



ALLIANCE NEWS



More Than A Show
The Impact of Magic Wardrobe Theatre
Page 9



Sam Stromberg

Shalom Friends,

It is difficult to find the words to thank all of you for allowing me to serve as board chair of this wonderful organization. Thinking back on all we accomplished together in the last two years is extremely fulfilling. As we look toward the future, it is exciting to know that we are making incredible progress to ensure that the Jewish Community Alliance remains a premiere destination in our city for many years to come.

With spring coming to an end and the heat of summer ahead, our talented staff members are planning programs both near and far to entertain, educate and share new experiences with our community. Take note and save the date, we are bringing the JCA to you! Please read more about the J Experiences Faye Hedrick is busy planning on page 3.

This May, as we continue to strengthen Jewish life in Jacksonville, we hope you will join us to honor Israel’s National Days. Our J Institute Assistant Director Rachel Sandler has more details about how we will commemorate these days as a community on page 10.

There is something special about sharing our heritage and traditions with the greater Jacksonville community. In my opinion, the traditions we share are even more important as hate speech and bias continue to divide communities around the world. On page 8 our Development Director Kendall Sisisky Valiere has more insights on the traditions we hold and the deeper importance of using your grandmother’s *kiddish* cup during *Shabbat*.

Houston or bust! Our CEO Adam Chaskin along with several amazing JCA coaches will lead a group of 30 teens to the Maccabi Games® in Texas this August. These Jewish teenagers from Northeast Florida are sure to make memories they will never forget on the 2024 Jacksonville JCA Maccabi Games team. Playing basketball, flag football, swimming, baseball, tennis and volleyball - turn to page 13 to read more about our Maccabi-bound athletes.

I am always so proud to walk through our campus and see the variety of ways we serve our mission to enhance the quality of life for our entire community. Whether it is friends hurrying to get to their group fitness class on time, our youngest athletes playing their first sport, the many children who come here and ask for five more minutes of fun, or the sounds of young thespians practicing for the latest PAC Production – there truly is something for everyone at our JCA.

I know I speak for all of our employees and JCA board members when I say how proud we are to serve this beautiful community. The future is bright at the JCA and we are flourishing every day.

Humbled to serve you,



Sam Stromberg
Board Chair

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For additional program information and to register, please contact the JCA.
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Adam Chaskin Chief Executive Officer
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JCA BUILDING HOURS

Sun.....8 am - 6 pm	Fri.....5:30 am - 5 pm
Mon - Thu.....5:30 am - 9 pm	Sat.....1 - 6 pm
Memorial Day	
Mon, May 27.....8 am - 5 pm	

Kid Kare (babysitting) - (904) 730-2100 ext. 325

Hours:

Sun - Fri mornings, 9 am - 12 pm | Mon - Thu evenings, 5 - 8 pm

- JCA Kid Kare is available for children 3 months to 9 years old.
- Kid Kare service is for a maximum of 90 mins.
- Kid Kare is offered by reservation system via the My J app.
- Visit bit.ly/JCAKidKare for Kid Kare policies and to download My J.

In memory of...

MARGARET L'ENGLE MILLER
by Daniel Miller and Family
INBAL RASNER'S BELOVED FATHER
by The Miller Family

In honor of...

THE BIRTH OF ISABELLA ROSE KANTOR
by The Miller Families
Rochelle and David Stoddard
Adam and Regina Chaskin
The Board and Staff of the JCA



We Are Coming YOUR Way!

By Faye Hedrick, J Experience Coordinator

Todah Rabah! Our J Experiences are a hit - thanks to all of you! Our neighbors in St. Johns County and beyond joined us at the first-ever Passover at the Pond in Julington Plantation Park this April. Plus, we hosted our first-ever offsite J-Cation Day at Beth El – The Beaches Synagogue during Passover. With the feedback both positive and unanimous, I know many more J Experiences will be coming your way!

The next J Experience on tap is **Yiddish by the Sea**. We will be back at the Ponte Vedra Library at 11 am on May 21 with our friend **Aaron Holzer**. Aaron will facilitate conversation and learning, and share all he knows about Yiddish. Do not forget to mark your calendars and register online for any of our summertime J Experiences. **Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Shmuli Novack** is on Tue, Jun 4 at 12 pm.

Stroller Fit at the Beaches happens twice this summer with Gisela Reis. Mark your calendars for 10 am on Sun, Jun 9 and Sun, Aug 18 at Beth El – The Beaches Synagogue in Ponte Vedra. Also on Sun, Aug 18, **Full Moon Yoga for Tu B'Av**, Israel's holiday that honors love, starts at 7 pm in the Bryan-Gooding Planetarium at MOSH. For pricing and to register please follow this link: bit.ly/FullMoonYogaMOSH.

While some date, time and location details are still being finalized, I am thrilled to be planning even more programs that will bring the JCA your way!

Learn how to get fit from the comforts of your own home!

JCA Fitness and Wellness Director Karen Cataldo holds a wealth of knowledge as an exercise physiologist, certified aquatics and kickboxing instructor. In a comprehensive Sit & Get Fit class, Karen will teach us exercises that can be easily worked into our daily routines.

What is the sheva framework and how can you use it to support your children this summer and beyond?

Our Early Childhood Director Natalia Fisher will share her knowledge and expertise in a discussion about the *sheva* lenses. The *sheva* framework, centered around the topic of Divine Image or being created *b'tzelem elohim*, unifies all of humankind and is a focus with the children at our Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten.

From interacting with children to grandchildren or even a little one we may see in the supermarket, Natalia will share more on how we can include the *sheva* lenses in our lives with the next generation.

More J Experience location details are coming soon! If you have thoughts or suggestions on programs our JCA can bring your way, I would like to hear from you. Email me at faye.hedrick@jcajax.org and let me know what you want the next J Experience to be!

JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL

Welcome Jewish Book Council Authors

By Heather Terrill, J Institute Director

Every year our Jewish Community Alliance has the privilege of hosting a variety of authors presented by the Jewish Book Council. To quote their mission, “Jewish Book Council, founded in 1943, is the longest-running organization devoted exclusively to the support and celebration of Jewish literature. For over seventy years, Jewish Book Council has brought people together for meaningful discussions about Jewish life, identity, and culture through a literary lens. Jewish learning embodied in the printed word has played a crucial role in the development and strengthening of Jewish communities throughout the world.”

We are thrilled to be able to bring you a variety of authors to share their stories with our community. Our Jewish Book Council visiting author events are free and open to our entire community.

Please mark your calendars to hear these incredible authors speak!

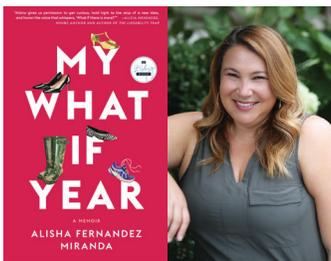


Richard Hurowitz *In the Garden of the Righteous*

Rescheduled from the 2023 Cultural Arts Festival: Author Richard Hurowitz joins us in person to share the illuminating and inspiring profiles featured in his new novel, *In the Garden of the Righteous*. The profiles included in the book display the brutality of the Holocaust and the collaboration, acquiescence, and passivity of millions as well as those who risked their lives to save others out of a sense of shared humanity.

Wed, May 1 | 7 pm

Free to the community thanks to the generosity of our annual Cultural Arts Festival sponsors.

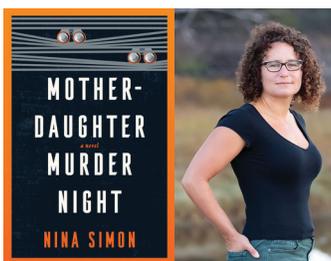


Alisha Fernandez Miranda *My What If Year*

Like many young women in their thirties, forties, and fifties, Alisha was experiencing burnout and felt the weight of responsibilities as she juggled a job and a family. Author Alisha Fernandez Miranda joins us virtually at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library to share her novel, *My What If Year*, chronicling her journey as a new intern in various fields.

Wed, Jun 5 | 12 pm

Ponte Vedra Beach Library



Nina Simon *Mother-Daughter Murder Night*

A fresh, fun and twisty whodunnit about a grandmother-mother-daughter trio who come together as amateur sleuths to solve a murder in their coastal California town. Author Nina Simon joins us virtually at the JCA to discuss her book.

Tue, Aug 27 | 12 pm



Our Jewish Book Council visiting author events are free and open to our entire community.



Birds on the Brain

By Natalia Fisher, Early Childhood Director

When entering our kindergarten classroom, you are immediately immersed in an environment that stimulates imagination and curiosity. Every corner of Mrs. Ledesma's classroom holds a discovery and the questions asked spark lively dialogue and debate.

Complete with bird songs chiming on the class clock, our constructivist kindergarten class is immersed in a comprehensive study of everything related to birds. Rooted in hands-on exploration and real-world encounters, this learning environment is filled with observations and documentation of birds and their behaviors.

When I came into the classroom, I told the children that I was hoping to learn more about their bird study. Sitting down at the circular table in the middle of the room, Jack and Rihaan quickly came over ready to share.

"Well, it started when we saw a squirrel taking food from the bird feeder. And we had to figure out how to keep the squirrel off," explained Jack pointing to the baffle on the feeder. "We sprayed cooking oil on it, see?"

"Yes, now we see all the beautiful birds and we make houses for them. Look," Rihaan chimed in as he pointed at the handmade bird homes hanging in the window.

From across the room, behind a shelf, Alora was working on a building and added, "The birds can be safe in the birdhouses."

"Birds are important because they fly and they are beautiful and some sing," exclaimed Oliver. "We need to take care of them."

"Look at this," Jack said as he showed me a photo, he took on the classroom iPad. "We found eggs in this house. We don't know what kind of birds are inside, but the eggs are beautiful. They have spots. Ms. Donna gave us the nesting house, but it is for bluebirds, but these are not bluebird eggs!"

As I was sitting and transcribing our conversation, Oliver brought over one of the many bird identification books and said very matter of fact, "See? This is a painted bunting. We can find out what all the birds are by looking in here. I know all the birds now."

Then Grayson came up to me, holding another copy of the same book and said, "Here, you can find all the birds in here."

Suddenly, Jack shouts, "Uh-oh! The squirrel is active now – GUYS – heads up!"

The children rushed to the windows and began discussing how the squirrel is trying to get up the baffle. They took pictures and directed each other to where the best spot would be to photograph the moment.

Mrs. Ledesma smiled and nodded, "We are waiting to see if the squirrel will be able to make it up."

With each statement, each moment, the children in Mrs. Ledesma's class lit up with excitement. They are eager to share their observations and experiences with the birds they see. It is more evident that this classroom is now a bird sanctuary of sorts, and I cannot help but marvel at the curiosity and joy contained as the children learn.

The true definition of a constructivist classroom with learning as a collaborative journey for the children guided by their interests and inquiries is framed by Mrs. Ledesma as she fosters a sense of wonder and empowerment in her students. The journey allows the children to take ownership of their learning experiences. By encouraging curiosity, observation, and reflection, the environment is truly cultivating lifelong learners who are eager to engage with the world around them.

If you are interested in learning more about Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten for your children, please email me at natalia.fisher@jcjax.org.



**Accredited by NAEYC
National Association of Education
of Young Children**

Every early childhood learning experience at the JCA is hands-on and formulated to help children reach their full potential.

Please visit jcjax.org/early-childhood/

to learn more about the unique learning opportunities we have available and how your children can become students at Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten.



ALUMNI CORNER

Mazel Tov, Wolfpack!

By Theresa Levy, Alumni Coordinator

Please allow me to *kvell* as dozens of alumni from our Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten are getting ready for graduation ceremonies throughout our River City and headed to colleges across the United States.

At Samuel W. Wolfson School for Advanced Studies, you will find Jacob Freeman, Tindell Harbin, Sam Kaplan, Jonas Koster, Max Marko, Ben Piersall, Jake Rutansky, Grant Scharer, Eitan Steiner-Safra and Sarah Tarbox – all trying to pay attention in class while fighting some serious senioritis.



In AP Statistics class, four of those graduating seniors, Jake, Jonas, Eitan and Max, are crunching numbers while they reminisce about the very beginning of their self-proclaimed *bromance*. Growing up at the JCA, their friendships began in our preschool and Zoe's Club House, Shelly's infamous theatre program. Even though all four went to different elementary and junior high schools, they remained friends – and reunited for High School at Wolfson. With promising futures ahead, these young men are thrilled to be sharing their next adventures too. After graduation, Jake and Jonas are headed to Tallahassee Community College as housemates on track to transfer to Florida State University. Eitan and Max will be roommates at the University of Central Florida.

Mazel Tov! It seems like yesterday we were watching them discover, learn and grow in our preschool. Here is a sneak peek of what these remarkable young men and women are doing after graduation.



If you are a first or second-generation Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten graduate, I would love to hear from you! Please share your contact information along with stories and photos from attending preschool and kindergarten at the JCA with me by emailing, theresa.levy@jcajax.org. **Todah Rabah!**



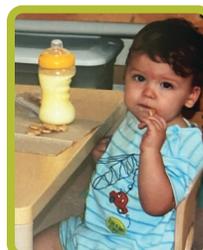
Jacob Freeman,
University of Central Florida



Tindell Harbin,
University of Florida



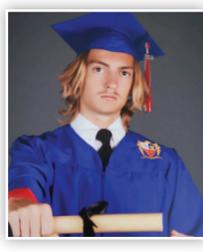
Samuel Kaplan,
Flight School, location to be decided



Jonas Koster,
Tallahassee Community College to Florida State University



Max Marko,
University of Central Florida



Benjamin Piersall,
Florida State College at Jacksonville
to University of North Florida



Jake Rutansky,
Tallahassee Community College
to Florida State University



Grant Scharer,
University of Florida



Eitan Steiner-Safra,
University of Central Florida



Sarah Tarbox,
Florida State University



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JOIN THE JCA TEAM 



Tradition! Tradition!

By Kendall Sisisky Valliere, Development Director

“And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word. Tradition!”

As Tevye explained, without tradition we would be precariously moving through life – much like a *Fiddler on the Roof*. Nearly 60 years after its debut, it is hard not to recognize some of the same narratives from the famed musical in today’s world.

Tradition is arguably more important now than ever before. As hate speech and bias are so easily and freely disseminated with the power to divide communities, sharing in our customs, and educating others about our beliefs can dispel misconceptions and drive compassion – helping us to promote kindness, understanding and acceptance.

The sharing of customs and beliefs from one generation to another is fundamental in Jewish culture. From the historically significant stories of Jews smuggling Torah scrolls into concentration camps during the Holocaust to the everyday examples like using a grandparent’s candlesticks and *kiddush* cup on Shabbat.

In my opinion, using the power of tradition to strengthen and unite our community is what makes our JCA so special. When we openly express our Jewish traditions to share with those who may not be familiar, we welcome conversation and education about our culture.

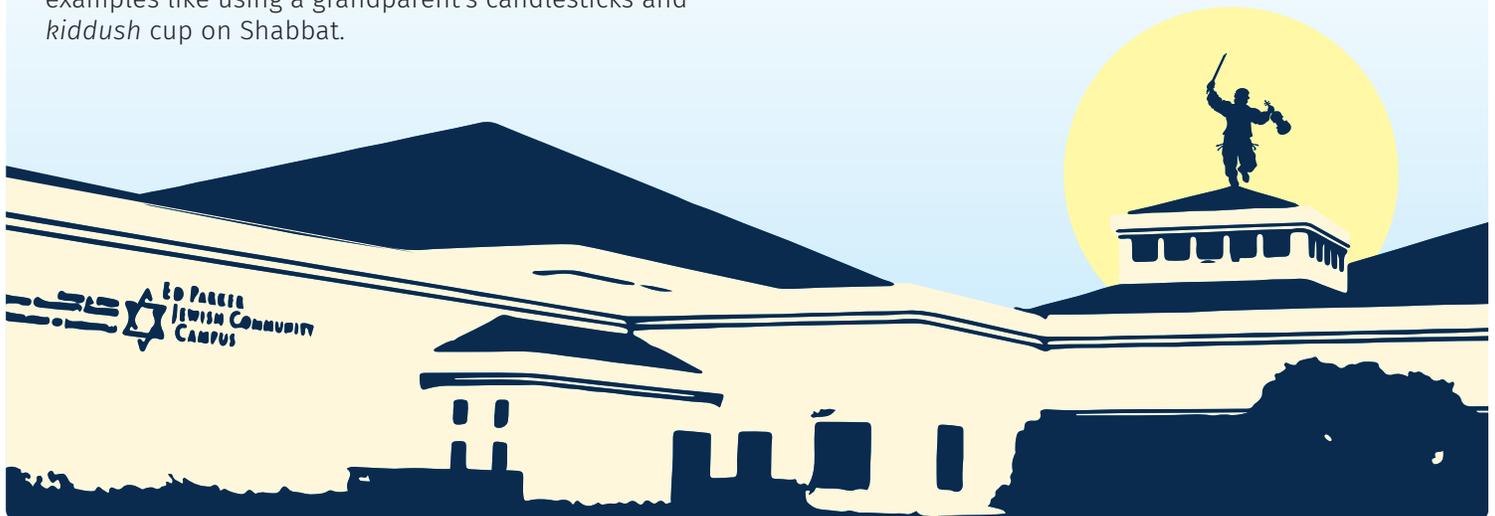
Traditions bring us comfort and happiness while they bind and bond us. Whether it’s Shabbat dinner or Sunday brunch with family, traditions passed on to the next generation give us the power to honor the past and unite the future.

Share in our tradition of giving at the JCA. Your generosity will help support the people who come here from generation to generation.



Scan the QR code to visit jcajax.org/give today.

“Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as... as... As a fiddler - on the roof!”





More Than a Show

By Shelly Higgins Hughes, Jewish Community Alliance

One of our favorite traditions at the JCA is to look back on just how impactful our Magic Wardrobe Theatre program is in our community. While it is difficult to measure exactly how big the audiences' smiles are after every show we perform, we counted tens of thousands of children in attendance this season.

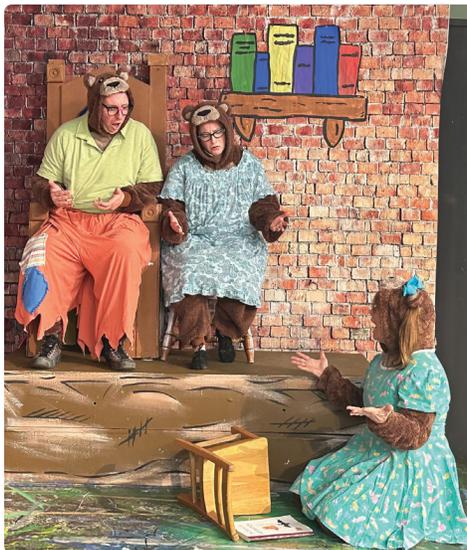
After we finished counting, I thought it would be much easier to describe the tremendous impact of all we do inside the Bessie Setzer Frisch Auditorium by the comments we hear and the people we meet after our productions. Sometimes our Magic Wardrobe Theatre experience means so much more than live theatre.

This season, a very special moment happened when a teacher approached me after a show. She had incredible things to say about our performance, then she pointed to the Israeli flag on the stage and said, "I am glad you have that there. It is an important reminder of what is happening to your people in Israel and unfortunately often here in America and Europe as well. My child was asking questions just last week about some not-so-nice comments some of the older kids were making about Jewish people. I'm taking

this opportunity to use this experience as a teachable moment about the fantastic people here at the Jewish Community Alliance. I will tell him to remember you all next time he hears a comment and to remember how much fun he had, how well he was treated and respected, and to make sure he uses his voice to speak up about his experience with the Jewish people in our community."

Magic Wardrobe provides not only an opportunity for young children to experience live theatre but also gives people who come here an occasion to enter a Jewish space that welcomes and embraces them. It is truly humbling to make a difference in our community's understanding and acceptance of people from every faith.

Each year, our Magic Wardrobe program is generously sponsored by VyStar Credit Union. Thanks to this generous funding, we hosted more than 28,000 children from Northeast Florida during our 2023-24 season – giving some of those children, teachers, and their chaperones their first-ever live theatre experience.





Honoring Israel's National Days

By Rachel Sandler, J Institute, Assistant Director, Jewish Education

Seven months since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, our recognition of Israel's National Days holds even more significance. Alongside our partners from Jewish agencies from across Northeast Florida, our JCA is proud to host programs in honor of Israel's National Days.

Yom Ha'Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, starts at sundown May 5 through 6 to commemorate the approximately six million Jewish people killed in the Holocaust and during the Jewish resistance at that time. Most Jewish communities hold a solemn ceremony for *Yom Ha'Shoah*, which includes remarks from survivors or their descendants, the lighting of memorial candles, and the Mourner's *Kaddish* prayer.

Yom Ha'Zikaron, the Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism, begins at sundown on May 12 and ends at sunset on May 13. All places of public entertainment are closed for 24 hours to honor *Yom Ha'Zikaron*. A siren sounds throughout Israel at 8 pm on May 12 and 11 am on May 13 - during which the entire nation observes a two-minute "standstill" of traffic and daily activities. Television programs portray the lives and heroic deeds of fallen soldiers, broadcast throughout Israel as citizens pay their respects for the victims.

Our Israeli Community Shlichah Tal Mola will lead us in a traditional *Yom Ha'Zikaron* ceremony on Monday, May 13 at 7 pm at the JCA.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut, starting at sundown on May 13 through May 14 this year, marks Israel's 76th Independence Day. This holiday honors the establishment of the State of Israel and when the *Megillat Ha'Atzmaut*, Israel's Declaration of Independence, was signed in Tel Aviv in 1948. During *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, there will be a photo display in the JCA lobby entitled, "I saw a bird in my window" (רופיצ ילש וולחב יתיאר). The display contains photos from cities on the southern Gaza border in the theme of "a spirit of hope and rebuilding"

Mark your calendars, our community-wide *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* celebration is on Sunday, May 19 at 3 pm at Etz Chaim Synagogue. This family-friendly event will feature Israeli-themed booths, face painting, bounce houses, a rock-climbing wall, a photo booth, Kona Ice, Israeli dancing, and more!

Zalman's Hot Dogs from Israel will be selling their Kosher all-beef hot dogs and fries, and Amir Zur will join us to discuss Israel's digital health. At his digital innovation booth, Amir will explore Israel's innovation and answer questions about this amazing journey.

Thanks to the Israel Engagement Fund: A Jewish Community Centers Association of North America Program Accelerator and the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, our *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* celebration is free and open to the community.



After School: When You're Here, You're Family

Evan McInnis, Youth Services Director

Yes, maybe we took the saying from an Italian restaurant chain, but we are incredibly proud of the community culture that our students, parents and staff members have created in Youth Services – and sometimes the food the kids cook in our enrichment classes is better than any restaurant!

As our After School program grows, we are proud to be serving even more students throughout Jacksonville. We added three new schools to the area we serve in 2023 and watched our program swell to over 130 participants in both the After School and Study Central programs for children in kindergarten to eighth grade.

Students choose a *Power Hour* activity daily which is one-hour and typically includes one STEM option, an art option, a sports option for younger students, and a separate sports option for older students. Throughout the week, we have a fresh lineup of fun that rotates over the course of the month. Once the new month rolls around, we introduce new programs designed to keep our friends engaged and ready to try new things.



For families interested in enrolling for the 2024-25 school year, registration is open!

We currently provide transportation from Beauclerc Elementary, Duval Charter School at Baymeadows, Greenland Pines Elementary School, Hendricks Avenue Elementary, LaVilla Middle School, Loretto Elementary, Mandarin Oaks Elementary, Martin J. Gottlieb Day School, Seaside Charter School in Mandarin, River City Science Academy Innovation and Mandarin campuses, and other select-schools with minimum enrollment.

Beyond the growth in numbers, our After School program was named the Best of Bold City in the Florida Times-Union's 2023 Community Choice Awards. I would like to credit our incredible staff, the amazing support we receive from the parents in our community and the voters who made this recognition possible.

If you would like to learn more about our JCA's After School program, the opportunities available for your children, or to register for the 2024-25 school year please email me at evan.mcinnis@jcjax.org or Julia Breen at julia.breen@jcjax.org.





A WONDER WOMAN, MACCABEE OF THE MONTH

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist



One of the most admirable qualities of our featured Maccabees of the Month is their incredible perseverance when faced with adversity. Like the rebel warriors of the *Chanukkah* story, the Maccabees we find on our JCA campus prove their resilience time and time again,

despite some of the toughest circumstances.

“I came back to the JCA after going on an anniversary trip with my husband, David. I was absolutely in excruciating physical pain, and it was a wake-up call that I couldn’t continue this path,” explains Michelle Grossman, who like many parents, first joined the JCA in 2003 to bring their daughters, Samantha and Brianna here for our early childhood, youth services, aquatics and fencing programs. However, as the years went on, family visits to the JCA became less frequent and Michelle’s complicated health issues worsened.

“I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in elementary school, I have a rare autoimmune disease that impedes my health, and more than 10 years ago I was diagnosed with a rare condition called Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). I can’t even begin to describe the physical pain associated with these two ailments. There are days that I am in tears with a pain level of 10,” says Michelle. “For decades my physical limitations impeded my ability to even leave the house. After that trip, I committed to myself that I would begin by going back to physical therapy and I would stick with it.”

After her renewed commitment to live a healthier life, Michelle restarted her therapy at Brooks Rehabilitation on our campus and was soon introduced to JCA Personal Trainer Peter Joseph.

“As my journey and progress continued, on the days I was not in physical therapy, I was in the gym with Peter. We gradually increased that personal training time to three times a week as I was transitioning out of physical therapy,” recalls Michelle. “It was truly because of Peter that I did not give up on myself. Together, we decided to call it a journey as we knew it was not going to be an easy road for me with multiple physical hurdles along the way.”

“Personal training is exactly that, training a specific person,” explains Peter Joseph. “So on days when Michelle isn’t feeling great we can change the exercises she does to make sure she is still benefiting and progressing. Michelle does cardio on her own, and regularly takes our Sit & Get Fit classes. Together we do exercises to work her posture and balance. Michelle started doing just 7.5 pounds and is now rowing up to 25 pounds regularly. In addition to her abilities, this journey has greatly helped her mental health improve.”

With newfound motivation, stamina, and the trainer she calls one of the best cheerleaders at the JCA, Michelle says there is no stopping her. To date, Michelle has lost more than 80 pounds and says that her dedication and Peter’s guidance will keep her on track.

“I realize now that this is a lifelong change forever, I will never go back to where I was. When I first came back just walking in the door was a struggle, I could barely walk up the stairs at home. Everyone needs a Peter Joseph – he is the best cheerleader and personal trainer. I went from struggling to walk for two minutes to walking on the treadmill for 30 minutes. It makes me sad because I know if I had stayed here at the JCA, I would have started my life sooner,” says Michelle. “My daughters call me Wonder Woman now which is such a good feeling. I send them text messages and photos after my workout and it feels so good to know they are proud of what I am doing to improve my life.”

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 me at beth.milograno@jcjax.org.



Houston or Bust!

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

The JCC Maccabi Games® are headed to the Rubenstein JCC in Houston, Texas, Aug 4 - 9 and the Jacksonville JCA Maccabi Games Team is ready for all the action!

Lead by our CEO Adam Chaskin and several incredible coaches, our JCA athletes will compete in 5v5 and 3v3 basketball, flag football, swimming, baseball, tennis and volleyball at the games. We are proud to announce the names of the 30 athletes who will represent the JCA in Houston.

- Romy Akilov
- Judah Algee
- Talia Algee
- Chloe Anders
- Indira Bagaria
- Nadav Bagaria
- Daniel Becker
- Micah Bozoff
- Cort Csar
- Ronan Curley
- Baylee Finklehoffe
- Taylor Finklehoffe
- Micah Jaffa
- DJ Kempner
- Rayna Kempner
- Riley Kropp
- Eli Kuvin
- Jonathan Landmann
- Juliet Leonard
- Sean Leonard
- Ben Levinson
- Lucas Lieberman
- Joey Morgenthal
- Noah Neihaus
- Andan Ordile
- Landon Schlossman
- Zachary Setzer
- Benjamin Smolensky
- Shajar Stein
- Avner Tzabari

Cort, Sean, Noah, Zachary, Andan, Landon, Shajar, Joey, Daniel, DJ, Micah B and Benjamin will represent the JCA on the 14U 5v5 basketball and 16U 3v3 basketball teams at the games. Coach Brian Sherman will lead the 14U basketball team, while Coach Benjay Kempner will lead the 16U basketball team.

Nadav, Micah J, Ronan and Ben will compete in flag football with Coach Andrew Jaffa at the helm.

Juliet, Baylee, Taylor, Talia, Rayna, Eli, Lucas, Avner and Chloe will compete in the pool with Swim Coach Jacob Rubin.

Riley will represent the JCA on the mixed Maccabi baseball team. Judah and Jonathan will show off their talents on the tennis courts. Finally, our volleyball players, Romy and Indira, are set to serve up the competition on the mixed Maccabi team.



As these young athletes represent our JCA and the greater Jacksonville community in Houston, they will also be contributing to the maintenance and enrichment of Jewish identity while they develop leadership skills through healthy competition and sportsmanship.

Established in 1982, the JCC Maccabi Games is touted to be five days that can change the lives of Jewish teenagers. Aside from sports, the games include programs filled with Jewish values and experiences, including Olympic-style opening and closing ceremonies.

While the games are about being part of Jewish peoplehood, they also come with a mission – to make the world a better place and to make ourselves better. These values help us all remember the greater mission of the JCC Maccabi Games and in Judaism.

Mazel tov to our Maccabi-bound JCA athletes!





Swim with the Makos this Summer!

By Dustin Rulien, Aquatics Manager

May 1 marks the first day of practice for our Summer Makos Swim Team! If your swimmers missed the kickoff party this April, don't worry! We accept registration for the Summer Makos

Swim Team through the end of May.

Our swim team competes in the River City Swim League (RCSL), but swimmers who do not want to compete can join our league to practice in the summer months. The summer swim league is designed to be fun for every skill level and keep athletes on track all summer long.

For the most part, swimmers compete to beat their times during summer league competitions. One of the greatest aspects of our summer team is there is something for everyone.

Competing in the RCSL means swimming against the likes of Caleb Dressel and Ryan Murphy - who swam in our league before their Olympic runs. If your swimmer wants to practice two days a week, every day or even wants to set a league record - we will work with them to help them achieve their goals!

As a lifelong sport that encourages discipline and perseverance, swimming is a great way for your young athletes to stay fit in the off-season. Don't believe me? Try doing your sport while holding your breath!

This summer season, we will host three meets at the JCA and travel (not very far!) to three more. The swim league championship meet is open to all swimmers who compete in at least three swim meets during the season.

The RCSL championships are held at Bolles High School, July 19 - 21. Swimmers are not required to attend all three days of championships; swimmers and their fans only have to be present when their swimmer is competing.



River City Swim League Season Schedule

Week One

Thu, May 23 | 4:30 pm at San Jose Country Club
JCA Makos versus San Jose Country Club Pool Cats

Week Two

Thu, May 30 | 4 pm at Wolfson High School
JCA Makos versus Arlingwood Swim Club and Ponte Vedra Swim Team

Week Three

Tue, Jun 4 | 4:30 pm at Jewish Community Alliance
JCA Makos versus Ponte Vedra Swim Club

Week Four

Mon, Jun 10 | 4:30 pm at Jewish Community Alliance
JCA Makos versus Mandarin Krakens Swim Club

Week Five

Thu, Jun 20 | 4 pm at Jewish Community Alliance
JCA Makos versus Arlingwood Swim Club

Week Six

Mon, Jun 24 | 4 pm at Epping Forest Yacht and Country Club
JCA Makos versus Epping Forest Swim Team

Championships

Jul 19 - 21 | Time TBA at Bolles High School



Scan the QR code to join the Summer Makos Swim Team or to learn more about the Aquatics programs at the JCA. If your swimmer isn't quite ready for the Summer Makos Swim Team, our Learn to Swim program runs throughout the summer and can help your young swimmer get ready for next season.



Get Excited for



By Lucas Ramos Campos, Tennis Pro

It is clay court season in the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tours. When the best players in the world take a break from the hard courts to show their talent on a very different surface – clay tennis courts.

As our JCA tennis players know while playing on our Har-Tru® clay courts, the surface is slower than hard courts, it produces higher bounces and is usually more physically demanding for tennis players.

Tournaments in Monte Carlo, Madrid and Rome are exciting for tennis fans this time of year. The French Open closes the clay season, promising spectacular battles and the crowning of a new clay court champion. The French Open, also known as Roland Garros, is one of the most prestigious tennis tournaments in the world, one of the four annual Grand Slam events, and the only one played on clay courts.

The 2024 French Open Tournament is forecasted to be a historic one. Fourteen-time tournament winner, Rafael Nadal is playing what could be his last French Open. As one

of the best players of all time and the greatest clay court player, Nadal has mentioned that this is likely his last year on the tour.

This year at the French Open will also be emotional for the fans and fellow players who followed Nadal's career. With unbelievable records at the French Open, 112 wins and 3 losses, it is difficult to put into words what Nadal means for the game of tennis. His work ethic, passion for the game, and Nadal's spectacular baseline game are just a few qualities of one of the greatest competitors that tennis has ever seen. Rafael Nadal will be missed next season, but we will certainly enjoy his last ride.

There is a lot of action happening on our clay courts too! Our ladies are entering their final month of competition. *Mazel tov* to our Teams A, B and C as well as the Working Women's team! These players are putting in incredible efforts and playing some great matches to end the spring season.

Want to play tennis with us?

Email me at lucas.ramoscampos@jcajax.org for more information and specific class dates throughout the spring and summer season.



David A. Stein
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 on the Ed Parker Jewish
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 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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