

# STAYING TOGETHER **While Being Apart**



**2021 IMPACT REPORT**

A PORTRAIT OF **An Untraditional Year**



**Jewish Federation**  
OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

## A MESSAGE FROM **Heidi Gantwerk & Jack Maizel**



### **Looking back and moving forward**

Dear Friends,

Jewish Federation of San Diego County has served the Jewish people for a remarkable 85 years. We are incredibly proud and mindful of the privilege and responsibilities that come with the roles of President and CEO and Board Chair. We are filled with gratitude for your support and with great excitement about the path Federation is on today.

The past two years have been unlike any in our organization's history. We are a communal people, yet we were unable to safely gather. Even so, as our people always have, we endured and flourished. In our more than 60 collective years in San Diego's Jewish community, we have never felt more pride for — and connection to — our community as we do now.

Federation's staff and lay leaders continued their work with creativity, with kindness, and in collaboration with partners locally, in Israel, and around the world. Not once since the beginning of the pandemic did we step back or turn away from the work; we doubled down with creativity and resilience.

Together, we charted a path forward driven by the vision of Michael Jeser, z"l, that focuses on addressing Jewish poverty, ensuring an enduring Jewish community, and fostering meaningful personal connections with Israel and Jews around the world. Today we are proud of the tangible and positive impact in

these areas and in so many other aspects of Jewish life in San Diego and for Jews everywhere. These efforts move us ever closer to Federation's vision of a more vibrant, caring, and enduring Jewish community.

We hope you take the time to read through this report, as there is so much to highlight. We are both eagerly anticipating our CommUNITY Trip to Israel in May of 2023, our first since 2006. Our goal is to bring every corner of our community together, with 360 people (at least!) joining us on a multi-faceted and celebratory trip in honor of Israel's 75th birthday and the 25th anniversary of our relationship with our sister region, Sha'ar HaNegev. With opportunities to curate your own trip to ensure you experience Israel and the work of Federation and our partner agencies in a way that is deeply meaningful and relevant to you, we hope you will save the dates May 4-11, 2023.

In these pages, we showcase how your generous support furthered our mission and we preview the exciting work on which we embark. Thank you for your continued investment in the critical work of Federation. We are proud to share this report with you. Together, we look ahead to a year with so much possibility — with community, in community.

**Heidi Gantwerk**  
**President & CEO**

**Jack Maizel**  
**Board Chair**



## FOCUS ON **Survivors**

San Diego is home to nearly 500 Holocaust Survivors, Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, and Jewish refugees of WWII. While many are still living independently, 1/3 of this population is living at, or below, poverty. Many of these individuals are outliving their resources and experiencing emerging and dynamic needs while others struggle with persistent challenges and traumas that they have carried with them their entire lives. Our Survivors endured one of the darkest periods in human history, and we must **ensure they live comfortably and with dignity** for the remainder of their lives. Taking care of Holocaust Survivors is not just the responsibility of any one organization; it is the collective responsibility of our entire community.



### With your support we:

- Established Project Connect, a new program incubated by Jewish Federation and implemented by Jewish Family Service. To date, 152 Survivors have received care with an emphasis on addressing critical needs before they become emergencies.
- Distributed \$188,000 in emergency support to help with food, home care, rent/utilities, and more.
- Hired a Russian-speaking community organizer for grassroots outreach to underserved Russian Survivors.



Photographer: Joel Ortiz

“I want to thank the wonderful volunteers at Jewish Federation for delivering meals to local Holocaust Survivors during the pandemic. Their warm faces were as meaningful as the meals they delivered.”

**Mike Wallenfels, local Survivor**



# Security

## FOCUS ON **Security**

Around the world, attacks against Jewish communities and institutions are on the rise. From anti-Israel vitriol on American campuses to desecrated religious centers in Europe, Jews are once again targets of extremism. The new threat levels have compelled the **Jewish community to think differently about security** and, together with our partners, we are making every effort to keep Jewish San Diego safe and secure.



### With your support we:

- Granted \$150,000 to Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of San Diego to form a security partnership and hire a Jewish Community Security Director.
- ADL's Jewish Community Security Director, funded by Federation, conducted multiple site visits at local San Diego Jewish institutions to ensure safety measures were maximized and implemented where necessary.
- Helped support more than \$1.2 million in grant requests by distributing \$25,000 to local organizations to help offset Federal grant application costs.



“Having two organizations like Federation and ADL spearhead a vision for community-wide security demonstrates the seriousness and commitment of the Jewish community to care for and protect one another.”

**Shelley Zimmerman, Former San Diego Chief of Police and Member of the Jewish Community Security Advisory Committee**



# Recovery

## FOCUS ON **Recovery**

In March of 2020, our community was struck by the crushing impact of COVID-19. The **San Diego Jewish Community COVID-19 Emergency Fund** was established to respond to the most immediate needs. To date, hundreds of donors have come together to contribute more than \$3 million to support our Jewish community.



### With your support we:

- Partnered with Jewish Community Foundation and Leichtag Foundation, raising more than \$3 million dollars to support COVID related challenges in San Diego.
- Granted \$25,000 to 5 local Jewish day schools to show our gratitude and appreciation to the educators.
- Raised an additional \$540,000 for San Diego through Jewish Federations of North America's Human Services Match.



“In March of 2020 we were forced to close our campus and figure out new ways to teach children virtually. My world was upended. Parents and donors simply could not meet their financial obligations to the school. We were struggling to keep all our staff on payroll and were only able to do so because of the San Diego Jewish Community COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. If it were not for that funding, our teachers would have been furloughed. I was so grateful for Federation’s support and will never forget how they so graciously helped my staff during this extremely difficult time.”

**Rabbi Peikes, Torah High School of San Diego**



# Israel

## FOCUS ON **Israel & Overseas**

Federation connects community members to our **heritage, historic and modern Israel, to our sister region of Sha’ar HaNegev and to fellow Jews around the world.** The ShinShinim program, which brings young Israelis to work as Israel emissaries throughout San Diego, is just one of the many ways we are creating a cultural bridge between our communities.

### With your support we:

- Added a fourth Shinshin to the program to expand community support. Partner organizations include Congregation Beth Am, Congregation Beth El, Congregation Beth Israel, Camp Mountain Chai, Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, Kavod Charter School, and Seacrest Village Retirement Communities.
- Engaged 40 teens from San Diego, Sha’ar HaNegev, Sofia (Bulgaria), and St. Petersburg (Russia) in a year-long Jewish identity building program. Teens participated in meaningful conversations about their day-to-day life, received an introduction to local culture, and built meaningful and enduring friendships.
- Raised critical emergency funds for Sha’ar HaNegev immediately after incendiary balloons and thousands of rockets wreaked havoc, terror, and destruction in the region.



“Serving in San Diego for my year of service through the ShinShinim program helped me connect to my Judaism in such new and exciting ways that I would have never experienced in Israel. My adopted San Diego family at Congregation Beth Israel supported me as I explored and discovered more about Judaism and my Jewish identity. I was so inspired and felt a brand-new sense of connection that I decided to become a Bat Mitzvah in this very special community”

**Omer, ShinShinit Educator at Congregation Beth Israel and Seacrest Village**



# Covid-19

## A SWIFT & EFFICIENT **Response**

### PHASE 1

#### Addressing Emergency Needs and Payroll Support (\$1,117,719)

- Emergency Payroll Bridge Loans to 8 local organizations
- Grants to 28 local Rabbis' discretionary funds to provide support to congregants in crisis
- Over 150 households have received support for basic needs

### PHASE 2

#### Safe Reopening (\$1,036,305)

- 19 local Jewish organizations received funding for PPE, sanitation equipment, and security
- Bridge funding for healthcare costs of Jewish communal professionals who had been furloughed or laid off
- Special grants for case management and mental health services

### PHASE 3

#### Revitalization, Virtual and Distance Learning (\$556,704)

- 18 local organizations received grants for new COVID-safe programming
- Helped create a COVID-safe space for virtual learning and childcare for 118 students
- \$100,000 for preschool and camp scholarships

## A community is too heavy to carry alone

Deuteronomy Rabbah 1:10

Through our approach of convening and collaborating with Jewish organizations, agencies, and synagogues, we work to identify synergies and leverage opportunities to address comprehensive community needs.

This year your investment in Federation positively impacted dozens of organizations and thousands of individuals. Here are a few highlights:



**73 organizations**  
received  
Federation funding



**49 local orgs** supported by  
the San Diego Jewish Community  
COVID-19 Emergency Fund



**\$175,000**  
invested in  
Community Security



**\$400,000**  
granted to support  
and care for Survivors



**\$700,000** to support Israel  
and Global Jewish communities  
plus  
**\$137,500** to support 7 projects  
in Sha'ar HaNegev



**\$100,000**  
to support 24 local  
Jewish teen programs

# Our Programs

## WHAT WE DO

### Caring

- Holocaust Survivor Coalition
  - Project Connect
  - Kavod Emergency funding
  - Person Centered Trauma Informed Trainings
- Kibitz Call Line for seniors
- Chaplaincy program
- Mental health and wellness book clubs

### Community

- Teen immersive travel subsidies
- Peer Leader Fellows
- NextGen LEADS
- Moishe House
- Honeymoon Israel
- PJ Library Subscriptions
- PJ Parent Connectors
- One Happy Camper and Camp Scholarships
- Preschool Directors Council

### Peoplehood/Israel & Overseas

- My Israel Journey teen travel subsidies
- Shinshinim program
- Sha'ar HaNegev community partnerships
- San Diego/Shaa'ar HaNegev Community Captains
- Masa Israel Journey
- Global Partnership Program with Sha'ar HaNegev, Sofia, St. Petersburg
- Grants
  - Birthright Israel
  - American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)
  - Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)
  - World ORT to St. Petersburg school
- Yom Hashoah Commemoration
- Yom Hazikaron Commemoration
- Yom Ha'atzmaut/Israelfest Celebration

# Financials

## FY2021

### Community | Continuity

**29%**

\$1,734,152

### Caring

**29%**

\$1,745,243

### Peoplehood | Israel & Overseas

**27%**

\$1,640,470

### Fundraising

**9%**

\$514,462

### Administrative

**6%**

\$351,767

TOTAL **\$5,986,095**





## Michael Jeser

### OUTSTANDING JEWISH PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The Michael Jeser Outstanding Jewish Professional Award is powered by Jewish Federation of San Diego County in recognition of Michael Jeser z”l, a pillar of Jewish leadership for more than 20 years. The purpose of this award is to recognize individuals currently working in a professional capacity at a Jewish communal organization in San Diego. The nominees must demonstrate outstanding professional work and a commitment to the field of Jewish professional leadership. The winner will receive up to \$5,000 to subsidize a professional development experience or program.



#### About Michael Jeser z”l:

Michael’s limitless compassion and passion, rooted in his Jewish values that were imbued in him from a young age, were driving forces in everything he did. He was devoted to Holocaust Survivors, raising critical funds to ensure that this increasingly vulnerable population received lifesaving services that allowed them to live with dignity. Seniors, teens, young families, children, and young professionals all benefited from his unwavering commitment to create a vibrant Jewish life today and for generations to come. He was simply an unstoppable force when it came to community building.

Federation President and CEO Heidi Gantwerk, shared, “In Hannah Senesh’s poem, *Yesh Cochavim (There are Stars)*, she writes of people like stars; they may be gone, but their light continues to

shine on us all,” she said. “Michael was a star. He may not have been in San Diego for long, but he shone so brightly during his time here that he continues to light the way for all of us, as we work together to build on his vision for a thriving, connected, secure Jewish people in San Diego and around the world.”

“There must always be a Jewish Federation in San Diego. No other organization can mobilize the community to raise and transfer funds to Israel in an emergency, to care for Jews in poverty, to improve security, and to develop new programs when the needs arise. The Federation connects Jewish groups in San Diego and around the world.”

**Dr. Robert Rubenstein & Marie Raftery, Community Leaders**

### Leaving a Jewish Legacy

Ensure that the community receives a gift on your behalf every year, through your lifetime, and beyond. To learn more about legacy giving, please visit [jewishinsandiego.org/legacy-society](http://jewishinsandiego.org/legacy-society).





This image, Courtesy of Giving Back Magazine, was featured on the cover of their October 2021 issue



## Our Mission

Inspired by Jewish values, we broaden and deepen engagement in Jewish life to strengthen Jewish identity, foster dynamic connections with Israel, and care for all Jews in need.

We mobilize our community's resources, leaders, and organizations to address the community's most critical needs, creating profound impact locally, in Israel, and around the world.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

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\*Denotes Executive Committee

# Looking Ahead

## OUR FOCUS AREAS FOR 2022-2025

In the midst of the first year of a three-year plan, Federation's work is centered around three priority areas, each with several initiatives and investments designed to achieve our mission while creating a more vibrant, caring, connected, and enduring Jewish community.



ENSURING AN ENDURING JEWISH COMMUNITY

Federation believes in ensuring a strong, sustainable, and safe Jewish community by addressing the leadership, professional development and security needs of both individuals and organizations.

“Since I moved to San Diego, Federation has created so many opportunities that have allowed my family and me to make Jewish connections and build community, so leadership was a natural

next step. I am humbled to be given the opportunity to hone my leadership skills that make me a better community member, professional and mother. Leadership is about having influence to make positive changes for our kids and our community. I am excited to be able to play a part in that for me, my family, and future generations.”  
- Shoshannah Hart, Yesod Participant, Women’s Philanthropy Board Member, Foster Women’s Leadership Institute

What we do:

- Ensure every Jewish organization has access to resources and trainings that lead to a more safe, secure and welcoming Jewish community.
  - Deploy a community ADL Security Director to do assessments and trainings
  - Utilize Federation national resources (Secured Community Network & Live Secure)
  - Grant funding to stimulate proactive approaches to security
- Inspire, cultivate and identify new communal leaders.
  - Provide funding and resources to local organizations to achieve leadership goals
  - Design and run leadership programs that connect leaders throughout the San Diego Jewish community to each other
- Build the capacity of community professionals through networking, training, and intentional collaboration.



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Federation believes that community extends beyond our San Diego borders, and that relationships with the land and people of Israel and Jewish people around the world deepen our own identity and connection to community.

“I am deeply committed to supporting Federation’s effort to connect

San Diegans to Israelis. Launched in summer 2020, the Community Exchange project connects groups of San Diegans with similar groups from our sister region in Sha’ar HaNegev. It has been an honor to cultivate and explore these meaningful relationships while deepening my understanding of life in Sha’ar HaNegev.”  
- Theresa Dupuis, Community Leader

What We Do:

- Deepen partnership with sister region Sha’ar HaNegev by focusing on relationships.
  - GESHER brings together executive leaders of both communities to build new relationships and foster ongoing partnerships
  - Community Exchanges bring together residents of both communities for virtual and in-person programs and discussions that build personal relationships and foster opportunities for community connection
  - Global Partnership Program brings together a group of 40 teenagers from San Diego, Sha’ar HaNegev, St. Petersburg, and Sofia for a yearlong program that explores individual Jewish identity, local Jewish community, and global Jewish peoplehood, culminating with an in-person retreat and participation in the Maccabi Games
- Bring Israeli young adults to San Diego to serve as Israeli emissaries in local organizations.
- Serve as the local fundraising arm of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).
- Provide subsidies to support travel and exchange opportunities for San Diego teens.







## CARING FOR JEWS IN NEED

**F**ederation believes that we can better take care of the needs of our community when we do it together. Through a coordinated effort, we can serve more people and better meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

“Harnessing the power of collective expertise, we work with diverse partners both inside and outside the Jewish community across a range of service

areas to deliver the best support possible to those facing poverty. Through this community work, we have identified gaps and emergency needs specifically within the senior and Survivor community, and today, we are better positioned to support these vulnerable populations. We can do so much more together than any single organization can do alone.”

– Darren Schwartz, Federation

### What we do:

- Facilitate community collaborations that lead to a coordinated approach to support Jews facing poverty.
- Provide targeted support that allows vulnerable seniors and Holocaust Survivors to remain in their homes safely and with dignity.
- Deploy an 18-month community study that learns about every corner of our community including those living in poverty.
- Actively explore grant funding opportunities to incentivize new approaches in addressing poverty.

# The CommUNITY

## Trip of a Lifetime



## SAVE THE DATE

### May 4-11, 2023

## SAN DIEGO» ISRAEL 2023



Jewish Federation  
OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

858-571-3444

[Jewishinsandiego.org/israel2023](https://Jewishinsandiego.org/israel2023)







The Family Wealth Group and Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management are proud to support Jewish Federation of San Diego County to keep our local and global Jewish communities strong.

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