

PRESIDENT’S LETTER



People ask me what is special about the J? Naturally, I mention our amazing state-of-the-art facilities. However, the vibrancy of the Samuels Family Community Pavilion, the warmth of West Houston and the energy at the Merfish Teen Center are fueled by people!

9,000 members share life experiences. Walking around, one can hear multiple languages, Shabbat stories being read to toddlers and laughter from seniors enjoying a Kosher lunch. One can see elementary age thespians in costumes, teens and adults heading to workout, people conducting a business meeting and others learning how to paint. One can smell the scent of chlorine from the swimmers and the aroma of spices from aspiring chefs. **Members reflect all life stages and slices of our community.**

Dedicated staff energize operations. Every hug from a teacher or counselor, compliment from a coach or instructor, idea from a lecturer and bingo number called adds to the J experience. Every question answered, ticket sold, marketing material produced and car observed creates a welcoming and secure environment. Every IT solution created, payment processed, employee hired and equipment serviced keeps the organization functioning at maximum capacity. **Staff are true partners.**

Talented volunteers add tremendous value. Seniors receive weekly Meals on Wheels from volunteer drivers, ushers greet guests at the theatre, parents provide another set of hands, committees plan programs and events, and leaders provide

agency oversight. Hundreds of volunteers will help the J plan and host the JCC Maccabi Games® & Access. **Volunteer engagement is a unique aspect of the J culture.**

Generous donors invest in the J. Patrons support the arts and culture programs and fund scholarships for children. Capital campaign donors have built and renovated our facilities for generations. Endowment creators sustain Jewish experiences, scholarships, leadership development and ongoing maintenance of facilities. **Philanthropists are partners and visionaries.**

Together, with our members, staff, volunteers and donors, the J is the heart of the Jewish and wider Houston community.

- I would like to leave you with a call to action. Here is a menu for your consideration...
- Invite someone to join the J.
 - Say thank you to a staff member for a job well done.
 - Volunteer at the upcoming JCC Maccabi Games® & Access.
 - Include the J when planning your philanthropy.

It is a pleasure and honor to serve as the chair of the board at the J.

CHEERS,
DEBBIE

Debbie Diamond



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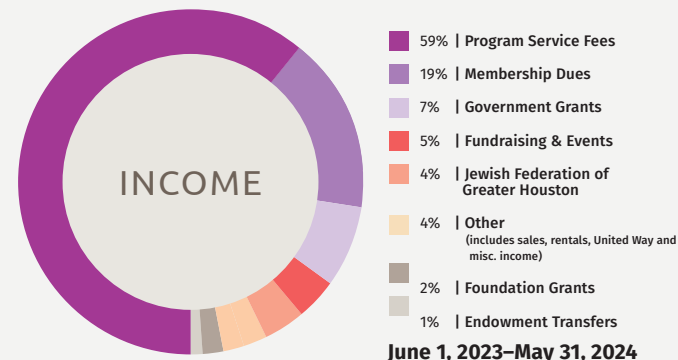
Lonny Hoffman

Sara Edelman

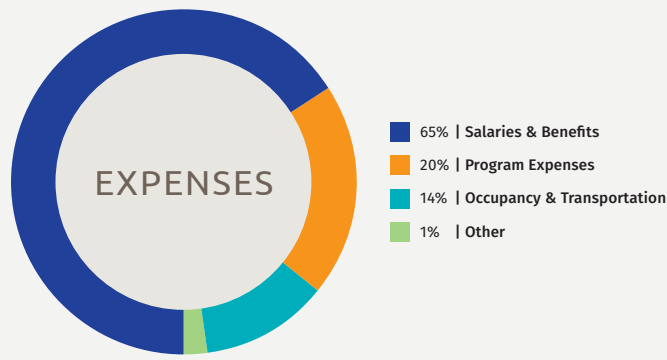
FINANCIAL REPORT

OPERATING BUDGET | \$19,855,000

With an operating budget of \$19.9 million, the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center serves the Greater Houston Jewish and secular communities through a multitude of programs and services. The longstanding tradition of providing for every segment of the population in Houston is sustained through grants, membership dues, program fees and donations.



June 1, 2023–May 31, 2024



J

EVELYN RUBENSTEIN JCC
HOUSTON

2023–2024
YEAR IN REVIEW
Impact Report

Photo courtesy of Jewish Herald-Voice: Hagit Bibi

EVELYN RUBENSTEIN JCC HOUSTON
5601 S. Braeswood | Houston, TX 77096-3907
713.729.3200 | erjchouston.org



erjchouston.org

“The J is a bustling town center for the Jewish and wider Houston community.” - *Debbie Diamond, J President*



6,217 People

have experienced the best of Jewish and Israeli arts and culture through author talks, films, music, theatre and comedy throughout the year.



There was a great energy at the event, and everyone seemed happy to be together in a Jewish space, celebrating the power of reading and writing.

- *Anonymous*



40% of Funding

for the arts and culture budget came from Patrons of the Arts, individuals who prioritize supporting the arts at the J through their philanthropy. Every contribution makes a significant difference.



Celebration Company artists and local quilters in the Jewish community collaborated in transforming the artwork for Celebration Company into quilts. They were on display in the Edith and Robert Zinn and Family Art Gallery. The quilts were very cheerful and brightened up the space at the J. The artists loved seeing their artwork transformed and were amazed by the results and the space.

- *Samara R.*



294 Adults

have participated in 39 hands-on cooking classes in the Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio learning new cooking techniques and connecting through food since the studio opened in March 2023.



1,000 Individuals

have been impacted by our Israel engagement efforts. Programs like “The Israeli Parsha” offer a variety of educational activities and discussions for all ages, strengthening community ties with Israel. Collaborations with other organizations have enhanced our impact, featuring highlights such as Purim and Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations.



600 Unique Families

attended one or more of our family engagement programs this year. Our family engagement programs offer young families the opportunity to enjoy play dates, community events and holiday celebrations that connect families, build friendships and introduce Jewish values through play-based programs, such as Tot Shabbats, Toddler Tales Story Times, Havdalah programs, family performing arts shows and more!



150 Teens

enjoyed social activities with Houston Connect 68, such as cooking classes, ice skating and the J’s signature limo scavenger hunt. J-Teen Philanthropy Initiative participants learned leadership skills and collectively donated to Houston area nonprofits focused on Israel education, antisemitism and combating hate through consensus-building discussions. Maccabi sent 24 athletes to Israel and 77 athletes to Fort Lauderdale for their individual and team sport competitions.



JTPI has allowed me to connect with students from high schools around Houston and learn how to fundraise for causes that are important to me and my community!

- *Lauren M.*



30 Senior Companion Volunteers

provided one-on-one companionship to 40 clients throughout Harris County. They pair low-income seniors volunteers with homebound individuals, enabling them to maintain independence in their own homes and offer respite to family caregivers.



When the J sponsors programs like Senior Companion’s and Meals on Wheels, the community is helped because we are meeting them where they need the most help, going into the community instead of just being in the building.

- *Joe D.*



619 RSVP Volunteers

have dedicated over 56,000 hours across 18 counties in Southeast Texas. RSVP volunteers play crucial roles in their communities, offering companionship, nutritional support, transportation and safeguarding against scams and fraud for seniors, ensuring their safe aging at home. They also provide respite to caregivers, educate on disaster preparation and support harm reduction strategies for the opioid crisis.



\$563,000 in Scholarships

The J strives to make programs accessible to all, regardless of financial need. We help those in need with financial assistance in different areas of the J. Many of the scholarship dollars are made possible by the Irvin Kaplan Children’s Scholarship Fund, the Soph and Al Natkin fund and the Richker Grossman Maccabi Fund.



1,876 Lunches

for the senior “lunch bunch” have been provided for seniors to enjoy food and fellowship at the J.



200 Students

were served by our Foster Grandparents at 13 schools throughout Harris County. Our 35 foster grandparents influenced the lives of these children by providing crucial reading, writing and math tutoring, creating lasting bonds and nurturing mentorships throughout the school year.



124,432 Meals

were delivered to 709 homebound seniors from over 300 volunteers in our Meals on Wheels program.



Your deliverers are always cheerful and courteous to me and my daughter. They feel like family and friends to us.

- *Meals On Wheels client*



285 Children

ages 6 weeks to 5 years old are enrolled at Bertha Alyce and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood Schools.



430+ Gymnasts

from toddlers to school-aged children are enrolled in our gymnastics classes. We have more than 100 competitive gymnastics team members plus several current and future NCAA recruits, two of whom have committed to NCAA schools in 2024!



4,950 Hours

of sweat this past year with great classes like barre fusion with Meryl, aqua fitness with Betsy, zumba with Renee, peaceful yoga with Gudrun and yogalates with Traci.



I love the J, the workout classes are so good and gym is really nice. I did an amazing barre class early this morning and was able to be home by 6:45 AM to get my kids ready for school. The J is great for our family!

- *Jennifer P.*



504 Bus Rides

transported 103 children from eight local elementary schools to KidZone, a safe and nurturing program for after-school activities. Here, children unwind with interactive games, arts and crafts, culinary experiences, and open playtime in our state-of-the-art gymnastics center and playground.



200 Swimmers

each week are enrolled in our Learn-to-Swim classes. Our year-round aquatics program offers private, semi-private and group swim lessons for all ages and abilities in a safe and fun environment. Let our swim instructors teach you the skills to navigate through the water with confidence.



1,427 Campers

enjoyed a fun summer at J Camps participating in a wide variety of camps, including art, performing arts, sports, tennis, gymnastics and dance.



I love the J because you can do fun activities like swimming, dancing and gymnastics. You also get to be creative!

- *Silas R., Age 8*



798 Tennis Enrollments

in our children’s tennis programs encompassing a wide array of classes, lessons, leagues and the competitive Levine Family Tennis Academy. Additionally, our in-house pickleball open play attracts over 1,000 players of every skill level!



12 Productions

were presented by 200 children ages three to 18 on the Kaplan stage in our children and teen theatre department.

“Behold how good and pleasant it is when all people live together as one.”

-*Psalm 133*