



United Jewish
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your impact



UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITY
OF THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA
IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

thanks from the board



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OUR MISSION

The UJCVP 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,

As we welcome the year 5785, we want to express our deep gratitude for your unwavering support, trust and partnership with the United Jewish Community of the Virginia Peninsula over the past year.

This year has been challenging, as we faced the turmoil of war in Israel and the alarming rise of antisemitism at home. In such uncertain times, it's easy to feel isolated and overwhelmed. But, within our Jewish community, we are not just individuals but a united force, strengthened by our rich history, culture, and traditions. We are committed to uplifting and empowering communities worldwide, believing that together, we can achieve far more than we ever could alone.

The distressing events of the past year have underscored the critical importance of our community and the power of our collective impact. Despite all the challenges, the UJCVP has displayed remarkable resilience and determination. Together, hundreds of community members supported our Annual Campaign and our Israel Crisis Relief Fund, raising over \$1.5 million – a truly extraordinary achievement.

These funds are making a profound difference, addressing urgent humanitarian needs both locally and globally. They support Jews on the Virginia Peninsula, in Israel, and worldwide; engage our youth; assist those in need; build Jewish identity; educate the next generation; and foster meaningful connections.

We encourage you to read through this impact report, which highlights the many challenges we faced this past year and the community-building work that continues in response. Despite adversity, we remain steadfast in our mission to promote a vibrant and evolving Jewish community where everyone is welcome.

As we begin implementing our Peninsula 2030: Forward Together Strategic Plan, we recognize that we stand at a pivotal moment with boundless potential for growth and innovation. Our priorities will be to build on our foundation, address our challenges, and grow the resources needed to sustain our community.

The following pages illustrate how your generous contributions are being used to help, support, and grow our community. With your continued support, we will carry this momentum into the new year. Let us continue to work together, ensuring that our Jewish community thrives for generations to come.

Steven Marks

Steven Marks
President



Eric Maurer

Eric Maurer
Chief Executive Officer



impact at a glance



\$1,500,000

raised through gifts to the Annual Campaign, Israel Crisis Fund, and Ukraine Relief Fund



853

households engaged with the UJC by supporting our causes and attending events



83

wonderful years serving the Virginia Peninsula



91%

of Annual Campaign donors continue to give year after year



15

middle and high school students received awards for participating in the Holocaust Writing & Arts Competition



247

rides have been provided for local seniors to attend Grand Club and other events



112

students played, learned, and grew at the Sarfan Early Childhood Center last year



UJC  P



you are

nurturing

Jewish life, education
and values

There's no doubt that it has been a challenging year for the Jewish community, with rising hate making it more important than ever to come together in joy. Thanks to a generous grant made possible by the JCC Association of North America, and in partnership with Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, we were able to create a memorable nighttime program, *Together We Shine: Community Havdalah Under the Stars* at the Virginia Living Museum.

"It was a wonderful evening. I enjoyed seeing such a traditional Jewish event take place in a very secular space. Seeing so many people of our faith from multiple congregations and generations made it very special. Touring the museum was a bonus," shared Leslie Borwick, a member of Temple Sinai.

Community members had the opportunity to craft their own Havdalah kits and enjoy treats before participating in an uplifting Havdalah service led by Jonathan Rathsam, Cantor of Congregation Emet V'Or. The camaraderie and joy were felt by all in attendance.

We are committed to a strong and vibrant Jewish community, one that meets the needs of Jews from all backgrounds and levels of observance.

96%

of PJ Library parents say the program supports family conversations about Jewish traditions, values and/or customs.

How you are nurturing Jewish life:

- 15,029 PJ Library and PJ Our Way books have continued to deliver joy to local families since the program began on the Peninsula in 2014.
- 19 events targeted our 20/30s Young Adult group, with attendance from over 50 individuals.
- 140 runners of all levels laced up for the 38th annual Sarfan Center 5K race.
- The Pearl Society Women's Giving Circle volunteers baked 730 challahs.
- 400 hamentaschen, 800 latkes and 288 donuts were enjoyed during Purim and Hanukkah celebrations.
- 21 students, ranging in age from third grade to adults, have refined their Hebrew reading skills.



you are securing our community

Jewish institutions across the U.S. have tightened security measures as a response to an increase in antisemitism since the attack on Israel by Hamas on October 7. Because those measures have come at a great financial cost to the community, the UJC has been working to identify outside funding to help offset those costs.

The UJCVP was awarded a \$50,000 security grant from the Tepper Foundation that was dispersed to our partner synagogues to hire security personnel.

"The security services that Temple Beth El was able to secure as a result of the UJCVP is incalculable and invaluable to the safety and security of the congregation," stated Carl Devore, Chair of the Safety and Security Committee of Temple Beth El of Williamsburg. "Thank you for your support of the safety and security of TBE, its staff and congregants."

This grant is in addition to the UJC's ongoing partnership with the Secure Community Network (SCN), through which we monitor and improve the security posture of our community, as well as offer training programs and safety assessments for Jewish organizations on the Peninsula, free of charge.

Since the inception of our Secure Community Initiative, we have assisted our synagogues and Jewish organizations in acquiring more than \$1,000,000 in federal, state and private grants to bolster security posture.

\$50,000
in grant money was
dispersed by the UJCVP
to local synagogues to
hire security personnel.

How you are building a strong community:

- The UJCVP is the first faith-based organization in Newport News to partner with the police department to integrate the FUSUS system, allowing law enforcement to monitor live video feeds in the event of an emergency.
- 41 cameras were added to the UJC campus as part of a comprehensive project to upgrade and centralize our video surveillance system.
- 193 community members completed a security training course through our regional security advisor, increasing their personal confidence, preparedness, and resilience in the event of an emergency.
- Our regional security advisor conducted 43 meetings with law enforcement and 6 assessments in the community.
- 49 campus law enforcement personnel participated in a Virginia roundtable discussion to examine the threats and security concerns Jewish students faced on college campuses in the spring and identified best practice strategies when school resumes in the fall.



you are
caring
for those in need

The Jewish Family Services Hanukkah program, started in 1990, has been a cherished tradition ever since. Now, each year, the giant Mitzvah Menorah becomes a centerpiece in the UJC lobby, serving as a beacon of generosity. The dreidel-shaped gift tags quickly disappear as our community steps forward to help families in need.

Libby Batten, Director of JFS, reflects, "It's overwhelming to see the look of appreciation and excitement from the families as they receive gifts for their children."

"Having JFS and the UJC was a bright spot for our family. They helped provide Hanukkah gifts, necessary clothing, school supplies, and even a bit of fun - things we would otherwise have stressed over, knowing we couldn't afford them," shares a local family. "Now we're in a position to pay it forward and support the UJC and JFS programs."

Your generous support of the Hanukkah program, food pantry and other JFS services creates a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve and on the volunteers who make it possible. Thank you!

You are helping
families in need
locally and around
the world.

10
local children made
cherished memories at
Jewish Day and Overnight
Experiences, made possible
through grants and
scholarships.

How you are caring for our community:

- 30 individuals facing diverse challenges - hunger, financial emergencies, unemployment, housing, instability at home, and growing concerns with physical or mental health - received case management through our JFS office, where we serve as committed partners in navigating the resources available to them.
- It was a joyous Hanukkah with more than 120 gifts and 70 gift cards distributed to local children and teens in need.
- Grand Club seniors enjoyed 1,146 delicious and nutritious meals, fueling their bingo and Mahjong games.
- 72 Rosh Hashanah and Passover holiday gift bags were delivered to homebound seniors, ensuring that everyone can celebrate the joy and traditions of Jewish holidays.
- 15 individuals received food assistance through our JFS food pantry, ensuring that the dietary needs of community members are met with cultural competency, sensitivity, and inclusivity.



you are

standing up for Israel

On October 7th, Jewish communities around the world awoke with horror and disbelief as we learned that terrorists from Gaza had infiltrated Israel. More than 1,200 innocent Israelis lost their lives, 240 Israelis and people of other nationalities were abducted and taken hostage to Gaza, and nearly 2,000 people were wounded during the brutal terror attacks. Our hearts were shattered. From grief and anger emerged a shared determination to ensure our brothers and sisters in Israel could feel the strength, warmth, and unwavering support of their Jewish family as they struggled to rebuild their lives.

Immediately after the attack, the UJCVP mobilized to raise funds for those impacted and displaced, hosted multiple community-building and educational events supporting Israel, and shared resources with our local law enforcement, elected officials, K-12 schools and local universities.

We will continue to work passionately to support Israel.

The distressing events of the past year underscore the critical importance of our community and the power of our collective impact.

\$833M

raised collectively by the UJCVP and other Jewish Federations throughout North America and allocated to 520 Israeli NGOs, sheltering 37,000 evacuees, serving 1.2M hot meals and providing medical equipment to 44 hospitals.

How you are standing up for Israel:

- 500 community members, civic and faith leaders, and neighbors came together in the immediate aftermath of October 7 for an evening of prayer, song and solidarity.
- 1 packed bus traveled to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to participate in the national March for Israel.
- Rabbi Hagai Lober, father of a fallen IDF soldier in Gaza, traveled 6,048 miles to Virginia to share his powerful theater show about bereavement, courage and hope in Israel.
- 292 local donors stepped up and generously supported our Israel Crisis Fund.
- 20 Jewish community leaders successfully urged Newport News City Council to refrain from considering an anti-Israel resolution.
- 1,800 blue ribbons for Israel were distributed to show solidarity for the safe return of the hostages.



This summer, campers at Camp Chaverim had the exciting opportunity to engage in meaningful watershed educational experiences, both on land and water, through a new partnership with The Mariners' Museum.

Campers participated in kayaking and nature-based activities, including an introduction to paddling and water safety, understanding various habitats and biodiversity, and exploring the impacts of human behavior on the health and sustainability of ecological systems.

"We raced the big kayaks back to the dock! I liked looking at nature, looking in the water for fish, and seeing a great blue heron." - Piper L., age 6

These programs broadened the campers' exposure to outdoor experiences, enhanced their understanding of global maritime culture and history, and provided environmental conservation education and recreational opportunities. All of this was made possible because of your generous support.

"We feel so fortunate to have discovered Camp Chaverim. That our son has such a safe, inclusive, action-packed, and positive place to spend his summers is a powerful blessing."

-KRISTEN & JASON H.

134

campers made friends,
played and learned at Camp
Chaverim this summer

How you are inspiring
memories that will
last a lifetime:

- 7 counselors grew up on the UJC campus, attending preschool, camp, or both.
- 4 Jewish overnight camps (Blue Star, Camp Wise, Capital Camps and Sababa Beach Camps) hosted Peninsula kids this summer.
- 9 medals were awarded to our four Team Virginia Peninsula athletes at the 2024 JCC Maccabi Games in Houston, Texas.
- More than 75 community members participated in our first annual Art Week at the UJC, attending an event, class, or just stopping by to view the 125 art pieces in the Camp Chaverim Art Gallery.
- 98 kids improved their water skills this summer with our UJC swim lesson instructors.

you are
inspiring
memories that will
last a lifetime



you are

combating antisemitism and hate

Antisemitic incidents across the country are at an all-time high. In Virginia, antisemitic incidents rose by a staggering 223% from 2022-2023. Working with our regional partners, the UJCVP is a central hub for communal efforts to respond to the rise in antisemitism by proactively preparing for, and immediately responding to, incidents. While we cannot completely eradicate antisemitism, we can empower and support the Virginia Peninsula Jewish community with clear and effective resources, tools, and capabilities that foster action against antisemitism.

We're educating young people - and the academic institutions that serve them - about antisemitism, Jewish history, and Jewish life to ensure that they both can confidently respond to acts of hate.

Our vision is one where all Jewish people on the Virginia Peninsula, of all ages, can proudly celebrate their religion, heritage, and culture safely and securely.

"The Holocaust Writing and Art Competition at the UJC, and the education and knowledge the children gain from it, is one of the best ways to fight against ignorance and hatred of the Jewish community and allow for a more unified and harmonious world for all religions and nationalities."

-MARLEY KEEFER

6

schools participated in our annual Yom Hashoah Holocaust Writing and Arts Competition. Teaching tolerance to students enables them to confront antisemitism, cruelty, bigotry and other current injustices.

How you are combatting antisemitism and hate:

- Members from the Peninsula joined with more than 225 Jews from across the Commonwealth on Jewish Advocacy Day to lobby our representatives, who successfully passed legislation that will safeguard Virginia's residents from unlawful discrimination, hate crimes, and antisemitism.
- The UJCVP launched a resource guide with educational tools and opportunities to act so that community members are motivated and equipped to stand up and fight back against antisemitism.
- 31 Jewish teens and parents were taught tools to respond effectively and proactively to antisemitism through the ADL's *Words to Action* workshop.
- Williamsburg-James City County schools received "No Place for Hate" designation at all 16 of their schools, working in partnership with the UJCVP and the ADL.



you are

guiding curious young minds

Our Sarfan Early Childhood Center is buzzing with excitement thanks to the addition of our new educational bee hut, where children can safely observe and learn about the vital role bees play in our ecosystem.

Alongside this, our new Sarfan Center garden beds offer a hands-on experience in growing and nurturing plants, teaching the importance of sustainability and healthy eating.

"Having the bee sanctuary and the garden at the preschool has been so beneficial to our kids and their learning experiences," said Sarfan Center teacher, Corin Keller.

"Our students were so excited to grow our vegetables from seeds, water them, watch them grow and eventually share their kindness by giving them to people in need."

These unique features not only enrich our curriculum but also instill a sense of responsibility and wonder in our young learners. We are committed to creating an environment where children can explore nature up close and develop a lifelong appreciation for the world around them. This year, our center has truly blossomed into a vibrant space for early childhood education.

Early childhood experiences lay the foundation for a lifetime.

76%

of our 2024-2025 Sarfan Center Pre-K students started out in our Infant/Toddler program

How you are guiding curious young minds:

- 154 Shabbat Bags went home this school year. Through our Shabbat Bags, families get to explore celebrating Shabbat together in a unique and meaningful way.
- 175 Grandparents and Grand-friends attended our annual Grandparents Day celebration, one of our biggest early childhood events, dedicated to honoring the roles grandparents play in our lives.
- \$7,700 raised from our Sarfan Center 5K race was used to enhance our nature-based curriculum, our outdoor nature spaces, and programming.
- 6 garden beds were built specifically for our Sarfan Early Childhood Center as part of our nature-based programming. Teachers and students work together to maintain, plant, and harvest. The food that is harvested is shared and often used as a snack option for our classrooms.
- 20 Pre-K students graduated from our program and are enrolled in kindergarten locally.



The Annual Campaign
is the lifeblood of our
UJCVP 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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contribution \$1,800) | LOJE - Lion of Judah Endowment | PACE - Perpetual Annual
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thank
you
for your support

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



"Having been members of the local Jewish community for 85 years, we have a unique perspective. The UJCVP is very important because it ensures the continuation of the Jewish community for future generations, and we have seen how important this is for our survival as a Jewish people."

-BOBBI & RALPH GOLDSTEIN

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David Sherman PACE
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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

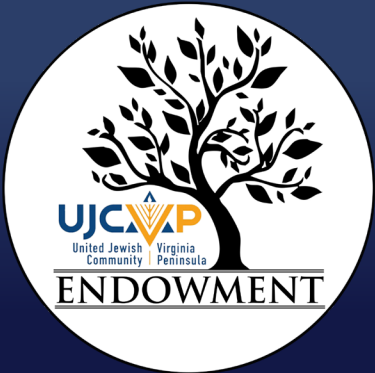
DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

The Bagel-Legum Philanthropic Fund
The Blechman-David Foundation
Philanthropic Fund
Harold "Dooley" Cohen, Jeanne S. Cohen, and Hilda
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Philanthropic Fund (#73)
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Goldstein/Comess/Benbassat Philanthropic
Fund
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The Barbara & Ralph Goldstein Charitable
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William T. & Joanne K. Roos Philanthropic Fund
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Rosenbaum-Lautman Children's Fund
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you are
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our future

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

The UJCVP Endowment is an
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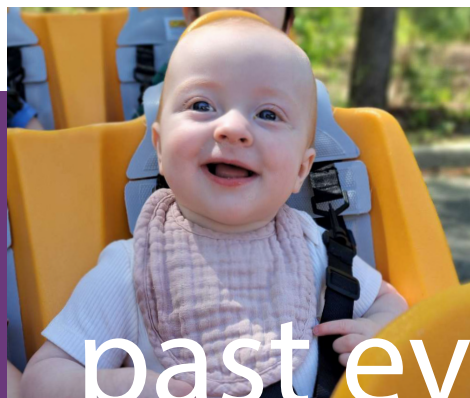


The 1st
Annual Barbara
Rosenbaum Young
Leadership Award
invests in the growth of
emerging leaders.

33
community members from
the Peninsula attended
Jewish Advocacy Day in
Richmond, VA.



10
Holocaust survivors and
survivor families lit
candles at the Yom
Hashoah Remembrance
Ceremony.



577
calls were made to
personally thank donors.



past events
2023-2024