, California

Josh Shenker has lifelong connections to the JCC Movement, having grown up in numerous JCC programs beginning with preschool and has more than 14 years of experience as a full-time JCC professional. He received an undergraduate degree in Judaic nonprofit management from Virginia Commonwealth University, a master’s degree in nonprofit management from Gratz College, and was a recipient of a professional development scholarship from JCC Association. Shenker has worked as the youth and camp director at the Weinstein JCC in Richmond, Virginia, the director of children, youth, and camping services at the Tucson JCC, the chief operating officer at the Tucson JCC, and currently is the chief operating officer at the Osher Marin JCC in San Rafael, California.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Early Childhood Graduate | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Professional Development Scholarship Program

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Paige Silberfein** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
COO

Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater, New Jersey

Paige Silberfein began her career as an inclusive education teacher, where she developed a deep commitment to creating welcoming environments for all. During the summer, she worked at a JCC camp, an experience that sparked a lifelong passion for the Jewish communal world. When the opportunity arose to make the leap into full-time JCC work, Silberfein eagerly embraced it. She joined the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater, New Jersey, where she has proudly served the community for more than 26 years and held a variety of leadership roles. For the last 13 years, she has served as the chief operating officer. The JCC is truly a family affair for Silberfein. Her husband also worked at a JCC and at JCC Association, and her children have been part of the JCC community since birth. Now in high school, they both work at the JCC, making it a lifelong home for the entire family.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Middle Management Training Program (MMTP)

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Spend time with family; be outdoors, at the beach, sleep.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I played Rugby throughout College I met my husband through JCC Maccabi Games, both as DH.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Larry Skolnick** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Evelyn Rubenstein JCC, Houston, Texas

Larry Skolnick is the CEO of the Evelyn Rubenstein JCC in Houston. Previously, he served as the president and CEO of the Memphis JCC for 13 years, the CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton for eight years, and the associate executive director of the JCC of the Greater Palm Beaches for six years. Skolnick has worked in the JCC field for 30 years and is passionate about the work of the movement.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I love to travel, workout, read and am a huge foodie.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues



**Jim Sluyter** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
CEO & President  
JCC of Greater Kansas City, Kansas

Jim Sluyter is a graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University, where he earned bachelor's degrees in accounting and business administration. He began his career in finance and accounting roles with various nonprofit organizations in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1995, his career took him to Kansas City, where he was appointed chief financial officer of Blue Hills Homes Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to inner-city housing initiatives. He completed an MBA at the University of Kansas in 1999, with concentrations in finance and nonprofit management. That same year, he was recruited to serve as chief financial officer of the Jewish Community Center. After serving as interim executive director during three different stints between 1999 and 2015 he formally assumed the role of chief executive officer in September 2015.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Kivunim 2016

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Love to spend time outdoors. I can be found frequently doing back-country hiking/camping trips in either Rocky Mountain National Park or somewhere on the Appalachian trail. When not camping or hiking, you most likely will find me playing Racquetball, Pickleball or spending time with my two adorable grandchildren.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

An adrenaline junkie I love skydiving, bungee jumping or taking unique tours while traveling like exploring caves or rappelling down waterfalls.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Michael Sophir** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
CEO  
Staenberg-Loup, Denver, Colorado

Michael Sophir serves as the chief executive officer of the Staenberg-Loup Jewish Community Center of Denver. He joined the JCC team in 2022. Previously, he was CEO of an international educational organization, worked in the marketing and communications field, and did philanthropic development work with the Children's Hospital Foundation of Colorado. Sophir is originally from Omaha, Nebraska.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | Kivunim 2022 | Other JCC CEO Journey to Israel

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Ski, hike and take dog for long walks.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Tony Bennet was once my client.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Carly Stein** | Less than 2 years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
JCC of Greater Kansas City, Kansas

Carly Stein is originally from Chicago and has lived in Kansas City since 2010. She earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and began her career in benefits consulting in Chicago before relocating to Kansas City to work at KU Hillel. After five years at KU Hillel, Stein returned to the corporate sector, where she spent nine years in digital marketing, leading teams of project managers. In 2024, she transitioned back to the nonprofit world, serving as chief operating officer at The J and contributing to an organization that has played an important role in her family's life. Stein is an avid reader, enjoys binge-watching television, and loves to travel with her husband, Louie, and their three children, Jackson, Hailey and Addison.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Traveling, reading, watching tv, hanging out with my kids.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am an identical twin.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Josh Steinharter** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
JCC of East Bay, Berkeley, California

Josh Steinharter has built a 20-year career as a Jewish professional, starting at the JCCSF as youth athletic director, JCC Maccabi Games delegation head, and selection as a Merrin Teen Fellow. He was the founder and executive director of the JCC Maccabi Sports Camp, a Jewish overnight camp in the Bay Area.

He merged that camp with the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto in 2020 before joining JCC East Bay in 2024 as chief operating officer to help lead the organization's expansion from Berkeley to a new Rockridge campus. Steinharter previously worked as a talent agent in South Beach, a general manager in Costa Rica, a media rep in Chicago, and sold televisions at Sears. He enjoys cooking, music, prestige TV and movies, outdoor adventures with his family, and long walks to the refrigerator. He and his wife, Meghan, live in the Bay Area with their sons Benjamin and Jackson.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2014 | Merrin Teen Professional Fellowship

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

I like to cook and/or eat a good meal, spend time with my family in nature, watch a good movie I've never seen or a bad one I've seen many times before, watch sports or other quality TV, or just sit on the couch, enjoy a cocktail and spin some vinyl.

**What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

As a proud member of Avodah '90 at URJ Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI), I learned the art of plunging a toilet and am proud to say that more than 35 years later, I have never been beaten by a clogged toilet and remained the undisputed, undefeated champion!

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Informal conversations and community



**Jo-Ellen Unger** | 2–5 years in the JCC Movement  
COO  
Jewish Community Alliance, Jacksonville, Florida

Passionate about the possible, Jo-Ellen Unger, MARE, RJE, serves as chief operating officer at the JCA in Jacksonville, Florida. She was the founding director of the URJ 6 Points Creative Arts Academy, a summer camp dedicated to the intersection of the arts and Judaism. Unger developed her own skills in voice, theatre, and dance at the PAVAC (now New World School of the Arts) in Miami, the fine arts program at Florida State University, and the National Shakespeare Conservatory in New York City. She earned a master’s degree in religious education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, with a Capstone project on structure and agency. She has held positions in formal and informal education in South Florida, Jacksonville, and Baltimore; worked as remote Jewish educator at UCF Hillel; and has spoken at academic and professional conferences on a variety of topics. Unger shares two sons, Jacob and Micah, with her husband, Adam, a chef.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

Brandeis Antisemitism Program | JCC Camper and/or Staff | M<sup>2</sup>

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

Music.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

Studied Shakespeare.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Learning and professional growth



**Denise Wolf** | 20+ years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
JCC of Youngstown, Ohio

Denise Wolf is the executive director of the JCC of Youngstown in Ohio. Previously, she was the chief operating officer at the Tucson JCC for 16 years. Her work in the movement started when she was a lifeguard at her local JCC in high school. After college, she worked as the assistant aquatic director at the JCC in Marblehead, Massachusetts, and then the JCC's youth and camp director of an offsite 114 acre campground. She also served as the executive director of Congregation B'nai Israel in Gainesville, Florida; the executive director of The Bridge Center, a Massachusetts nonprofit recreation, equine therapy center, and camp that serves children with developmental, physical, and emotional disabilities; and worked in development for Hebrew Senior Life in Boston. She has an undergraduate degree in exercise science/adapted aquatics and a graduate degree in nonprofit management. She has two sons, Jake, 25, a wealth manager in Tucson, Arizona, and Cody, 23, a law student at the University of Akron.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Camper and/or Staff | JCC Maccabi Athlete, Coach, or Delegation Head | Kivunim 2021

**When you're not working, how do you recharge?**

Open water swimming.

**At Mifgash, you're most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community



**Jennifer Wood** | 11–20 years in the JCC Movement  
Executive Director  
JCC & Federation of Augusta, Georgia

Jennifer Wood is the executive director of the JCC and Federation of Augusta, Georgia, where she leads strategic initiatives to strengthen Jewish life and community engagement in the region. She began her career in the public sector, managing a library system, before transitioning into human resources and payroll management in public and private organizations. Her passion for meaningful, mission-driven work led her to the nonprofit sector, where she is dedicated to making a lasting impact. Wood is an active and experienced board member, currently serving with the Interfaith Fellowship Association of Augusta, the Augusta Jewish Museum, and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program through the United Way. She also contributes her leadership expertise to national initiatives through her work with Women’s League for Conservative Judaism. She holds an MBA from Touro University with a concentration in Jewish nonprofit management and a BBA in management from Augusta University.

**In which JCC experiences have you participated in?**

JCC Lay Leader | Kivunim 2025 | M<sup>2</sup> | Tzedek

**When you’re not working, how do you recharge?**

I need quiet time to recharge so I enjoy reading, yoga, meditation and spending time outdoors.

**What’s something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I play the piano and have written two books.

**At Mifgash, you’re most excited about:**

Reconnecting with longtime colleagues, Meeting new people, Learning and professional growth, Reflection and renewal Informal conversations and community

**QUESTIONS?**

Check out the FAQ. Still have questions?  
Email [mifgash@jcca.org](mailto:mifgash@jcca.org) and we'll get back to you soon.

[ABOUT](#) | [SCHEDULE](#)  
[KIVUNIM](#) | [FAQ](#) | [REGISTER](#)  
[PLANNING COMMITTEE](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

