

## Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine

Newsletter,  
Volume 2

Fall/ Winter 2014, 5775

### Board of Directors

**President**  
Steve Brinn  
**Vice President**  
Eric Kolben  
**Treasurer**  
Stuart Piltch  
**Secretary**  
Bette Novick

Rachael Alford  
Adam Arens  
Sherrie Bergman  
Judy Bertram  
Eva Frank  
Michael Goldman  
Matthew Jacobson  
Ben Kahn  
Ben Marcus  
Dan Pearl  
Dan Rose  
Tom Rosen  
Roberta Zimmerman

**Executive Director**  
Emily Chaleff

### *Shanah Tovah! A Good New Year*

As we settle into the routines of fall and embrace the New Year, we savor memories of another beautiful Maine summer, filled with community events and outdoor activities. There are so many opportunities to support and strengthen the Jewish community locally and around the world!

While we continue to build capacity within the Jewish Community Alliance (JCA), we hope you will visit our redesigned website at [www.mainejewish.org](http://www.mainejewish.org). We are committed to keeping the website current, fresh, engaging, and full of the information you need to make your personal connections to our shared community. Check it out and explore ways to join us as a volunteer, committee member, or participant this year.

### Get Ready for Hanukkah Lights!

For six years, this Jewish Family Services program has brought toys and warm winter clothes to needy families throughout Southern Maine. Please consider adopting a family, sponsoring a child or volunteering your time to the program this year. Gifts will be collected by December 11th and delivered by December 15th. Drop off your donations

and join JFS and PJ Library at the JCA as we celebrate *tzedakah* (righteous giving) on Thursday, December 11 at 5:00 pm. For more information contact Molly at [mrowles@mainejewish.org](mailto:mrowles@mainejewish.org).

### Come with us to Cuba!

The JCA is gearing up for another fantastic trip, this year to Cuba. Join us March 8th-15th! We will explore Cuba's Jewish history and support and celebrate contemporary Jewish life on the island during this unique, fully sanctioned trip. Learn about our itinerary at an informational meeting on Wednesday, October 29th at 7:00pm. For more information and to sign up, please contact Fae at [fsilverman@mainejewish.org](mailto:fsilverman@mainejewish.org).

### Let's Read!

Whether or not international travel fits into your plans this year, we invite you to be a part of our community read as we discuss "An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba" by Ruth Behar. This acclaimed memoir, packed with archival material and historical insight, fully describes the Jewish Cuban experience. Come alone or bring your book group and join us for a community discussion on Monday, January 12th from 7:00-9:00pm.



Check out our new website!  
[www.mainejewish.org](http://www.mainejewish.org)

Update your mailing and email address at the site or email [jca@mainejewish.org](mailto:jca@mainejewish.org).

We want to hear from you!



## Jewish Family Services Retreat

We continue to explore the richness of the legacy of Jewish Family Services as we work to plan its future.



In July we gathered a dynamic group of committed community members for a visioning session to consider current programming and define our goals moving forward, and we are continuing to elicit feedback and ideas. Please contact Molly at [mrowles@mainejewish.org](mailto:mrowles@mainejewish.org) with any questions, concerns or to schedule a time to discuss the program.

## Join the Mothers Circle

Mothers of other faith traditions and backgrounds raising Jewish children are invited to be part of this engaging, supportive group. Join peers to enrich your family's Jewish experiences and deepen your connection to Jewish practices. Margaret Hathaway leads this group with insight, compassion and joy. Families of all constellations are welcomed, no prior knowledge is assumed, and child care (with dinner!) is provided. The program is free, and will run Mondays from 5:30-7:00pm starting October 27th-December 15th! For more information and to sign up, please contact Fae at [fsilverman@mainejewish.org](mailto:fsilverman@mainejewish.org).

## NextDor

Series 360° provided a great opportunity for young people to come together and celebrate the richness of our community. Over the course of the spring and summer, we gathered to hear from David Levi of Vinland Restaurant, Zach Heiden of the ACLU, Mayor Michael Brennan, Adam Gardner of Guster and the LeeVees, and Adam Lee of Lee Auto Mall. The speakers were engaging, inspiring and fun – and we look forward to another slate of great events next year! If you are interested in being a part of the planning committee for these events, contact Fae at [fsilverman@mainejewish.org](mailto:fsilverman@mainejewish.org).



## Center Day Camp

It was another incredible summer at CDC, with over 1,200 camper weeks and busloads of happy campers. Following a long and demanding review process, CDC was reaccredited by the American Camp Association this summer, a clear reflection of the expertise and care with which our fantastic staff approaches their work.



Apple prints and a bee honey dish made at the PJ Library Rosh Hashanah Celebration, Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine.

## PJ Library in the Community

PJ Library currently engages 233 children in Southern Maine. In addition to free monthly books, the JCA hosts PJ events throughout the year in collaboration with local institutions. Most recently, children and families read PJ Library stories, made Rosh Hashanah themed crafts, taste tested a variety of apples and honey and learned about honeybees during a bee chat at the Children Museum and Theater.

## Preschool

Our preschool program in Portland continues to grow, with 60 children in three classrooms, a 10% increase this year! The program is steeped in Jewish values, and draws on the "High Scope" curriculum, a Reggio-Emilia based, student-led approach in which teachers and students work together to create an active and joyful classroom where learning and play intersect.

A generous donation of outdoor play materials from the Fruhman Foundation has transformed our playground; above, children build and explore together.



## Staff Updates

The JCA welcomes Alexandra Sax, who had previously been at the front desk, as our new Advancement Associate. Her expertise as an artist and designer helped us to transform our image online and in print, and her deep dedication to this community is evident in all she does. Alex lives in Portland with her triplets, who attended the JCA preschool and are now enrolled at the Levey Day School.

Tal Zucker has ably filled the role of First Impressions Coordinator. Tal grew up in Israel and moved to Maine in 2003; her background in customer service and hospitality, as well as her positive outlook and excellent office management skills have already made her invaluable. Tal is a native Hebrew speaker and lives in Portland.

We also welcome two new teachers – Clare Flore in the Toddler room and Kristen Smith in the Nursery room. Both bring extensive experience and passion for working with children, and we are thrilled to have them join us.



## Executive Director's Message

By Emily Chaleff

There is an exciting resurgence of engagement at the JCA. A majority of new constituents are new to our community, religiously unaffiliated, and were born after 1970. They bring with them fresh ideas, a variety of interests, and an innovative approach to expressing their shared Jewish identity. Your generous support of the JCA Annual Campaign enables us to better serve our diverse population.

The JCA exists to connect our community with Jewish values and traditions, philanthropy, Israel and Jewish cultural life. Greater engagement has left the JCA bursting at the seams. A vibrant, engaged Jewish Community is once again taking shape and needs a new facility. The JCA is on track to secure a new home for the multifaceted JCA by the end of 2014.

We are inspired by the opportunities we see before us. I regularly speak with young families considering a move to Portland and seeking a vibrant Jewish Community. The new facility will reflect the vitality and generosity of the Jewish community and allow us to grow in concert with the ever-evolving Greater Portland Region — demonstrating to fifth generation Mainers and newcomers alike, that "YES, Jewish Life is Good Here!

While life is good in Maine, the intense violence between Israel and Hamas this summer was tragic. In 1995, I spent my junior year of college at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It was there,

amidst five Hamas bus bombings, and in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, that I realized my identity is tied together with millions of Jews around the world, and that the center of that world is in Israel. Yet, we are obligated as Jews to question the kind of violence that we are witnessing today and ask "why"?

Since 1995, we have seen Hamas change their tactics, but not their mission. They attack Israel, use innocent Palestinians as targets, kill 'collaborators' and falsify casualty reports — waging a war for the complete destruction of Israel and successfully alienating Israel from moderate and progressive support around the world.

We should be and can be proud of Israel — the only democracy in the Middle East and the only Middle Eastern country that allows civil unions and freedom of religious practice. When attacked, this democracy has the right to defend itself. Ultimately, the JCA supports a two-state solution to this conflict — a Jewish state of Israel and an independent Palestinian state.

The JCA is committed to representing Southern Maine's Jewish community as a voice for Israel and to providing forums in which we can all question and discuss events and policies to become better informed. In the last year the JCA has hosted a variety of events — speakers, book groups, and travel to Israel — to broadly engage the community. This coming year the programming will continue. We welcome you all to join us to both learn from and teach each other.

Best wishes for a *Shana Tova* — a good year!

## JCA Annual Meeting 2014

The JCA's Annual Meeting on June 19th at Temple Beth El was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on a year of activities and share more about our plans for the future.

Each year, the JCA takes time at the annual meeting to celebrate the accomplishments of local students, recognize the talents of community members and offer scholarship support through several dedicated funds. As usual, this year our pool of award applicants was incredibly accomplished.

We are delighted to honor the following group of committed individuals who have helped to strengthen and enrich our community in so many ways:

Stephen Brent Jacobson Scholarship: Laura Frank

Fistal Family Nursing Scholarship: Julie Davis

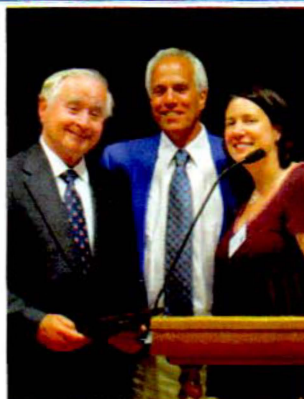
Robert J. Agger Award: Alexis Elowitch and Jacob Morrow-Spitzer

President's Cup: Heather Hodson

Linda and Joel Abromson Award: Jo Israelson, for her project focusing on House Island ([thestonepath.wordpress.com](http://thestonepath.wordpress.com))

Staff Recognition Award: Bobbi-Lyn Feathler

We were pleased to recognize Kenny Nelson's years of service to the Board of the JCA. Thank you Kenny!



Kenny Nelson, JCA Board President Steve Brinn and Executive Director Emily Chaleff



Stephen Brent Jacobson Scholarship winner Laura Frank with Fran Jacobson

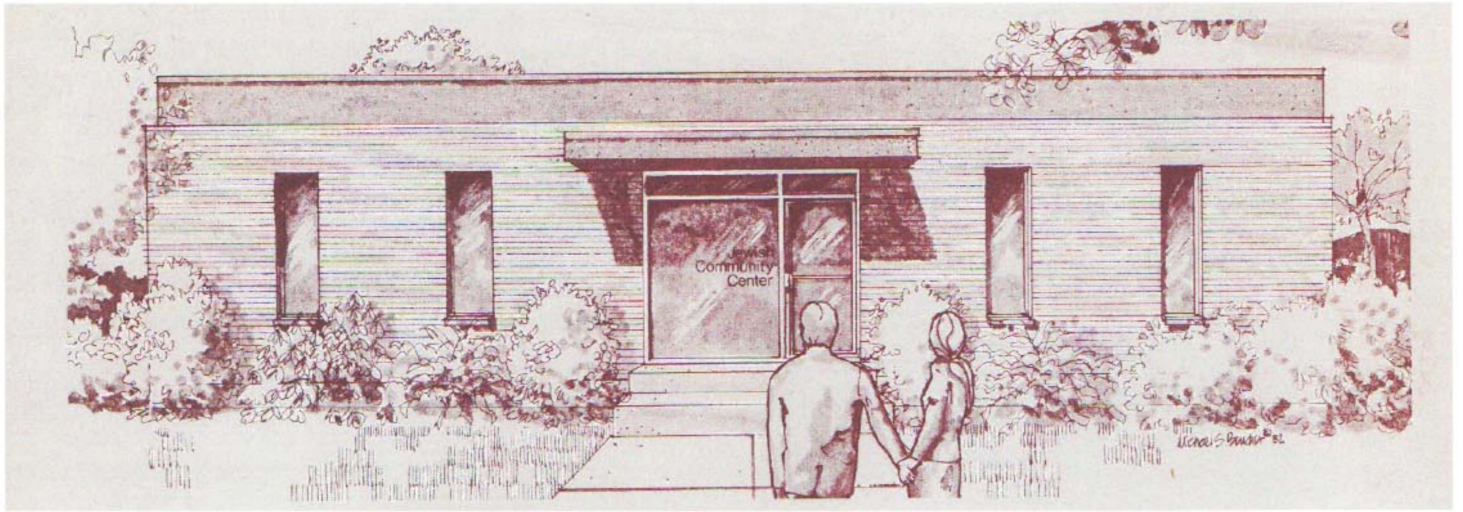


Robert J. Agger Memorial winners Alexis Elowitch and Jacob Morrow-Spitzer with CDC Director Eli Small



President's Cup winner Heather Hodson with JCA Board President Steve Brinn





*Portland Jewish Community Center Yearbook, 1982/5743, building dedication October 17, 1982*

The Jewish Community Alliance's archives bring to life our history. As we locate a new site, we remember our start at 57 Ashmont Street.

The mission of the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine is to enhance and promote Jewish life and continuity locally, in Israel and throughout the world, and to generate the financial resources to develop, provide and support diverse programs, education and services in order to accomplish these goals.

## Support the JCA Annual Campaign

**Donate Now!**

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

*"Rather than go after a few new workers, it is our belief that we should enlist the entire Jewish community in service to its institutions and associations. If all of our people are working together for all our community needs, there will be no misunderstandings, no competition, no "hard feeling," and no distress. There can only be the friendly, cooperative and pleasant relationship which comes from a mutual interest and which rightfully belongs to every Jewish organization in the city. "*

*Harry Potter, President of the Jewish Home for Aged, discussing the intention of a shared community campaign, Portland Jewish Community Guide, April 1935.*

**Jewish Community Alliance  
of Southern Maine**

57 Ashmont Street, Portland, Maine 04103  
Tel. (207) 772-1959  
[www.mainejewish.org](http://www.mainejewish.org)

