



Today we share a brief overview of the Rochester Jewish community's history, information about several local Jewish organizations, some demographic information and the data on antisemitism locally.

We encourage you to watch the video *[The Disturbing Resilience of Antisemitism](#)* last year by the Levine Center To End Hate. This extraordinary program provides a concise analysis of how antisemitism has survived and thrived for thousands of years and deepens your understanding about the lived realities and challenges facing the Jewish people today.

In our final day of "Shine a Light" we thank you for taking the time learn with us. We hope that we have helped to build our community's understanding and awareness of antisemitism in the United States and around the world. Hatred of Jews is not solely a Jewish problem – it is the truly the hatred of difference and the hatred of humanity. We must stand against antisemitism and all forms of hate to protect freedom and dignity for all.

ROCHESTER JEWISH HISTORY

Some interesting early history:

- 1830s/1840s: The first Jew settled in Rochester.
- 1840s: Several Jewish families arrived and settled – they were clothiers.
- 1848: The first synagogue, Congregation B'rith Kodesh, was formed on North Clinton Ave. (located today on Elmwood Ave).
- 1870: The Jewish population grew significantly, becoming the fourth largest minority in Rochester.
- Through the 19th century the Joseph/Clinton area was home to successive waves of immigrants from Ireland, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, and other European countries.
- 1900s-1960s: Most Jews lived in the Joseph Avenue area where butcher shops, bakeries and other Jewish businesses thrived.
- In 1907 the Jewish Young Men's Association was formed from the Judean Club at 3 Franklin Square in downtown Rochester. Later in 1907 a Jewish Young Women's Association was founded. In 1936, the combined JYM&WA opened at 380 Andrews Street. Renamed the Jewish Community Center of Greater Rochester, Inc., in 1973 it moved to 1200 Edgewood Avenue in Brighton.
- Jewish migration from the crowded Joseph Avenue neighborhood began in the early twentieth century and continued throughout the early and mid-20th century as Jews settled in suburbs like Irondequoit and Brighton
- In the 1940s, 50's and 60s, Holocaust survivors and their families began to settle in Rochester.
- 1970 through 1990s saw several waves of families arriving in Rochester from the former Soviet Union

READ: *City of Refuge: The Beginning of Rochester's Jewish Community*

READ: *Historic Brighton* Newsletter and Journal. Spring 2020

WHERE DOES THE ROCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY LIVE TODAY?

Although many assume that the Rochester Jewish community now lives in Brighton, based upon the data collected in the 2019 Every Voice Counts survey, less than half our community's Jews live in Brighton. Jews live across all parts of Rochester:

- Brighton - 45%
- Pittsford - 19%
- Collar Communities (i.e. Webster, Penfield, Fairport, Perinton, Victor, Mendon, Honeoye Falls, Rush, Henrietta) - 18%
- Rest of the City (i.e. Rochester, Irondequoit, and Greece) - 13%
- Rest of the Region - 5%

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY

One of the core Jewish values is "*tikkun olam*", helping to repair the world by doing "*tzedakah*" or righteous deeds. Rochester is home to many Jewish non-profit organizations that work to enrich the lives of our Jewish community members, but impact, service, and support the entire community, Jews and non-Jewish.

Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester has as its mission to build a strong Jewish community in Rochester, Israel and worldwide through philanthropy, engagement, education and advocacy.

Levine Center to End Hate, a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, seeks to unite the greater Rochester community in overcoming hate through education, dialogue and positive action. Programs have included: Asian Matters: Stating with Rochester's Asian American Community, Generating Justice: Co-Creating Our Anti-Racist Future and Brave Spaces 2021: Rochester's 2nd Annual Summit to End Hate, A Tale of Two Cities: Redlining and Racist Policies in Rochester, NY.

Jewish Family Services – serving Jewish and non-Jewish individuals, families and communities in our community by providing a wide array of programs and services built upon the traditions of dignity, kindness and *tikkun olam* – improving the world. Its programs include:

- **Brighton Food Cupboard** prevents and reduces hunger and food insecurity in the community, allowing clients to shop for food and have it delivered to their homes.
- **Brighton Your Wardrobe** provides free clothing to families in the Brighton school district and clients of Jewish Family Services unable to afford clothing for daily living as a result of the impact of suburban poverty.
- **Pencils and Papers** provides free school supplies to teachers in high poverty areas of Rochester. Teachers can shop twice a year and receive an estimated \$800 worth of school supplies each time.

Jewish Community Center ("JCC") – Open to all in the community, the JCC provides programming for all ages -- from babies to seniors, including fitness and aquatics, childcare, theater, cultural programming, and summer camps.

WATCH: [JCC 2020 Member Stories](#)

[Jewish Senior Life](#) – a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), offering all levels of senior care from independent living to skilled nursing care on a single campus.

[Hillel Community Day School](#) – an egalitarian, private and pluralistic Jewish day school, offering a full-day program for all students from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

[National Council of Jewish Women – Rochester Chapter](#) - a social action group striving for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.

SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE ROCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY

Although Rochester is a comfortable Jewish community for many, it has not been without antisemitic incidents. Swastikas have been carved into the day school, on the walls of the yeshiva, the bleachers at Brighton High School, and on the desks of other public schools. Headstones at the Jewish cemetery have been uprooted and vandalized. Jewish athletes participating in their school's sporting events have been subjected to antisemitic slurs. During the 2021 high holidays, a congregant was confronted with hateful antisemitic rhetoric on the sidewalk by the synagogue; although he was not physically assaulted the aggressor approached him in a threatening manner. Because of these and national incidents, the Rochester Jewish community has made safety and security a top priority.

READ: [Jewish community focusing on security following national anti-semitic attacks](#)

READ: [A Campaign for Community Security](#)

DEEPER DIVES

WATCH: [“The Disturbing Resilience of Antisemitism”](#) with Oren Jacobson (1:21.38)

WATCH: [Virtual Chanukah Journey Through Israel](#). (47:56) International March of the Living with Julian Resnick (Israeli tour guide and former Judaic specialist and Camp Seneca Lake)

READ: [Rochester, Refugees and the Jewish Community 1930-1950](#)

READ: [City of Refuge: The Beginning of Rochester's Jewish Community](#)

READ: [A History of the Jews of Rochester](#)

READ: [A Piece of Jewish History](#)

WATCH and READ: [The Soviet Jewry Movement in America](#). My Jewish Learning.

ACT

Stand with the Jewish community against hate and antisemitism.

PARTICIPATE: [The Blue Light Project](#). Stand against hate and “Shine a Light on Antisemitism” by replacing a light outside of your home or business with a blue light or placing a lamp with a blue light in your window from December through April 26, 2023 (Yom

Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day). This project is a collaboration between the Jewish Federation and ROC Against Antisemitism.

The lightbulbs will be available for pick-up at the Louis S. Wolk Jewish Community Center.

The blue light bulbs have been made available through the generosity of **Kovalsky-Carr Electric Supply** and have been sourced from the electrical supply business of Holocaust Survivor, Herb Gilden. Learn about his story here: [The Starfish](#).

DISPLAY AND SHARE: Place a paper menorah in your window during the 8 nights of Chanukah.