



A Jewish Federation Cohort Experience for Belonging Builders & Champions |

Ohel Fellowship 2026

Charlotte NC



Douglas Greene is the Director of Jewish Community Relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, where he leads the Federation's JCRC and spearheads Outshine Hate, a comprehensive framework focused on education, advocacy, and coalition-building to counter antisemitism and strengthen civic relationships. A former secondary English educator with a specialization in Holocaust education, Douglas brings classroom expertise into the heart of communal and public-facing work,

partnering closely with K-12 school systems, higher education, civic leaders, and cultural institutions across North Carolina. Douglas is the founder and facilitator of the North Carolina Jewish Coalition, an emerging statewide model that coordinates Jewish advocacy, education, and incident response. He works extensively with national and regional partners, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), JFNA, JCPA, Facing History & Ourselves, and the Stan Greenspon Holocaust Center, and regularly engages state and local policymakers on Jewish communal priorities. His work centers on translating education into action and building durable relationships that advance both Jewish security and democratic values.



Howard Olshansky, MSW, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte. Howard has over 40 years of non-profit leadership experience in Child Welfare, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Aging, Mental Health, and Jewish Communal Services. Howard has spearheaded systemic initiatives, including the privatization of Child Welfare in the State of Florida, School-Based Community Collaboration in Las Vegas, and Managed Mental Health Care in the State of Maryland. Howard has held executive leadership positions at organizations with budgets ranging from less than \$1 million to over \$14 million. Howard has extensive experience in financial resource development, including leading successful operating,

capital, and endowment campaigns. Howard is particularly proud of JFS Charlotte's growth and recognition, which have truly made it the community's emotional and social service support system.

Howard received his Master of Social Work Degree from Temple University and a Bachelor's of Social Welfare from the Pennsylvania State University. His greatest joy comes from spending time with his four grandchildren, who all fortunately live in the Charlotte area.

Columbia SC



My name is Yaffa (she/her), and I am the Program Coordinator for Columbia Jewish Federation! My family lives in Memphis, Tennessee. I have four younger siblings, two who live in Israel, and one who is currently in the IDF. I graduated from Stern College in NYC in 2024 and spent a year working in New York before I found my dream job here in Columbia, South Carolina. In University, I worked as a Resident Advisor and helped run multiple clubs- including the Broadway Club, Feminism Club, and Pride Alliance. Through planning

events in college, I found my true passion- creating community. Whether it's for an event, forming new friendships, or fostering a new community, I know I can help build a welcoming environment through programming. In my current role, I work with my team and the whole Jewish community in Columbia to do just this. With the Ohel Fellowship, I am excited to forge new friendships and develop professionally as a leader.



Patty is deeply involved in Columbia's Jewish community. She co-versed over B'nai B'rith Women, chaired the Beth Shalom Religious School Education Committee, and co-directed the JCC Preschool. When her children entered high school, Patty decided to pursue a master's degree in library and information science at USC. Upon graduation, she embarked on a career as a school librarian and later as a technology trainer for teachers. She also served as an adjunct professor for the College of Charleston, teaching graduate-level courses for teachers. After two decades with Lexington School District One, Patty retired,

planning to relax, play mahjong, and enjoy some leisure time. However, new opportunities quickly altered those plans. She served several years on the JCC Board and Executive Committee. She co-chaired the JCC Columbia Jewish Film Festival, which kept her busy with screening films and organizing programs each year. Later, Patty was asked to co-chair the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission. She recently completed her two-year term as president of Tree of Life Congregation and is now serving a two-year term as the Columbia Jewish Federation's Chair.

Metrowest NJ



Sharon Zucker is the Director of Welcoming and Inclusion for the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ. In this role, Sharon is tasked with increasing a sense of belonging within the Jewish community, with a specific focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion, Interfaith/Mixed Heritage families, Jews of Color, Russian-speaking Jews, the Orthodox community, Israelis, and others. Prior to joining Federation in 2023, she worked in the fields of education access and interpersonal violence prevention. Sharon holds an MPA in Public Administration with a focus on Domestic Violence and a BA in Communication. She lives in West Orange, NJ, with her two teenagers.



Jody Hurwitz Caplan is a self-described “over-committed community volunteer.” In recent years, she has focused her efforts on supporting several Jewish organizations, though the majority of her time is spent with Jewish Federation Greater MetroWest NJ. Jody is the current Chair of Welcoming and Inclusion. Her past Federation roles include Chair, Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC); Chair, Community Engagement; Chair, Governance; and President, Women’s Philanthropy. Jody is a member of the National Women’s Philanthropy Board. Jody lives in Short Hills, NJ, with her husband, Jonathan. (Despite living in New Jersey for over 30 years,

she will still tell you she is from Connecticut.) Jody and Jonathan are the parents of 3 adult children. Jody’s favorite new nickname is “MOB”, Mother of the Bride.

Minneapolis



Alene G. Sussman is the Senior Director of the Minnesota Jewish Community Foundation (MN JCF). She helps fund holders give through a Jewish lens and promotes the concept of tikkun olam (repairing the world). Alene works with individuals, families, and nonprofits, guiding their philanthropic goals (current and legacy plans), family philanthropy, creating funds, partnering on complex asset/tax/trust/estate transactions, succession plans, and cementing their charitable giving legacy. She also runs MN JCF's professional advisors affinity group, which supports advisors in their conversations w/their clients about their clients' charitable goals and giving.

Alene is a former in-house attorney at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and, prior to that, practiced at Dorsey & Whitney LLP. She graduated from Howard University School of Law, and received her undergraduate degree in Political Science from Columbia University. She volunteers for a variety of non-profits around the Twin Cities in the areas of development and fundraising, and grant making, including as a Regent Trustee on the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Co-Chairs the Arboretum Annual Gala Committee, and Temple Israel (variety of committees). She loves spending time with her son and husband, foodstagramming, traveling, and is a cautiously optimistic/perennially disappointed Minnesota Vikings fan



Layah Shagalow brings a deep commitment to inclusion, education, and community empowerment to her role as board member and lay leader for the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. Born and raised in Minnesota as the child of Chabad Shluchim, Layah has always been passionate about serving and strengthening the Jewish community. She currently serves as the Associate Director of Sha'arim + Gateways, a nonprofit dedicated to creating inclusive Jewish experiences for individuals with disabilities and building a more inclusive Jewish community. In her role, she has fostered meaningful collaborations with organizations across the Twin Cities and has been a driving force behind the development of impactful programming, including social, educational, and vocational initiatives that support individuals across a wide spectrum of needs. Layah also holds her LICSW and works individually with teens, young adults, and families as a clinician at Twin Cities Behavioral Health.

San Diego



Darren Schwartz is the Chief Planning and Strategy Officer with Jewish Federation of San Diego County. In his role, Darren provides leadership for the Community Partnerships staff to further the Federation's strategy to create a vibrant, caring, connected, and enduring Jewish community with our local, national, and global partners.

A San Diego native, Darren holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California, Davis. Darren lives in Del Cerro with his wife Dara and their three children.



Allie Hauser-Erickson, MA, is an education and parenting expert bridging research in neuroscience, psychology, and education with real-world practice in curriculum, pedagogy, and policy. She has over fifteen years of experience as a head of school, administrator, teacher, and learning researcher in pluralistic Jewish community schools. Her professional research examines how belonging shapes learning and development, a focus she is equally passionate about cultivating across Jewish communal spaces. Allie has served on the Jewish Federation of San Diego's Board of Directors since 2022. She is in her sixth year of the Jewish Federation of North America's (JFNA)

National Young Leadership Cabinet. This year, she proudly serves as Co-Chair of Jewish Life and Learning on the Cabinet Executive Team. During her tenure on the Cabinet, she has also served as ORT Board Observer (2022-2023), on the Philanthropy Committee (2024), and as Class Lead (2024). Previously, Allie served as a Cabinet member from Seattle and is a graduate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle's Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP). Allie holds degrees from Duke University, City University of Seattle, and Harvard University and is a certified Educational Therapist, Parent Coach, and Behavior Specialist. Her work has been featured in multiple journals and national conferences, including the National Association of Independent Schools and Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools.

Washington, DC



Lisa Handelman is the Director of Inclusion and Belonging at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. She is also a leadership coach, consultant, workshop facilitator, and youth mental health first aid instructor. She is the former Director of the Jewish overnight camp, Capital Camps, where she implemented programming to meet the physical, social, emotional, mental health, and Jewish identity-building needs of both campers and staff. She built a model disability-inclusion program at Capital Camps and works with the Foundation for Jewish Camp and her local community to advance disability inclusion. Lisa is on the advisory council for Imun (the Jewish coaching network). She creates and leads

bridge-building and team-building workshops, specializing in civil conversations across differences. Lisa and her husband live in the Washington DC area and have four grown children.



Linda Elise Adams holds a Master's Certificate in Dyslexia Studies from Antioch University and a BA from Fordham University at Lincoln Center. Her professional background spans human resources roles at Montefiore Hospital and Citibank, N.A., entrepreneurship as the owner of a children's clothing store in Brooklyn, and work as a reading specialist providing literacy tutoring and coaching for children with reading disabilities.

A dedicated community leader, Linda has served in numerous volunteer roles, including board member of Georgetown Day School and the Barker Foundation Adoption Agency, Co-President of the Parent Association at Lab School of Washington, and the Home and School Association at John Eaton Elementary School, and Chair of Mitzvah Day at Washington Hebrew Congregation. She is a member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington Community Leadership Council and an active leader in social justice initiatives, with a particular focus on racial equity, Black-Jewish relations, and educational equity, including long-standing support for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

Special Observers

Milwaukee



Kai Yael Gardner Mishlove, Director of Advocacy & Alliances