



NEXT GEN JEWISH FEDERATION FELLOWSHIP FIRST COHORT FELLOWS

We're thrilled to welcome the first cohort of 22 fellows of the [Next Gen Jewish Federation Fellowship](#). These educators, leaders, and innovators come from diverse backgrounds, but all have one thing in common: They're dedicated to transforming young adult engagement across North America, part of Federations' critical community-building work. Learn more about them below.

Rena M. Abrams, NextDor Director Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ

Rena Abrams came to the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ with extensive experience operating and managing nonprofits on both local and national levels. She recently received the Leo Brody Communal Service Award from JPRO New Jersey. Rising from director of USY on Wheels to associate director of education at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York City, she later joined Perry Davis Associates as senior account executive consulting with Israeli and Jewish nonprofits. Born and raised in New Jersey, Rena attributes her passion for Jewish community to attending Golda Och Academy and participating in USY. She earned a bachelor's in sociology from Barnard College/Columbia University and a bachelor's in Bible from List College at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where she also earned a master's in informal and communal Jewish education. She lives in South Orange with her husband and two children.

Ellie Solimani Adelman, Young Adult Division Campaign Manager Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas

Ellie Solimani Adelman grew up in Dallas but quickly began blazing an adventurous global path toward Jewish communal service. After graduating from the University of Texas in Austin, she made *aliyah* and joined the Israel Defense Forces, where she served in a female combat unit (Caracal) on the Egyptian and Jordanian borders. Later, she helped build a Nefesh B' Nefesh program for Lone Soldiers. After seven years in Israel, Ellie married the love of her life. Their work took them to Cape Town, Bangkok, San Francisco, and back again to Dallas, where she's thrilled to be using her global experience to build local Jewish community at the Dallas Federation.

Lauren Berger, Young Leadership Director Milwaukee Jewish Federation

Lauren Berger — a native of Baltimore now living in Milwaukee — has been in professional Jewish communal service for 13 years, serving everyone from babies to the very elderly. Currently, she facilitates leadership opportunities at the Milwaukee Federation for younger adults seeking a connection to their Jewish values and a permanent home in the community. Lauren recently completed a master's in Jewish professional studies from Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, and earned a BA from University of Maryland, College Park, in English language and literature, with a citation in Jewish studies. She lives with her three children and husband, Noah, who serves as rabbi of the largest synagogue in Wisconsin.

**Alexandra (Alexi) Faye Biener, Donor Experience Associate, Young Adults
Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles**

Alexi Biener was born and raised in Los Angeles to parents who emigrated from Romania by way of Israel. While studying child and family development and Jewish studies at San Diego State University, she was deeply involved with Hillel/Jewish Student Union. After graduating, Alexi oversaw engagement and Birthright programs at Santa Barbara Hillel for three years. Then, studying as a Jewish Federation FEREP scholar, she earned an MSW and MA in Jewish nonprofit management at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California. She is honored to now serve her hometown by overseeing the Los Angeles Federation's Young Adult philanthropy work, partnering across departments and creating a collaborative and innovative workspace. Alexi was recently engaged to her boyfriend of seven years!

**Carolyn Cohen, Campaign Director, Emerging Leaders and Philanthropists
UJA-Federation of New York**

What started as a few extracurricular activities and a summer trip to Israel evolved into Carolyn Cohen's decades-long love affair with Jewish communal work. The Brooklyn native dabbled in media and entertainment before taking a deep dive into the world of Jewish do-gooding — first nationally with the Anti-Defamation League, then locally with the 14th Street Y. Now at UJA-Federation of New York, she works to broaden and deepen the bench of Next Gen supporters for UJA's game-changing work across New York City, in Israel, and overseas. Carolyn's key professional strengths range from developing collaborative working relationships to finding common ground in support of shared goals. She lives in Forest Hills, Queens, with her husband, Ian, and their two daughters. She holds a BA in American studies from Cornell University and an MPA and certificate in publishing from New York University.

**Maya Cohen, Director, Centre for Jewish Identity
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto**

Maya Cohen oversees UJA's work with young families, teens, and young adults throughout Toronto. Previously, she held a variety of roles in which she helped organizations achieve success through the development of their people. Maya holds a BAsC in nutrition from the University of Guelph and an MBA from the Schulich School of Business at York University.

**Ariel Frechtman, Community Engagement Director
Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta**

Ariel Frechtman has an important mission: to facilitate meaningful Jewish experiences that will inspire others. Her vision is to build a network of philanthropists and leaders committed to Jewish causes. She has a strong background in leadership and community development, fundraising, and coaching and inspiring professional teams, and seeks to inspire others to recognize their own value and potential within Jewish spaces.

**Melanie Gerchberg, Director, NextGen
Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia**

Melanie Gerchberg has a diverse background in nonprofit management, team development, operations, sales, city politics and education. Her Jewish roots run deep as well: She was a participant in the Alexander Muss High School in Israel and the Nativ Leadership Program, during which she studied at Hebrew University and lived on Kibbutz Sa'ad. Later, she taught at synagogues and USY around Philadelphia. Now, she oversees NextGen Affinity at the Philadelphia Federation, engaging people ages 21-45 who seek a Jewish connection and the opportunity to network, volunteer, fundraise, travel, and make a difference for others in the Philadelphia Jewish community, in Israel, and around the world. Melanie holds a BA in philosophy from Binghamton University and lives with her husband, Eric, and dog, Prudence.

**Alona Geysman, Eastside Community Director
Jewish Federation of Broward County**

Arriving in Canada via Israel and her native Ukraine, Alona Geysman understands firsthand the impact Federation has had on her own family's life as well as other former Soviet Jews. Upon graduating from York University with a double degree in psychology and law & society, she chose to pursue Jewish nonprofit work as a way of 'paying it forward.' She worked at Hillel of Greater Toronto, coordinating Birthright Israel trips and creating various initiatives to engage Russian Jewish students in Jewish life. Presently, she is developing a strong philanthropic young professional community in East Broward County through various networking, educational events, and media. Alona lives in Fort Lauderdale with her husband, Jason Levine, and their rescue Shiba Inu

**Tair Giudice, Director of Education & Engagement
Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte**

A native Israeli, Tair Giudice moved to the U.S. in 2006 to serve as the community *shlich*a (emissary) in Charlotte, NC. Since then, Tair has worked for the Charlotte Federation as Young Adult coordinator, director of outreach & engagement, and, currently director of education and engagement overseeing Charlotte's new Center for Jewish Education. Passionate about Israel and all things Jewish, Tair spends most of her time making sure family, friends, and community members find meaning and joy in their Judaism. She holds a BA in Middle Eastern studies and political science from Ben Gurion University in Israel and lives in Charlotte with her husband, Chris, and their two children.

**Lindsay C. Hirsch, Director of Leadership Development, Mandel Center for Leadership Development
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County**

Lindsay Hirsch works across Federation departments, community agencies, and synagogues to create partnerships that engage the young adult population. Previously, she held roles at the Consulate General of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico, at the American Jewish Committee, at the Hillels of Broward and Palm Beach and Hofstra University, and at Easter Seals Florida. Lindsay earned an MPA in nonprofit management from Norwich University and a bachelor's in religious studies from Florida State University, where she recently joined the Visioning Task Force for Jewish Life. She has been involved with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation for over 20 years. Lindsay lives in Palm Beach Gardens with her husband and their two-year-old twins.

**Charlene Green, Learning Specialist, Leadership & Community Engagement, Center for Impact & Innovation
Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey**

Charlene Green's years of experience with Jewish youth, university students and young adults, and community members reflect her unmatched skill and commitment to strengthening Jewish community. Currently, she thoughtfully develops leadership and engagement programs to serve emerging communal needs at the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey. Charlene recognizes individual strengths and tailors her work to identify and energize current and future Jewish leaders. She specializes in teaching key leadership values and techniques, exploring creative applications of diverse leadership theories, and empowering dynamic leaders who take action. Charlene completed her master's in leadership studies at the University of San Diego and received the award of Outstanding Research Project for exploring the implementation of values in faith-based nonprofit organizations. She is grateful to have a partner to help navigate Jewish traditions with modernity as they raise their two young children.

**Liana Konhauzer, Director, Young Adult Division Director and Development Officer
Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County**

Liana Konhauzer studied hospitality and event management at the University of Central Florida. Upon graduating, she worked in a fast-paced environment at a boutique public relations agency in South Florida. With her passion for Jewish causes and solid marketing background, she soon found that working in the corporate sponsorship department at Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County was a natural fit. As a result of her excellent interpersonal skills, vivacious personality, and commitment to community, Liana now leads the Young Adult Division, where she helps develop the future leaders of the South Palm Beach County Jewish community.

**Gitana Mirochnik, Director of Young Adult Initiatives & Social Media
Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester**

Gitana Mirochnik was born in Moscow, Russia and moved to Rochester, NY with her family in 1991. Now, she's helping shape the future of the city's Jewish community. Gitana holds an MA in journalism from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and a BA in English from the University of Rochester. Previously, she worked at Verizon Wireless for more than 10 years. Gitana and her husband, Gennadiy, have two children.

**Isabelle Nadler, Manager, Wall Street & Financial Services Division
UJA-Federation of New York**

Isabelle Nadler began her career at UJA-Federation as a development assistant in the Philanthropic Leadership Group and has grown within the organization over her more than five-year tenure. She currently oversees the Young Wall Street Division, the Annual Wall Street Dinner, and the Goldman Sachs & BlackRock firm campaigns, as well as a team of professionals. Isabelle joined UJA-Federation directly after graduating from the University of Maryland with a BA in government & politics and minors in both philosophy and Israel studies. During the spring of 2011, she studied abroad at Tel Aviv University. Isabelle is a passionate New Yorker who currently lives on the Upper East Side.

**Karen S. Nahary, Associate Director of Young Adults
Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston**

Born and raised outside of New Haven, CT, Karen Nahary immediately jumped into the Jewish community upon moving to Boston in 2011. She volunteered as a Big Sister in Jewish Big Brother Big Sister and participated in Combined Jewish Philanthropies' (CJP) LEADS program. She joined CJP's Young Adult Initiative in January 2015 and focuses her work on engaging young adults with Israel through travel, volunteering, and learning opportunities. Most recently, she has become the associate director of young adults, focusing on launching the Bridge to the Future initiative that will transform CJP's traditional model of outreach and engagement to the Next Generation (20s and 30s). Karen earned a BA in communications from Keene State College and a master's of business in organizational leadership and certificate in human resource management from Southern New Hampshire University. She lives in Brookline and loves to travel, read, go skydiving, and attend live concerts.

**Sally Preminger, Assistant Vice President, Next Gen Initiatives
Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago**

Sally Preminger's position as assistant vice president of Next Gen initiatives was created to grow the Jewish United Fund's (JUF) commitment to young adult fundraising, engagement, and leadership development opportunities; to manage opportunities available to young adults; and to enable JUF to create new high-level leadership development and fundraising opportunities for this demographic. Sally previously served as assistant director and director of JUF's Young Leadership Division, taking the Big Event Fundraiser, the Gesher leadership development program, and other programs to new heights. Before JUF, she worked in development for Chicago Opera Theater and the Illinois Medical District Guest House Foundation. Sally graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, double majoring in anthropology and psychology, and is originally from Chapel Hill, North Carolina (go Tar Heels!).

**Lisa Robbins, Director of Young Adult Engagement
Tampa Jewish Community Centers and Federation**

A native Floridian, Lisa Robbins worked for the Tampa JCCs & Federation for 10 years and recently returned to build relationships and create high-quality experiences and touchpoints that deepen commitment and foster leadership opportunities for 20s and 30s within the Tampa Jewish community. In between her roles at Tampa, she worked for The Jewish Federations of North America as associate director of community and professional relations, providing support, resources, and consultative services to Federation professionals working with young Jewish adults. Lisa began her career in Jewish communal service as a Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow at the Hillel at The Ohio State University and also worked as a communications consultant for Tucker/Hall, a public affairs and public relations firm. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is pursuing a master's degree from Gratz College.

**Lauren Luskey Taube, Manager, Engagement and YAD Campaign
Memphis Jewish Federation/Jewish Community Partners**

Lauren Luskey Taube oversees PJ Library, teen programs, young adult engagement, and welcoming newcomers' initiatives at the Memphis Jewish Federation. Previously, she worked in congregational religious schools, Jewish summer camps, and nonprofits such as Facing History and Ourselves. Lauren received her master's in Jewish education from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles and her undergraduate degrees in public relations and religion from the University of Southern California. Originally from Midland, Texas, Lauren, her husband, David, and their one-year old son live in Memphis, where she spends her free time trying new recipes, practicing her handstands in yoga, and traveling.

**Sharon Siegel, Manager, Young Adult Engagement & Philanthropy
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, San Francisco**

Sharon Siegel's passion for connecting young adults to their Jewish identity led her to Israel, where she earned an MA in nonprofit management and leadership from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Now at the San Francisco Federation, she organizes meaningful Jewish engagement opportunities for young adults who strengthen the local Jewish community through social events, leadership learning and application, and volunteer activities. Sharon is a natural connector and fosters partnerships within the Bay Area Jewish community through the Federation's NextGen Professionals Network. Her previous work as an educational administrator at a leading progressive New York City institution inspired her to pursue nonprofit community work. Sharon grew up in the Bay Area and enjoys charcoal drawing, great coffee, and experiencing new cultures by traveling the globe.

**Ashleigh Miller Wong, Development Director
JEWISHcolorado**

Ashleigh Wong oversees the Young Adult Department, general Campaign, corporate sponsorship, and major events at JEWISHcolorado, where she also works closely with the Jewish Community Relations Council. Previously, she was the Young Adult director at the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, where she was responsible for rebuilding young adult engagement through programs like Leadership Development Group and National Young Leadership Cabinet. Ashleigh's enthusiasm for Federation started as a Birthright participant in 2007 and continued as a Masa Israel Journey participant in 2008 and a Hillel professional in 2009. She holds a BS in accounting from the University of Colorado and lives in Denver with her husband, Seth.

**Alaia Zeno, Major Gifts Officer, Next Generation & Young Families
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, San Francisco**

Alaia Zeno is a seasoned fundraiser, business development leader, and senior manager with 10+ years working at the intersection of civic, philanthropic, and corporate organizations — including raising over \$6.7 million for three national nonprofits. She also has a long history of involvement with Federation and other Jewish organization in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, from participating in an Anti-Defamation League teen program on race relations to, currently, handling NextGen affairs at the San Francisco Federation. Alaia is an exceptional relationship-builder and dynamic public speaker with a track record of success engaging NextGen and Millennial communities. Raised off a dirt road in a small, rural community just outside of Los Angeles, Alaia earned a BA in American studies and ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University and has taken business classes at New York University. She is also an avid animal lover and a trained percussionist.

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