



ALLIANCE NEWS

REMEMBERING
EIFFEL GILYANA
PAGES 4 - 5

WE LOVE

OUR

MEMBERS





Chris Turner
730-2100
ext. 257

Shalom Friends,

When we come to work at the JCA every day, we strive to always enhance the quality of life for our entire community. Since the passing of my dear friend, mentor, and colleague, Eiffel Gilyana, our members turned the tables – showing us that we are accomplishing the JCA mission in more ways than we realize.

Through grieving the loss of Eiffel, I am learning that our saying, *More Than a Gym*, is so much *more* than a great tagline. Instead, it is a phrase that is lived at our JCA every single day. I not only saw strength and resilience throughout our campus in recent weeks, I saw the true meaning of community shining brightly.

When Joseph Gilyana was preparing to speak about the enormous legacy his father left, one of our JCA members calmed his nerves by reminding him to speak from the heart and made sure he would have a proper suit to wear for the memorial services. Donations were made in Eiffel’s name and sent to us to give to his family. A member delivered five dozen doughnuts for our staff to raise morale and some simply shared a hug because one of our brightest spirits is no longer here.

In processing this loss, I find peace in the lessons Eiffel shared through our years working together. Eiffel believed we should **be a friend to everyone**; he never met a stranger and welcome everyone as if they were an old friend. He always took the **time to talk to people**. Sure, sometimes it was much longer than anticipated, but Eiffel **never rushed conversations or made anyone feel undervalued**. He believed we should **never defer or deflect an act of kindness** and that we should **always help people** when we can. Finally, he taught us to **live each day to its fullest**. This does not necessarily mean 4:30 am workouts or 40-mile swims for us all but I think we can all try to make a little bit more out of each day simply because Eiffel would want us to.

As you read the feature articles included in this issue of Alliance News, I hope you will be reminded of a memory you shared with Eiffel at our JCA. Always remember, whether you are trying something new, supporting a cause, striving for a goal, or better yet, accomplishing one – Eiffel is proud of you and we are too. He brought quite an exuberance for life in everything he did through his friendships, leadership, physical abilities, or genuine pride for others. While his presence, voice, advice, bear hugs (if you were lucky), and boisterous cheers are missed around our campus, I am certain Eiffel’s spirit will live on through all of us.

Wishing you peace and resilience,

Chris Turner
Membership Director

JCA BUILDING HOURS

Sun.....	8 am – 6 pm
Mon – Thu.....	5:30 am – 9 pm
Fri.....	5:30 am – 5 pm
Sat.....	1 – 6 pm

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For additional program information and to register, please contact the JCA.

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- JCA Kid Kare is available to children 3 months to 9 years old.
- JCA Kid Kare is offered on a reservation basis.
- Space limited to 15 kids per shift.
- Kid Kare service is for a maximum of 90 minutes
- Visit jcjax.org/fitness to review our Kid Kare policies or to make a reservation.

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TRIBUTES

In memory of...

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by The Spring and Miller Families
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The Board and Staff of the JCA

**KAREN CATALDO'S
BELOVED MOTHER**

by Adam and Regina Chaskin
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For the speedy recovery of...

KAREN AND PHILIP ADLER

by The Board and Staff of the JCA

REGINA CHASKIN

by The Flagler Family
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In honor of...

**JEFF EDWARDS ONEJAX
HUMANITARIAN AWARDS**

by The Spring and Miller Families

NATALIA FISHER'S BIRTHDAY

by Rochelle and David Stoddard

MATT FLAGLER'S BIRTHDAY

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HELEN ROWAN'S BIRTHDAY

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ANNUAL
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Jax Vegas, Baby!

FEBRUARY 17, 2024 | 7:30 PM

CHAIRS

Sunny Gettinger • Lior Spring

We're going to Jax Vegas, Baby! Get ready to roll the dice with all your favorite icons of The Strip. Bellagio fountains will greet you at the door, epic performers will entertain all night long, extravagant buffets delight your culinary desires, and casino games will test your skills.

Your attendance or sponsorship will make a meaningful impact, offering crucial financial and scholarship assistance to individuals and families benefiting from our exceptional JCA programs. Purchase your tickets today - you won't want to miss this exciting event!



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SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [BIT.LY/JAXVEGASBABY](https://bit.ly/jaxvegasbaby)

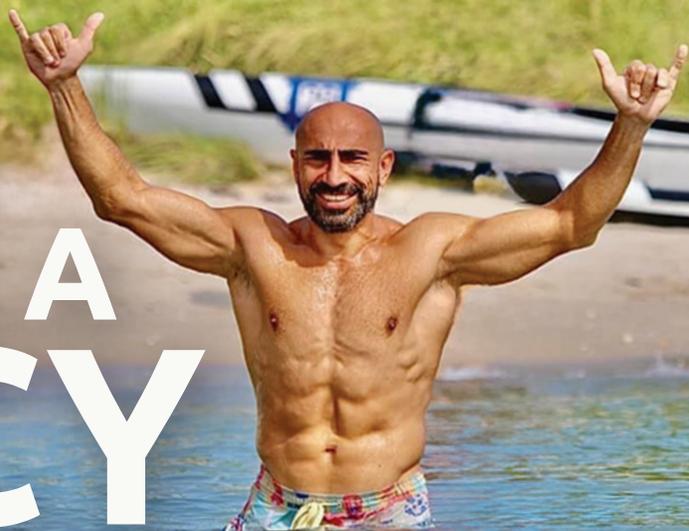


WHAT HAPPENS AT THE JCA, STAYS AT THE JCA

For sponsorship opportunities and event information, please contact Kendall Sisisky Valliere at (904) 730-2100 ext. 231 or kendall.valliere@jcajax.org.



EIFFEL GILYANA HONORING A LEGACY



By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

It seemed appropriate to be together the way our beloved Fitness and Wellness Director would have enjoyed the most – packed like sardines inside our Bessie Setzer Frisch Auditorium to honor one of the best human beings we all had the privilege to know. Hundreds of people gathered at the JCA to celebrate Eiffel Gilyana’s life and recount his incredible legacy.

As the crowd poured into the doors of our campus, on Sunday, December 31, the line of members, friends, and families stretched outside the building. Countless people greeted each other with an embrace and shared their disbelief at the passing of our superhero.

While we all heal through this heartache, the memories and the laughs we share will be what helps Eiffel’s legacy to always live on.

Geisla Reis,
Friend and Colleague

Eiffel Gilyana you will be forever and ever in my existence, my life will never be the same, my friend, my mentor! I now carry you heavy in my heart, you are my greatest inspiration!

Allison Brody,
Friend and JCA Member

Our family is terribly heartbroken about Eiffel. He was truly an extraordinary person. He was our son Aidan’s first soccer coach, our personal trainer, and most importantly, our friend. He was so enthusiastic and invested when coaching soccer and so professional and motivating when training in the fitness room. He embodied kindness, bravery and strength. My husband, Scott, and I remember his incredible life stories, his infectious laughter and his genuine warmth. He was just an incredibly likable, all-around amazing person. Our hearts ache. We are so saddened by this loss - a tremendous loss for so many.

Rick Van Rickley,
Friend and Cofounder of Task Force Hydro1

Eiffel Gilyana was my best friend. We met in 2004 in Iraq when I hired him to be my interpreter. From driving Linton in range rovers, to blowing cars up in the desert, or conducting raids in the middle of Mosul, he was always smiling. It was fate when we reconnected in jax, totally unplanned. He has become such a huge member of my family and organization that it leaves a huge gaping hole. May you guide me from above brother, like you did throughout my entire cancer treatment.

Sarah Brown Perfido,
Friend and Former Colleague

I feel so blessed to have known and worked with Eiffel for several years. He was a great mentor and friend. Eiffel truly was a special person and a wonderful human who dedicated his life to helping all who met him. We are all changed for knowing him. My heart goes out to his beautiful family. There are no words for this great loss. May his memory be for a blessing.

Suzie Pollak Becker,
Friend and JCA Member

My nephew taught me that each of us is here for a purpose-until our task is complete, and God calls us home. We are charged with making an impact that will outlast our person-with love, service, kindness and intention. Today I witnessed the legacy of a man who served God, family and community. I believe if life is lived correctly, the last two become interchangeable, and you become a shining link of the chain that reaches all the way to the Divine Spirit. My word for this year is Eiffel. In spirit, character, discipline, resilience, and values I will strive to improve myself with tenacity and try to leave everyone feeling better than I found them, like Eiffel.
#TeamEiffel #EiffelStrong





Ilana Manasse – Maccabee of the Month

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

The greatest memories I have working with Eiffel was receiving the lists of members he nominated as Maccabee of the Month in our Alliance News magazine. Dedicated to the health and wellness of every member he encountered, Eiffel’s nominations were always coupled with inspirational stories about dedication, motivation, resilience, determination, physical grit, and perseverance.

There was a certain glow and excitement that came over Eiffel’s face and profound eyebrows as he shared his lengthy list of reasons for every Maccabee of the Month nomination. Although sometimes longwinded, Eiffel’s article preps always filled me with excitement to meet, learn more, and share the stories of some of our most incredible JCA members. Month after month, Eiffel nominated people worthy of a kvell or two, and his nomination for this magazine was no exception.

“The JCA is the best place in town to spend time with friends and enjoy great fitness facilities. In my view, our community should be showcased around the world for accepting and embracing everyone.”

“We forget to celebrate and highlight the people who keep healthy and strong day in and out through the life journey. Ilana Manasse never stops, she does everything here, and she is a role model to women throughout our community. She stays strong and healthy, and you would not know but she is in her later years,” Eiffel explained and started listing Ilana’s weekly routines at the JCA. “Zumba, Pilates, Latin Fusion, Yoga, Cardio Kickboxing, Tone and Stretch classes, she does everything we have to offer and there is probably more I am not even thinking about.”



Upon meeting our Maccabee of the Month, I quickly learned why Eiffel chose to nominate Ilana – her spirit, determination and physical abilities mirror those of women half her age. A true Maccabee in every sense of the definition, Ilana has not stopped since joining our community when the JCA campus opened in 1988.

“I have three kids and six grandchildren, and I always say we must take care of ourselves

to keep going so our kids do not have to take care of us as we age. I love to travel and every time I need to walk fast, climb, or squat, I say to myself, thank goodness for the JCA,” explained Ilana, who says as a veteran of the Israel Defense Force and retired Judaic studies teacher, the JCA nurtures her spirit with every Jewish holiday and Israel-focused program.

“Most recently I co-hosted the Israeli Dance program with our Community Shlichah Tal Mola. I love to dance; it makes you smile and keeps you moving,” laughed Ilana. “My spirits are always high when I am at the JCA because I see my friends, all from different races and religions, supporting each other and having a good time together.”

True to Eiffel’s nomination, Ilana’s determination and perseverance are not the only qualities that make her a Maccabee - her spirit is evident through all she does here and all she continues to do to nurture her mind and body on our campus.

“I always gain new insight and knowledge from attending the events here and I especially love the Cultural Arts Festival,” explained Ilana. “The JCA is the best place in town to spend time with friends and enjoy great fitness facilities. In my view, our community should be showcased around the world for accepting and embracing everyone.”

The Maccabees were Jewish rebel warriors and heroes of the Chanukkah story. Maccabee means “hammer” and is known as a symbol of physical might, spiritual strength and mental resilience in the face of adversity.

If you know a JCA member who is a Maccabee, please email Beth at beth.milograno@jcajax.org.



Why Families Love the JCA

The Rostholder family: Erik, Emily, Hannah, and Ethan, seem to always be doing something great on our JCA campus. Nourishing their minds, bodies, and spirits through sports, the arts, summer camp, and a plethora of fitness activities, every member of the family has a reason why they love coming to our JCA.

“When I was growing up, I worked as a counselor in training one summer at camp and our kids continue to spend summers at the JCA when they are not at sleep away camp,” explains Dr. Emily Rostholder, who was raised in Jacksonville. “Our family membership began about eight years ago; Ethan was just born at the time and Hannah started to learn to swim with private lessons when she was three.”

Through watching their children’s experiences and by engaging in some of their own, Emily and Erik Rostholder say they have many more memories to cherish thanks to their time spent as a family at the JCA.

“We enjoy all the cultural, educational, and art programming available for our family. I use the pool and gym regularly for fitness and Ironman endurance training,” says Erik Rostholder, who when not in our pool or fitness center, can be found courtside in the Joe and Sophie Witten Gymnasium watching his children gain confidence, coordination, skills, and technique, in our JCA Fencing Academy.

“As our children grow, we are using the J more for After School programming and watching Hannah and Ethan make incredible progress in fencing,” explains Erik. “It is inspiring to watch them improve through private lessons and group classes at the JCA. Hannah is now competing in national fencing competitions, both of our kids fence in

“Having a predominately Jewish space for our kids for after school and athletic choices is important to our family. If we don’t pass on our Jewish values and the importance of history and our religion, who will?”

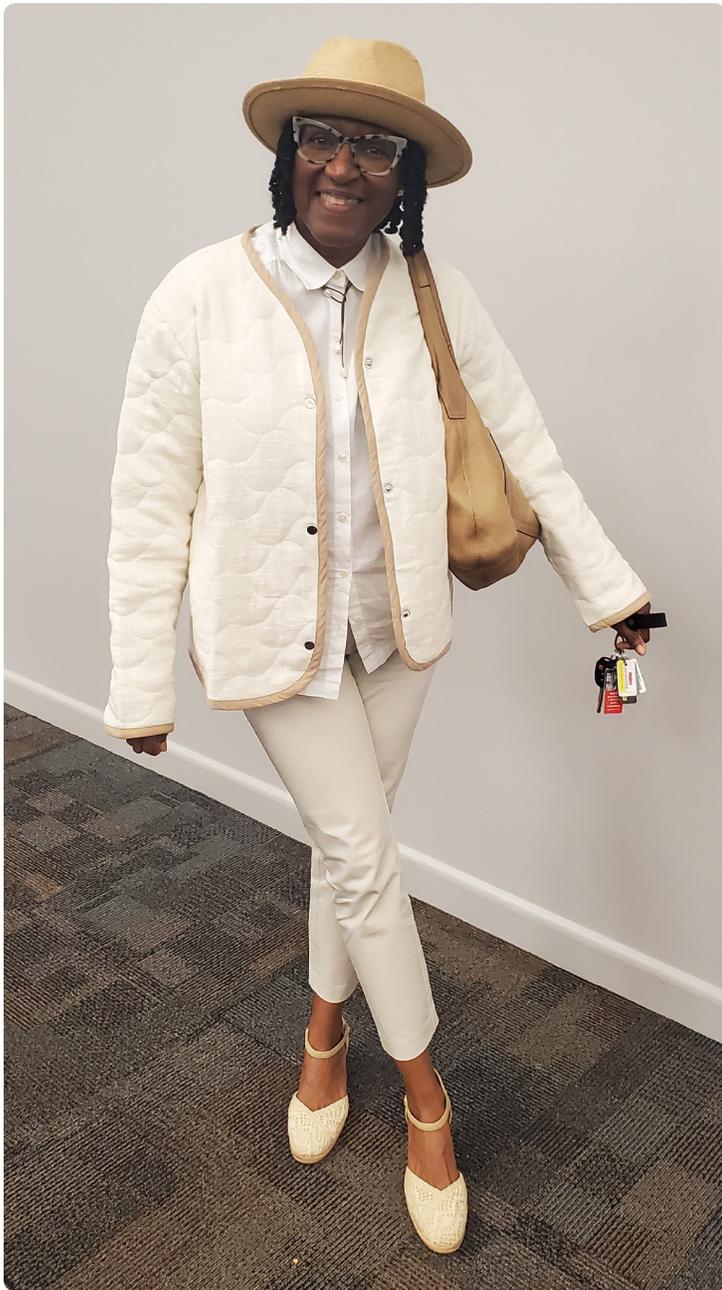
regional competitions, and Ethan will likely be ready to go to nationals in the summer of 2024.”

More so than fencing, playing sports and a variety of activities, the Rostholder family believes in our JCA’s mission and what our founders envisioned the JCA campus to be: the place, in the tradition of our heritage where people come to share in Jewish culture and values while they enhance body, mind and spirit.

“The fact that it’s a Jewish space with many of our community members here keeps us coming back. The JCA is a warm and welcoming place with a welcoming staff and expert trainers who treat you like family, says Emily. “Having a predominately Jewish space for our kids for after school and athletic choices is important to our family. If we don’t pass on our Jewish values and the importance of history and our religion, who will?”



Have you shared the JCA with your friends and family? From our sports clinics and fitness classes to enrichment programs, celebrations of the arts, and Jewish family programming - there truly is something on our campus for every generation. When our members refer a friend to the JCA they can earn free dues and a cash bonus. Visit jcajax.org/join for more details and start referring your friends to the JCA today.



“There are a variety of classes, day trips, the traveling dinner club, arranged lunches and healthcare professionals that come in to discuss a myriad of issues that face us every day, especially as we age.”

Since her first visit, Rena has not stopped. She visits our campus weekly and says the 30-minute drive is always more than worth it.

“I really love the group fitness classes, yoga with Lynelle and Grant, and everything the J Institute offers,” said Rena. “There are a variety of classes, day trips, the traveling dinner club, arranged lunches and healthcare professionals that come in to discuss a myriad of issues that face us every day, especially as we age.”

A supporter of everything our J Institute does on our campus and throughout Northeast Florida, Rena also serves as a committee member of our Jewish Cultural Arts Festival. From lectures with authors from the Jewish Book Council to the films we screen and of course, Ladies’ Night Out, Rena says it is hard to count all the reasons why she loves the festival each year.



“It is free – and it gives people who may not have the resources to attend cultural events the opportunity to experience the arts. The author lectures and discussion allows you to understand the characters in each book and you get to ask the authors questions,” said Rena. “The JCA is more than just a gym, and it’s for everyone in your family from children to seniors.”

Worth Every Minute

For most of our valued adult members, their first experience at the JCA is a workout in our fitness center or aquatics programs, but those popular programs were not the reasons Rena Smith drove from Middleburg to visit our campus in 2017.

“My husband, Kevin, and I enjoy classical music and are supporters of our Jacksonville Symphony, so my best friend Edgar Covil invited me to one of the classical performances back in 2017 and the rest was history,” explained Rena Smith whose first visit on our campus was to see one of the world-renowned artists featured in the Berman Family JCA Concert Series. “We did a tour after the concert then decided to join that day.”

You are invited to join us! The Berman Family JCA Concert Series is free and open to the entire community thanks to the incredible generosity of the Berman Family. Our 2024 concert series begins on Sun, Jan 14 at 3 pm with Chelsea Guo, a soprano vocalist and pianist who was included in Classic FM’s Rising Stars: 30 Brilliant Musicians.

Mark your calendars, the Berman Family JCA Concert Series continues through March 2024.

Lun Li, Violin

Sun, Feb 18 | 3 pm

Benjamin Baker, Violin

Sun, Mar 17 | 3 pm



Lights, Camera, Action

“Independence, self-expression, and being confident in front of a group are so important in a child’s development as they prepare for adulthood,” explained Dr. Samira Meymand, a Board Certified Oral and Maxillofacial surgeon in Jacksonville, whose journey at the JCA began when she enrolled her son, Zachary in our Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten. “Zachary had an amazing JCA preschool experience. Although we moved onto a different school due to proximity to our house, he still plays basketball and soccer, performs in theatre programs, and attends summer camp at the JCA.”

Now a sixth grader who plays multiple sports and has completed eight speaking roles in our PAC Productions (so far), being part of our community gives Zach valuable experiences and Samira a front-row seat to watch him grow while he discovers his true passions in life.

“The JCA provides the exact environment to encourage dialogue with other children and develop communication tools that a computer or iPad cannot provide. Zachary is very expressive and loves singing and dancing. He loves Shelly and I love how Shelly can create such amazing productions month after month, year after year with children of all ages.”

“Shelly Hughes’ programs are so important because they teach children how to engage, perform, and give children the confidence they need in life as they prepare for their future. In a predominately technology-based society where everyone spends so much time on screens, children need

to learn to look into another person’s eyes when they are talking and need to be engaged,” explained Dr. Meymand. “The JCA provides the exact environment to encourage dialogue with other children and develop communication tools that a computer or iPad cannot provide. Zachary is very expressive and loves singing and dancing. He loves Shelly and I love how Shelly can create such amazing productions month after month, year after year with children of all ages.”

Other than preparing for his next role on the JCA stage, Zachary is focused on doing more with his acting career.

“Zachary is currently preparing for a commercial audition in Los Angeles. He has embraced everything that the JCA has to offer, from his acting to his sports/physical fitness/ basketball training,” said Dr. Meymand “He tried out and was selected for the middle school basketball team thanks to the one-on-one basketball training he does with Jimmy in the fitness center. Zachary is looking forward to his first commercial audition, and of course, he is ready to be in the next PAC production of Seussical the Musical. The JCA is an open-hearted, welcoming community for all ages, all religions, and stages of life. We believe in the mission and the vision of the JCA and see it in action every day when we drop Zachary off for theatre practice and at every performance. We love everything the JCA has to offer– and let’s not forget the amazing challah bread! A bonus is that on Thursdays I can come to the JCA and buy six loaves at a time to share with my co-workers and friends. It is just so, absolutely, delicious! We are so blessed to experience all these amazing benefits!”



Like it or love it too much, our challah bread is on sale for \$6 per loaf at the front desk every week starting on Thursdays.

Seussical The Musical is the next Performing Arts for Children (PAC) performance happening in the Bessie Setzer Frisch Auditorium. Mark your calendars to see Zach and all our budding Broadway stars take the stage. Ticket information will be available on jcjax.org in February.

Mar 2 and 9 | 7:30 pm

Mar 3 and 10 | 1 pm



A Family Tradition

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

On any given day, at any given time, you can find multiple generations of families enjoying every service our Jewish Community Alliance has to offer. To paraphrase our mission and the Werner family can attest to, we strengthen Jewish life, serve as a common meeting ground, and enhance the quality of life for every person who comes here.

“Growing up, we were members when the JCA first opened. My late grandfather, Joe Mizrahi, would meet up to play cards with his friends and my siblings and I would play t-ball during the early days of sports programming,” recalled Sara Werner, who as a third-generation member of our JCA can quite literally find childhood memories at every corner of our campus.

“I have early memories of swimming at the JCA and celebrating a birthday party as a child. Our family was always connected to the JCA, attending community events and cheering on our friends and family members in plays and at soccer games. I always looked forward to when

“ Tali has been in eight plays with Shelly and two years of theatre camp. She loves cooking at the JCA and playing basketball. Jonah is in taekwondo with Master Freddy. He participates in a variety of sports and attends Camp Sabra. Micah is just getting started, most recently finishing his first season of soccer. ”

I could bring my own kids here.” From participating in youth sports leagues to working out in our fitness center in high school, Sara says now with her husband Bruce and children, her visits have come full circle as she makes new memories at the JCA. “We started our own family membership when our kids were old enough to participate in after school activities. We initially returned because it was familiar and convenient. We stay because we support the mission of the JCA and our children truly love the programs that are offered.”

As she watches the fourth generation of her family experience all our campus has to offer, the Werner children, Tali, Jonah, and Micah, can be found in theatre, cooking, playing soccer, basketball, football, mastering taekwondo, swimming, on the tennis courts, and at summer camp. Sara says they are only looking forward to more. “Tali has been in eight plays with Shelly and two years of theatre camp. She loves cooking at the JCA and playing basketball. Jonah is in taekwondo with Master Freddy. He participates in a variety of sports and attends the Sabra program at JCamp. Micah is just getting started, most recently finishing his first season of soccer.”

Making new memories while embracing the traditions of our heritage, the Werner family looks forward to spending time in our environment of fun, harmony, and friendship, for many years to come.

“Our kids love the activities but also just hanging around the building, where they see friends, cousins and even their teachers,” said Sara. “The JCA is a wonderful place for our entire community to connect. We believe in the mission and that our involvement strengthens our connections in the Jewish community.”





Sharing Culture and Education through the Arts

“This is my favorite part of the campus because it is beautiful local art and there is always something different to see,” Susan Elinoff shared as she perused the pieces on display in our beautiful Vandroff Art Gallery.

As founding JCA members, art enthusiasts, world travelers, and longtime supporters of nearly every cultural arts program we present, Susan and Ron Elinoff say they knew our JCA community would be meaningful to people of every generation and faith, long before our campus opened.

“The Jewish community wanted this to be wonderful, and it is what we intended - a place for everyone, where everyone belongs,” explained Dr. Ron Elinoff, a retired dentist who also served for many years as a member of the JCA Board of Trustees. “This environment allows the community to see we are all the same as everyone else that comes here, all while we offer our neighbors a high caliber experience to anyone who comes here.”

Other than the beauty that the artists’ works bring to the halls of our campus, the Elinoffs believe that discovering the arts by way of Jewish literature, films, fine art, and music, leads to an important education.

“The arts bring our community together while offering our neighbors an enriching, fulfilling and educational experience,” said Susan who along with Ron is a proud committee member and supporter of our annual Jewish Cultural Arts Festival. “We love being part of the festival committee because of all the

people we get to connect with to make the events happen. It is a lot of fun reading the books and watching the movies in advance, then we make our selections to bring to the JCA – the entire process is rewarding.”

During the 2023 festival season, the Elinoffs sponsored screenings of 10 Questions for Henry Ford, at the JCA and for our partners at River Garden Senior Services. The feature-length documentary art film, directed by Andy Kirshner, is based on Henry Ford’s personal notebooks, oral histories, archival documents, and the publication of his antisemitic screed, The International Jew.

“We felt it was extremely important to bring this film to our community and share the education and history it provides. Many people do not realize Henry Ford’s background or the antisemitic things he did so many years ago because it was all forgotten,” said Ron. “Bringing films, directors, and authors into our community to share stories, research and education firsthand is what helps us learn, stop the division in our world, understand what happened in the past, and assure that history will not be forgotten.”

Advocates of our JCA for more than 35 years, the Elinoffs say they believe in the future of our agency, all we can achieve, and our destiny to remain a vital place for our neighbors to engage and learn while they enhance mind, body, and spirit.

“We are proud to support and serve on the cabinet for the Building Our Future Together capital campaign, so we can continue to nurture this incredible environment,” said Ron. “People like coming to our JCA and experiencing all we have to offer. Expanding and remodeling our JCA is the right move because we want to be ahead of the game and always provide a premiere experience to anyone who comes here.”

“The Jewish community wanted this to be wonderful, and it is what we intended - a place for everyone, where everyone belongs. This environment allows the community to see we are all the same as everyone else that comes here, all while we offer our neighbors a high caliber experience to anyone who comes here.”

Stay tuned, more details about our capital campaign will be announced in 2024. To date, we have raised more than \$11.5 million to upgrade and renovate the JCA! If you would like more information or have questions about the Building Our Future Together capital campaign, please email our Development Director Kendall Sisisky Valliere at kendall.valliere@jcajax.org.



David A. Stein
Jewish Community Alliance
*on the Ed Parker Jewish
Community Campus*

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MISSION STATEMENT The Jewish Community Alliance (JCA)
strengthens Jewish life, serves as a common meeting ground
and enhances the quality of life of the entire community.

VISION STATEMENT Our vision is to provide **the** place in the tradition of our
heritage where all people come together throughout their lives to enhance
body, mind and spirit in an environment of fun, harmony and friendship.



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**AGES
2 AND UP**