



# Federation FOCUS

Updates, highlights and insights from your Jewish Federation  
March 2022



Julie S. Solberg  
President



Jason Moss  
Executive Director

Building  
Community,  
Enhancing  
Jewish  
Life

Dear Friends,

It gives us great pleasure to share with you this inaugural newsletter, **Federation FOCUS**. Many of you may remember our Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valley's *Jewish Community News* newspaper you used to receive in your mailboxes. We replaced it a number of years ago when we partnered with JLife to bring *JLife SGPV* to our community. Our goal has been to use the magazine to share news and information about our local Jewish community as well as highlight programs and services that we provide. However, when we learned that the magazine was only going to be available digitally, we knew we wanted and needed a newsletter like this to communicate the work of the Jewish Federation.

We hope to mail this newsletter 3-4 times a year. Each issue will share how our programs are impacting community members, showcase specific Jewish Federation programs and services, and preview upcoming events.

Our Jewish Federation's mission is to build community by strengthening and enhancing Jewish life here in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. We are able to do this through the ongoing support from community members like you.

Thank you for supporting our work and for understanding the importance of being an active member of the community. We look forward to seeing and connecting with you soon.

Julie S. Solberg  
President

Jason Moss  
Executive Director

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### Jewish Federation

of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys  
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# JEWISH

## Why do you feel the Jewish Federation's role in the community is important?



**Julie S.:** The Jewish Federation of the San and Gabriel and Pomona Valleys plays an integral role in advocating for the Jewish community. From dealing with antisemitic incidences to reminding the local schools about

Jewish holidays, the Jewish Federation strives to support those in the community. In addition, the programs we offer draw from a broad regional base and can make connections for people both affiliated with synagogues and those not affiliated but looking for Jewish connections.



**David:** Our Jewish Federation embodies a 3,500-year-old tradition of caring that goes back to the giving of the Torah and sustains us in the bold pursuit of Jewish community, Jewish values and Jewish peoplehood. As

the Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, we are people who remain committed to care enough to want to perfect an imperfect world by demonstrating a passion of commitment, where *tzedakah* and a sense of social justice can make a difference every day in our community.



**John:** The Jewish Federation exists to provide opportunities for the Jewish people in our vast geographic region to connect with one another and with Jewish life and culture in ways that no other single organization can

do. We support Jewish life with information, resources, programs, and services, and perhaps most importantly, pathways toward community while invigorating people's Jewish identity. In doing all of this, the Jewish Federation is a catalyst in building a stronger Jewish community.



**Julie B.:** The Jewish Federation acts as a community organizer, a friend to all perspectives, and helps the Jewish community with broad programs and issues. Since our Jewish community is bigger than any one of our syna-

gogue communities, our Jewish Federation helps us join together to create experiences and programs that may need to exist on a regional level and provide opportunities to gather and collaborate as a Jewish community and faith.



**Mickey:** The Jewish Federation serves a unique role in the lives of the Jewish community. It works hard to provide meaningful Jewish focused programs and services for all Jews, no matter their affiliation. The Jewish Federation is the only Jewish organization in the San

Gabriel and Pomona Valleys that strives to address the entire Jewish community by providing relevant communication, information and representations not readily available elsewhere.



**Jeanine:** With such a relatively small number of Jews in any one area of our community, and being that we are so spread out, the Jewish Federation is the organization who approaches stores to remind them to offer Pass-over foods, reaches out to schools to

educate them about providing excused absences for students during the High Holy Days, and most importantly, reaches across the spectrum of our Jewish identities and unites us into feeling a part of one community.

# FEDERATION'S

## Board of Governors Introductions



**Julie M.:** I believe the role of the Jewish Federation is to bring the small Jewish communities throughout our region together and act as a bridge to unite us.



**Stu:** Our Jewish Federation touches so many people. Our challenges are great but the rewards are awesome. I have seen the growth in programs and smiles on faces....that is my reward!



**Oran:** Although the Jewish Federation's role is often seen and described as an "umbrella organization," I see it more as the center (or hub) of the Jewish community....sort of like the center of a wheel with spokes

attached all around it, representing the synagogues throughout the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. This creates a two-way relationship for our synagogues and community members whereby they can benefit FROM the Jewish Federation's programs and also be a benefit TO the Jewish Federation through their respective participation in community-wide events.



**Irv:** I feel the Jewish Federation's role in the community is important as we try and communicate with what is currently affecting all Jews in our area. We offer programs of an artistic nature, events such as our Jewish

Food Festival to give everyone a "taste" of what Jewish food is, events that allow us to show how to deal with problems of today such as security, summer camp where Jewish heritage is shown at the same time children can band together and enjoy each other, and a lot more.

## OUR MISSION

Jewish Federation's mission is to build community by strengthening and enhancing Jewish life.

Jewish Federation does this by providing programs and services that support the needs of the Jewish community in our region, and acts as the Jewish voice on issues that affect the greater Jewish community.

### JEWISH FEDERATION'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS

<b>President</b> Julie S. Solberg	Mickey Bernath
<b>Vice President</b> David Levy	Jeanine Mann
<b>Chief Financial Officer</b> John Carlton*	Julie Miller
<b>Secretary</b> Julie Bank	Stuart Miller*
	Oran Reznik
	Irv Tons

\* Past Federation President

# The impact of **PJ LIBRARY**



***We love PJ Library!*** As a working parent, this program is an easy way to teach my daughter Jewish values and teachings through the books we receive. We are able to incorporate this into our daily life in a fun and easy way. What is really special for us is that my nephew is also part of the program where he lives. My daughter and her cousin often read their books together which helps them connect. This feeling of belonging and a part of something bigger is amazing.

It is not only the books that come as a gift from the community that are meaningful - the holiday kits that we have signed up to receive are incredible...they are just so fun! My daughter gets so excited when it arrives (as do !!), whether it is delivered to our doorstep or in our mailbox. She cannot wait to open it and discover what is inside. They are just so fun for us to be able to celebrate Judaism as a family and a great way to help teach my daughter about our traditions.

***PJ Library is such a valuable program for families, and we are so appreciative that our local Jewish Federation provides it to the community.*** - Charlotte D., Altadena

PJ Library sends free, award-winning books that celebrate Jewish values and culture to families with children from birth through 12 years old. To learn more, contact Debby Singer, Jewish Federation's PJ Library & PJ Our Way Program Director, via email: [dsinger@jewishsgpv.org](mailto:dsinger@jewishsgpv.org)



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

# PJ LIBRARY

## A DREAM COME TRUE

In the most recent edition of *Proof*, the PJ Library magazine which captures the achievements, goals, and accomplishments of this unique organization, we find the sentiment that, “At its heart, PJ Library is about continuing the Jewish story.” The article goes on to highlight ways in which PJ Library helps families make Jewish life part of each and every day. PJ, which unsurprisingly and simply stands for pajama, reaches Jewish families all around the globe.

And who exactly are the folks that make this all happen? And how is it financed?

PJ Library was the dream of Harold Grinspoon, a philanthropist who wanted to ensure that the future of Judaism is secure. The books provide an entry point for families just beginning their Jewish journey in an inclusive, non-judgmental way. Each book is a resource for parents to help them become the purveyors of Jewish knowledge to their children and encourages them to share their stories, their family traditions, and histories, thus ensuring the continuity of our people.

All of that takes place on the national and international level since PJ Library books are sent to households in 35 countries, are written in seven different languages, and are sent to PJ Library families each and every month...free of charge, paid for by their respective local communities. Since its inception in 2005, PJ Library has mailed 20 million books to children in North America alone. Currently the number of books mailed each month worldwide is 700,000!

This is where the Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys comes in. Our leadership saw the value of PJ Library many years ago when it became clear that this program was offering families a way to “Do Jewish” on their own terms. After seeking and receiving the financial support necessary from a few very generous donors to launch PJ Library, our Jewish Federation made sure the program had a home in the San Gabriel & Pomona Valleys together with all of the other programs anchored by Jewish Federation’s goal of doing Jewish together. PJ Library would simply not exist in our community without the sponsorship and support of our Jewish Federation.

As the local program sponsor and administrator of PJ Library, the Jewish Federation uses PJ Library to reach out to and engage with our local Jewish community. This includes working closely with our community partners, our local synagogues and schools, to create programs and experiences for families with young children. Collectively, there are over 200 PJ Library communities throughout the country.

Each local community is responsible for managing and directing its own programs, along with raising the necessary funds to administer the program, although we do receive some ongoing

financial support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF). In fact, through funds we raise annually, we are able to send each of our PJ Library families their monthly books as a gift from the community.

There are conferences for PJ Library professionals, trips to Israel for potential authors, matching funds to those communities with endowments, grants for staff and much, much more. The support for our community from the main office in Agawam, Massachusetts is invaluable. And locally, HGF provides Engagement Officers to help us navigate this world of riches.

Since we launched our program in 2015, we have sent more than 63,000 books to our families. That number accounts for the fact that up until two years ago we were sending one book each month to each family and then the decision was made to send one book each month to each child in the family. Something we are very proud of! Currently we are sending out about 1200 books each month to PJ families. I would be remiss if I didn't mention PJ Our Way, a special program for those tweens who age out of PJ Library when they turn 9 and we have about 250 kids in that cohort. With both programs, the reach of PJ Library programs extends from birth through the age of 12.

But PJ Library is so much more than books. Creative, inclusive programs with the goals of engaging families, building relationships, connecting to other Jewish organizations, empowering parents, welcoming new families and connecting families to each other, are the bagel and cream cheese of PJ Library. Granted our programming has taken a turn during the last two years due to the pandemic and even though we've had to traverse some new untraveled roads our goals of staying connected and providing support to our families, have not faltered. And the response by our families has been uplifting. Just last year we either mailed or delivered 5 take home kits to almost 200 participating families, we had a rousing Hanukkah concert on Zoom, we featured a children's author on-line and had a hybrid event at the Southern California Children's Museum spotlighting another popular author. Our Gan Katan Class was active through 2021 as well and the white envelopes filled with books were delivered to doorsteps right on schedule.

We are all anxiously awaiting a time in the not-too-distant future when we will be able to gather together on a regular basis. We are poised and set to go. Our portfolio of programs is at the ready. The starting line beckons. Look for us to be back in your neighborhood soon! In the meantime, feel free to check out [pjlibrary.org](http://pjlibrary.org) for more information, follow us on Instagram and Facebook or meet me for coffee!

Debby Singer  
PJ Library and PJ Our Way Program Director  
[dsinger@jewishsgpv.org](mailto:dsinger@jewishsgpv.org)



What we have done...

# October 2021 - January 2022

## JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Our 23rd Annual Jewish Book Festival was a huge hit with one of the largest audiences we have ever had attend a book festival event. This year's festival brought together an incredible array of authors covering a wide range of subjects, from a stuffed animal that is not a dog's toy, the food culture of America, and a collection of fiction to a behind scenes look at *60 Minutes* to the current situation in Israel. There was something for everyone and even included two hybrid (in-person and virtual) events. Without the hard and tireless work of our Jewish Book Festival committee and the financial support of our Literary Circle members, this year's festival would not have been the success it was.

## PJ LIBRARY HANUKKAH

In a special celebration for our community's youth and their families, PJ Library created and delivered very special Hanukkah kits to close to 80 families to help engage with and celebrate Hanukkah. These kits coincided with our 4th Night Family Hanukkah concert with crowd-favorite Jason Mesches. This virtual concert helped our families celebrate the festival of lights and included a special candle-lighting where the children lit their menorahs together over Zoom. Seeing that many people lighting their Hanukkah menorahs all at once was a sight to see. We also featured children's author Ann Koffsky for a virtual story time based on her newest *Kayla and Kugel* book about Hanukkah that also included a wonderful art project.



## FESTIVAL OF JEWISH MUSIC

Although we normally hold the Festival of Jewish Music right before or during Hanukkah, this year's concert took place after the holiday and provided the community an opportunity to gather, both in-person and virtually, to listen to and celebrate the warmth and rich culture Jewish music provides through the performances by Kol HaEmek, our Jewish Youth Orchestra, and our local cantors. We brought Jewish music into the community. And following the passing of Stephen Sondheim, the cantors shared some personal reflections and sang some of their favorite songs from Sondheim's incredible treasury of musicals.

## 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Our 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was held on January 9, 2022. During the meeting, we installed our new Board of Governors, including the installation of Julie Solberg (President), David Levy (Vice President), John Carlton (Chief Financial Officer), and Julie Bank (Secretary), as well as our newest

board member Jeanine Mann. Our 2021 Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Edie Taylor. The meeting also featured a keynote conversation between Dr. Steven Windmueller and our Jewish Federation Executive Director Jason Moss about the current challenges facing American Jewry and their future implications.

## EVERY PERSON HAS A NAME

This year's Every Person Has a Name returned back to the steps of Pasadena City Hall and was co-sponsored by the City of Pasadena. The event began with a commemoration ceremony highlighted by remarks from Israel's Consul for Public Diplomacy and Culture Jonathan Bar-El, local elected officials (Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo, Congresswoman Judy Chu, State Senator Anthony Portantino, and representatives from LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger and State Assemblymember Christopher Holden's offices), a moving performance of *Oifn Pripichik* by our own Jewish Youth Orchestra, a reading of the poem *Babi Yar* by Cantor Paul Buch and a reflection by Rabbi Jonathan Kupetz who also led us in the Mourner's Kaddish.



This year over 130 volunteers read over 10,000 names of those who were murdered during the Babi Yar massacre that took place over 80 years ago on September 29 and 30, 1941. We also featured the exhibition *Auschwitz - A Place on Earth* in partnership with *Yad Vashem* and helped make possible through the support of PJTC's Sisterhood.

## JEWISH COOKING CONNECTION

One of our newest programs has been our Jewish Cooking Connection. The brainchild of our Cultural Arts Program Coordinator, Cantor Judy Sofer, celebrates Jewish food by showcasing community members talking about and preparing family favorite recipes on screen. Over the last few months, we have had food demonstration videos presented for: Fruited Citrus Chicken (Dr. Jacquelyn Green), British Hanukkah Fruitcake (Yvonne Cheyney), Flourless Chocolate Cake (Mary Gatter) and Tuscan Salmon Fillets (Nancy Carlton). This program has been so well-received that the Jewish Federation of the Desert has partnered with us to share our videos with their community.



The Jewish Federation's



present:

# Grumpy Old Men

THE MUSICAL

## PERFORMANCES:

Saturday, March 26 & April 2, at 8 P.M.  
Sunday, March 27 & April 3, at 4 P.M.  
Wednesday, March 30, at 7:30 P.M.  
Thursday, March 31, at 7:30 P.M.

## LOCATION:

Porticos Art Space  
2033 E. Washington Blvd., Pasadena, CA

## TICKETS:

Premium \$35 | General \$25  
Group (10+) \$20 | Student/ Child \$10

For tickets:  
visit [www.jewishsgpv.org](http://www.jewishsgpv.org)  
or call 626.445.0810



# SCHOLARSHIP

The Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys is excited to announce a new **\$2,500 scholarship** for a high school junior. It is our hope that the scholarship will help kick-start a high school junior's college application process.

Applicants must be a current high school junior, graduating in 2023, and planning to attend a 4-year college after high school graduation. A minimum unweighted cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 is required.

**To apply visit [www.jewishsgpv.org](http://www.jewishsgpv.org).  
The deadline to apply is  
Friday, April 29, 2022.**

The annual scholarship has been established through the funds raised two years ago for our Youth Fund and from funds received from the closure of Weizmann Day School in June 2020.

# CAMP GAN SHALOM 2022

WHERE JUDAISM COMES ALIVE!

## AVAILABLE PROGRAMS:

**KEHILLA (K-5<sup>TH</sup>)**

**MANHEEGIM (6<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup>)**

**CIT (9<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup>)**

## WHEN? WHERE?

June 13 - July 15 (Weeks 1-5)  
Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center  
1434 N. Altadena Drive, Pasadena

July 18 - August 5 (Weeks 6-8)  
Temple Beth Israel of Pomona  
3033 N. Towne Avenue, Pomona

To register visit:  
[www.jewishsgpv.org](http://www.jewishsgpv.org)

Visit the "Camp Gan Shalom" tab under "Our Programs" to learn more, or send an email to [ganshalom@jewishsgpv.org](mailto:ganshalom@jewishsgpv.org).

**Note: All campers and staff must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 at least two weeks before their first day to attend or work at Camp Gan Shalom.**



## JEWISH COUNSELING AND REFERRAL NETWORK

Helping you find the services and resources you need in our community.

For more information contact Rebecca Russell:  
626-445-0810 ext. 304 or  
[rrussell@jewishsgpv.org](mailto:rrussell@jewishsgpv.org)



The **Chesed Society** brings together visionary leaders and supporters who are dedicated to help the Jewish Federation build and strengthen the Jewish community here in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.

Consider joining fellow supporters by becoming part of the **Chesed Society**.

To learn more and join contact Jason Moss:  
Email: [jmoss@jewishsgpv.org](mailto:jmoss@jewishsgpv.org)  
Phone: 626-445-0810 x 305



**JEWISH  
FEDERATION**  
OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL  
AND POMONA VALLEYS

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This year, we will continue to reach out to those in need, find innovative ways to engage with our community and make sure *Good* grows right here in the greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.

Just as we have in the past.  
Just as we will in the future.  
Because together, we are  
*Here For Good.*

HELP US BE  
*here for*  
**GOOD**

In a world filled with unprecedented need, Jewish Federation not only rose to the occasion, but thrived.

We were able to do so because of the generous support we have received in the past.

Please give what you can today, so that *Good* can continue to grow throughout our community now and in the future.

For over 100 years,  
Jewish Federation has been  
*Here For Good.*

And with your help,  
we're not going anywhere.

Donate today!

[www.jewishsgpv.org/make-your-impact](http://www.jewishsgpv.org/make-your-impact)



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