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JEWISH PENINSULA

your impact

JEWISH PENINSULA

IMPACT REPORT 2025-2026



thanks from the board



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OUR MISSION

Jewish Peninsula promotes and supports a vibrant and evolving Jewish community where everyone is welcome. Through a powerful combination of advocacy, programming, social action and philanthropy, we strengthen Jewish life on the Virginia Peninsula, in Israel and around the world.

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of growth, strength and rising impact. Thanks to your generosity, we came together to care for one another, defend what matters most and build a future that will flourish and endure. The J's impact continues to grow as we reach more people and meet more needs, from the youngest campers finding their first friendships to the families who turned to us in moments of crisis. But beyond the numbers, this year has been defined by the spirit of connection and belonging that runs through everything we do. None of it would have been possible without you.

Your support is the quiet infrastructure behind every visible moment of impact: the Hillel Shabbat dinners, the early childhood laughter, the camp friendships, the crisis response, the subtle acts of belonging that don't always make headlines but always make a difference. It's there in the hands that pack totes for neighbors in need, in the volunteers who show up when we need them most, in the donors who give without ever expecting recognition. You are the reason the J can say yes when our community needs us most, and the reason our impact keeps growing, year after year.

In a few weeks, we'll launch our Annual Campaign with a special evening featuring Chef Yaniv Cohen, known to many as "The Spice Detective." A great spice blend is never one note. It's cumin and cardamom, saffron and sumac, a dozen distinct flavors, none of them remarkable alone, but when combined, something new and better emerges. It's a fitting image for who we are. Look around our community on any given day: at the Sarfan Center, at Camp Chaverim, in our sanctuaries and around our board tables, and you'll find people who arrived by different paths, carrying different backgrounds, observances and stories. Some grew up here; others found their way to us later in life. Some come every week; others find us once a year and are welcomed just the same. Alone, each of us is simply ourselves. Blended together, with care and intention, we become something greater than any of us could be on our own. That is the true miracle of community.

As we welcome a new year, we want to thank you for what you bring to our community's blend: your presence, your voice and your gift. Every contribution, no matter its size, adds something irreplaceable to the mix, and it is only that mix that makes us whole. Because of your invaluable flavor, this has truly been a year of growth and renewal, and your impact will continue not just to grow, but to flourish and endure, for our community today and for the generations who will inherit it tomorrow.

With heartfelt appreciation,



Steve Shapiro
President



Eric Maurer
Chief Executive Officer

JEWISH PENINSULA

impact at a glance



$860,706

raised through gifts to the Annual Campaign.



677

individuals from 572 households connected with Jewish Peninsula through our causes and events.



85

incredible years serving the Virginia Peninsula.



85%

of Annual Campaign donors continue to support the Annual Campaign each year.



248

children experienced education, creativity and personal growth through the Sarfan Center, Hebrew School and Camp Chaverim.





2,243

birthday wishes and cheerful greetings brought joy and connection to community members throughout the year.



2,716

meaningful touchpoints kept our community informed, engaged and connected through e-blasts and letters.

JEWISH PENINSULA



Last spring, 24 headstones were vandalized and knocked over at the Jewish Cemetery of the Virginia Peninsula, many decades old and deeply woven into the story of our local Jewish community.

Buddy David, President of the emetery, captured the weight of the moment: "It is [an] assault on our dead, on our grief and on our dignity as a community. Those resting [at the Jewish Cemetery] are entrusted to our community. An attack on them is an attack on all on us."

Because of you, the response was immediate. Jewish Peninsula and the Jewish Cemetery launched a joint fundraiser, and donors moved quickly, helping raise $34,583 to begin repairing the damage and honoring our shared responsibility to protect this sacred space.

Your generosity did more than restore stones. It restored dignity, reassured families that their loved ones had not been forgotten and brought volunteers to the cemetery to help with repairs. In a moment of grief and violation, you showed that this community will not stand by when Jewish memory is threatened, turning an act of destruction into a powerful statement of care, resilience and collective responsibility.

you are mobilizing

in times of need

"The cemetery is our physical representation of *l'dor v'dor*, generation to generation, where we can unite and reflect with those here and those who have left us."

– RICHARD GORDON

JEWISH CEMETERY TRUSTEE

300

tote bags were filled with essential hygiene products by over 50 volunteers in less than one hour at our first Dignity Grows event for the Virginia Peninsula chapter.

How you are putting Jewish values in action:

- 77 individuals attended the Jewish Cemetery briefing on Zoom.
- 55 hats, scarves and blankets were handmade by community members and donated to those in need for the J's second annual Knitz-vah Project.
- 191 community member donors gave nearly 200 units of life-saving blood at Red Cross blood drives held at the J, positively affecting 567 patients.
- 400 connections were initiated by Super Sunday volunteers in support of our Annual Campaign.
- More than 150 dog toys, cat treats and other pet essentials were collected from community members for the Pearl Society's social action party, Pearls for Paws, then donated to Peninsula SPCA.
- 6 community partners joined forces with the J for our first Dignity Grows packing party for the Virginia Peninsula chapter: Alternatives, Inc., Hampton Public Library, THRIVE Peninsula, ECHO Orphancare Partners, Hampton VA Healthcare System and Williamsburg Regional Library.



In the hours before our annual Hanukkah celebration, our community learned of the terrorist attack in Sydney, Australia. In light of the attack and with freezing temperatures in the forecast, many wondered whether the event should go on at all.

Thanks to people like you, it did. Hundreds gathered on the first night of Hanukkah, not because it was easy but because being together mattered. The gathering turned the 19th annual celebration into more than a party; it was a moment of remembrance for those lost in Sydney and a reminder that our community shines brightest when we stand together. As Immediate Past President Steve Marks shared that evening, "Hanukkah reminds us that even the smallest flame can push back a great deal of darkness." Your presence and generosity were that flame.

For nearly two decades, Hanukkah at City Center has brought our community together in celebration. This year, it also became a testament to the strength of our community.

Thank you for helping the light of Hanukkah shine, even in uncertain times.

you are nurturing

Jewish life, education and values

"It was truly special how our community gathered for the Hanukkah lighting, finding warmth and light together despite the cold and the shadow of the Sydney attack. That spirit of unity is what makes our community so strong."

– JONATHAN RATHSAM

230

people viewed Jewish films through Jewish Peninsula's film series, which included screenings of *Bad Shabbos*, *Yaniv* and *Eleanor the Great*.

How you are nurturing Jewish life:

- 485 children (from 287 local families) have enjoyed PJ Library books since the program began serving the Peninsula in 2014.
- More than 75 community members had a blast at the J's Purim carnival, devouring 500 assorted hamentaschen.
- 2 CNU Hillel members were selected to join a brand new Hillel leadership program, allowing them to connect and grow with the other 25 members in this exciting program.
- 21 community members developed new talents by participating in the J's Skills Series programming.
- 120 youth attendees loved the new JKids programming and engaged at 5 unique events, including Field Day and DIY Game Night.
- Over 60 community members braved the winter cold to celebrate the last night of Hanukkah together at New Town in Williamsburg.
- 38 young adults gathered at the NextGen Shabbat dinner to enjoy a tasty potluck dinner and good conversation.



you are

caring

for those in need

Because of your generosity, more families were able to celebrate Passover with dignity and joy.

In the second year of our growing partnership, THRIVE Peninsula and Jewish Peninsula continued working together to offer a free kosher pantry during Passover for individuals and families facing food insecurity. Our community donated Passover essentials, from matzah to gefilte fish, so that no one had to choose between observing tradition and putting food on the table.

At Jewish Peninsula, we believe every person deserves to feel welcomed and cared for during the holidays. As our CEO, Eric Maurer shared, "The holidays, while joyous occasions, can also be a time when financial burdens feel particularly overwhelming for many families. We have a sacred obligation to ensure every member of our community has what they need to celebrate with dignity."

Your compassion turned those words into action. Through Jewish Family Services, your generosity offered more than food: it offered comfort, preserved cherished traditions and reminded our neighbors that they are not alone. Thank you for helping make Passover a season of hope and belonging for everyone who calls the Virginia Peninsula home.

"When we honor one another's traditions, we strengthen our entire community. This Passover partnership was a beautiful reminder that dignity begins with feeling seen, welcomed and cared for."

– CAROLINE DUTLE

THRIVE PENINSULA

1,191

delicious and nutritious meals were enjoyed by our Grand Club senior members throughout the year.

How you are caring for our community:

- 450 items were donated to our Jewish Family Services food pantry.
- $12,691 in camp scholarships aided our community families participating in early childhood, day and overnight camps.
- 12 individuals received food assistance through our JFS pantry, ensuring the dietary needs of community members were met with cultural competency, sensitivity and inclusivity.
- 30 individuals facing diverse challenges - hunger, financial emergencies, unemployment, housing, instability at home and growing concerns with physical or mental health - received personalized case management through Jewish Family Services. With your support, our team walked alongside each person, connecting them with resources, advocating on their behalf and providing compassionate guidance every step of the way.
- 14 community children received Hanukkah gifts and gift cards donated to our JFS office through our Mitzvah Menorah program, helping families make Hanukkah bright even when times are tough.
- 30 holiday-themed gift bags, full of food and other holiday items, were distributed by JFS to community members in need on Rosh Hashanah and Passover.



you are building bridges to keep our bond with Israel strong

Because of your generosity, Yom Ha'atzmaut became more than a date on the calendar, it became a powerful expression of connection, pride and solidarity with Israel.

This spring, the Christopher Newport University campus came alive as Gilad Segev's *Rise Up: Project Heroes* concert united our community through music, storytelling and shared purpose. Together, we celebrated Israel's independence while honoring the courage, resilience and heroism that continue to inspire the Jewish people. As voices joined in song and emotions filled the room, participants experienced the unbreakable bond that connects our local community to Israel.

Moments like these don't happen on their own. They are made possible by caring supporters like you, who ensure our community has meaningful opportunities to gather, celebrate our heritage and strengthen our connection to Israel. When Yom Ha'atzmaut arrives again, we'll celebrate with the same joy, the same passion and the same unwavering love for Israel—because your support continues to make these unforgettable moments of unity possible.

"The Rise Up Heroes Project was a moving experience for me. It called on all of us to be inspired and stand up in small ways or in big ways when faced with challenges, injustice and when presented with opportunities to help others in need.

– SHOSHANA MARZIANO

More than **120** people attended meaningful classes and programs about Israel at the J, including Judaism Confronts War and Israel 201 with Joel Chasnoff.

How you are building bridges for Israel:

- A new 3-year partnership was announced by Jewish Peninsula and Jewish Federation of Richmond through the global Communities2Gether program, providing aid and support to the Israeli town of Shlomi.
- 3 community members volunteered their time toward Shlomi recovery projects and efforts.
- Nearly 20 Shlomi businesses are in the process of rebuilding or have fully restarted their businesses with the help of our provided small business grants.
- 100 students on the autism spectrum at Shlomi's Nachalim School now have a safe room in every classroom.
- 200 falafel balls were tasted and 101 Israeli flags were crafted during Israel Day at Camp Chaverim.
- 10 community members participated in Krav Maga at the J, a popular self defense system used by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).
- More than 80 attendees joined CNU Hillel and the J for A Path to Peace discussion on the future of Israel and its neighbors, featuring Middle East experts Dennis Ross and Ghaith al-Omari.



you are

inspiring

memories that will
last a lifetime

Thanks to your continued support, Camp Chaverim was once again filled with laughter, discovery and unforgettable summer memories.

The excitement was clear from the start: 139 camper spots filled within three days, as families eagerly secured a place for their children to learn, grow and belong in a welcoming Jewish community.

Campers explored everything from athletics to dramatic arts, with special celebrations, including America's 250th anniversary, bringing creativity and fun to every corner of camp.

Your support also helped make this one of our safest summers yet, as Camp Chaverim joined CampSafe®, a nationally recognized child safety initiative endorsed by the American Camp Association, ensuring every staff member was trained to keep children protected, supported and empowered to thrive.

Every friendship formed, every new skill discovered and every joyful camp tradition was made possible because of you. Thank you for creating a summer where children felt safe, celebrated and inspired. We can't wait to build even more unforgettable moments together next summer.

"Creating proactive, lasting safety culture is the most effective way to ensure the magic of the summer camp experience."

- NAIOKI WOOD
CAMP CHAVERIM DIRECTOR

13

Peninsula kids spent a total of 46 weeks at Jewish overnight camps this summer.

How you are inspiring memories that will last a lifetime:

- 20 Camp Chaverim counselors joined more than 15,000 national camp staff trained by CampSafe®.
- 4 Virginia Peninsula athletes traveled to compete in the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games in Toronto, Canada.
- More than 150 art pieces were beautifully displayed during Camp Chaverim's 4th annual art show.
- 3 Camp Chaverim staff members grew up attending J programs, the Sarfan Center or both.
- 123 loaves of challah were baked during the first week of Camp Chaverim by campers, teen leaders and camp staff, all bringing a taste of Shabbat home to share.



you are combatting antisemitism and hate

This year, because of your generosity, Jewish Peninsula proudly partnered with the Newport News Police Department for the third consecutive year, replenishing the security fund with a state grant that protects our synagogues during worship — with a 20% increase over last year's investment. That fund means Newport News congregations no longer bear the crushing cost of hiring law enforcement to keep prayer services safe. Families can walk through the doors of their synagogue thinking about their faith, not the price of protection.

But we knew our work couldn't stop at Newport News' borders. Too many of our congregations elsewhere on the Peninsula have had difficulty partnering with their municipality to access this state grant. So our JCRC took action, leading a determined push to change the language of the Virginia State Hate Crime Grant so that nonprofits could apply for these funds directly. Working alongside state Sen. Mamie Locke and JCRCs across Virginia, that effort succeeded.

None of this happens without you. Your support doesn't just fund security, it builds a future where every Jewish family across our region can gather, worship, learn and celebrate without fear. Thank you for standing with us, and for standing up for our community.

"Showing up and advocating are the bedrock of change. Advocating ensures that your needs and the needs of others are heard."

– JEFF LUCKMAN

JCRC CHAIR

More than 225 people attended Jewish Peninsula's Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance program and were inspired by 100-year-old Frank Shatz's story of survival.

How you are combatting antisemitism and hate:

- All 6 synagogues on the Virginia Peninsula were awarded security grants from Jewish Peninsula to offset the cost of hiring security guards.
- 23 security assessments and law enforcement meetings were conducted by our regional security advisor in the last year.
- 25 Virginia Peninsula residents joined with other Jewish communities from across Virginia, forming a group of 300 Jewish advocates who lobbied at the state capital for Jewish Advocacy Day.
- 66 local students submitted entries to our Holocaust Writing & Visual Arts competition, empowering the next generation to confront hate and stand against antisemitism.
- 14 middle and high school students were honored at the 25th Annual Holocaust Writing and Visual Arts Competition during our Yom HaShoah program.



you are guiding curious young minds

For 40 years, you've done more than support a race, you've built a tradition that brings our community together. What began as a small neighborhood run has grown into one of Jewish Peninsula's most beloved annual events, thanks to supporters like you. Every registration, sponsorship, volunteer hour and donation has helped transform the Sarfan Center 5K into a celebration of community, wellness and belonging.

This spring, nearly perfect weather welcomed runners, walkers, families and friends to Mariners' Park for our 40th anniversary 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run. Participants of every age crossed the finish line and gathered to enjoy snow cones, donuts and the simple joy of spending time together, made even more special by the generosity of our 21 sponsors.

Milestones like this don't happen by chance; they happen because year after year, you show up. Your generosity has sustained this tradition for four decades, creating opportunities for connection, healthy living and Jewish community for thousands of participants. Thank you for making the first 40 years possible — we're excited to cross the starting line with you for many more to come.

"Forty years is something truly worth celebrating!"

– CARMELA MALKIN KUHN
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

180
visiting grandparents and grand-friends enjoyed the cutest morning, watching singing and dancing at our Sarfan Center Grandparents' Day.

How you are guiding curious young minds:

- 26 Sarfan Center students, 18 from pre-K and 8 from kindergarten, graduated in 2026 and joined the thousands of Sarfan Center alumni.
- 11 vegetables and herbs, including spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes and basil, grow in the Sarfan Center garden, teaching our preschool kids the value of Shomrei Adamah, caring for the earth.
- 16 new students and their families were welcomed to the Sarfan Center for the 2026-2027 school year.
- 130 dedicated runners and walkers from accross the community came together to participate in our 40th annual Sarfan Center 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run.
- More than 20 of our tiniest racers competed in a thrilling and adorable 50-yard dash to cap off our 40th 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run event.



The Annual Campaign is the lifeblood of our Jewish Peninsula activities and programs.

Your generosity is appreciated and your commitment to our community is valued.

Please join us in honoring our loyal and generous donors. Thank you!

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Not pictured: Nathan Braford & Frankie Levy

"Since we moved back to the Peninsula 40 years ago and established our Jewish home, the J has been an important extension of our family. It is a place where we have built meaningful relationships, shared traditions, celebrated milestones and strengthened our connection to our Jewish community.

It has been important to us that our wonderful Jewish Community remains strong for our children, grandchildren and generations to come. That desire continues to motivate us to participate in volunteerism, lay leadership and annual support of the J. We are grateful for the opportunity to give back to an organization that has given so much to our family."

- ROBIN & GUY LEVY

"We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give."
— WINSTON CHURCHILL

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Theodore H. Cohen Unrestricted Fund
Neisser Unrestricted Endowment Fund
Charles Olshansky Memorial Fund of UJC
Schoenbaum Unrestricted Fund of UJC
Jonathan Schwab Unrestricted Fund
UJC/Support Unrestricted Fund
UJCVP Grants Fund
The Wolberg Unrestricted Fund

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Theodore H. Beskin Scholarship Fund
The Youth Fund of the UJC
Belle S. Frank Endowment Fund of UJC
Jerome & Mable Gordon Restricted Fund
Guy & Robin Levy Rodef Sholom Temple Legacy Fund
Susan & Mayer Levy Rodef Sholom Temple Endowment Fund
Lipman Family Restricted Fund
The Eric & Jack Luckman Memorial Scholarship Fund
Boris & Selma Margolin Israel Experience Fund
Rhoda H. & Marvin I. Mazur Education Fund
The Marc Minkoff Sports Camp Scholarship Fund
Barbara Rosenbaum Young Leadership Fund
Donald & Joan Rosenbaum Rodef Sholom Temple Sukkah Fund
The Beverly Sellers Memorial Fund
Emil Emanuel Shavitt Scholarship Fund
Leroy M. Spigel Early Childhood Education Fund
Rita Sarfan Block Spirn Restricted Fund
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Franklin O. Blechman, Sr. PACE
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Jerome & Mable Gordon PACE Fund
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Ettalea Esther Kanter LOJE
Betty N. Levin LOJE
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David Sherman PACE
Howard & Sandy Waters PACE

CUSTODIAL FUNDS

UJC Repair and Replacement Fund
Congregation Emet V'Or Fund
Congregation Emet V'Or Building Fund
Jewish Cemetery of the Virginia Peninsula, Inc.
Peninsula Jewish Historical Society
Rodef Sholom Temple

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

The Bangel-Legum Philanthropic Fund
The Blechman-David Foundation Philanthropic Fund
Harold "Dooley" Cohen, Jeanne S. Cohen, and Hilda & Harry Oser Philanthropic Fund
David Family Fund of UJC
William R. & Goldie R. David Memorial Fund
The Diamonstein Family Charitable Fund
The Rona M. & Erwin B. Drucker Charitable Trust Fund
The Wendy C. Drucker Family Foundation
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The Norma G. Frank Donor-Advised Fund
Glasofer Donor-Advised Fund
The William M. & Gloria E. Goldsmith Philanthropic Fund (#73)
The William M. & Gloria E. Goldsmith Philanthropic Fund (#74)
Goldstein/Comess/Benbassat Philanthropic Fund
Goldstein Family Philanthropic Fund
The Barbara & Ralph Goldstein Charitable Fund
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The Karlin Family Fund
Kanter Family Fund
The Kostiner Family Donor-Advised Fund
The Roy & Elizabeth Lasris Charitable Fund
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William T. & Joanne K. Roos Philanthropic Fund
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Edward & Jody Sarfan Philanthropic Fund
Sarfan/Gary S. & William M. Nachman Philanthropic Fund
Scott Wolf Family Fund
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you are impacting our future

Through the UJCVP Endowment, generous donors create Jewish tomorrows for the Virginia Peninsula community.

A Legacy is Forever: Create Yours Today

jewishpeninsula.org/legacy

The UJCVP Endowment is an independent tax exempt public charity, separate from Jewish Peninsula.











10

Holocaust survivors and generational surviving families remembered their loved ones by lighting candles in their memory at our Yom HaShoah Commemoration.

300

call were made to personally thank donors for their generosity.













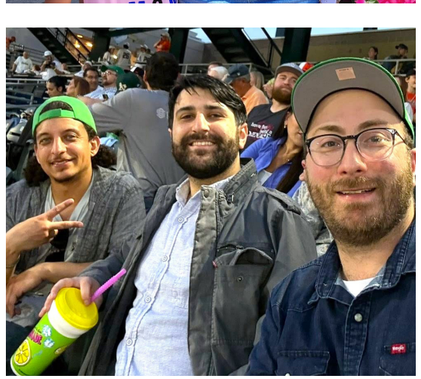

120

guests celebrated our proudest achievements at the J Annual Meeting.















$160,000

technology grant from the Weinberg Foundation brought enhanced Wi-Fi, an upgraded audio-visual system and a brand-new video wall to our atrium.



past events 2025-2026