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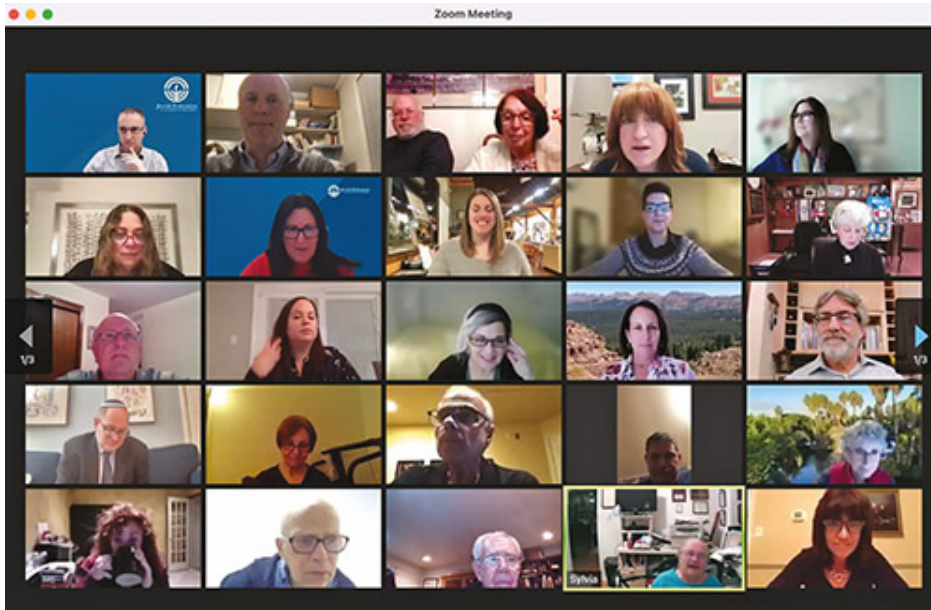
Jewish Federation Annual Meeting Celebrates Volunteers

By Harry Glazer | December 23, 2021

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The Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey, which covers Middlesex and Monmouth counties, recently held its annual meeting, with a focus on the contributions of everyday volunteers. The meeting featured 10 speakers, and began with broadcasts of a youth choir singing the National Anthem and Hatikvah, then a dvar Torah by Rabbi Eli Garfinkel of Temple Beth El in Somerset, who shared a humorous story from the Dubno Magid that illustrated the value of volunteers.

The Federation selected six community leaders to highlight. Jessica Solomon, executive director of the Jewish Heritage Museum of Monmouth County, allowed her facility to serve as a collection point for the Federation's Gratitude Project in November (a drive for food, toiletries, toys and gift cards to give to those in need), and then volunteered to help sort and pack all the contributions with others in the Federation's Women's Philanthropy division.

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Solomon, in accepting the recognition, said, "I personally believe that the more people you help, the better off you are."

Joel Krinsky and Liran Kapoano, lay leaders of the Federation's Jewish

Community Relations Council, helped put together and promote a six-part series that trains community members on how to effectively respond to antisemitism in the area. Kapoano noted that while antisemitism is a major threat, he believes a greater threat is that "we're divided on how to respond to these challenges." He pointed out with pride that the Federation partnered with a few well-regarded national organizations to develop the series.

Sam Landers and Adi Beniluz, two youth beneficiaries of Federation grants to attend Jewish summer camps, have subsequently "given back" by making donations or volunteering in



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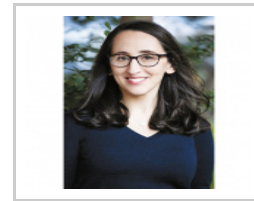


Federation's J-Serve teenage volunteer corps. This year J-Serve focused on efforts to promote environmental stewardship, and in August J-Serve volunteers held a cleanup of a beach in Sandy Hook. In accepting her recognition, Beniluz shared that "it's my duty to leave the planet a better place," and is grateful to the Federation for giving her the opportunity to do so.

Dr. David Blain was a research scientist at Exxon/Mobil until his 2020 retirement. He moved with his wife from Cherry Hill to Highland Park in 2019. Looking to volunteer in the area, he contacted the Jewish Federation and found a role as a data manager at the Federation, participating in weekly meetings and assisting the organization in improving its donor records. Blaine estimated that he has enhanced 5,000 computer records to date. He noted that his father worked for Israel Bonds for 30 years and he "felt like the slacker in the family" because he didn't work in the Jewish community. He thanked Federation for the opportunity to fulfill a long-held dream to work in the Jewish communal field.

The volunteer recognition segment of the meeting was led by Marlene Herman of Highland Park, a former Jewish Federation president and current member of their board, who volunteers at assisted living residences in the area, visiting Jewish residents and leading religious services.

The annual meeting also featured welcoming remarks from Federation's president, Cheryl Markbreiter, and executive director, Susan Antman. It also allowed Federation to conduct some business, electing a slate of members to its board of directors for



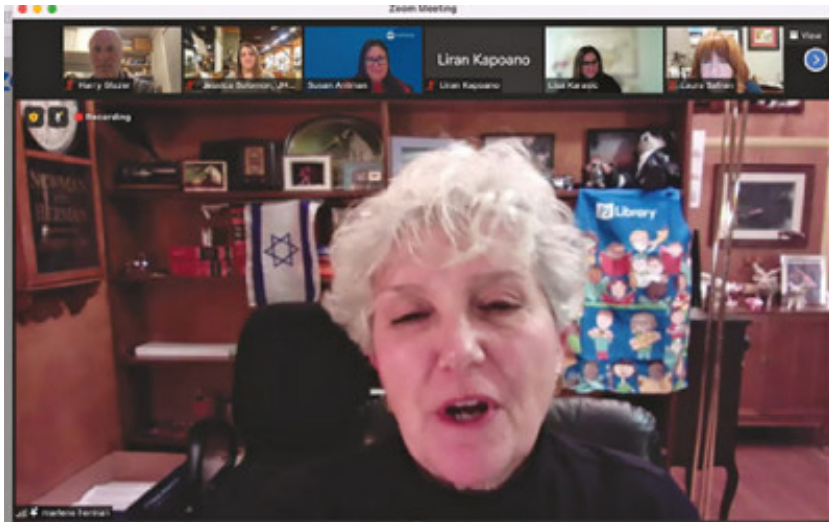
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establishing a new Governor's Council to collect and share input from the community.

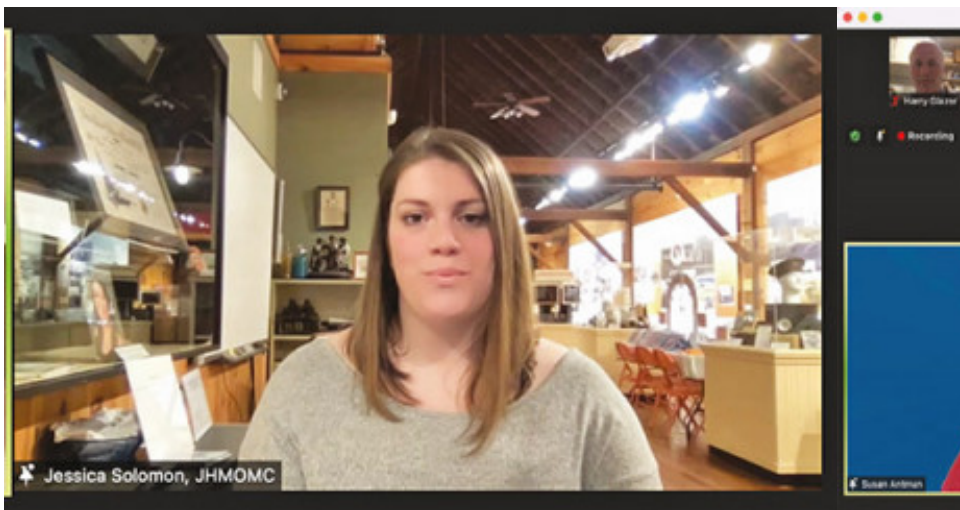
For information on how to volunteer at the Jewish Federation or in one of their many initiatives, go to www.jewishheartnj.org (<https://www.jewishheartnj.org>).

By Harry Glazer



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