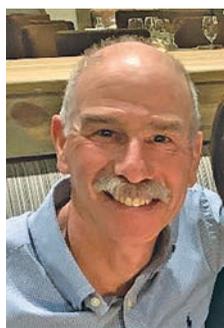


Jewish Long Beach/Alpert JCC Integration – Dream With Us

Edie Brodsky | President, Jewish Long Beach Board and Barry Zamost, MD | President, Alpert Jewish Community Center Board



Edie Brodsky



Barry Zamost, MD

Are you a “Federation” person or a “JCC” person? This question has remained a common one in our Jewish community throughout the decades. But if the integration of Jewish Long Beach, formerly the Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Foundation, and the Alpert Jewish Community Center (AJCC) were such a great idea, why has it taken over 70 years to get beyond that question? As often occurs with major changes, it came down to the right people and the right time.

While some people in the community have believed that Jewish Long Beach and the AJCC were already one agency, they have actually always been two distinct organizations, each with its own board, staff structures, mission, budget, and operations. Even with joint efforts to raise funds and build the beautiful new building housing the AJCC, Jewish Long Beach, and other Jewish communal agencies in 1999, we were still left with the Federation as the landlord and the AJCC as the primary tenant, resulting in frequent and complicated discussions about the management and maintenance of the building. While often working together on projects, such as

our new solar energy system, security needs, and management of the pool, the fact that the agencies were separate created barriers to collaboration. Jewish Long Beach, in its role as a community convener, was setting community priorities, and the AJCC was making strides to engage those priorities through programming in an environment where true, seamless collaboration remained impossible.

But as leaders in the community began to populate both boards, with AJCC past presidents holding important positions on the Jewish Long Beach Board, and vice versa, one could slowly see a new spirit of cooperation developing. A sense of what would be possible when we work together was emerging. In 2019, the Long Beach Federation and Foundation merged to become Jewish Long Beach, and a new CEO of Jewish Long Beach, Zach Benjamin, arrived. Meanwhile, various communities around

the country were looking at new models, and donors everywhere were asking whether there might be better ways to coordinate annual and legacy giving, to assess community need, and to address those needs through innovative programming.

And so the AJCC Future Visions Task Force was born and soon expanded to become a joint Task Force with Jewish Long Beach under the experienced leadership of AJCC Immediate Past President Matt Davis, and Jewish Long Beach Immediate Past President Laurie Raykoff. After preliminary communications with several communities around the country, and more focused Zoom meetings with two communities that

had already successfully integrated, the work of the Task Force began to gain momentum.

In March 2020, Interim AJCC Executive Director (and previous Federation CEO) Deborah Goldfarb arrived, which coupled with the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, caused the process to rapidly accelerate. A year of intense preparation followed, consisting of committee meetings, joint executive committee and governing board meetings, governance structure and mission/vision subcommittee meetings, the creation of integration timelines, organizational charts, and combined financial models, all leading to the recent historic votes. In late March 2021, the Jewish Long Beach and AJCC Governing Boards separately and

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the act or process of incorporating as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups

unanimously voted to integrate the two agencies. The Alpert JCC will still retain its name and brand as part of Jewish Long Beach, and while the

formal legal date for establishing the new agency is expected to be January 1, 2022, the boards and staffs will immediately begin working together to serve the community with unprecedented impact and effectiveness.

This would never have happened without trust: trust between the lay leaders, between the AJCC and Jewish Long Beach Executive Directors, between the two Governing Boards, and our trust that the community will Dream With Us in securing a bright and exciting future.

So, from now on, the answer to the question, “are you a JCC or a Federation person?” will always be, “Yes.” 

ZOOM Town Hall
Wednesday, May 5 at 7:00 pm

Dream With Us

Join Jewish Long Beach and the Alpert JCC for a virtual town hall gathering to learn more about the coming together of these two long-standing Jewish agencies. Register for the event to obtain the ZOOM link – <http://bit.ly/JLBxAJCC>