



**Jewish Federation**  
of Reading/Berks

**2025**

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Presenting a year of growth, innovation, and impact. This annual report encapsulates our journey, milestones achieved, & aspirations for a brighter, more sustainable future.*

Prepared By  
**Richard Bradbury**  
Development Director



# Our Mission



To create a vibrant, healthy Jewish community by strengthening our connections, inspiring Jewish identity, providing for those in need and promoting greater understanding.

*At home and throughout the world, these **Core Values** guide Federation's programs and services to our Jewish community.*



## **Tzedakah - Charity and Social Justice**

- Jewish Family Service
- Jewish Community Relations



## **Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World**

- Bi-monthly Food Pantries open to the entire Berks County community



## **Kehilah - Building Community**

- Jewish holiday community celebrations
- Collaborating with local synagogues



## **Torah - Jewish Learning**

- Adult and youth programming based on Jewish values



# A message from our CEO

Dear Friends,

Contemplating 2025 and anticipating a continued enthusiastic 2026, we are deeply inspired by the shared purpose that defines our community. This year, has demonstrated that together we can build a stronger, more affirming Jewish life in Berks County and beyond.

In times of global and local challenge, our Federation remains resolute in defending Jewish dignity, supporting those in need, and strengthening the fabric that binds us—while staying attentive to the realities unfolding in Israel and around the world. Your unwavering support empowers every program, service, and initiative that keeps our community resilient.

To guide our work in the coming year, we are centering on our core commitments to putting values into action. Our focus is to:

🤝 Unite our Jewish community - Bridge gaps across generations, denominations, and backgrounds, and bringing our unaffiliated into the community with open arms. We are working to create more meaningful, shared experiences through learning, service, and celebration—that deepen connection.

🛡️ Combat antisemitism and hatred in all its forms - Strengthen education, awareness, and advocacy through community outreach to schools, businesses, and partner organizations to counter antisemitism wherever it appears. We stand in solidarity with other communities facing discrimination, building a broader culture of safety and respect for all.

🔒 Increase security and safety - Invest in security upgrades, consistent training and preparedness for our entire Jewish community. We are collaborating with security professionals to be proactive in protecting our community while preserving an open, welcoming environment.

We continue to dedicate ourselves to providing robust programs and opportunities for Jewish education for all ages. We host renowned speakers from all over the world that inform and inspire, opening our minds to new ideas based in traditional Jewish concepts. We care for the vulnerable and strengthen local and global Jewish connectedness through emergency assistance, food security, and essential services. We deepen ties with local community partners and Israeli humanitarian agencies through shared values, mutual support, and compassionate action.

We appreciate our community's care which has shone in times of crisis—locally, nationally, and globally—reminding us that solidarity and core beliefs are our strongest resources. Please continue to support our work with your gifts of time, talent and treasure which enable fun and educational events, community outreach, and support for those facing hardship. Share your ideas about what you would like to see from YOUR Federation. Join a committee. Volunteer. Donate much needed financial resources.

Thank you for your partnership to make an enduring difference. As we continue through 2026, we are invigorated by the strength of our shared commitment and what we will accomplish together. Thank you for helping us create a more connected, more just, and safer world for Jewish life—and for all communities.

L'Shalom,

Cynthia Gerber Tomlinson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



# Meet Our Team



**CINDY GERBER TOMLINSON**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
BEGINNING AUGUST 2025



**ADI SHALEV SMITHEMAN**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
BEGINNING DECEMBER 2025



**CAROLE ROBINSON**  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE  
DIRECTOR



**RICHARD BRADBURY**  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
BEGINNING MAY 2025



**SARI INCLEDON**  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE  
COORDINATOR



**MARGO LEVIN**  
JEWISH COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS & PROGRAMMING



**AMANDA WERTZ**  
OFFICE MANAGER

- **MARK NEMIROW** - SHALOM
- **IRENE MOUHLIZIS** - BOOKKEEPER
- **PETER ALVAREZ** - MAINTENANCE
- **BRIAN YAFFEE** - WEBSITE



**VICKI HLLER GRAFF**  
PREVIOUS PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
END TERM DECEMBER 2025



# Finance

How your financial support makes a difference in our community



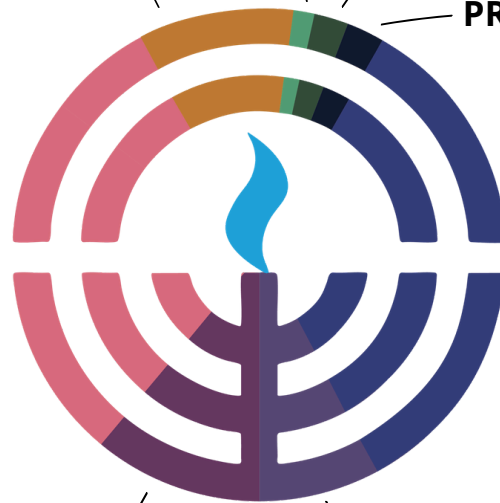
**JEWISH EDUCATION**  
10.38%

**JCRC**  
0.22%

**TECHNOLOGY**  
1.96%

**PRINTING/ADVERTISING**  
2.87%

**JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE**  
27.5%



**ADULT & YOUTH PROGRAMMING**  
38.26%



**FUNDRAISING**  
15.95%

**ISRAEL & OVERSEAS**  
2.86%



## 2025 Total Revenue:



Annual Campaign: \$464,624  
 Jewish Family Service: \$36,791  
 JCC Membership: \$22,703  
 Honorariums/Memorials: \$11,248  
 Shalom Income: \$14,764

United Way: \$77,654  
 Grants Received: \$126,977  
 Program Income: \$16,115  
 Other Income: \$83,310  
**Total: \$854,186**

# 2025 Volunteers

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait  
a single moment before starting to improve the world.”  
– Anne Frank

***Many thanks to those who have offered their gifts of time  
and talent to help make our Berks County community a better place.***

Allison Althouse  
Mary Anne Avins  
Rev. Jayme Babczak  
Cindy Balchunas  
Eric Blackerby  
Shirley Blackerby  
Sheila Bornstein  
Scott Bram  
Paula Bub  
Ivan Bub  
Rachel Canar  
Cindy Chronister  
Judy Copeland  
Phyllis Dessel  
Russell Farbiarz  
Michael Farrara  
Sue Farrara  
Marc Filstein  
Sam Flamholz  
Sarah Flamholz  
Raymond Gehring  
Jeff Gernsheimer  
Sharon Gernsheimer  
Anzie Golden  
Dn. Deborah Graf  
Patty Hartman  
Emily Hollinger

Amanda Hornberger  
Rev. Megan Huesgen  
Katie Huey  
Aidan Incledon  
John Incledon  
Pete Jacobson  
Wayne Johns  
Arlene Johns  
Dorie Karp  
Nancy Knoblauch  
Jennifer Koosed  
Dana Kramaroff  
Michelle Leisawitz  
Jessica Leisawitz  
Sid Lempiner  
Lisa Levine  
Lori Linton  
Rabbi Yosef Lipsker  
Lisa Lozar  
John Lozar  
David McConnell  
Rabbi Brian Michelson  
Mike Miller  
Paul Mintz  
Mary Neville  
Annette Peppard

Carol Perlmutter  
Gordon Perlmutter\*  
Rabbi Ted Prosnitz  
Jennafer Reilly  
Dan Reilly  
David Richie  
Mike Robinson  
Nancy Russo  
Mike Schein  
Robert Schneier  
Paul Schwartz  
Ellen Schwartz  
Ellen Schwickrath  
Russ Shanahan  
Lila Shapiro  
Jan Simon  
Brad Snyder  
Vicky Sokoloff  
Sharon Syret  
Gail Tomrell  
Oleg Umanov  
Joan Walden  
Michael Warshaw  
Phyllis Warshaw  
Elana Weinblatt  
Andy Wernick  
Corinne Wernick  
Amy Zitelman

***Special Thanks to Antanavage Farbiarz PLLC, Bluestone Family & Cosmetic  
Dental, DoubleTree By Hilton Hotel Reading and Sweet Street Desserts  
for their continued in-kind support.***



# Jewish Family Service



Jewish Family Service (JFS) is an integral part of the Federation providing human services for the entire community. Serving all age groups, it is dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the quality of individual and family life in the Jewish community through outreach, counseling, emergency financial assistance, information and referral.

## 2025 Milestones

Ways in which Jewish Family Service aids their clients in need:

Rent

Grocery Cards

Utilities

Medical Bills

Transportation

Home & Hospital Visits

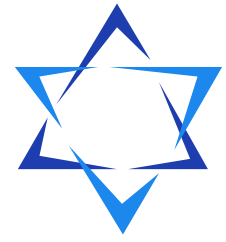
Counseling

- Keeping our seniors engaged with
  - Two monthly Friendship Circle programs.
  - Outreach to more than 100 community members for the Jewish holidays.
  - Special Passover Seder and Rosh Hashanah services.
- Serving the Greater Reading Community with:
  - Two monthly Food Pantries partnering with Helping Harvest:
    - 302,000 lbs of food distributed in 2025
    - served 8,468 people in 2,056 households
    - 11% growth in number of clients served from 2024
- In partnership with Senator Judy Schwank and the PA Department of Banking & Securities, JFS presented Scam Jam, a program empowering members to recognize and avoid scams.
- JFS Emergency Thanksgiving Food Drive raised \$15,000.00
- Provided outreach services to more than 200 community members through:
  - Information and referrals on government benefits and community services
  - Caregiving Information and Housing Options
  - Counseling
  - Home and hospital visits



# Programming

## Jewish-Israeli Culture & Engagement



Federation offers a variety of programming, strengthening both our Jewish identities as well as our community connections. We strive to inspire our Jewish community by providing something for all ages, from toddlers to adults. Federation also prides itself on collaborating with our three community synagogues as well as other non-Jewish organizations throughout Berks County.

### 2025 Milestones

#### Youth and Family Programming:

- Jewish Federation doubled PJ Library and PJ Our Way subscriptions and developed youth and family programming with Berks County Libraries.
- JFR youth & families participated in MLK Day of Service at Immanuel UCC.
- Bus trips to Jewish Heritage Night at the Philly 76ers, to watch Israeli forward, Tai Baribo, play for the Philadelphia Union and to NYC for *Anne Frank, The Exhibition*.
- Attended theatre productions of *The Producers*, *Parade* and *Our Class*, highlighting Jewish themes and stories.

#### Adult Programming:

- Inspiring educational programs including Great Decisions, Literatour Berks (10 authors), Reading Jewish Film Series, Tech Tuesdays, and Noontime Knowledge.
- Social programming including Happy Hours, ROMEO (retired old men eating out), MahJong and Movie Mondays.
- 19th Annual Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture featuring guest speaker Boaz Dvir, and the 45th Annual Leo Camp Memorial Lecture featuring former U.S. Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer. Both events held on the campus of Albright College.

#### Commemorations and Connections with Israel:

- Yom HaShoah Memorial Service at the JCC featuring Cindy Chronister sharing her family's story of survival.
- Provided meaningful engagement through participation in the Soldiers In Uniform program, Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAztmaut and films such as October 8th.
- In-person and streamed programs with guests speakers, Dani Wassner (JFNA), Avi Melamed (and Paul Staniland, PhD (University of Chicago)).
- Kristallnacht Commemoration at Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading.



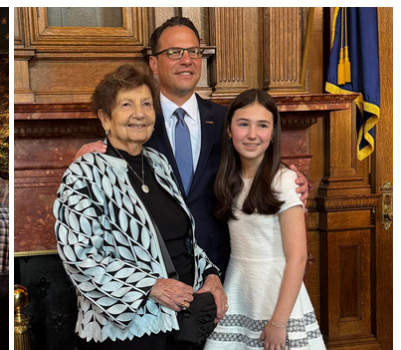
# Jewish Community Relations



Our Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) continues to fight for social justice and combat antisemitism in Berks County and beyond. Building relationships with other local non-profits and governmental bodies, JCRC works to promote unity within our community.

## 2025 Milestones

- JCRC meets regularly as part of the Greater Reading Unity Coalition made up of JFR, NAACP, Centro Hispano, the Islamic Center of Reading, Bring the Change, The Inter-faith Ministry of Alvernia University and the LGBT Center.
- Represents Jewish Federation at the Reading Diversity Festival.
- Participated in and helped organize a Kristallnacht Circle of Light and service at Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Reading.
- Represents Federation as a member of the PA Jewish Coalition Committee with Governor Josh Shapiro.
- JCRC representatives Margo Levin and Debbie Goldberg received the 2025 Culture Titans Award from Bring The Change for promoting cultural diversity and integration in Berks County.
- Organized “Shine A Light on Antisemitism” following the annual menorah lighting in Reading, inviting community members and local elected officials to educate them on rising antisemitism and how, together, we can combat it on a local level.
- Attended the National JCRC Summit at the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C.
- Annual communication with all Berks County School Districts to provide resources to raise awareness and help combat antisemitism.
- Attended NAACP gala, Harwood Institute for Public Innovation conference and Book Launch, and participated in Juneteenth Festival.



# Lakin Preschool

From January through May of 2025, our preschool offered programming for toddlers and children up to age 5. The preschool was located within Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom, and had been funded, in part, by the Federation's Edwin A. & Alma Lakin Philanthropic Fund. In June 2025, our preschool closed. Thanks to an alliance with Yocum Institute for Arts Education, an established arts-based preschool, our children were welcomed to the newly named Lakin Early Childhood Enrichment Classroom, where Jewish curriculum continues.

**2025 Highlight: Tzedakah** - monthly collection raised over \$260.00 this year. Carole Robinson facilitated an activity to demonstrate the importance of Tzedakah. Children actively participated in assembling food and snack bags for those less fortunate.



# Lakin Early Childhood Enrichment Classroom

at the Yocum Institute for Arts Education

70 years of our much beloved Lakin Preschool will live on through every new child as they build, play, sing and grow at the Lakin Early Childhood Enrichment Classroom. The Lakin Classroom has incorporated five Jewish Holidays into their curriculum: *Rosh Hashanah*, *Sukkot*, *Chanukah*, *Tu B'Shevat* and *Passover*. Teaching our traditions helps Jewish students (and their families) feel seen and understood. It also creates an early, positive introduction to Jewish life for non-Jewish students and families attending the school. Lakin's preschool's story isn't ending, it's now being written in new places, with new voices.



# FAQ'S



## -How old is the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks?

- o The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks was legally incorporated as the Jewish Federation of Reading Pennsylvania Inc in 1933, so we are having our 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday!

## -What is the primary mission of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks?

- o Serves as the planning, coordinating, and fundraising entity for the Jewish community in Greater Reading and Berks

## -Where does the money that donors contribute to the Federation actually go?

- o 96% of the funds received stay at the Federation to run our programs, employ our staff, maintain utilities, liaise with the non-Jewish community, serve the population living under the poverty line, unify individuals and families across our three congregations, and enhance the lives of the people in our Jewish Community.
- o Only 4% of the 2025 Annual Campaign dollars went to Israel.

## -What happens to the money that we send to Israel?

- o In 2025, the Federation sent a total of \$18,000 to two humanitarian non-profits in Israel: Meir Panim and Yemin Orde.

## -What are these groups and what do they do?

- o Meir Panim is dedicated to fighting poverty and providing immediate and long-term relief to vulnerable populations across Israel. Its name—which translates to "brighten faces"—reflects its mission to feed and support the needy while preserving their dignity and self-respect.
- o Yemin Orde is a youth village atop Mount Carmel in northern Israel that serves as a 24/7 safe-haven, residential high school, and home for at-risk and immigrant youth.

## -Does the JFR give money to the Israeli government?

- o No. The Federation takes no political position regarding Israel, nor does it support anything other than these two humanitarian organizations.

## -Where does the operating budget of the JFR come from?

- o The operating budget of the JFR is comprised of funds from the annual campaign, plus 4.5% of the funds held by the Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks. This income goes toward running programs, events, trips, operating JFS, and working with partner organizations through the Greater Reading Unity Coalition and local and state government.

## -What are some key accomplishments in 2025-2026?

- o First ever flag raising in City Park on Israel's Independence Day
- o Received the Commendation for Jewish History Month, Commendation and Proclamation for Israel Independence Day Yom Ha'atzmaut
- o Received the Spirit of Civility Award from Common Ground USA with our partner, Alvernia University, for our Interfaith Dialogue program
- o Had a Teen and Parent Workshop on Combatting Antisemitism facilitated by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
- o Partnered with CTeen and BBYO for teen programming
- o Established a NextGen group for young professionals
- o Provided 50+ Jewish fun, educational and cultural programs, with VIP events being the successful LeoCamp and Yashek lectures partnering with Albright College, Community Shabbat, and Special Guests from Israel, as well as the ever popular Jewish Comedians



# Advocacy and Justice in Israel

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks helps address the urgent needs of at-risk Jewish youth in Israel and around the globe, as well as food insecurity and poverty through support of two Israeli humanitarian programs.



**Yemin Orde Youth Village** was originally established as a sanctuary for orphaned youth after the Holocaust and is now a 24/7 residential school for 400 at-risk teens who experienced trauma, neglect, abandonment and/or extreme poverty during their young lives. Youth receive an education, trauma-informed therapy, Hebrew and English language support and career development skills.

**Village Way Educational Initiative** impacts 60,000 at-risk youth in 97 communities across Israel's diverse society by providing stability and care to youth struggling with uncertainty, displacement and trauma during these uncertain times. **For more information please visit [www.impact-israel.org](http://www.impact-israel.org)**



**Meir Panim** - based in Israel, Meir Panim's mission is to alleviate and diminish the harmful effects of poverty on thousands of families across Israel by supporting a range of food and social service programs aimed at helping the needy with dignity and respect, including free restaurants, meals-on-wheels, school lunch programs, prepaid food card distribution, vocational training and after-school youth clubs. **For more information on this organization, please visit [www.meir-panim.org](http://www.meir-panim.org)**



# Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading



The Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading was founded in 2023 to protect funds held at the Federation through endowments as well as philanthropic funds. The funds are currently managed by Connors Investor Services. Terms for Foundation members are 2 yrs and elections are held every March.

**Chair:** Michael Fromm

**Members:** Robert Caster

Jeff Driben

**Past Chair** Gordon Perlmutter

Andrew Wernick

## NextGen

NextGen is a network of young professionals between the ages of 25 and 45, in the Jewish community, who are looking to give back as they build connections and community. Opportunities include social events, volunteering, and networking with like-minded people.

Ready to be part of the community? email [info@jfreading.org](mailto:info@jfreading.org) or call 610-921-0624 for more information.



**JEWISH FEDERATION OF  
READING/BERKS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Officers 2025-2026**

Chairperson: Jonathan Avins  
1st Vice Chair: Jennifer Koosed  
2nd Vice Chair: Susan Wilson (ended March 2026)  
Treasurer: Paul Schwartz  
Secretary: Lisa Levine

**Board Members for 2025-2026**

Ron Berman  
Irving Ehrlich  
Russell Farbiarz  
Michael Karchevsky  
Michele Leisawitz  
Mindy McIntosh  
Galen Newman  
Leah Rotenberg  
James Rowe

**Affiliate Members 2025- 2026**

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker, Chabad Lubavitch  
Rabbi Ted Prosnitz, Keshet Zion  
Rabbi Brian Michelson, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

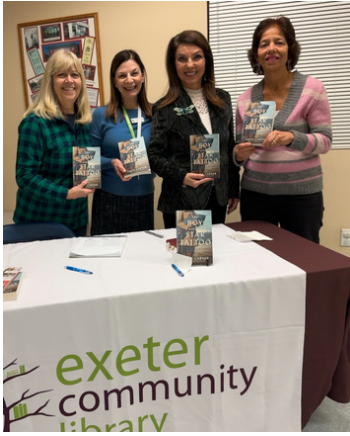
**Past Board Chairs**

Sheila Bornstein  
Robert Caster  
Haia Mazuz  
Larry Rotenberg  
Paul D. Cohn  
Alvin Katz  
Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer\*  
Michael Fromm  
Kenneth Lakin  
Gordon Perlmutter\*

Sheila Lattin  
Donald Fox  
Neal Jacobs\*  
Paul Kozloff  
Alma Lakin\*  
Victor H. Hammel  
George P. Viener  
Bernard Fromm  
David N. Farber\*  
Gerald A. Goodman\*

Benjamin Cutler\*  
Edwin Lakin\*  
Leo Camp\*  
George Eligman\*  
Norman Dunitz\*  
Max Fisher\*.

\*Deceased





**Jewish Federation**  
of Reading/Berks



ENRICHING LIVES  
מעשירים חיים



United Way of Berks County

*Honor the Past. Celebrate the Present.  
Embrace the Future.*



[www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org](http://www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org)



[info@jfreading.org](mailto:info@jfreading.org)



610-921-0624