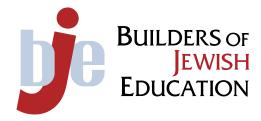
BUILDING JEWISH EDUCATION POST OCTOBER 7TH





ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Jewish Education in a Changing World





After three years focused on helping schools, educators, administrators, and families meet children's educational needs amid a pandemic, BJE and its affiliated schools looked

forward to a return to "normal" operations in 2023-2024. Unfortunately, the horrific events of October 7th triggered serious educational challenges of a different sort. From programs for teachers and parents on educating children about Israel and the war in which Israel, of necessity, engaged; to addressing Jewish identity and peoplehood at a time of rising anti-Semitism; to equipping students heading to college with tools to relate to an increasingly Israel-hostile campus environment, and more, as you will read in these pages, BJE undertook significant initiatives beyond the scope of its ongoing educational programs and services.

While addressing these compelling, immediate concerns, BJE also adopted a strategic plan to guide its work over the period 2024-2029. From engaging more children and families in Jewish education; to pursuing strategies for making a difference in the affordability of Jewish

education as part of the goal of promoting access to Jewish educational opportunity; to ensuring the quality of Jewish education in its many settings, the mission of BJE is enduring. BJE acknowledges with appreciation the partnership of many individuals and institutions in carrying forward each prong of its vital mission.

Now, more than ever, it is important to share with our children knowledge of and pride in the rich heritage of which they are fortunate legatees. Meaningful Jewish educational experiences not only enrich the lives of learners, but they also enable them to share their story and the story of our people with others. In a changing world, the abiding wisdom of a timeless tradition has much to offer successive generations of Jewish children, providing them with invaluable roots and wings.

Thank you for your continuing partnership with BJE, and best wishes for a *shanah tovah* – a year of good health, abundant blessing, and *shalom al yisrael*.

Craig Rutenberg

President

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2023-2024 BJE by the Numbers

\$2.15 M in Educational Services

BJE-accessed, federally funded services on behalf of students at 29 BJE-accredited schools.

31,000+ **JKidLA**

BJE's JKidLA website and educational consulting services were accessed more than 31,000 times.

20,000+ **Jewish** Students

in L.A. early childhood, day school and part-time Jewish education benefited from BJE services.

8,866 Hours of Direct Services

in English Language Arts, Math, Counseling and Hebrew were provided to 855 students.

1,747 Hours of Professional Coaching

received by 644 teachers and

650+ ECE **Educators**

attended BJE's annual Bebe Feuerstein Simon Early Childhood Institute.

185 March and Learn in Poland

130 high school seniors made up BJE's 2024 teen delegation. 55 adults made up BJE's adult delegation to the International March of the Living and a week of learning.

17 **Networks**

BJE convened 17 ongoing professional networks by Professional school role (heads of school, etc.), strengthening L.A.'s Jewish educational system.

11 Outstanding L.A. Educators Recognized

11 educators were recognized by BJE as recipients of Milken Family Foundation Jewish Educator Awards, Lainer Awards for Early Childhood or Lainer Religious School Educator Awards.



KidLA

Boosting JKidLA to Boost Participation in Jewish Educational Experiences



In July 2023, BJE relaunched a new, powerful, and vastly more robust JKidLA.org website, immediately seeing deeper and more extensive site usage. A comprehensive marketing program introduced BJE's JKidLA to 30,000 prospective new users, driving hundreds to the site, increasing Facebook usage 201%, Instagram usage 100% and generating 100 additional newsletter subscribers.

JKidLA connects L.A. families to Jewish schools, camps and other settings for Jewish educational experiences and includes a full, current calendar of programs and events for kids. JKidLA's Concierge provides custom, confidential Jewish educational guidance at no cost to families.

BJE thanks the Diane & Guilford Glazer Foundation, Jewish Federation Los Angeles, and the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation for supporting grants, and Tiny Windows Consulting for their valuable expertise.

JkidLA

is your connection to ongoing activities for tots through teens in Jewish LA!



Looking for custom guidance on Jewish education options in LA, at no cost to families?

Contact me!
I'm Rachel Kaplan, JKidLA's
Concierge for Jewish Education.





Strengthening Jewish Identity: BJE's March of the Living Program



BJE's 2024 teen March of the Living (MOTL) experience brought 130 Jewish high school seniors from 10 schools across Los Angeles to Poland to learn about the students' Jewish past, present, and future. Participants

commemorated Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) along with thousands of people from around the world, marching from Auschwitz to Birkenau where a memorial program was held. In addition, BJE led a group of 55 adults on this year's March of the Living, the largest adult delegation BJE has conducted.

The BJE teen delegation was extremely fortunate to be able to hear from Holocaust survivors, and from family members of survivors no longer with us. They shared personal experiences about their lives and their families to begin to create lasting relationships with the teens throughout their journey.





Benjamin DeMatoff, a recent graduate of Fairfax High School, participated in this year's BJE program. "March of the Living was one of the most meaningful experiences in my life. At a time when we're encouraged to suppress our Judaism and our Zionism, March of the Living tells a story of six million who didn't get the chance to be proud. It encourages us to carry their stories and their legacies with us and live the lives of proud Jews they never got to live." Benjamin will take what he learned on the BJE trip, and from BJE's pre/post trip educational programs, with him as he heads to University of Colorado Boulder this fall.

BJE's March of the Living professional staff and leadership shape program goals and objectives around the mantra: Remember. Educate. Act. The (typically two-week/two countries) trip is enhanced through Janet and Jake Farber pre-trip workshops and post-trip alumni activities to help participants integrate the enduring lessons of the MOTL experiences into their lives and translate memory into action. Due to the war in Gaza, this year's program was limited to Poland only.







Sunday, February 25, 2024
BARAD HALL, SINAI TEMPLE



The Pop-Up Choir of Temple Isaiah performs Kaddish D'Rabbanan – A Prayer for our Teachers



TOP left to right: Co-Chairs - Allison Samek, Gregg Bernstein and Adrian Miller BOTTOM: Honorees – Alan Petlak, Sharon De Mayo, Rachael Gordon, MD and Don Snyder

On February 25, 2024, more than 300 BJE supporters gathered at Sinai Temple to honor four outstanding leaders and builders of Jewish education: Sharon De Mayo, Alan Petlak, Don Snyder and Rachael Gordon, MD. The honorees shared stories of their own Jewish educational experiences, as well as the range of paths to Jewish education that they chose for their children, including early childhood programs, part-time religious school, day school, summer camp and Israel experiences.

As the first BJE gathering of its size since the terror attacks in Israel, the evening was especially meaningful, and the spirit of community was palpable. A video presentation about BJE programs and services initiated to meet the needs of schools and families post-October 7th, was part of an appeal that raised over \$40,000 beyond proceeds of the Gala in support of ongoing BJE activities toward new. Israel-focused educational initiatives.

Sharon, Alan, Don and Rachael were surrounded by friends, family and community who celebrated their many years of leadership and support of Jewish education in Los Angeles. BJE congratulates and thanks these exemplary leaders!

BJE Welcomes New Board Officer & Directors

BJE is excited to welcome a new board officer and directors. They each shared with us why BJE is important to them. To read more about each of them and see the full board list, visit the BJE Board of Directors page of our website at www.bjela.org/bje-board-directors.

Don Snyder, Vice President



"I am very proud to be involved in Builders of Jewish Education. In difficult times like these, it is even more important to be an advocate of Jewish education for children as well as for adults. I am grateful for the Jewish education

that I had growing up and passing on this love to the next generation is so important to me."

Linda Brettler, Director



"As a firm believer in the power of understanding our history, culture, and religion, I feel Jewish education is vital. It can both empower our children and create compassionate, knowledgeable members

and activists not only in our own Jewish community but the world at large."

Naama Pozniak, Director



"Jewish education is not just a preference or a measure of quality; it's deeply personal. As a single mother and a third-generation Holocaust survivor, I've experienced firsthand the transformative power of education.

It's the foundation on which I've raised my children and a mission I'm deeply passionate about. My goal is to share these years of experience, make Jewish education accessible and affordable to as many people as possible, regardless of their background, and strengthen the global Jewish community."

David Sternberg, Director



"BJE plays an important role in supporting Jewish education in Los Angeles, and a thriving Jewish community is dependent on strong Jewish education. I'm grateful for the opportunity to help achieve BJE's mission."

BJE Early Childhood Conference Grows from 450 to 650+

More than 650 educators gathered for BJE's 43rd annual Bebe Feuerstein Simon Early Childhood Institute, a day of learning, skill building and professional development for educators at Jewish early childhood centers. The theme of this year's conference was "Chazakim B'Yachad – Stronger Together" and the event was held at HAMAKOM. The program, developed in collaboration with The Paradigm Project, included three workshop blocks, as well as time for networking, and a designated time for reflection to close the day. This year's conference attendance was the highest in more than 15 years, up by more than 200 participants from the 2023 Institute.



One of this year's speakers, Sasha Kopp Hass, Senior Director of Education and Engagement at ElevatEd, said, "BJE's Bebe Feuerstein Simon Early Childhood Institute was filled with passionate early childhood educators not only from throughout Los Angeles, but throughout the entire country. There was such a buzz of excitement in the air as educators re-connected, shared learning, and bonded over a passion for this critical work. As a leader in our ECJE landscape, I was inspired. It is rare to see a community come together across denominations and geography at this volume. BJE's Bebe Feuerstein Simon Early Childhood Institute is an incredible gift to the early childhood Jewish community in Los Angeles."

BJE Helps Early Childhood Educators Become Mentors



This year, 12 educators from nine BJE-affiliated early childhood programs were selected as BJE's first cohort to enroll in a special partnership between BJE and American Jewish University's (AJU) Mentor Teacher Training program. Throughout the 10-month certification program teachers received practical experience mentoring a teacher within their school under the guidance of an AJU course instructor. BJE now convenes the group of mentor educators as a Community of Practice (CoP) learning network, as they continue to mentor other teachers and help create a "mentoring culture" at their schools. The program is subsidized by both BJE and AJU, with schools contributing the balance for their own educators.

Veronica Amato of Valley Beth Shalom Early Childhood Center:

"This experience has been wonderful! My place of work acknowledges how important this program is and makes time for my Mentee and me to meet weekly. It has built a trusting space where we can talk about things in depth and detail regarding observations and experiences. With this program, you can see how much my Mentee's confidence has grown in being a teacher. My learning has also grown by meeting monthly with my cohort. I love how we practice everyday situations and scenarios. I see us continuing to be there for each other along our journey as educators."

Leora Javaheri-Far of The J LA Early Childhood Center:

"I have several years of experience working with individuals from diverse backgrounds and I have encountered various challenges along the way. This program has significantly enhanced my ability to understand different personalities and navigate these challenges. I have built so much trust in my peers by learning together with them and creating techniques to connect with our students better. The past 25 years of teaching have been incredibly rewarding. Being in a helping profession is something that I take pride in. This program has taken my experience to the next level and has guided me as a professional to not only be able to work well with children but with my coworkers as well."

BUILDING JEWISH EDUCATION POST OCTOBER 7TH

Immediately following the October 7th terror attack on Israel, BJE turned to meeting the need for educational resources, providing teacher and parent support to help children relate to the war in Gaza, and launched a series of Israel education workshops for educators.

BJE's initiatives included:

- Training for educators and parents on how to talk with children of all ages about the war and crisis.
- · Establishing an online bank of tools and resources to help educators and families.
- Convening a landmark conference of L.A. Jewish education leaders from 35 schools, camps, and youth organizations to reassess and envision Jewish education, identity and peoplehood in a post-October 7th world.*
- Training on how to help children navigate social media and relate to escalating incidents of antisemitism.
- Launching an Israel Education Community of Practice to help part-time religious schools reimagine and strengthen their Israel curricula.



"During the most difficult year in the recent memory of the Jewish people, BJE has convened important conversations among educators and provided essential professional learning opportunities to support their continued growth. Now, more than ever, Jewish educators need to develop a deep understanding of events in Israel and how they impact and are impacted by American Jewry; a keen awareness of how young Jewish learners understand and make sense of events in and about Israel; and opportunities to rethink, refine, and reimagine the practices of teaching and learning about Israel in their institutions. BJE has provided important opportunities for key groups that support children's learning to come together to investigate the current practices of Israel education and imagine the possibilities for transformative teaching and learning about Israel in the years to come."

Dr. Sivan Zakai, Sara S. Lee Associate Professor of Jewish Education, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

"In the wake of the events of October 7th, BJE's support for schools in addressing Israel education has been especially invaluable. They have provided resources, guidance, and a sense of solidarity that has helped schools navigate these complex and sensitive topics with students. BJE's ability to blend our different communities together with thought and meaning is a testament to their dedication and skill in community building. Thank you for creating such a meaningful and impactful experience. I deeply appreciate the effort and dedication that BJE put into organizing the conference on Jewish Peoplehood and Identity. From discussions on contemporary Jewish identity to exploring the many opportunities of Israel education, the conference provided a platform for rich and insightful dialogue."

Larry Kligman, Head of School, Heschel Day School



^{*}The conference was sponsored in part by a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.

BUE HELPS MEET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AT A TIME OF CRISIS









"As panelists at BJE's Jewish Peoplehood and Identity conference, we were asked, 'How has your program evolved since October 7th?' My simple answer: 'It hasn't evolved, it's evolving and if there is one very significant and important theme to our world as Jewish educators post October 7th, it's that we have grown complacent and stale in our Israel education.' The number of nodding heads and people who came up to me and thanked me for that response told me that I really hit a nerve. Since the pandemic hit and beyond, BJE has been front and center, supporting, responding, nurturing the professional and personal souls of the educators in the trenches, doing everything they can to partner with the leaders in 21st century Jewish education."

Cathy Gordon, Head of Religious School, Wilshire Boulevard Temple

"I'm so grateful to BJE for providing high quality, timely learning about how to teach Israel, especially at this moment. Each monthly learning session I came away thinking more deeply and intentionally about all aspects of my Israel curriculum as well as with concrete action items to try before

our next session. I appreciate BJE's responsiveness to educators' needs, providing a cohort for shared learning, and supporting us in continuing to improve our craft."

Rebecca Berger, Director of Education, IKAR

"The BJE Conference on Jewish Peoplehood and Identity could not have come at a more appropriate time. The need for Jews to unite when antisemitism rears its ugly head is the only way to combat our detractors. Once again BJE has created a forum that allows many of us with different backgrounds and perspectives to join together and focus upon what we have in common."

Rabbi Mordechai Shifman, Head of School, Emek Hebrew Academy Teichman Family Torah Center

"We had a REALLY interesting and valuable conversation about the hopes and challenges of Jewish educators in the current landscape. I learned organically from the discussion, and both facilitators were very good at creating a space for thoughtful discourse and honest/safe sharing, probing questions, identifying themes, and pulling things together."

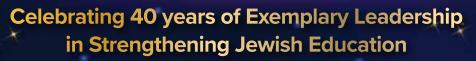
Kimberly Schwartz, Principal, Milken School

Join us for

BJE's 2025 GALA

Honoring

Dr. Gil Graff



Sunday, February 23, 2025 • 5:00 pm Sinai Temple

An evening of gratitude in recognition of the extraordinary achievements of Dr. Gil Graff, who will be retiring as Executive Director of BJE in July 2025.

Co-Chairs: Susan Baum, Mark Berns, Susan Jacoby Stern

Honorary Co-Chairs: BJE President Craig Rutenberg and BJE Past Presidents Mark Berns,

Max Candiotty, Rhea Coskey, Janet Farber, Herb Glaser, Mark Lainer, Elaine Lindheim,

Linda Goldenberg Mayman, Donna Nadel, Marc Rohatiner, Bennett L. Spiegel, Alan M. Spiwak

How meaningful it is to share in a project – the Jewish education of successive generations of Jews with enduring impact on and value for the lives of children, families, the Jewish people, and the larger society of which we are part. It is the privilege of a lifetime to have devoted 40 years at BJE to advancing the mission of encouraging participation in Jewish education, enhancing the quality of Jewish education, and promoting access to Jewish education mi'dor l'dor, from generation to generation.

– Dr. Gil Graff

In July 2025, Dr. Gil Graff will retire, having served BJE with 40 years of extraordinary leadership, including 32 years as Executive Director. Under his steady and inspiring guidance, BJE has benefited from rare levels of professional continuity and has established itself as a vital and trusted organization. An accomplished leader, educator and true *mensch*, Dr. Graff is especially beloved for his vast Jewish knowledge, his unmatched memory, and his embodiment of Jewish values.

Among other initiatives during his tenure, BJE developed an ambitious school accreditation process for all school types; partnered with International March of the Living to annually lead L.A. teens on a powerful educational journey to Poland and Israel; expanded professional networks among educators in early childhood centers, day schools, and congregational religious schools to better meet the needs of students and families; secured grants to assist day schools in creating and building endowments incentivized by distributions from the Simha & Sara Lainer Community Day School Endowment; organized a consortium of day schools that it represents in accessing federally funded Title services and programs from which thousands of day school students benefit each year; and created JKidLA to help connect families with the vast array of Jewish educational opportunities available in greater Los Angeles.

BJE provides professional development for hundreds of teachers each year on topics ranging from Israel education to meeting students' diverse learning needs, benefiting thousands of students at Jewish pre-schools, day schools and part-time religious schools. Amid the pandemic, BJE provided resources and support to its affiliated schools and helped many of them access available government funding. Since October 7, 2023, BJE has provided programs and resources to help teachers, students and parents navigate new educational challenges. Gil's leadership has consistently enabled BJE to meet our community's ever-changing needs.

Prior to joining the staff of BJE as Assistant Director in 1985, Gil, a native of Los Angeles, held positions as a teacher and administrator at day and supplementary schools and served as director of a Jewish summer camp. The author of four books and many articles on topics of Jewish education, history, and law, Gil's most recent book, *Living Torah: Gateway to a Timeless Tradition*, will be released in fall 2024. He and his wife Robin are the parents of Ari, llan (Veronica), and Talia (Mordechai), and three grandchildren: Rafael, Leo, and Azriel.

We hope you will join us on February 23, 2025, to celebrate and honor Dr. Gil Graff for his important contributions to advancing Jewish education and community.

BJE gratefully acknowledges The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles for its generous, multi-year Next Stage Grant to help BJE "implement a smooth leadership transition amidst the upcoming retirement of its long-serving Executive Director (ED), positioning BJE for a successful and sustainable future." We look forward to announcing and welcoming a new BJE ED in the 2024-2025 school year.

Supporting Jewish Education Honor Roll of Donors

Gifts of \$100+ received July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

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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(\$100,000 - \$499,999)

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z"l: Of blessed memory

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

Abrahamz" & Annette Berman

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In Memorian



BJE honors the memory of donors and staff whose passing we became aware of during the year.

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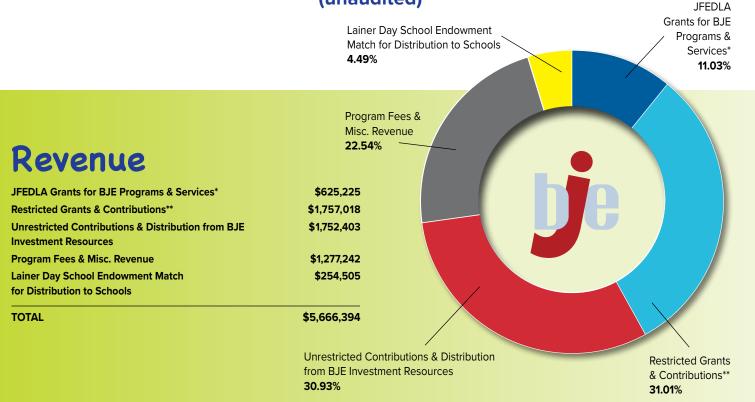
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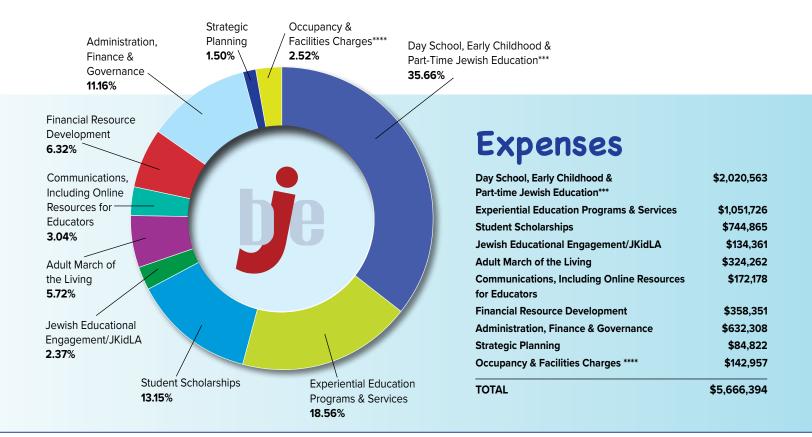
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Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget (unaudited)





- * Includes \$615,000 in program grants, \$4,000 in support of Early Childhood Education Conference, and \$6,225 for CAPSO dues on behalf of BJE-accredited Day Schools
- ** Includes \$955,361 spend rate distribution to schools of funds deposited by schools as part of the High School Affordability Initiative
- *** Does not include \$2.15 million in title services accessed by BJE in support of student learning at 29 BJE-accredited schools in 2023-2024

^{****} Occupancy charges paid to Jewish Federation Los Angeles



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