



Dear Friends,

Over the last 30 years, our Jewish Federation has worked hard towards fulfilling our mission – to build community by strengthening and enhancing Jewish life here in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. Since our last Federation FOCUS newsletter, we have had a leadership change and several incredible programs and events which are highlighted in this issue. The devastation and destruction of the Eaton Fire have forever changed our community. We are grateful that our Jewish Federation has been able to respond in ways that we hope have been beneficial to those affected by the fire.

We extend our appreciation to those who have supported our effort to support community members affected by the Eaton Fire. The funds we have raised have directly supported them as they look to rebuild their lives following the loss of their home.

This issue of Federation FOCUS provides an overview of our effort to support Jewish community members affected by the Eaton Fire. In addition, we have included a summary of two new initiatives we launched in October for our community – One Happy Camper and our new Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). We are also highlighting programs and events that took place between September 2024 and February 2025.

Thank you for helping our Jewish Federation be our local community's Jewish advocate and community conduit. All of what our organization is able to do is made possible through the generosity and support of community members like you. It is through this power of community that, together, we continue to strengthen and enhance Jewish life in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.



Jeanine Mann
President



Jason Moss
Executive Director



Jeanine Mann
President



Jason Moss
Executive Director

**Building
Community,
Enhancing
Jewish
Life**

STRENGTHENING

The Jewish community mobilized into action when the Palisades and Eaton Fires broke out on January 7-8, 2025. Our local Jewish professionals reached out to see how they could help Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center (and B'nai Simcha Community Preschool) after news spread that the synagogue was lost to the fire. The outpouring of support from all across the globe was tremendous.

Our Jewish Federation's effort to support the community during its time of need was widespread. Typically, when a natural disaster occurs, the local Jewish Federation will set up an emergency campaign. However, in this case, our Jewish Federation was invited to partner with Jewish Federation Los Angeles to coordinate our relief effort and encourage people to donate to the Wildfire Relief Fund. As that effort was taking place, people started donating directly to our Jewish Federation.

On the Monday after the Eaton Fire broke out, our Jewish Federation opened our office and welcomed PJTC and B'nai Simcha's staff to our office so they had a place to work together. We coordinated the purchase of computer equipment and arranged with our internet provider to increase our internet speed so we could have enough bandwidth for all three organizations' staff to work at optimal capacity, and it was all up and running by noon on January 13, 2025.

While all of this was happening, we continued to keep our community as informed as possible, including providing resources and information we were receiving from a wide array of sources.

As you may know, we sent out multiple asks to determine who in our community was adversely affected by the fire and who lost their homes. As of today, we are aware of more than 70 Jewish households that were destroyed. Our board made the initial contact with these community members and began arranging for our Jewish Federation to provide immediate cash assistance so that they could use funds that we had raised for their immediate needs.

From the beginning, our Jewish Federation's philosophy has been to support our affected community members in a way that provides them with as much dignity and humanity as possible. This same mentality governs how we continue to provide assistance and support in our ongoing support. As an example, rather than conducting a Judaica drive, we have arranged for a Judaica Match effort to help our Jewish community members replace the exact (or as close to) the Judaica items lost in the fire.

Our Jewish Federation remains committed to continuing to be there for our community during moments like this, and we are leveraging our relationships to maximize the resources and services that can be useful to the community. This includes connecting with organizations such as Jewish Family Services, Bet Tzedek, Jewish Free Loan Association, National Council for Jewish Women, and others.

We know that our community is facing a lengthy recovery, and we will continue to do whatever we can to meet the needs of the affected community members. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help. This is what the power of community looks like, and we are glad to be able to be here and support those affected in whatever way we can.



Rabbi Akiva taught:

“Love your neighbor as yourself. This is the most important rule in the Torah.”
(Jerusalem Talmud Nedarim 30b)

These are some of the comments we received after our initial contact with some of our community members who were adversely affected by the Eaton Fire.

“Thank you for your generosity.”
- John - Altadena

“We are grateful for the help. We are staying with friends.”
- David - Altadena

“If there are people who need it more, please give it to them.”
- Josh - Altadena

“Thank you so much for reaching out. It means a lot to us. Yesterday, we picked up our mail from the post office, and our PJ Library book was there, when my son saw it his face lit up, it him very happy”
- PJ Library family

Thank you for this, but we would prefer seeing it go to families who need it more than we do.
- Michael - Altadena

“Greatly appreciate the support and outreach. Thank you for the assistance offer but we ask that you give it to others.”
- Josh - Pasadena

“Thank you so incredibly much for this - we appreciate it more than words can express. We send hugs and love back.”
- Jennifer - Pasadena

OUR COMMUNITY

EATON FIRE RELIEF FUND

A heartfelt thank you to all our generous donors who contributed to our Eaton Fire Relief Fund. Your support – whether from our local community, across the country, or even as far away as Israel—has been truly overwhelming.

Because of you, our community stands stronger than ever. We are deeply grateful for your kindness and generosity.

Donations as of February 3, 2025

Nancy Adin	Sarah Katel
Michael Afergan and Suzanne Korkin Afergan	Shirley Kedes
Denise and Wayne Alhadeff	Barry and Wendy Kielsmeier
Peter and Nancy Ambrose	Jessica Korsunsky
Nikki Ann and Howard Applebaum	Mark and Beth Koslin
Alysha and Graham Applebaum	Jennifer Kurilla
Jeff and Nicole Aptekar	David and Ina Labowitz
Cary Barber	Adrian Lanch
Adrienne Bass	Wynne and Crystal Langer
Mary Ann and Michael Bernath	Scott Lazaruk
Debbie Beutler	Sara Levine
Susan Biales	Lawrence Lurvey and Elena Martinez
R Boon	Clarissa Manges
William Bothamley	Jeanine and Stuart Mann
Cantor Paul and Lisa Buch	Lisa Martin
Simon and Nurit Burrow	Lori and Bob McKenna
John and Nancy Carlton	Stu and Stacy Miller
Elyse Chang	Lanie and Alan Moss
Ruth and Carl Charloff	Carol Morecki-Oberg
Andrea Chasen	Deborah Noble and Erich Schlecht
Yvonne Cheyney and Simon Saul	Karen and Howard Ort
Samuel Cohen	Jacquelyn O'Sullivan
Sarah and Ken Cooper	Ben and Karen Park
Luisa D'amico	Susan and David Porter
Carrie and Steve D'Arcangelo	Deborah and Ed Pruitt
Daniel D'Arcangelo	Victoria Raschi
Mike and Ruth Devine	Halaine Rose
Paul C. Dietz	Sandra Rothenberg
Shari and Donald Emas	Robert and Rita Rubin
Charles Enzer	Marcia and Elliot Sainer
Kandy and Chuck Fisher	Rabbi Rick and April Schechter
Susan Fisher	Jack and Diane Schuster
Helen Fishman	Doris and Hervey Segall
The Morningstar Foundation	Jane Seltzer
The Seed the Dream Foundation	Stephanie Shlasky
Kim Galloway	Temple Sholom of Ontario Sisterhood
Kristina Geddes	Laura Sloofman
Ellen Gervase	Diane and Richard Smiarowski
Kevin Giser	David and Gail Snyder
Jo Ann and Joel Golden	Julie Solberg and Ted Chandler
Tedd and Susan Goldstein	Hannah Swartzel-Rausch
Ruth Goldstein	Miriam Teltser
Edward and Barbara Gomperts	Farrah Trinker
Lois Goodman	Kirstie Waring
Douglas and Cindy Graff	Susan and Richard Weiner
Sue Hogan	Marilyn and Ron Weintraub
Peter and Susan Ivory	Edward Morris Wolf and Helen Morran-Wolf
Che Jones	Suzanne Zitser
Sidney and Mildred Jones	

OUR MISSION

To build community by strengthening and enhancing Jewish life.

OUR VISION

The Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys is a resource for everything Jewish in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. We are a safe place for people to find their way into and connect with both their Judaism and the Jewish community. The programs and services we provide celebrate Jewish community and create opportunities for people to engage with the beauty and richness of Jewish culture. And, we are the Jewish voice for our local community, the eyes and ears who serve to locally educate and promote Judaism and Jewish life.

JEWISH FEDERATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Jeanine Mann President	David Levy Vice President	John Carlton CFO	Julie Bank Secretary
Mickey Bernath	Avi Bilu	Lawrence Lurvey	
Stuart Miller	Oran Reznik	Julie S. Solberg	

JEWISH FEDERATION STAFF

Jason Moss Executive Director	Rebecca Russell Program & Community Outreach Director	Cantor Judy Sofer Cultural Arts Program Director	Karen Galeana Operations & Communications Manager
Debby Singer PJ Library & PJ Our Way Program Director	Naama Philosofof PJ Library & PJ Our Way Program Assistant	Annabella Tornek Camp Gan Shalom Director & Social Media Coordinator	Susan Hain Bookkeeper

ENHANCING JEWISH LIFE



Our Jewish Federation continues to explore ways to engage our local Jewish community and promote opportunities and experiences to enhance community members' Jewish connections. The challenge of passing along a meaningful connection to Judaism and an essential commitment to the next generation has become one of the most significant concerns of the North American Jewish community. Based on research and recent studies conducted by national Jewish organizations, there is compelling evidence that attending a Jewish summer camp (including day camps) has a proven means of building Jewish identity, community, and leadership. For example, adults attending Jewish overnight camp are 37% more likely to light candles regularly for Shabbat, 45% more likely to attend synagogue at least once a month, and 55% more likely to feel emotionally attached to Israel.

Unfortunately, due to the rising costs of sending a child to a Jewish overnight summer camp, many families simply cannot afford it. Recognizing this barrier, the Foundation for Jewish Camp created One Happy Camper, a need-blind grant program that gives families sending their child for the first time to a Jewish overnight camp up to \$1,500 towards the cost of camp.

In October, thanks to the generosity of a local couple, our Jewish Federation, in partnership with the Foundation for Jewish Camp, **launched One Happy Camper in our community.**

Jewish summer camps provide children the opportunity to immerse themselves in Jewish culture, engage in ritual and education, challenge themselves physically and spiritually, and prepare to be leaders in and out of the Jewish community. With One Happy Camper in our community, we are investing in the community's future and helping to make these life-changing experiences possible.

In addition, at the heart of the One Happy Camper program is a commitment to engage in a marketing campaign to the Jewish community and increase awareness of and access to an overnight Jewish camping experience. With this in mind, our Jewish Federation designed and mailed its 2025 Jewish Summer Camp Guide, promoting Camp Gan Shalom, One Happy Camper, and California's 10 Jewish overnight camps.

This investment will help strengthen our community's commitment to Jewish summer camping. Recent research also shows that children who attend Jewish summer camps are being infused with Jewish education, awareness, and identity at one of the most critical times in our lifetime.

THIS WAY TO INDEPENDENCE

At Jewish overnight camp, kids discover who they are—and who they want to become—while having the time of their lives. They race across ziplines, climb up mountains and sail across lakes. They make their own adventures, every day. Plus, you might be eligible for up to \$1500 off your camper's first summer.

There's a perfect camp for every Jewish camper. Find yours today at OneHappyCamper.org.



STRENGTHENING OUR

ADVOCACY WORK

JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Over the last several years, as our Jewish Federation has increased its advocacy work, it became evident that our local Jewish community would benefit from having a Jewish Community Relations Committee (JCRC). JCRCs exist nationwide, even though Southern California has not had a formal one for over 20 years. The need for our Jewish Federation to launch one was even more evident after the work our Executive Director, Jason Moss, getting to securing 29 of our community's 48 cities to adopt resolutions condemning antisemitism and all forms of hate, as well as the work community members did in fighting the one-sided immediate ceasefire resolutions many local city councils considered last spring.



What is a JCRC and what does it do?

Our JCRC is comprised of community members who have showcased their passion for and ability to ensure a strong Jewish presence in and around our community as we confront issues that require a Jewish perspective. Within this capacity, the JCRC helps provide a strong Jewish voice and serves in an advocacy role on behalf of the local Jewish community. Overseen by our Jewish Federation's Executive Director, this group helps our community confront and respond to a wide-range of areas including, but not limited to, antisemitism, hate, anti-Jewish sentiment, the local implementation of ethnic studies, issues in and around the community that require a Jewish response, outreach to local school districts, as well as to enhance and expand our relationships with local elected officials and bodies. In addition, the JCRC will provide critical and comprehensive information on critical issues that can be shared to educate the community.

Initial issues JCRC will address

After looking at the current issues confronting the Jewish world, the JCRC members discussed and considered the initial areas they feel can maximize the committee's capabilities and significantly impact our local Jewish community. The three areas our JCRC will focus on for the foreseeable future are: 1) work with K-12 schools to combat/respond to antisemitism and hate (including Ethnic Studies); 2) outreach to various nonprofit/interfaith/inter-cultural/inter-ethnic groups in our community; and 3) outreach to local elected officials (i.e. city council, county, state, and federal). While the committee sees Jewish students' current issues across the country, they recognize that numerous national Jewish organizations and agencies, including governmental and legal efforts, are addressing this crisis.

Periodic updates about the work the JCRC is doing will be shared with the community. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the work of the JCRC, please email: federation@jewishsgpv.org.

OUR JEWISH FEDERATION LED A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN SUPPORTING TRADER JOE'S

In November 2024, after being made aware that a grassroots organization was planning a protest of Trader Joe's Corporate Offices (located in Monrovia) for carrying six Israeli products in their stores, our Jewish Federation sprang into action and launched a "buy-cott" (a reverse boycott) campaign that was supported by Jewish communities across the United States.

The campaign asked people to visit their local Trader Joe's stores from November 4-10, 2024 and purchase as many of the Israeli products they sell as possible. While there, people were encouraged to thank the Trader Joe's staff for continuing to carry the items. Those unable to go to Trader Joe's were asked to call the Trader Joe's Customer Support line and express their appreciation for the store carrying Israeli products and to please continue to do so.



Through our Jewish Federation's initiative, communities in Buffalo, Greater Washington DC, St. Louis, Tidewater (Virginia), Virginia Peninsula, Chicago, the SF Bay Area, and Houston participated. We also know that the Jewish Federation of North America's National Young Leadership and Women's Philanthropy Divisions were encouraged to participate. The campaign also got national attention once #EndJewHate and JewBelong picked up the campaign and blasted it out on their social media feeds and their massive email distribution lists.



As the campaign concluded, Trader Joe's CEO contacted our Executive Director to express his and the company's appreciation and assurance that they do not allow protests and petitions to influence their business.

What we have done...

SEPTEMBER

THE WISDOM OF EVE

JFed Players' fall production, "The Wisdom of Eve," was performed in September. The play, adapted as a movie (All About Eve) with Betty Grable, tells the story of an aging but very successful actress



who slowly becomes usurped by a newcomer who poses as her assistant. Our production, directed by Joanne Karr, included some of our new actors who have worked with us recently and some of our longtime JFed Players performers. Audiences enjoyed the play and shared with us how much they are looking forward to our next JFed Players' production this Spring 2025.

JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

After reviewing over 270 recently published books with either a Jewish author or Jewish theme, our Federation Jewish Book Festival Committee narrowed it down to 15 authors to present at our 26th annual Jewish Book Festival. From learning about the first organized crime boss (a sweet Jewish mother) to celebrating Jazz greats Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie, our 2024 Jewish Book Festival had something for everyone. We added Temple Beth Israel in Highland Park



to our venues and started a new event bringing award-winning authors from our community together in order to continue to expand the reach of our yearly festival. We are proud to be able to find new ways to connect our full community in celebration of Jewish literature.



TOWN HALL WITH CONSUL GENERAL OF ISRAEL

Our Jewish Federation has worked closely with the Israeli Consulate for many years. And, it is through this partnership that we have had the privilege to hold several Town Hall Meetings with the Consul General of Israel. In December, we hosted Consul General Israel Bachar. During the event, he shared perspectives and updates on the war against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, the challenges facing Israel today, the relationship with the U.S., and the current situation Jewish college students are facing on campuses across the country. The event also included a VIP reception prior to the Town Hall.



2025 CAMP GAN SHALOM



OUR PROGRAMS

KEHILLA (K - 5th)
\$350 per week

MANHEEGIM (6th - 8th)
\$425 per week

CIT* (9th - 10th)
\$125 per week
*Must complete application and interview process.

SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE
EXTENDED
CARE
AVAILABLE

WHEN? WHERE?

June 9 - July 18
(Weeks 1-6)

Monroe Elementary School
402 W. Colorado Blvd. Monrovia



July 21 - August 1
(Weeks 7-8)

Temple Beth Israel of Pomona
3033 N. Towne Ave., Pomona

HOW TO REGISTER?

For more information, to register, or to apply for the CIT program, visit:
www.jewishsgpv.org



- FEBRUARY

PJ LIBRARY HANUKKAH PARTY AT VROMAN'S

Once again, Vroman's Book Store in Pasadena provided the space for a very lively PJ Library Hanukkah celebration on December 22, 2024. Over 100 enthusiastic participants lifted their voices in song with Cantor Judy Sofer and her guitar, leading the way. Local children's author Sylvia Rouss read her cherished Hanukkah tale, *Latkes, Latkes, Good to Eat* and families created very special Hanukkah art to take home. The mood was joyous; the energy electric and the spirit of the season was contagious.



FESTIVAL OF JEWISH MUSIC

On December 22, 2024 we hosted our 16th Festival of Jewish Music at Temple Beth Israel of Pomona, featuring seven regional cantors and Kol HaEmek. The event was well attended, creating a joyous Hanukkah celebration filled with incredible performances.

The Festival of Jewish Music started in 2008 as a way for our Jewish community to come together to hear holiday and Hanukkah music at a time when we are inundated with Christmas songs everywhere we go. We were delighted to conclude this year's festival with a singalong of Hanukkah songs, and as everyone left, they walked away with a sufganiyah (jelly donut)!

PJ LIBRARY'S PAW, PIZZA, PLAY, AND HUGS

To ease the pain caused by the devastating wildfires in our area, even just for a moment, we held a gathering for our community at the Southern California Children's Museum in Pasadena. This amazing play space graciously opened its doors for the exclusive use of our PJ Library families and friends at the end of January 2025. We also featured local children's author Marisa Nicely and her therapy dog, Ezer the Bagel. And, of course, there were plenty of snacks and pizza. Our families donated their gently loved PJ Library books to help rebuild the collections of those who lost their homes, as well as the libraries of B'nai Simcha and PJTC. The positive energy in the room was palpable, and for a couple of hours, we were all able to live in the present and appreciate being part of a caring community.



THE JEWISH FEDERATION'S JFED PLAYERS COMMUNITY THEATER ENSEMBLE IS PROUD TO PRESENT:

RADIO STYLE PERFORMANCE OF:
**ARSENIC AND OLD LACE &
STARSTRUCK**

By Steve Cleberg



PERFORMANCES:

Saturday, May 3 and 10, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 4 and 11, 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION:

Temple Beth David
9677 Longden Ave., Temple City

To purchase tickets, visit:
www.jewishsgpv.org



JOIN US IN BUILDING AND CELEBRATING JEWISH LIFE.



TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Your gift today helps strengthen our community and ensures a vibrant future.

TO DONATE, VISIT:
WWW.JEWISHSGPV.ORG





**JEWISH
FEDERATION**
OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL
AND POMONA VALLEYS

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EVERY PERSON HAS A NAME

25-HOUR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE PROGRAM

March 22, 2025 7 p.m.

COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

March 22, 8 p.m. - March 23, 2025, 8 p.m.

READING OF THE NAMES

AT PASADENA CITY HALL &

LIVE ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/jewishsgpv

Supported by The City of Pasadena



**JEWISH
FEDERATION**
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