

### ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

celebrating







Years of BJE









### Thank You Alan M. Spiwak, Welcome Mark S. Berns



Dr. Alan M. Spiwak and Mark S. Berns

With the start of the new year, the BJE board marks a change of leadership. During the most recent three years, 2014-2017, BJE was extremely fortunate to benefit from the outstanding leadership of Dr. Alan M. Spiwak as BJE president. Alan, a businessman with a professional background in psychology and volunteer experience with several non-profit and synagogue boards, brought tremendous perspective and skill to guiding the work of BJE during an eventful term. Not only were BJE programs—some of which are highlighted in these pages—strengthened and expanded thanks to Alan, the capacity of BJE was significantly advanced by the work of committees of the board that Alan established and helped guide.

BJE's new President, Mark S. Berns, an accomplished CPA, was first elected to the BJE board in 2005 and has chaired several of its committees, most recently Planning & Budget. Among the many boards on which Mark has served in leadership roles are: Milken Community High School, Stephen S. Wise Temple, URJ and HUC. Mark and his wife Penny are the parents of Allison and Michael, both graduates of Wise School and Milken Community High School; Michael is also an alumnus of BJE March of the Living. Mark brings both considerable interest and commitment to Jewish education and outstanding organizational skill, wisdom and experience to his service as BJE President.

That BJE, at 80 years continues to evolve and make a substantial difference in the lives of children and families is testimony to its compelling mission and to the dedication of those who support its vision. Not only the BJE board, but all who invest time and contribute resources to further this work are builders of Jewish education. Thank you to Alan and Mark for their leadership, and to each of you for enabling BJE to engage successive generations in meaningful Jewish learning experiences.

With best wishes in 2017-18 (5778),



Dr. Gil Graff, Executive Director

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### **Transforming Parent-Child Education**

The First 36 Project, which launched a second cohort of Fellows in 2017, was developed by the Simms/Mann Institute in collaboration with BJE and The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. The First 36 Project provides a select group of parent-andme instructors with a professional development experience designed to enrich their knowledge and their subsequent support of parents as they build strong, meaningful bonds with their children. Educators in the program spend a year learning together about the latest in child development theory incorporating cutting-edge neuroscience research and Jewish values, focused on children ages birth to three years. They attend the Simms/ Mann Institute Think Tank and receive



#### Second cohort of the First 36 Project:

**Bottom (left to right):** Shayna Goldman (Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu ECC), Nicole Mevorak and Debbie Myman (Wise School Early Childhood), Molly Mills (Mann Family Wilshire Blvd. Temple ECC), Dr. Maxine Mintzer (Simms/Mann Content Facilitator)

**Top (left to right):** Leslie Silverstein (Simms/Mann The First 36 Project Director), Jayne Rosen (Temple Israel's Bay-Nimoy ECC), Jenna Pitson (Wise School Early Childhood), Valerie Segall (Valley Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center), Emily Glickman (Leonard I. Beerman ECC at Leo Baeck Temple), Jessica Smiedt (Temple Isaiah Preschool), Alana Levitt (University Synagogue ECLC), Michal Rosenbaum (Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu ECC), Cheryl Ibgui (Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy EC Dept)

in-depth coaching, while having access to a rich array of Institute resources. Since its inception, a total of 23 parent-and-me educators at 13 Jewish early childhood centers throughout Los Angeles, have participated as First 36 Fellows.

"There's so much we know now about the importance of early development and how consistent, supportive, and nurturing parent-child interactions help support the development of a child's brain architecture—as well as the child's lifelong health and wellness," said Phil Liff-Grieff, Associate Director of BJE, who oversees BJE's work with the Simms/Mann Institute and The First 36 Project.

"The beauty of this partnership with the Simms/Mann Institute is that it has allowed us to work with a specific group of educators-parent educators [at BJE schools] in a manner similar to how we work with other educational professionals. Through a combination of rich content, cohort-based learning and coaching provided by Leslie Silverstein, the project director, the program helps them incorporate the scientific and Judaic content into the work they do. We've seen dramatic impact on the Fellows as they approach their work with parents with new skills grounded in cutting edge neuroscience research."

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### Lowering the Barrier of Access to L.A. Jewish Day Schools



Paul Bernstein, CEO of PRIZMAH addressing Los Angeles lay and professional day school leaders (left to right): Lisa Feldman - Head of School (HOS), Weizmann Day School, Dr. Erica Rothblum -HOS, Pressman Academy, Bluma Drebin - Principal, YULA Girls High School, Tami Weiser - HOS, Wise School, Gary Lainer - President, Sinai Akiba Academy (now Alice and Nahum Lainer School).

As 2016-17 drew to a close, the 21 day schools with which BJE has worked on endowment development in recent years, had raised nearly \$38M in cash and legacy pledges.

With funding from and partnership with the Jim Joseph Foundation, PRIZMAH, the AVI CHAI Foundation, The Jewish Federation, and local donors, BJE has provided training for administrators and fundraising staff at the 21 participating schools and created the LAHighSchoolAffordability.org website to provide schools and communities throughout North America with documentation and support for those interested in taking on similar challenges.

"Prior to these programs, very few L.A. day schools had any type of endowment," said Betty Winn, Director of BJE's Center for Excellence in Day School Education. "Through BJE's efforts and with donor and foundation support, as well as a 1:4 match from the Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment (Lainer Fund), BJE was able to change the culture in the community and involve 21 day schools in this process. These programs were just the beginning. L.A. schools now understand the importance of endowments and many are committed to raising significant additional endowment dollars."

In addition to the endowment dollars raised over the past 7 years, grants from the Jim Joseph Foundation, AVI CHAI Foundation, individual donors and the Lainer Fund Match provided over \$8.778M in tuition assistance, benefiting over 400 students with multiyear grants, thus lowering the barrier of access to BJE-accredited day schools.

"In America today, in the 21st Century, it would be so easy for young Jewish people to let go of their Jewish identity, to lose all of their Jewish heritage." said Scott Taryle, whose two sons attended Jewish day high school with the benefit of subsidies from the Jim Joseph High School Affordability Initiative. "The key to preserving [their heritage] is a good, strong Jewish education. Thanks to the Jim Joseph Foundation and BJE, we have a wonderful opportunity to preserve that and create a new generation of Jewish leaders."

BJE partnered with PRIZMAH: The (national) Center for Jewish Day Schools in May, 2017 to present a national, two-day training on advanced endowment cultivation and solicitation techniques. Attendees learned from expert fundraising consultants and from two panels featuring donors, lay leaders and professionals from Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School, Brawerman Elementary School of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy, Pressman Academy, Sinai Akiba Academy and Weizmann School.

BJE will continue to nurture endowment development among BJE accredited schools and hopes to expand the number of schools actively building endowment and benefiting from the match provided through the Lainer Fund. For information about the Lainer Fund, supporting tuition assistance at all participating Jewish day schools, contact Miriam Prum Hess, BJE's Director of Donor and Community Relations, at 323.761.8334.

"In America today, in the 21st Century, it would be so easy for young Jewish people to let go of their Jewish identity, to lose all of their Jewish heritage." - Scott Taryle, Day School parent

### The Power of BJE March of the Living

BJE March of the Living annually takes a group of L.A.-area teens on a life-changing educational program in which young people from all over the world travel to Poland and Israel to study Jewish history pre-Holocaust, examine the roots of prejudice during the Holocaust period and explore post-Holocaust Jewish life in Poland and Israel. This year, BJE brought 209 teens, 25 staff members, and 5 Holocaust survivors, as well as a separate group



Janet and Jake Farber with Maya Aharon, Director, BJE March of the Living

of 26 adults, to Poland and Israel. Teens prepare for the journey through a series of pre-trip workshops, supported by a fund established by Jake and Janet Farber. The March itself is a 3-kilometer walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Yom Hashoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day – as a tribute to all victims of the Holocaust. Teens then travel to Israel to commemorate Israel's Memorial Day (Yom HaZikaron) and celebrate Israel's Independence Day (Yom HaAtzmaut).



Holocaust survivor Lea Radziner, marching out of Auschwitz with the 2017 BJE March of The Living delegation

# BJE March of the

#### **Michael Schulman**

"I've heard about the March since ninth grade—it's almost like a rite of passage for Jewish teens in LA—I knew it was going to be a great trip, but I didn't realize how powerful it would be. It's something I'll never forget.

We were all new people after, and we were all ready to go out into the world and try to make a difference and try to teach people love and compassion.

The BJE March of the Living motto: "Remember. Educate. Act.", means that I have a responsibility to not just remember but share the stories of all the things that I've experienced, share the stories of the survivors that I've met and not only just to tell people about it but to stand up against injustice in the world and make sure something like this should never happen again."

#### Lea Radziner

"It was heavy, it was difficult. I grew up in Amsterdam during the Shoah. When the Nazis invaded, my mother sent my sister and me out of the city to live in the country with separate gentile families. I did not see my sister for five years. After the war, I was reunited with my mother and sister, but my father and many of my extended family members had been murdered in the camps.

I had never been to Poland before, but there's no way you can compare reading and seeing movies to seeing the real thing. Probably the hardest thing was when we went to a graveyard memorial, the site where hundreds of babies had been abused and killed. I think it was something important for everyone to bear witness to this tragedy firsthand.

We met other groups, and I thought it was very unusual that most of them did not come with a survivor. I think going with survivors made it more real for the kids, and they were lucky to experience it, because it won't be going on for much longer."



2017 BJE March of the Living participants: Bottom row (left to right): Michael Schulman, Jordan Brenner, and Josh Berenbaum Top row (left to right): Aaron Lawrence and Brian Pearlman



## **2018 BJE GALA**

In celebration of BJE's 80th anniversary the 2018 Gala will recognize individuals who have made, and continue to make, significant impact on Jewish education and life in Los Angeles. Each of our honorees is committed to Jewish literacy and learning, and applying that knowledge to living a meaningful Jewish life.

### Jean and Dr. Jerry Friedman

#### Jean and Dr. Jerry Friedman

are longstanding pillars of the Jewish community. Following over a decade of volunteer involvement with Jewish education in Montreal, the Friedmans moved to Los Angeles in 1971, and almost immediately became involved with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, serving on and chairing many of its committees including the Council on Jewish Life, Refugee Resettlement Program and, later, the Commission on the Jewish Future of Los Angeles and the Culture Committee of the Los Angeles/Tel Aviv Partnership. All of their involvements are motivated by a deep concern for Jewish continuity and a sense that Jewish education and culture are key to addressing that concern.

Jerry served on the BJE Board from 1982-2004, assuming a leadership role as Committee Chair and officer for many of those years. Jean served as a director of the BJE Board from 1992-2000, with a special focus on arts and culture.



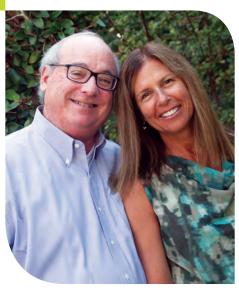
Dr. Jerry and Jean Friedman

In the 1980s Jean and Jerry went back to study at Harvard under Lawrence Kohlberg, whose "Just Community" modeled a way of living and learning that became the foundation for two transformative educational institutions which they founded: My Jewish Discovery Place (now the Zimmer Children's Museum), where Jean is the founding Chairperson (1991) and Shalhevet High School (1992) which in 2013, was officially renamed Jean and Jerry Friedman Shalhevet High School. In addition to founding the school, Jerry served as Head of School at Shalhevet until spring 2008. Through their leadership, the Friedmans have changed the face of both formal and informal Jewish education in Los Angeles.

"We believe BJE is so important because, through its programs, it facilitates both formal and informal Jewish education. That combination is the best way to preserve Jewish continuity. Intensive Jewish educational experiences such as day school, camping, and trips to Israel, give us a better chance to keep our kids within the Jewish dream. Our relationship with [BJE Executive Director] Gil Graff and his wise counsel, helped shape the vision for Shalhevet which used the methodology of Jewish camping to develop an environment for the school where kids could internalize Jewish values. We believe that this increases the percentage of kids who live a Jewish life."

### Bennett L. Spiegel

Bennett L. Spiegel has been a valued director of the BJE board for 16 years, providing leadership and wisdom as a board officer and member of BJE's Executive Committee, as Chair of the Committee on School Personnel Practices and as an active member of the Audit Committee. His involvement in the Jewish community goes well beyond BJE-Bennett is a Past President of Adat Ari El synagogue, and currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at American Jewish University, and on the Board of Bet Tzedek Legal Services. Bennett's wife, Dr. Lise Spiegel, is on the faculty at de Toledo High School and their children are graduates of BJE-accredited Adat



Bennett L. Spiegel and Dr. Lise F. Spiegel

Ari El Early Childhood Center and Day School, one child also graduated from Milken Middle School, and one from de Toledo High School. Bennett, Lise, and each of their three children have also participated in BJE's March of the Living.

"I wholeheartedly support the mission of BJE to enhance the quality of, increase access to, and encourage participation in, Jewish education in Los Angeles. I greatly respect and admire the BJE professional staff and lay leaders who keep that mission on track, and who are constantly challenging themselves to fulfill that mission in a dynamic and ever-changing world. I am agreeing to be honored in the hope that it will contribute in some small way to the continuity and ongoing success of BJE's work in our community."

### Keren Dunn

#### Since 2009, Keren Dunn

has brought her keen insight and commitment to Jewish education to her position as a director of BJE's board and as a Vice President of the organization since September 2016. Keren is also the board advisor to the BJE NextGen Committee. and an active member of BJE's Jewish Educational **Engagement Committee.** Outside of BJE, Keren serves on the Day School Committee of Pressman Academy, the BJE-accredited school which her and her husband Lenny's sons attend. Keren is the recipient of BJE's Young Leadership Award for her active service on the BJE Board and her leadership in encouraging the future of BJE through the active involvement of



Leonard and Keren Dunn

the BJE NextGen Committee. "I have been involved with BJE since my children were very young, and I gain a new appreciation for the programs and services offered by BJE as my children grow and their needs change. Earlier this summer my older son had an opportunity to participate in the BJE Impact Teen Service Corps, giving him exposure to hands-on community service and tying the experience to Jewish teachings. I hope my children will be able to participate in March of Living when they're older. This is the 80th anniversary celebration of BJE and I am honored to play a role in that celebration, as BJE focuses on the past and future direction of Jewish education in Los Angeles. I have always been impressed with BJE's commitment to evolving with the times and staying relevant, while also staying true to its core mission."

### Focus on Professional Development for Teen Experiential Educators

The LA Jewish Teen Initiative (LAJTI) has established, as one of its priorities, the professional development of Teen Experiential Educators, in order to provide these key professionals with the tools needed to meet the needs of and be able to engage today's teens.

The LAJTI looked to BJE to take leadership of the following three components of the program:

- The Jewish Teen Experiential Educators Fellowship which provides one-on-one mentoring, skills-based workshops and a robust community of practice for the Fellows.
- Service learning program consultations and demonstration projects to enhance professional skills in providing service learning programs and experiential educational programs more generally.
- University Access which provides these educators with significant subsidies for select college level courses.

"Given BJE's longstanding history of successful professional development programs, it seemed a natural fit for us, and we're thrilled to have this opportunity," said David Lewis, Director & Head Consultant of Education Services at BJE. "I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and work with my mentor," said Ashley Marx, Director Teen Experiential Education, Stephen Wise Temple and Schools. "It was so wonderful having someone to bounce ideas off of and brainstorm with. We reflected on current issues, workplace challenges, and my transition to the field. The Mentoring Fellowship was invaluable!"

Building on the success of the first year of the program, LAJTI and BJE

have been recruiting a second cohort of Fellows that will begin in the fall.

These programs are part of the Janet and Jake Farber Teen Experiential Educator Network, co-funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and the Jim Joseph Foundation, and supported by a generous grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.



Alisha Pedowitz (top left), Director, BJE Center for Excellence in Teen Experiential Education with teen participants at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to meet and work with my mentor, it was so wonderful having someone to bounce ideas off of and brainstorm with."

- Ashley Marx, Director of Experiential Education, Stephen Wise Temple and Schools

### Reinventing (part-time) Religious School Education

Citing a real need for change in Los Angeles' earliest mode of organized Jewish education—supplementary (part-time) schools—which in L.A. alone educate 10,000+ students in BJEaffiliated schools, BJE joined forces with Hebrew Union College's Rhea Hirsch School of Education (HUC) and the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) to develop the first North American Conference on Reinventing Religious Schools.

Nearly 150 religious school educators, clergy, and lay leaders, representing 45 congregations from San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego, came together on Sunday, June 11, to assess the current state of supplementary religious schools, and explore innovative ways in which to help their religious schools thrive.

"When we wrote the proposal for the conference we hoped there would be sixty participants. The fact that we had a turnout like this says a lot about the hunger for new ideas," said Amy Asin, Director of Strengthening



as well as multiple workshops. "This conference was motivated by a strong desire for change, which has been shared by religious school educators for years," said Dr. Isa Aron. "But it shouldn't be mistaken for an endpoint. This represents the beginning of something real that will potentially impact thousands of students for whom supplementary religious school is their

#### Dr. Isa Aron, HUC-JIR and David Lewis, Director, BJE Educational Services

June's conference and beginning fall 2017, BJE and URJ will convene a coalition of interested and ready Los Angeles supplementary religious schools to further the conversation and help those schools take a deeper dive into the change process. This is made possible by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

"There's a momentum for us to engage in change as a larger ecosystem and to see educators, rabbis, lay leaders and congregational presidents come together with their professionals, having real conversations about change that is happening, not change that is presumed. And even though everybody might be in a different stage in their change process,



everybody has this aspiration to truly make what we do better for the members of our communities," said Rabbi Yechiel Hoffman, EdD, Director of Youth Learning Engagement at Temple Beth Am.

Congregations at the Union for Reform Judaism. "The question is no longer 'should we change?' Instead, the question is 'what should we change, and how do we get there?'"

These questions were addressed in a keynote by Miriam Heller Stern, PhD, National Director of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) School of Education, only mode of Jewish education. What we hope to see in the future is religious school students who are truly engaged and making memorable moments in their communities. We are thrilled to partner with BJE and David Lewis (Director of BJE Educational Services in support of religious schools) in this endeavor."

Building upon the momentum of

Participants in the 2017 Conference on Reinventing Religious Schools.



Honorees (left to right): Larry Miller, Judy and Lou Miller, Caryn and Jerry Katz, Philip and Judy Miller, Adrian Miller



### HONORING THE MILLER FAMILY

BJE's January 18, 2017 Gala, chaired by Marjorie Gross, Natalie Roberts, Angel Schneider and Sheila Baran Spiwak drew an attendance of over 530 people and raised over \$400,000 thanks to BJE's honorees and our generous donors.



In addition to honoring the multigeneration Miller family for all of the work that they have done and continue to do to strengthen Jewish education, the Gala recognized BJE professionals Phil Liff-Grieff and Monise Neumann for professional leadership advancing Jewish education.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2017 BJE Gala and made it a truly unforgettable event.

The event honored the 25 member Miller family for their philanthropic work in support of Jewish education. "BJE chose to honor the Miller family because they embody 'I'dor v'dor,' from generation to generation," said Dr. Alan M. Spiwak, president of the BJE board. "They are a family, starting with Lou and Judy, who have educated their children, their children have educated their grandchildren, and the great grandchildren."



Gala Chairs (left to right): Angel Schneider, Natalie Roberts, Marjorie Gross and Sheila Baran Spiwak

### BJE DONOR THANK YOU EVENT From Routes to Roots



Bottom row (left to right): Mark Lainer, Lauren Adelson, Mark L. Hess, Sandy Brenner. Top row (left to right): Roberta Goodman-Rosenberg, Miriam Prum Hess, Dr. Mayer Brenner, David L. Rosenberg.

On June 11, 2017, BJE thanked contributors at Donor Society levels for their leadership in



helping to surpass the 2016-17 campaign goal of \$1.275M. In celebration of BJE's 80th anniversary, the Thank You event, chaired by Linda Goldenberg Mayman, featured a bus tour of iconic Los Angeles historical Jewish educational sites with a focus on Jewish education past and present. We were fortunate to have Stephen Sass, President, Jewish Historical Society of Southern California and a donor to BJE, lead the tour. Beginning at Wilshire Boulevard Temple's landmark Glazer campus in Koreatown, participants explored the historical building and then toured the Brawerman East Day School campus led by Head of School Brandon Cohen.

Torah, commonly known as the Breed Street Shul, an early orthodox synagogue in Los Angeles with associated Talmud Torah, day school and youth group. In addition to the tour guided by Stephen Sass, BJE Legacy Society member Jo Mintz-Seligman reminisced about her childhood growing up at the Breed Street Shul and Talmud Torah.

The day concluded with a tour of the Pico Union Project (PUP), the site of Los Angeles' original Sinai Temple, led by the PUP's Executive Director, Dr. Zachary Lasker and Stephen Sass. For information about BJE's Donor and Legacy Societies contact Miriam Prum Hess, BJE'S Director of Donor and Community Relations at (323)761-8334.

### **Supporting Jewish Education: Honor Roll of Donors**

Gifts of \$100+ received July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

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.

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\$500,000 - \$999,999 The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles Simha and Sara Lainer Family Foundation

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**BJE Impact** BJE Impact, Expanded Service Learning Consultation\* California Association of Private School Organizations (CAPSO) dues (on behalf of schools) Day School Capacity Building JKidLA/Concierge Program Leveraging Government Resources March of the Living Professional Development, Youth Educators\* \*Part of the L.A. Jewish Teen Initiative, funded in part by Jim Joseph Foundation

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#### Simha and Sara Lainer School Endowment Fund

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- Miriam Prum Hess & Mark L. Hess - Jodi & Greg Perlman
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BJE gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have made testamentary provisions to support the enduring mission of BJE:

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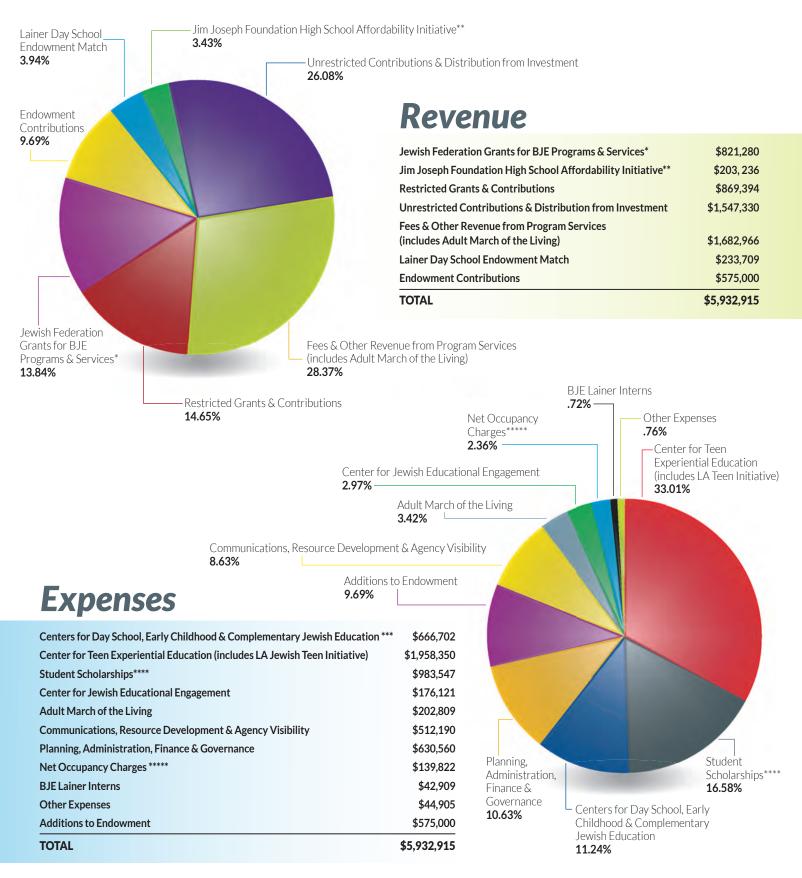
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\* Includes \$58,362 in support of collaborative project with Simms/Mann Institute, \$139,290 for L.A. Jewish Teen Initiative jointly funded by The Jewish Federation and Jim Joseph Foundation, and \$4,753 for CAPSO dues, on behalf of BJE-accredited Day Schools

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