



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 MOUCLIZIS** - BOOKKEEPER
- **PETER ALVAREZ** - MAINTENANCE
- **BRIAN YAFFEE** - WEBSITE

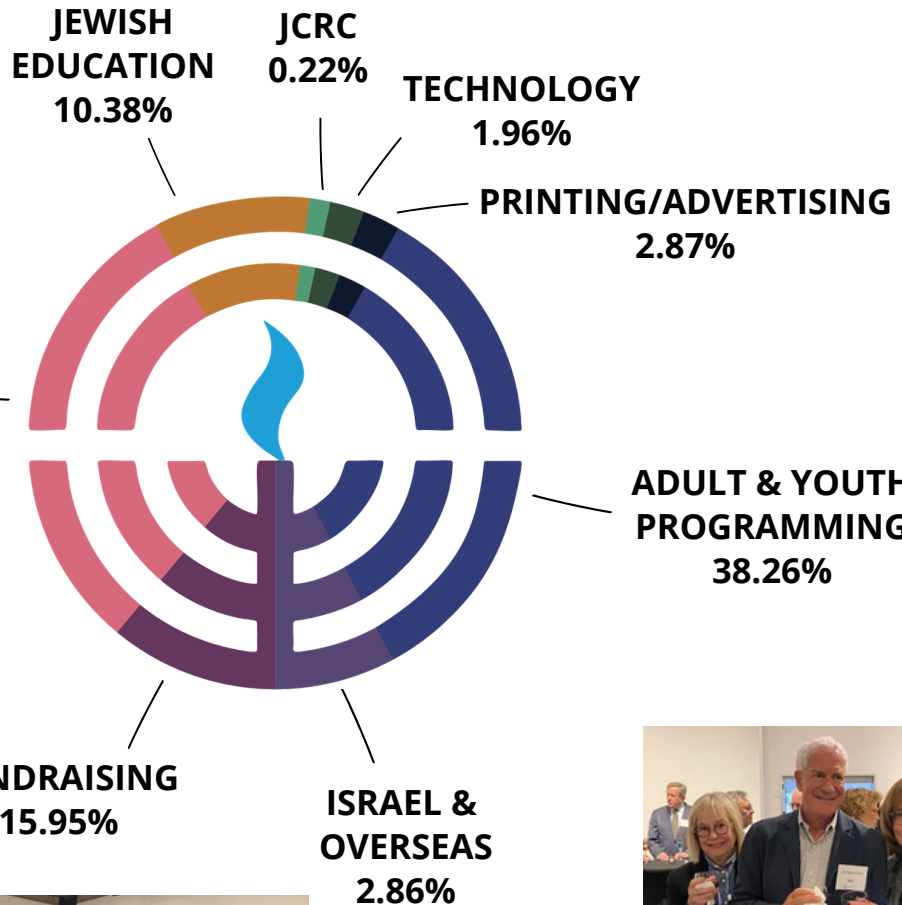


VICKI HLLER GRAFF
PREVIOUS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
END TERM DECEMBER 2025



Finance

How your financial support makes a difference in our community



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
Jeff 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

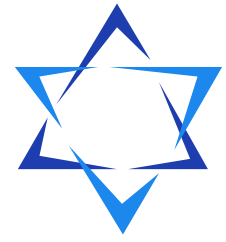
Counseling

- 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.



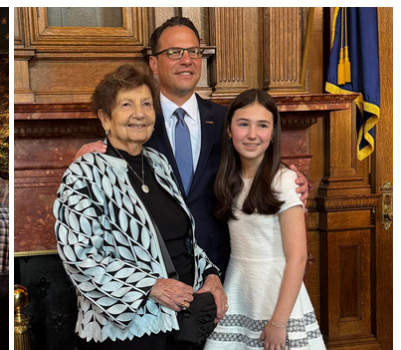
Jewish Community Relations



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 93rd 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**



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**



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 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

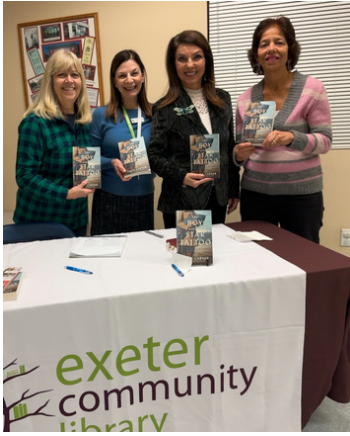
Past Board Chairs

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



info@jfreading.org



610-921-0624