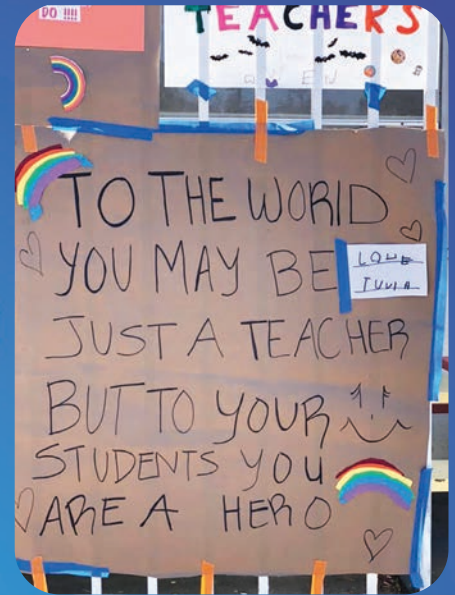


# Builders of Jewish Education Annual Report

2019-2020



Building Bridges Together and Apart

# Nurturing Jewish Education



Mark S. Berns and Gil Graff

The strength of Jewish education is a function of the collective efforts of parents, teachers, students and all who support Jewish learning. Spring 2020 brought extraordinary challenges as well as new opportunities to the enduring project of Jewish education. The pages of this Annual Report include a glimpse at BJE's significant role in helping schools and families relate to changes resulting from COVID-19.

Throughout its history, BJE has been blessed with outstanding Presidents. Over the past three years, BJE has been headed by Mark S. Berns, a past president of Stephen Wise Temple and long-time officer of many boards, including that of BJE. A recently retired partner at the national CPA firm Cohn

Reznick LLP, Mark's commitment to Jewish education, financial expertise and sound judgment did much to ensure that BJE could carry forward its mission long into the future. I cannot sufficiently thank Mark for his exceptional leadership throughout his term.

BJE's long history of outstanding lay leadership continues with the election of Bennett L. Spiegel as President of BJE, effective September 1, 2020. Bennett, a partner at the law firm Hogan Lovells US LLP, is a past president of Adat Ari El and a long-time officer of the BJE board. He serves, as well, on the board of Bet Tzedek and the Advisory Board of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. An alumnus of Ramaz High School (not to mention Yale Law School and Yale School of Management), Bennett embodies the combination of wisdom, skill, demonstrated leadership and commitment to Jewish learning that has enabled BJE to flourish.

Thank you to the more than 1000 individuals, families and institutional partners who made the work described in these pages possible. Your partnership nurtures the Jewish education of thousands of children and families, enriching their lives and building the Jewish future. With wishes for a shanah tovah, a year of good health and abundant blessing,

Gil Graff, Executive Director

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\*BJE past Chairs and Presidents

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Norman Saiger  
Jo Seligman  
Rabbi Avrohom Stulberger  
Mel Wynn<sup>z1</sup>  
*z1 of blessed memory*

# bje 2020 gala

## BJE's 2020 Gala Honors Leaders in Jewish Education and Teen Experiential Education



Mark S. Berns, BJE President, Susan Jacoby Stern, Gala Co-Chair, Cheryl Davidson, Honoree, Marlynn and Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Honorees, Maggie Howard, Gala Co-Chair, Craig Rutenberg, Honoree, Brian Kaplan, Gala Co-Chair and Dr. Gil Graff, BJE Executive Director

In January, more than 500 people gathered for BJE's Annual Gala to celebrate honorees who each help spread the light of Jewish education to the next generation, and have a deep appreciation for the enrichment, joy and community these opportunities create. Cheryl Davidson, Rabbi Elliot and Marlynn Dorff, and Craig Rutenberg are all passionate

community leaders with a profound commitment to Jewish education, and a special appreciation for experiential Jewish educational opportunities. The honorees all generously agreed to use part of their own gifts as a dollar for dollar match for all donations that came in as a result of the gala, in support of BJE's teen experiential programs.

## About BJE's Teen Experiential Programs

Experiential Jewish education is about teaching Jewish life and values through compelling experiences, and BJE has long played a role in this arena. Locally and abroad, BJE offers programs for LA area teens to engage in meaningful Jewish learning outside the classroom. Until the Coronavirus grounded this year's BJE March of the Living program, over 200 local teens annually participated in a two-week journey to Poland and Israel to learn about the Jewish past, present and future. BJE Impact and BJE Teen Service Corps offer meaningful service opportunities, pairing hands-on projects with Jewish learning. Through these BJE programs, hundreds of teens every year explore such powerful concepts as ethics, values, tolerance and compassion through a Jewish lens.



Ayla Kattler

*"The 20th-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig said that what we do in the world can lead us to understanding Torah better. Instead of Torah being the lens for life, our life-experiences can be the lens for Torah. To me this really encapsulates the very Jewish idea of action followed by understanding. This is the simple beauty of experiential learning. First-hand experiences can help us understand Torah better, and can help us internalize the lessons learned."*

**Ayla Kattler spent two summers as a BJE Teen Service Corps participant.**

# BJE Provides Communal Support During Covid-19 Crisis

Amid the uncertainty and upheaval of the Covid-19 crisis, BJE worked to help schools, teachers, parents and students adapt to changes in teaching, Jewish life and communal engagement. BJE's robust networks of educators in day schools, early childhood centers and part-time religious

schools collaborated and expanded their knowledge with support from BJE professionals and facilitators. BJE also served as a central location for resources for parents and educators during this period, compiling and hosting lists on the BJE website.



## BJE Director of the Center for Excellence in Early Childhood and Day School Education, Rabbi Jim Rogozen,

convened Zoom meetings of the various Day School professional networks in order to share information and experiences. BJE helped schools access information about legal issues, PPP loans, and helped them secure PPE supplies; in addition to thinking through such issues as educational programming, graduation, staffing, re-enrollment and finances.

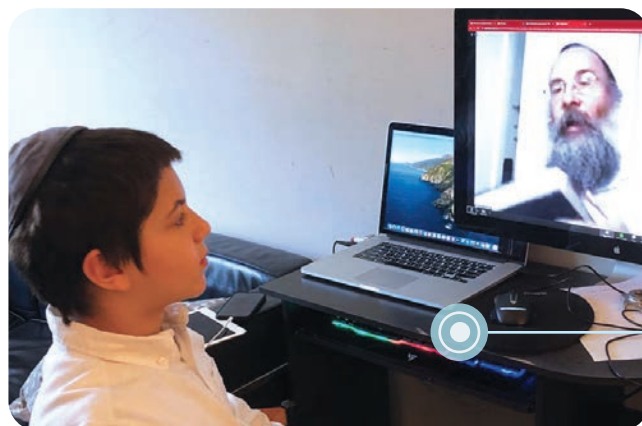
## BJE's Early Childhood Education Specialist, Carly Rosenstein,

quickly adapted the March 16th Early Childhood Institute to a Zoom format to make it accessible and safe for the more than 400 participants. Since then,

she has held regular Zoom meetings of the Early Childhood Directors Network, and helped facilitate collaboration between the directors in the group and plan for reopening. She also created an online data bank of resources for families with young children to use at home during this time. It is housed on the BJE website and contains submissions from ECCs across the city.

**David Lewis, BJE Director of the Center for Excellence in Part-Time Jewish Education,** convened BJE's Religious School Educators Network (RSEN) for

a collective discussion about how to quickly adapt programs from in-person to online, and continued to hold Zoom meetings with the group twice a week. He worked with the Jewish Federation,



and online Jewish educational content providers based in Los Angeles, to harness free online materials and support for schools.

**Michal Kress, BJE Experiential Educator**, offered virtual workshops for the LA Jewish Teen Initiative Professional Learning Community of teen educators and provided online consultations to experiential educators and service learning professionals at partner institutions. One example was a very well received Lunch & Zoom to discuss spirituality in the time of Coronavirus.



**BJE Project EnAble Director, Michelle Porjes**, met with school-based Student Services providers via Zoom to share ways to meet the needs of diverse learners in virtual learning. Representatives from a variety of schools discussed what is being done in their schools to help those students struggling academically and how to support teachers.

**BJE's JKidLA Concierge, Rachel Kaplan** connected with synagogues, schools and community organizations to continually update information and opportunities community-wide specifically geared to everyone's Safer at Home circumstances.



## BJE Communities of Practice

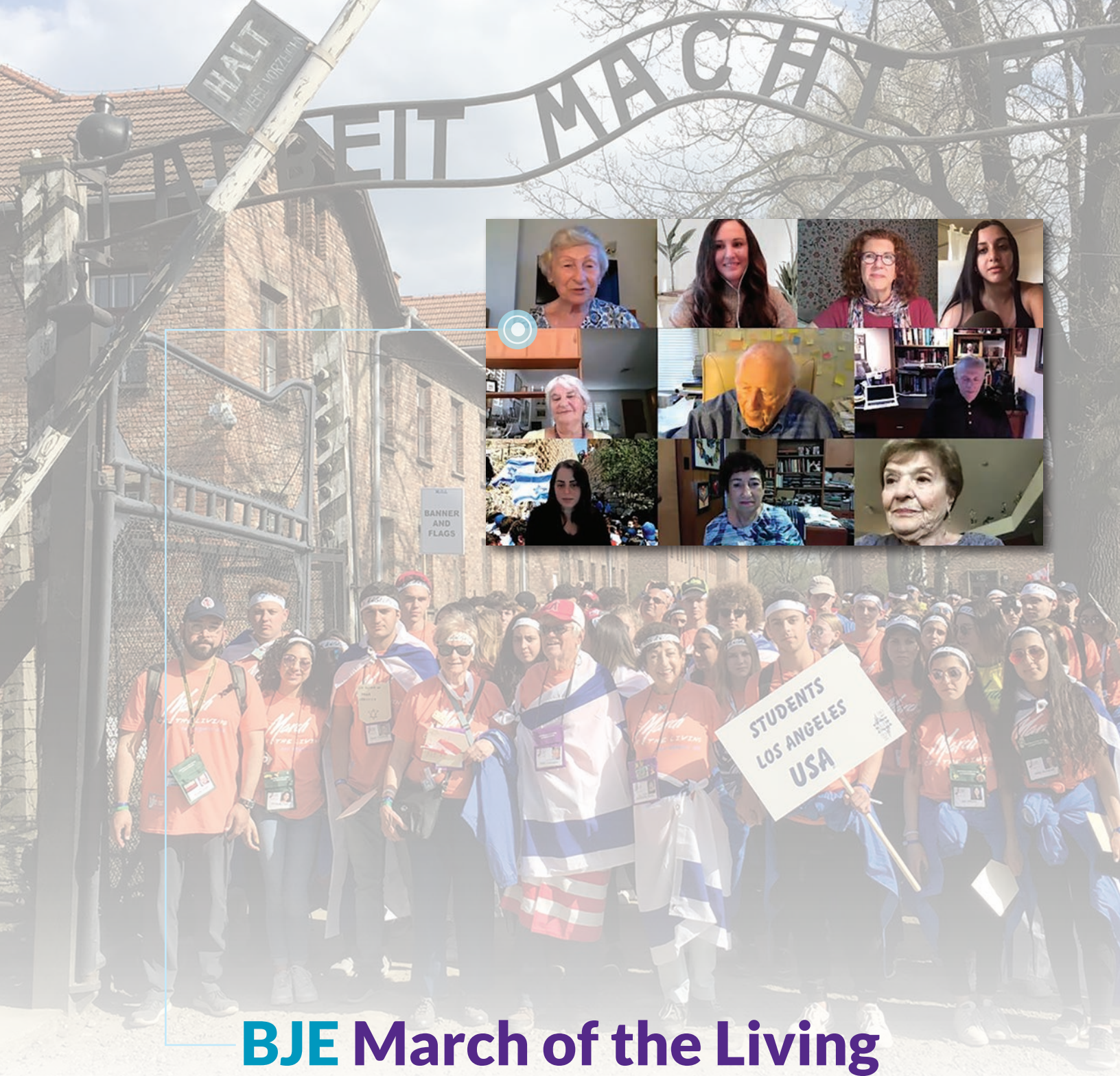
BJE has convened groups of educators for many years – educators and administrators who work in early childhood, day schools, religious schools and teen education.

*Here is a list of the BJE-led professional groups:*

- Admissions Directors
- Early Childhood Directors Network
- General Studies Principals
- Heads of Day Schools
- Hebrew Language Educators
- Jewish Studies Principals
- Professional Learning Community for Teen Educators
- Religious School Educators Network
- Reshet-LA (Part-Time Jewish Education) Innovators Network
- Student Support Specialists



In addition, BJE has for over a decade organized a Legal Consortium with the law firm Liebert Cassidy Whitmore.



## BJE March of the Living

When, because of the pandemic, the International March of the Living trip had to be cancelled, BJE's MOTL team looked at ways the 220 local teens who had planned to go on the trip could still experience some of the meaningful components of the program. In commemoration of Yom Hashoah, all the teens were invited to gather by Zoom to hear personal stories from the survivors who would have joined the trip.

In fact, the ability to adapt, to overcome adversity and persevere is exactly what the MOTL program is all about. As teens heard from survivors about a terrible time that they overcame, they also learned firsthand about perseverance,

overcoming hardship, maintaining connections and positivity in the face of difficult times.

Under the prevailing circumstances, BJE staff experimented with new approaches. When two teens from the group were so moved by the survivors' stories that they wanted to expand their reach, BJE helped them organize a virtual series of survivor presentations. The experience inspired staff to consider new ways to enhance teaching the essential lessons of the Holocaust outside the context of the trip, including the use of technology in building connections between survivors and teens.

# BJE Builds Community Together and Apart

BJE's commitment to Jewish education extends beyond schools into the community.

## BJE Day of Service Learning



Co-chairs Kimberly Schwarz and Amy Leibowitz (a BJE board member), with BJE board members Linda Resnick and Sharon De Mayo.

On Sunday, October 6, 2019 more than 80 people gathered at the Japanese Garden in Balboa Park for BJE's fall Day of Service Learning. Hosted by BJE's JKidLA and the Federation's PJ Library, the event was one of BJE's semi-annual service learning programs offered to the community. With a theme of Respecting Our Elders and Each Other, guests of all ages made New Year's cards and origami artwork to be delivered to residents at the Los Angeles Jewish Home. At the end of the day, the entire group assembled for Tashlich, the ritual of gathering at a body of water during the period of the High Holidays to symbolically cast off sins and recite prayers of repentance.



## BJE Celebrates Shabbat Across LA



The Shabbat candles glowed even more brightly on December 6, 2019 when more than 100 hosts throughout the community opened their homes to more than 1,300 participants from 500 households, as part of BJE Celebrates Shabbat Across LA. As BJE represents the broad spectrum of the LA Jewish community, each Shabbat dinner reflected the hosts' traditions. In addition to a sheet of shabbat blessings,

each host received a challah board and information about the week's Torah portion to inspire discussion around the table.



Co-Chair, Sherry Burdorf; Co-Chair and BJE Board Member, Linda Resnick; BJE staff member, Millie Wexler; Committee Member and BJE Board Officer, Liz Rosman Schwartz; and Co-Chair and BJE Board Member, Kathi Barnhard; not shown, Co-Chair and BJE Board Member Sam Yebri

# BJE by the Numbers

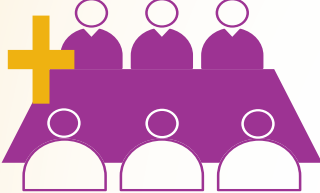
**38** administrators participated in meetings of BJE's Early Childhood Directors' Network



**400** early childhood educators attended BJE's annual Early Childhood Institute by Zoom



**1,000** day school and early childhood educators participated in or later viewed BJE's virtual Covid-19 related seminars

**60+** 

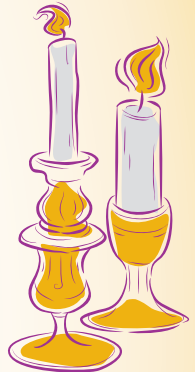
number of meetings or events BJE held last year for day school and early childhood educators

**57** 

teens participated in BJE's Teen Service Corps in summer 2019

**1,300**

people attended a Shabbat dinner during BJE Celebrates Shabbat Across LA



**85** 

individuals of all ages gathered at the Japanese Garden for BJE's Day of Service Learning and Tashlich

**500** people attended BJE's 2020 Gala

**bje 20/20 gala**

**\$1,225,000**

amount BJE secured in government funding for professional development and support for students with academic challenges

Using Federal Title funding in the 6 months from January-June 2020:

- ✓ **214** students received instructional services
- ✓ **193** participated in workshops
- ✓ **24** received counseling
- ✓ **233** educators participated in professional development
- ✓ **55** parents participated in workshops



52

members of BJE's Religious School Educators Network participated in a national web-based series on helping students thrive in religious school

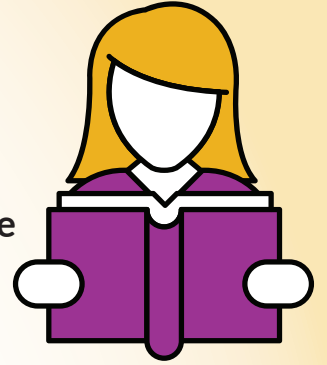
# BJE by the Numbers



schools, community organizations, youth groups and camps received BJE consultation on service learning and experiential education

48

students received support in social skills, math, study skills, reading and language arts, speech and language through BJE's Project EnAble



# 1,000+ number of BJE donors



26,423 students in LA are enrolled in some type of Jewish schooling and benefit from BJE's work



# 11,349 people visited BJE's JKidLA website



# 8,148

people follow BJE's JKidLA on Twitter, Facebook or Pinterest



# 2,581 subscribers to BJE's JKidLA eblast

# Welcome to BJE's New Officers and Directors!

BJE is excited to welcome three new board members, three new officers of the board, and a new agency president. They each shared with us why BJE is important to them. To read more about each of them, visit the Board of Directors page of the website at [www.bjela.org/bje-board-directors](http://www.bjela.org/bje-board-directors).



**Cheryl Davidson, Recording Secretary**

Judaism and our survival as a nation is so important to the future of our people. I don't want future generations from now to look back and think that their ancestors were part of a tribe that used to be called the Jews. BJE is so vital to building a vibrant future for Jewish

education in Los Angeles for all denominations. I want young Jewish families to have the same access to Jewish education that I did growing up here in LA and if they aren't sure how to find it, we at BJE can be the resource to point them in the right direction.



**Bennett L. Spiegel, President**

Regardless of our level of religious observance, or on which side of the hill we live, BJE provides support for families, teachers, and administrators of early childhood centers, religious schools, and day schools in numerous ways. BJE is also a leader in providing

experiential learning opportunities to teens through the March of the Living Program and its Teen Service Corps. With the need for educational methods to adapt to the current public health challenges, BJE's commitment to the LA Jewish community remains steadfast. It is my great privilege to assist BJE's immensely dedicated staff and lay leaders in their invaluable contributions to our community.



**Jonathan Gerber, Director**

Promoting Jewish education in Los Angeles is a core value of mine. As a product of the Jewish day school system, I understand the impact it has had on me, my family, peers and community. Jewish education broadly speaking includes summer camp, March

of the Living, and other forms of informal Jewish education - which collectively will empower the next generation to build Jewish homes and communities. BJE enables all of this, and I am excited to be a part of this process.



**Kathi Barnhard, Vice President**

Jewish education is at the heart of our steadfast tradition, keeping the Jewish people's pulse strong over time. BJE ensures that our current and future generations are constantly being re-energized, whether learning in day schools or after school programs from

an educator who received BJE professional development, or participating directly in a BJE program like March of the Living. Being passionate about Jewish education and knowing that BJE is there for us on an individual and communal level makes it easy to support BJE.



**Joanna Kasirer, Director**

I feel so lucky that for my whole life I have been surrounded by Judaism. From my home life to school and camp, it has been ingrained in me from the very beginning. Judaism has strengthened me in so many ways and I believe that every Jewish

individual should also have this gift.



**Mayer Brenner, Vice President**

I am rejoining the BJE Board at a particularly challenging but essential moment. Jewish education is fundamental to Jewish continuity and will be key to reestablishing vibrant Jewish life under the altered circumstances ahead of us. The BJE community and especially those

of us who help to lead must ensure that BJE continues to play a forceful role in the days ahead.



**Don Snyder, Director**

I have had a passion for Jewish education from the time I was a young private day school student, and now it gives me great pleasure to see that same passion in my children. This passion does not come by accident. It comes as a result of a lot of hard work, dedication and involvement

in Jewish organizations with a focus on education. It is my belief that my personal and professional background and passion for Jewish education are well suited to make a meaningful contribution on the BJE Board.

# Supporting Jewish Education: Honor Roll of Donors

Gifts of \$100+ received July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

BJE gratefully acknowledges the essential support of the donors and organizations whose generosity enables BJE to provide ongoing services and programs to enhance quality, increase access, and encourage participation in Jewish education.

## PILLAR

\$500,000-\$999,999

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles

## SUSTAINER

\$100,000-\$499,999

Anonymous: Fund for Gifted Education  
Janet Farber  
Jerry and Jeanine Goldberg Trust\*  
Jewish Community Foundation  
Milken Family Foundation  
Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment Fund

## TRAILBLAZER

\$50,000-\$99,999

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Dr. Susan Plutsky & Mel Plutsky  
Simha and Sara Lainer Family Foundation

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\$25,000-\$49,999

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Halina Wachtel  
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Rochelle & Freddy Cohen  
Faith & Jonathan Cookler  
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Rheba Ganzweig Goldman  
Senta & Dr. Chaim Graff  
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Betsy Levy Timsit  
Deli & Herb Weisberg\*\*\*  
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## \$1,000 - \$1,799

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 Helen & Frank Ponder  
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 Helen & Moshe Sassover  
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 Marshall Temkin  
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**\$500 - \$999**

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\* Funds administered by the Jewish Community Foundation

\*\* Walt Disney Company Foundation Match

\*\*\* Northwestern Mutual Foundation Match



## BJE Acknowledges with Appreciation: Program funding from the Jewish Federation, in support of:

BJE March of the Living  
California Association of Private School Organizations (CAPSO) dues (on behalf of schools)  
Day School Capacity Building  
The First 36 Project  
JKidLA/Concierge Program  
L.A. Jewish Teen Initiative Programs (BJE Impact; Professional Learning Community)\*  
Reshet L.A.  
Strengthening Jewish Day Schools through Leveraging Government Funding

\*The LAJTI is co-funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and the Jim Joseph Foundation, with seed funding provided by the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.

### Program funding gifts (\$10,000+) from foundations and individuals in support of:

#### Day School Scholarships

- Bertha, Erwin, & John Lustig Welfare Fund\*
- Max and Lillian Candiotti Scholarship Endowment Fund\*
- Milken Family Foundation
- Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment Fund\*\*
- Simha and Sara Lainer Fund to Benefit BJE\*

#### Educator Awards

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#### The First 36 Project

- Simms/Mann Family Foundation\*\*

#### Gifted Education

- Anonymous

#### Hebrew Language Proficiency Program

- Judith & Louis G. Miller

#### JKidLA/Concierge Program

- The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Foundation

#### Lainer Fellows Program

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#### March of the Living

- Sandy & Mayer Brenner
- Carlin & John Glucksman
- Erwin Rautenberg Foundation
- Jerry & Jeanine Goldberg Trust\*
- Mount Sinai Memorial Parks & Mortuary

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- Jewish Community Foundation

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\*\*In cooperation with The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles

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Zwern March of the Living Fund in Memory of Sigi Zwern

BJE gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have made testamentary provisions to support the enduring mission of BJE:

Sandy & Max Candiotti  
Rhea & Hal<sup>z</sup> Coskey  
Arlene & Gerald Davis  
Janet & Jake<sup>z</sup> Farber  
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Betty & Sivan<sup>z</sup> Hamburger  
Miriam Prum Hess & Mark L. Hess  
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BJE is grateful to receive generous and continuing support from the following legacies established at the Jewish Community Foundation:

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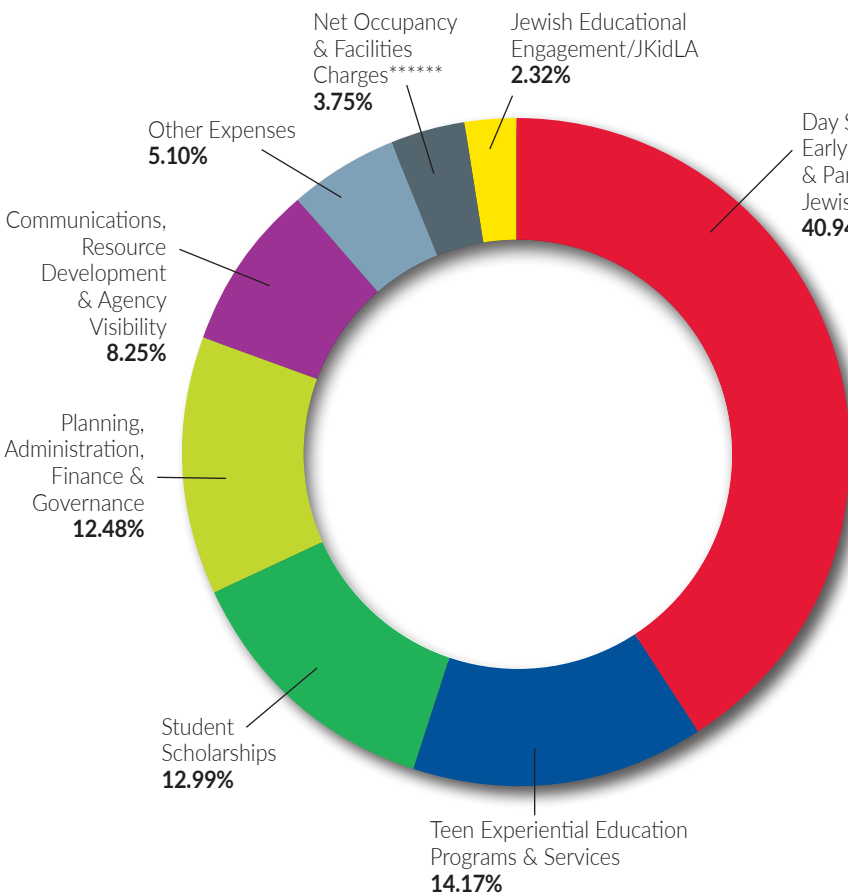
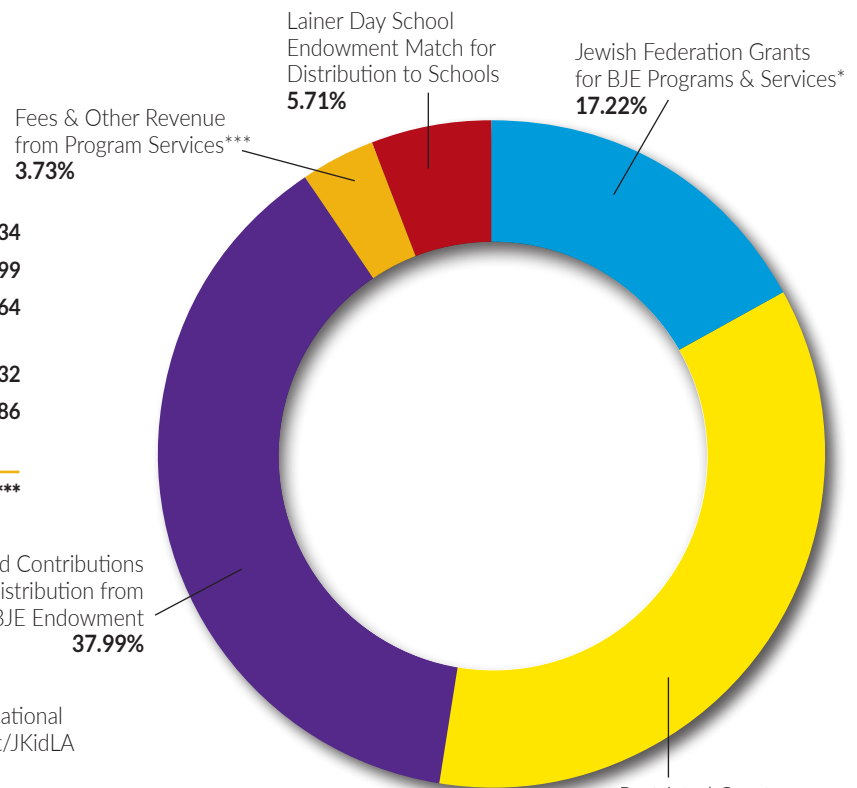
To discuss Legacy or Endowment opportunities at BJE please contact  
Miriam Prum Hess,  
323.761.8334 or mprumhess@bjela.org

# Financials at a Glance

## Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (unaudited)

### Revenue

Jewish Federation Grants for BJE Programs & Services*	\$788,034
Restricted Grants & Contributions**	\$1,617,399
Unrestricted Contributions & Distribution from BJE Endowment	\$1,738,264
Fees & Other Revenue from Program Services***	\$170,432
Lainer Day School Endowment Match for Distribution to Schools	\$261,186
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,575,315****</b>



### Expenses

Day School, Early Childhood & Part-Time Jewish Education****	\$1,873,089
Teen Experiential Education Programs & Services	\$648,179
Student Scholarships	\$594,332
Jewish Educational Engagement/JKidLA	\$105,985
Communications, Resource Development, & Agency Visibility	\$377,553
Planning, Administration, Finance & Governance	\$571,063
Net Occupancy & Facilities Charges *****	\$171,740
Other Expenses	\$233,374
Pension Amortization	\$199,232
Programs	\$34,142
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,575,315****</b>

\* Includes \$680,000 in program grants, \$20,926 in support of collaborative project with Simms/Mann Institute, \$81,844 for L.A. Jewish Teen Initiative jointly funded by the Jewish Federation and Jim Joseph Foundation, and \$5,264 for CAPSO dues, on behalf of BJE-accredited Day Schools

\*\* Includes \$931,945 spend rate distribution to schools of funds deposited by schools as part of High School Affordability Initiative

\*\*\* March of the Living 2020 trip was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic

\*\*\*\* Does not include contributions of \$58,588 to the BJE Endowment

\*\*\*\*\* Does not include close to \$1,225,250 in services supporting student learning at BJE-represented Day Schools, accessed by BJE through the Every Student Succeeds Act

\*\*\*\*\* Net occupancy charges paid to The Jewish Federation



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