

2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Presenting a year of growth, innovation, and impact. This annual report encapsulates our journey, milestones achieved, & aspirations for a brighter, more sustainable future.*

Prepared By

**Laurie Waxler**

Development Director



# Our Mission



To create a vibrant, healthy Jewish community by strengthening our connections, inspiring Jewish identity, providing for those in need and promoting greater understanding.

*At home and throughout the world, these **Core Values** guide Federation's programs and services to our Jewish community.*



## **Tzedakah - Charity and Social Justice**

- Jewish Family Service
- Jewish Community Relations



## **Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World**

- Israel Relief Campaign
- Bi-monthly Food Pantries open to the entire Berks County community



## **Kehilah - Building Community**

- Jewish holiday community celebrations
- Collaborating with local synagogues



## **Torah - Jewish Learning**

- Adult and youth programming based on Jewish values



# A message from our CEO



Dear Community Members,

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with a profound sense of gratitude and pride. This past year has been one of remarkable growth, resilience, and profound impact—none of which would have been possible without your unwavering support and commitment to our shared mission.

In the face of global challenges and local needs, the Jewish Federation of Reading has remained steadfast in our dedication to strengthening Jewish life, fostering community, and extending a helping hand to those in need. From providing essential services to individuals and families, to supporting our global Jewish community, we are proud to share with you the collective impact we've achieved together.

Through our programs and initiatives, we have reached almost 2,000 individuals and households across a variety of vital services, including food pantries, advocacy, emergency assistance, and community-building efforts. We have provided critical support to those facing hardship, and worked tirelessly to ensure the vibrancy and sustainability of Jewish life in Berks County for generations to come.

Perhaps most inspiring of all is the way in which our community has rallied in times of adversity. When crises have unfolded—whether in our own neighborhoods or abroad—we have witnessed extraordinary acts of kindness and solidarity. The outpouring of support for those affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and other tragedies underscores the strength of our Jewish values and the power of community.

Looking ahead, The Jewish Federation of Reading remains focused on our strategic vision to continue strengthening Jewish identity, supporting those in need, and building a more inclusive, compassionate world. Our work is far from over, and we are energized by the possibilities that the future holds.

We are deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in the Jewish Federation of Reading. Your partnership, volunteerism and financial support have made an indelible difference, and we look forward to continuing this important work with you in the years to come.

Thank you for helping us make the world a better place—for today, for tomorrow, and for future generations.

L'Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Chartock".

Brian Chartock  
Chief Executive Officer  
Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



# Meet Our Team



**BRIAN CHARTOCK**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**VICKI GRAFF**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
BEGINNING DECEMBER 2024



**CAROLE ROBINSON**  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE  
DIRECTOR



**LAURIE WAXLER**  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



**SARI INCLEDON**  
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE



**MARGO LEVIN**  
JEWISH COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS & PROGRAMMING



**AMANDA HORNBERGER**  
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER  
TERM ENDED: 9/13/2024



**AMANDA WERTZ**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



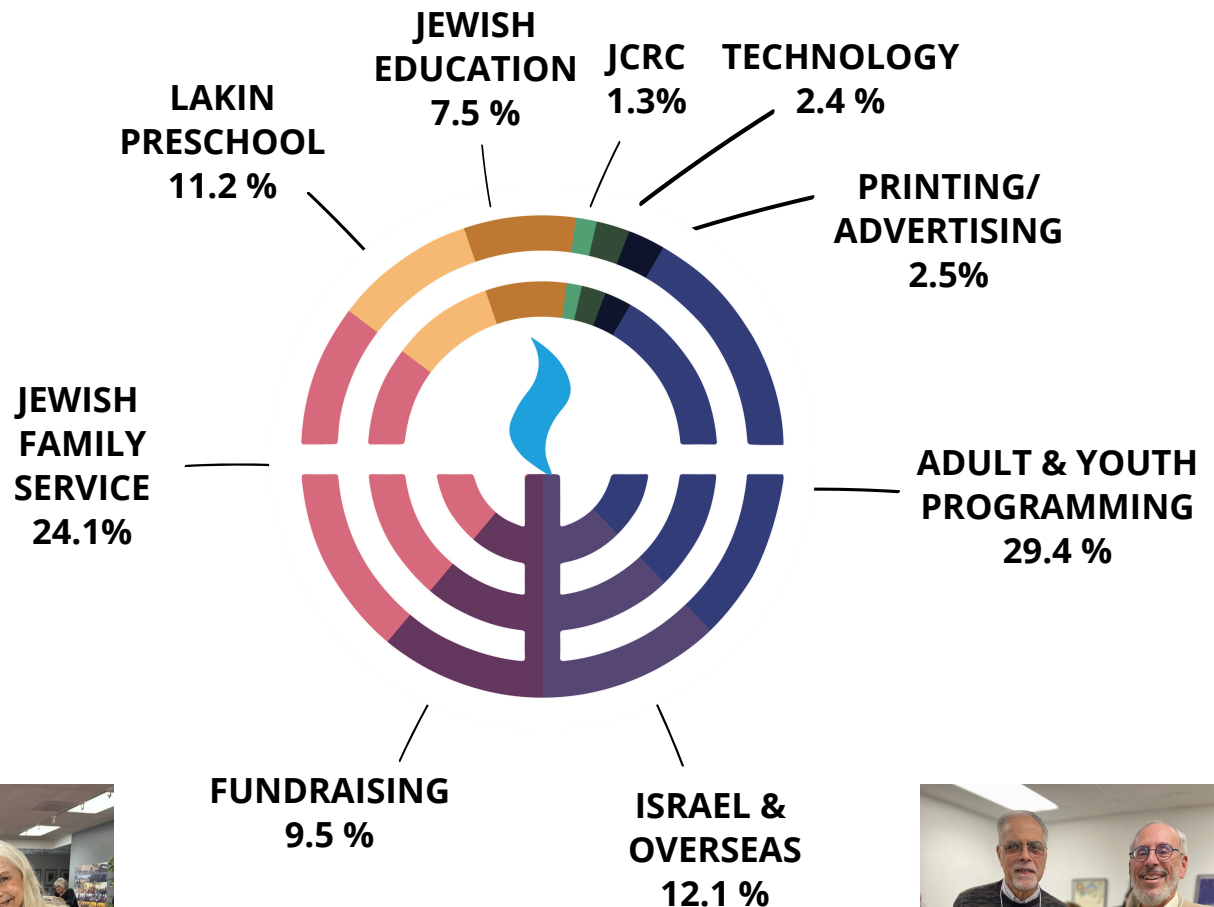
**ZIV LASKIN**  
SHALIACH  
TERM ENDED: 5/31/24

- **MARK NEMIROW** - SHALOM
- **IRENE MOUCLIZIS** - BOOKKEEPER
- **PETER ALVAREZ** - MAINTENANCE
- **BRIAN YAFFE** - WEBSITE



# Finance

How your financial support makes a difference in our community



## 2024 Total Revenue:



### Annual Campaign &

Jewish Family Service: \$438,426

JCC Membership: \$20,798

Honorariums/Memorials: \$11,056

Shalom Income: \$10,945

United Way: \$82,301

Grants Received: \$115,765

Program Income: \$23,270

**Total: \$702,561**

# 2024 Volunteers

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is,  
‘What are you doing for others?’”  
– Martin Luther King Jr.

***Many thanks to those who have offered their gifts of time  
and talent to help make our Berks County community a better place.***

Allison Althouse  
Mary Ann Avins  
Miryam Axler  
Cindy Balchunas  
Eric Blackerby  
Shirley Blackerby  
Jeff Bornstein  
Sheila Bornstein  
Scott Bram  
Ivan Bub  
Judy Copeland  
Phyllis Dessel  
Jeff Driben  
Michael Farrara  
Sue Farrara  
Sam Flamholz  
Sarah Flamholz  
Debbie Frank  
Raymond Gehring  
Debbie Goldberg  
Anzie Golden  
Patty Hartman  
John Incledon  
Pete Jacobson  
Arlene Johns

Wayne Johns  
Eddie Kazin  
Nancy Knoblauch  
Jennifer Koosed  
Elliott Leisawitz  
Sid Lempiner  
Lisa Levine  
Rabbi Yosef Lipsker  
John Lozar  
Lisa Lozar  
Pete Mancioni  
Michelle Mart  
Haia Mazuz  
Rabbi Brian Michelson  
Paul Mintz  
Debra Montanino  
Mary Neville  
Annette Peppard  
Carol Perlmutter  
Gordon Perlmutter  
Alec Platt  
Cantor Ted Prosnitz  
Jodi Radosh  
Jennafer Reilly  
Mike Robinson

Milo Robinson  
Rep. Jacklyn Rusnock  
Nancy Russo  
Mike Schein  
Chad Schlanger  
Robert Schneier  
Paul Schwartz  
Ellen Schwartz  
Ellen Schwickrath  
Esther Shanahan  
Russ Shanahan  
Jannine Shapiro  
Joan Sherman  
Jacob Sileski  
Vicky Sokoloff  
Claudia Strauss  
Sharon Syret  
Gail Tomrell  
Oleg Umanov  
Michael Warshaw  
Phyllis Warshaw  
Andy Wernick  
Corinne Wernick  
Victoria Williams  
Sue Wilson

***Special Thanks to: Antanavage Farbiarz, PLLC, Bluestone Family & Cosmetic  
Dental, Phyllis Dessel, Sweet Street Desserts, Wyomissing Optometric  
Center, and Jeff Gernsheimer for their continued in-kind support.***





# Jewish Family Service

Jewish Family Service is an integral part of the Federation providing human services for the entire community. Serving all age groups, it is dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the quality of individual and family life in the Jewish community through outreach, counseling, emergency financial assistance, information and referral.

## 2024 Milestones

- Keeping our seniors engaged with
  - twice monthly Friendship Circle programs.
  - Holiday outreach to more than 100 community members for the Jewish holidays.
  - Special Passover Seder and Rosh Hashanah services.
- Serving the Greater Reading Community with:
  - Two monthly Food Pantries partnering with Helping Harvest:
    - 290,000 lbs of food distributed in 2024
      - up from 223,000 lbs in 2023
      - served 6,611 people in 1,885 households
- Noontime Knowledge
  - twice monthly educational programs open to everyone.
- Provided outreach services to more than 200 community members through:
  - Information and referrals on government benefits and community services
  - Caregiving Information
  - Housing Options
  - Counseling
  - Home and hospital visits

Ways in which  
Jewish Family Service  
aids their clients  
in need:

Rent

Grocery Cards

Utilities

Medical Bills

Transportation

Home & Hospital Visits

Counseling



# Jewish Culture & Engagement

Federation offers a variety of programming, strengthening both our Jewish identities as well as our community connections. We strive to enhance our Jewish community by providing something for all ages, from toddlers to adults. Federation also prides itself on collaborating with our three community synagogues as well as other non-Jewish organizations throughout Berks County.

## 2024 Milestones

### Youth Programming:

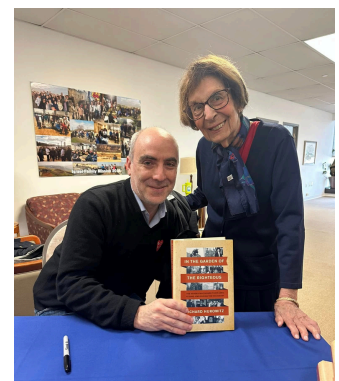
- PJ Library enrollment: 54 children (birth - 8 yrs)
- PJ Our Way enrollment: 23 children (ages 9 - 12 yrs.)
- Berks Interfaith Passport with our Jewish (RCOS), Christian (Immanuel UCC) and Muslim (Islamic Center) partners
- Havdalah, MLK Service Day of Service, Teen Krav Maga, Rock Climbing

### Adult Programming:

- Literatour Author Events: 10
- Various educational programs including Great Decisions, Literatour, Reading Jewish Film Series, Tech Tuesdays, and Noontime Knowledge
- Various social programming including happy hours, ROMEO (retired old men eating out), MahJong, Pilates, Maimonides, and Movie Mondays
- Annual Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecturer:
- Annual Leo Camp Lecturer: Avi Melamed, Middle East Historian & Commentator
- Comedy Night with Joel Chasnoff at Goggleworks

### Holiday and Family Programming:

- Bus trips to Philadelphia for Jewish Heritage Night at the Philadelphia 76ers and to the Weitzman Jewish Heritage Museum
- IDF Soldiers visit to Berks County for various community programs
- Kristallnacht Commemoration with Christ Episcopal Church
- Yom Hashoah memorial program at the Highlands at Wyomissing with 170+ in attendance, featuring Sid and Esther Bratt's story of survival.



# Jewish Community Relations



Our Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) continues to fight for social justice and combat antisemitism in Berks County and beyond. Building relationships with other local non-profits and governmental bodies, JCRC works to promote unity within our community.

## 2024 Milestones

- JCRC meets regularly as part of the Greater Reading Unity Coalition made up of JFR, NAACP, Centro Hispano, the Islamic Center of Reading, Bring the Change and the LGBT Center.
- Represents Federation at the Reading Diversity Festival.
- Organized a Diversity Night at the Reading Phillies featuring the GRUC groups and with local sponsorship, gifted 5,000 tickets to our community members to attend the game.
- Participated in and helped organize a Kristallnacht Circle of Light and service at Christ Church in Reading.
- Represents Federation as a member of the PA Jewish Coalition Committee
- Organized “Shine A Light on Antisemitism” following the annual menorah lighting in Reading, inviting community members and local elected officials to educate them on rising antisemitism and how, together, we can combat it on a local level.
- Reached out to all Berks County School Districts and provided resources to raise awareness and help combat antisemitism.
- Attended NAACP conference, Harwood Institute for Public Innovation seminar, and participated in Juneteenth Festival.
- Attended a panel with Representative Chrissy Houlihan about ‘safety in your house of worship.’



Federation has distributed this “Stand Up to Jewish Hate” lapel pin at many events. They are available at the JCC office if you’d like one.





# Lakin Preschool

Our preschool offered programming for toddlers and children up to age 5. The preschool is located within Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom, and has been funded, in part, by the Federation's Edwin A. & Alma Lakin Philanthropic Fund. As of June, 2025, the preschool will be closing. The Federation Board of Directors has been in close contact with the Yocum Institute for Arts Education, an already established preschool, and through a strategic alliance they will be adopting some of our Jewish curriculum to transition our students to their program, for those families who choose to participate.

**Co-Directors:** Wendy Bright and Judy Lefante

## 2024-2025 Programming

Program Offerings:

Little Stars

Toddler Time

Discovery - for 3+ yrs

Adventurers - for 4+ yrs

## Enrichment Programs

Amazing Athletes

I Love Stories

Kaleidoscope

Soccer Shots

Stay & Play

Early Morning Drop off



## 2024-2025 Highlights

- **Tzedakah**-monthly collection raised over \$220 this year. Carole Robinson facilitated an activity to demonstrate the importance of Tzedakah. Children actively participated in assembling food and snack bags for those less fortunate.
- **Thanksgiving Choral Program** - Family and parent reception followed the program.
- **Art Show**-Elyse Horowitz educated children about different mediums and techniques.





# Shaliach

## *Building Living Bridges to Israel*

Our Shaliach, Ziv Laskin, worked as an emissary for our Federation for 2 years, with his term ending in May, 2024. Ziv provided a living connection to Israel by sharing his personal Israeli experiences, programs were developed for both adults and youth. Ziv provided a unique learning opportunity for our Jewish community. Unfortunately, the following the terrorist attack in Israel, the program was put on hold and were unable to continue the program.

### 2024 Milestones

- Israeli Culture
  - Israeli cooking classes
  - Lectures from Israeli speakers and organizations
  - Twice monthly educational “Coffee with Ziv”
- Youth Outreach
  - Youth group activities for kids in grades 8 - 12
  - Religious school activities with RCOS & Chabad
- Young Adults
  - Shabbat dinners and activities
- Israeli Holidays
- Coordination with local institutions including RACC, Alvernia, Albright, Kutztown and local churches



# Israel & Global Needs

The Jewish Federation of Reading helps provide advocacy & justice in Israel and throughout the world, by supporting these two programs.

**Yemin Orde** - a Youth Village in Israel that is a home, school and safe-haven to 450 children from around the world. The Village has welcomed children from France, North Africa, Iran, India, Yemen, Eastern Europe and South America. Most of the children have suffered trauma in their young lives from isolation and neglect, to abandonment and extreme poverty. At Yemin Orde, they find a home, a family and a future. For more information about this organization, please visit [www.impact-israel.org](http://www.impact-israel.org)



**Meir Panim** - based in Israel, Meir Panim's mission is to alleviate and diminish the harmful effects of poverty on thousands of families across Israel by supporting a range of food and social service programs aimed at helping the needy with dignity and respect, including free restaurants, meals-on-wheels, school lunch programs, prepaid food card distribution, vocational training and after-school youth clubs. For more information on this organization, please visit [www.meir-panim.org](http://www.meir-panim.org)



# Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading



The Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading was founded in 2023 to protect funds held at the Federation through endowments as well as philanthropic funds. The funds are currently managed by Connors Investor Services. Terms for Foundation members are 2 yrs and elections are held every March.

**Chair:** Michael Fromm

(term began 4/1/2025)

**Past Chair** Gordon Perlmutter

(term ended 3/30/2025)

**Members:** Robert Caster

Michael Fromm

Vic Hammel

Andrew Wernick

## Israel Emergency Relief Campaign

Jewish Federation of Reading's Israel Emergency Relief Campaign, initiated after the terrorist attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, wrapped up on April 30, 2024. Chaired and championed by Vic Hammel and Michael Fromm, the Campaign raised \$435,000 by community members and was matched dollar for dollar by the Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Reading, resulting in \$870,000 being sent to Israel for humanitarian aid. Funds were designated to programs vetted by the Jewish Federation of North America, including mental health care, medical care, relocation and housing costs and more.





# JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Officers 2024-2025

Chairperson: Sheila Bornstein  
1st Vice Chair: Jennifer Koosed  
2nd Vice Chair: Susan Wilson  
Treasurer: Paul Schwartz  
Secretary: Debbie Goldberg

## Board Members for 2024-2025

Jonathan Avins  
Ron Berman  
Irving Ehrlich  
Jacob Gurwitz  
Michael Karchevsky  
Michele Leisawitz  
Lisa Levine  
Leah Rotenberg

## Affiliate Members 2024- 2025

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker, Chabad Lubavitch  
Cantor Ted Prosnitz, Keshet Zion  
Rabbi Brian Michelson, Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom

## Past Board Chairs

Robert Caster  
Haia Mazuz  
Larry Rotenberg  
Paul D. Cohn  
Alvin Katz  
Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer  
Michael Fromm  
Kenneth Lakin  
Gordon Perlmutter  
Sheila Lattin

Donald Fox  
Neal Jacobs\*  
Paul Kozloff  
Alma Lakin\*  
Victor H. Hammel  
George P. Viener  
Bernard Fromm  
David N. Farber\*  
Gerald A. Goodman\*  
Benjamin Cutler\*

Edwin Lakin\*  
Leo Camp\*  
George Eligman\*  
Norman Dunitz\*  
Max Fisher\*.

\*Deceased











ENRICHING LIVES  
מעשירים חיים



United Way of Berks County

*Honor the Past. Celebrate the Present.  
Embrace the Future.*



[www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org](http://www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org)



[info@jfreading.org](mailto:info@jfreading.org)



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