



Knoxville Jewish Alliance

2024 Annual Report

865.690.6343 | 6800 Deane Hill Drive | Knoxville, TN 37919
jewishknoxville.org

Serving as KJA President has been eye-opening, interesting, inspiring, sometimes frustrating, but mostly fun and also a very meaningful honor for me.

More than a year after the horrors in Israel on October 7, 2023, we're seeing a fundamental change in global and American Jewish identity. At the Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly conference recently, I heard multiple speakers reference a "surge" in American Jews wishing to re-engage with their communities, or to connect in ways that look different than what they've previously experienced. I have seen this personally, and am excited by the ways our community is growing and changing.

This past year has also provided me with deep insights about our operations and the resources required for our organization to adapt, thrive, and accommodate the needs and desires of such a diverse group. I continue to believe that one of our greatest strengths is that EVERYONE is welcome here, like our sign says on Deane Hill Drive. I invite you to be part of our work, on any level that feels comfortable and right for you.

Thank you to all of our donors. Thank you to our incredibly hard-working staff who have led and facilitated so much in 2024, and also been very patient with my learning curve. I am deeply grateful to our Executive Committee and Board of Directors, whose volunteer efforts are as enormous as their passion and hearts for our mission.

I look forward to 2025 and hope to see each of you often.

Judith Rosenberg

Judith Rosenberg, Knoxville Jewish Alliance President



KJA Mission

The mission of the Knoxville Jewish Alliance is to serve the Jewish people locally, in Israel, and throughout the world.

KJA Vision

Through coordinated fundraising, community-wide programming, social services, and educational and other activities, the Knoxville Jewish Alliance seeks to:

- Build community in a welcoming and dynamic space
- Provide assistance for those in need
- Promote Jewish culture and identity
- Develop effective Jewish leaders
- Enhance community relations locally, regionally, nationally & internationally
- Operate and maintain the Arnstein Jewish Community Center

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Judith Rosenberg

Vice President-Campaign: Renee' Hyatt

Vice President- Children and Youth: Martha Iroff

Vice President- Community Engagement: Noa Barak

Vice President- Jewish Community Services: Karen Ferency

Secretary: Debbie Abrams-Cohen

Treasurer: Scott Jacobson

Immediate Past President: Bryan Goldberg

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Stephanie Kodish

BOARD MEMBERS

Allocations: Bernard Bendriem

Budget: Eric Mayer

Community Relations Committee: Karen Robinson

Israel Committee: Marc Forman

Jewish Family Services: Nancy Britcher

Long Range Planning: Scott Hahn

Programs: Ilanit Harre

AUTOMATIC BOARD MEMBERS BY VIRTUE OF COMMUNITY POSITION

Chabad of Knoxville, Advisory Committee Chairman: Michael Zemel

Heska Amuna Synagogue, Chairman of the Board: Mark Siegel

Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge, President: Jim Bogard

Temple Beth El, President: Dan McLaughlin

Knoxville Jewish Day School, President: Gina DiSalvo

Hadassah, President: Barbara Mintz

Knoxville Jewish Community family of Funds, President: Stephen Rosen

KJA Staff

Tara Bain

Director of Community Engagement and Hillel at UTK

Anna Iroff-Bailey

Director of Jewish Life

Louise Lindsey

Director of Preschool at AJCC Early Childhood Program

Erin Gaines

Assistant Director of Preschool at AJCC
Early Childhood Program

Ed Hunter

Director of Finance

Nicki Russler

Archivist

Andrea Martindale

Office Administrator

In 2024, the KJA connected our community through 34 programs and events for people of all ages. We gathered socially for art classes and pool parties. We gathered culturally for Knoshville, Concert for Peace & Healing, Fiddler on the Roof, and with local speakers about Unlikely Jewish Composers and Hazzan Heizer. We gathered in remembrance for Yom HaShoah, A Muscular Peace: A Clergy Mission, A Palestinian Point of View, and October 7: Marking One Year. We gathered for holidays with Shabbat of Love, Shabbat "Near" the Pool, Sundown in the Sukkah, and the community Chanukah Festival. We gathered in gratitude through KJA Gives Thanks, MLK March/Parade, Tennessee Tree Day, LGBTQ+ Rights: 55 Years After Stonewall, and KJCFF's Chanukah Music Fest. The year connected us through sadness and joy.

Thank you for being with us through it all!



OCTOBER 7: Marking One Year



Pace Robinson Court Dedication



Summer Night at the J

Social and Cultural Programming



Sip & Support with Israeli Consul General Anat Sultan-Dadon



Knoshville Jewish Food Festival



Concert for Peace & Healing with
Rabbi Micah Becker-Klein



Yom HaShoah with Dr. Alex Kor



Shabbat of Love



Fiddler on the Roof at Clarence Brown Theatre



Dr. Gilya Schmidt with her exhibit
about Hazzan Mordecai Heiser

YOUR alliance

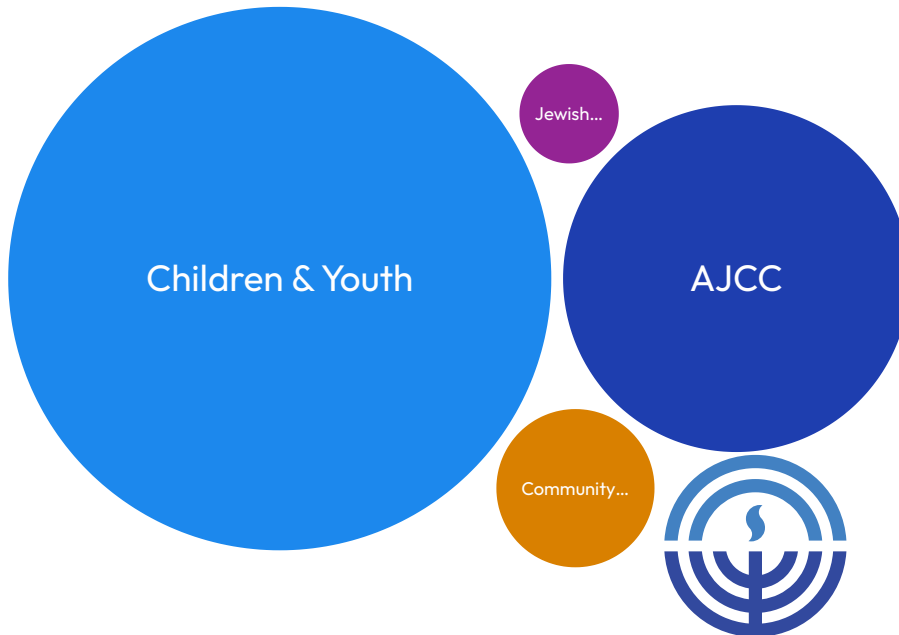
***As of October 31,2024**

Children & Youth

Milton Collins Day Camp.....	\$174,653
PJ Library.....	\$25,202
Preschool at AJCC.....	\$1,125,951
Smokin Salmon Swim Team.....	\$23,804
	\$1,349,610

Community Engagement

Media & Communications	\$41,375
Cultural/Social Programming.....	\$56,970
Knoshville.....	\$13,661
Shinshinim.....	\$2,380
	\$114,386



Jewish Community Services

Archives.....	\$8,192
Hillel@UTK.....	\$28,675
Jewish Family Services.....	\$8,297
	\$45,164

Arnstein Jewish Community Center

Facility.....	\$367,349
Offices.....	\$138,784
Pool.....	\$88,776
	\$549,909

in numbers...

Grants received

- Harold Grinspoon Foundation (PJ Library) -----\$8,851
- Hillel International (Hillel at UTK) -----\$14,128
- Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle TN (Hillel at UTK)-----\$6,000
- Jewish Federation of North America (October 7 event)-----\$3,000
- KJCFF - KJA Controlled Funding-----\$245,487
- KJCFF Funding-----\$12,800
- Our Daily Bread (Preschool at AJCC)-----\$37,477
- Tennessee State-----\$52,000
- TN Dept. of Safety & Homeland Security-----\$28,655
- United Way of Greater Knoxville-----\$275

Total: \$408,773

Annual Campaign Raised

\$233,851

*as of 12/18/24

Capital Improvements Total:

\$311,112



Preschool at AJCC fosters exploration with sensory bins in each classroom. They are changed regularly to reflect the theme in which the students are learning.



Preschool is so thankful to be part of the AJCC, where the beautiful grounds allow for so much outdoor play.

The enrollment totals for Preschool at AJCC reached 89 students this year with strong engagement across various programs and events. Highlights include the Purim Party on March 22 welcomed 24 family members, the Art Gala welcomed 42 family members and 17 community members, and the Family Shabbat Party on May 17 welcomed 27 family members. Community contributions included hosting KJDS for the Sukkah Hop, running a pet supply drive for PAWS, offering free birdfeeder-making at Knoshville, and providing tuition assistance for Israeli refugees. These efforts highlight a year of growth, community engagement, and giving back.

Preschool encourages parent participation, especially during the holidays!





PJ Library participated in JFNA's Shabbat of Love with Tot Shabbat and dinner hosted by Marty and Martha Iroff in February.



PJ Library teamed up with Rabbi Ahuvah at JCOR for a series of monthly Family Education days.



PJ Library and KJDS partnered to host 16 sessions of the Kinder & Kin playgroup for preschools and parents.

PJ Library and PJ Our Way provide free monthly Jewish books to families with children ages 0-12, offering an accessible way to engage with Jewish life. For many, these books are a vital connection to their Judaism and community, empowering parents to teach and share Jewish traditions at home regardless of their background. Our monthly e-newsletter further supports families by sharing local programming, blog posts, podcasts, and virtual events that connect them to the broader Jewish community.



Officers:
-President: Hannah May
-Sophia Walter
-Abby Quartaro
-Avi May



Kerns Food Hall program

Our chapter participated in BBYO's international October 7th Remembrance Zoom call, joining hundreds of teens from around the world to reflect and connect. Afterward, we discussed our personal journeys with Judaism and Zionism by labeling parts of a tree to symbolize our unique experiences. Later, we came together for a fun and engaging chapter dinner, where we not only shared our future plans for the chapter but also enjoyed a night full of laughter and meaningful connections.



2024 MCDC Staff



**In 2024
the Milton Collins Day
Camp had
over 930 registrations!**



Smokin'
Salmon
swimmers
boys, ages
8 & under,
competeing at
a home meet
in a
backstroke
event



2024 Smokin' Salmon Team

This year, Amelia Brooke led 61 swimmers. The Smokin' Salmon team were undefeated this summer in 4 meets, which should allow us to move up to League 5 next year. Thank you Amelia, Ethan, Effie, and Alisa for a great summer of swimming. On September 7, the 3rd annual Pooch Plunge at the Allen Rosen Aquatic Center was a successful fundraiser! This event was open to the greater-Knoxville community and an opportunity for pet owners to bring their dogs for a day of swimming at the pool.

A Strategic Plan was developed and implemented to improve collection development and management and increase the utilization of the Archives:

- Archives was renamed The Bernard and Barbara Winick Bernstein Archives of the Jewish Community of Knoxville and East Tennessee
- Knoxville engaged many attendees who helped identify people and events in items in our photograph collection
- Development of Information Resources focused on our multi-year project to digitize newsletters with completion expected in 2025.
- Internship Program engaged a UTK undergraduate student who supported our project to digitize The Center Menorah and successor publications
- Support to KJA Partnering Organizations included providing materials to Heska Amuna Synagogue and creating a digital collection of Gilya Schmidt's exhibit presented in the Schwarbart Gallery
- HaKol submissions continued to highlight holdings through "The Way We Were" column
- Walking Tour film event is slated to be presented in 2025



Jewish Family Services

The JFS committee met eight times during the year to plan and manage activities, including monthly First Friday Shabbats at Sherrill Hills with services and refreshments provided to 12 residents. Volunteers visited 24 residents in senior facilities, delivering challahs and holiday gift bags. The chairperson handled 25 discreet calls for referrals, addressing housing, community services, and emergency funding.



One educational event, Nature and Wellness, featured photographer Ron Sentell and wellness discussions, attended by 12 community members. The committee supported Susannah's House with donations and is exploring new initiatives for the greater Knoxville community. Future plans include collaborating on an aging program in March and assisting with a proposed community health fair.



2024 & 2025 Hillel at UTK Student Board



Hillel at UTK



Hillel at UTK engaged 86 Jewish students this year. Thanks to grants from KJCFF, Jewish Federation of Greater Nashville, and Hillel International, as well as targeted fundraising, Hillel at UTK was able to provide 86 Jewish students with 17 Shabbat and holiday gatherings, weekly study group for first year students, 4 Nights Out at local restaurants, 3 service projects, 4 campus tablings, and a variety of other campus and community programs. Hillel at UTK also worked with the Dean's Office to provide the director with weekly office hours for spring and fall semesters. Also in the spring, fifteen students gathered for the 4th annual Shabbaton in the Smokies to focus on Shabbat and Israel.

We have worked diligently to expand funding for Hillel at UTK in 2024. Thanks to a local donor, a Hillel at UTK Fund was created with KJCFF. During Hillel Global Giving Week in May, Hillel at UTK raised \$5,132.42 from 53 donors.

Thanks to Hillel International, we received a \$5,000 match and an additional \$500 for increasing our last year's donors more than 20%. Our total of \$10,632.42 was a 10% increase over last year.

This year, more than 1,200 households received HaKol. This is a 7% increase over last year. We also welcomed two annual advertisers in 2024, and all previous advertisers returned. Thank you to all who support our community's bimonthly magazine!

In 2024, KJA Connection averaged its readership at 1,067. Our open rate averaged 51%, a decrease of 9% since 2023.

Media & Communications



The gymnasium floor was sanded, stained, sealed, and repainted to honor our 2000-2001 Knoxville Jewish Federation President and first KJA President (2001-2002), Pace Robinson. The floor showcases Pace's signature, along with lines for basketball, pickleball, four square, and hopscotch.

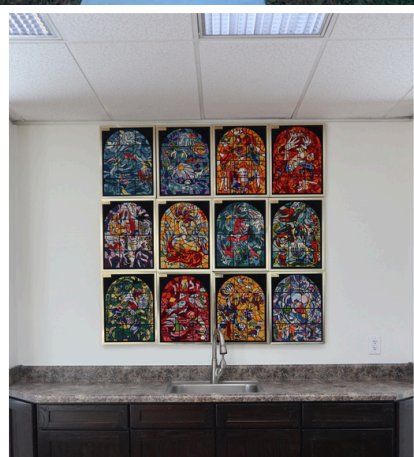
At the same time Pace Robinson Court was completed, Caller Auditorium received a facelift of light and dark blue.



The Iroff-Rayman Community Pavilion is now decorated with a permanent sign to honor Martha & Marty Iroff and Brenda & Chip Rayman.



The outdoor space off of the Orwitz Room was revitalized with deck flooring, new railing, and solar lights.



The interior of the Orwitz Room was painted to give the space a light, bright facelift. Thank you, Marty & Martha Iroff and Jared Iroff-Bailey.

The Knoxville Jewish Alliance welcomed our first Shinshinim in August, Noa Gilan and Tsur Kushnir. Shinshinim are recent high school graduates from Israel who spend a year volunteering in our community through the Jewish Agency for Israeli. Noa and Tsur have been bringing their energy, joy, and deep connection to Israel throughout our community. They have revitalized our BBYO-Connect program for middle schoolers, taught weekly cooking classes for the Preschool at AJCC, tutored Hebrew at KJDS, brought fun Israeli activities to Temple Beth El Religious School, joined with Shabbat services and dinners with Hillel at UTK and Jewish Family Services at Sherrill Hills, and more. They have also put together a powerful exhibit in the Schwarzbart Gallery in honor of victims and hostages of the October 7th attacks in Israel, as well as participating in community memorials, educational programs, and programs at local churches to speak about their personal experiences. Todah rabba, Noa and Tsur! We are lucky to have you with us in Knoxville.

Welcome Shinshinim, Noa & Tsur!

