



# ALLIANCE NEWS



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JEWISH  
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FESTIVAL



# JCA CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL 2023

**OCT 29 – NOV 16**

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE**  
and open to the community thanks  
to the generosity of our sponsors.



**Adam Chaskin**

Shalom JCA Members,

I hope this message finds you well and in good spirits. I'd like to address three significant topics that are close to our hearts: the ongoing conflict in Israel, the upcoming Jacksonville Jewish Cultural Arts Festival presented by our JCA, and to kvell just a bit about our incredible Theatre programs.

**Unity Amidst Adversity:** The events unfolding in Israel undoubtedly touch the hearts of so many members in our community. Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by the conflict as we continue to hope for a peaceful resolution. As we always have, the JCA stands as a beacon of unity and support in Jacksonville. We encourage our members to come together during these challenging times, to offer each other compassion and empathy. We often find strength in our shared Jewish values and our commitment to one another is unwavering. Please join us in wearing Blue Ribbons for Israel, which are available in several locations on our campus. This global showing of unity calls for the release of hostages in Gaza and shows that we stand together in support of the people we know and love in Israel.

**Jewish Cultural Arts Festival:** The annual Jacksonville Jewish Cultural Arts Festival presented by the JCA began on Oct 29 with our first-ever Jewish Pop-Up Market featuring an incredible display of Jewish-inspired art for sale, plus fun and games for the entire family. This beloved celebration of our rich heritage, showcasing the vibrant cultural arts, continues through November 16. From captivating films to engaging authors and art exhibitions, this year promises a joyous and enlightening experience for our entire community. We invite all our members to take part in this cultural celebration. It is a time for us to come together as a community, to share in our traditions and to embrace the creative expressions that unite us. Please read more from Heather Terrill about the grand finale festival event with *New York Times* bestselling author Adam Mansbach on page 4. We can't wait to celebrate our heritage with you; the detailed festival schedule can be found on page 5.

**A Spotlight on Theatre:** I'm thrilled to share exciting developments with our theatre programs. The JCA's Theatre Director Shelly Hughes and her fantastic team work tirelessly to bring our community captivating performances that are sure to delight and inspire. Each year, our dedicated staff, along with local professional actors and actresses, prepare a lineup of productions that span a spectrum of emotions and genres. This year is no exception. The JCA Magic Wardrobe Theatre program is the second most popular field trip location in Jacksonville, trailing only the zoo. Last season we hosted more than 27,000 students in elementary school and are well on our way to repeating that number. Our sincerest thanks to VyStar Credit Union for providing the funding that ensures every school, regardless of finances, can attend these magical performances. As for our youngest Broadway-bound performers, an extremely talented group of 66 children are preparing for their next show in our Bessie Setzer Frisch Auditorium. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for ticket information; *Newsies* takes the stage, December 2, 3, 9 and 10.

Theatre and the arts have a unique way of bringing people together, creating memories and sparking meaningful conversations. We look forward to sharing these experiences with you at the JCA this season. While we acknowledge the challenges in the world, I encourage you to make it a point to remember the beauty and strength of our community. We can support one another during trying times, enjoy the arts that enrich our lives, and celebrate our culture through all its diversity. Thank you for being a part of our JCA family. Your presence and support make our community a place where everyone belongs – and where all are welcome.

Wishing you a season filled with unity, the arts and culture,



Adam Chaskin  
CEO

The JCA Alliance News and Program Guide are published by the:

**Jewish Community Alliance**  
8505 San Jose Boulevard Jacksonville, FL 32217

For additional program information and to register, please contact the JCA.  
(904) 730-2100 P | (904) 730-2444 F | [jcjax.org](http://jcjax.org) | [info@jcjax.org](mailto:info@jcjax.org)  
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Beth Milograno ..... Communications & PR Specialist

**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

**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 is offered by reservation system via the My J app.
- Kid Kare service is for a maximum of 90 mins.
- Visit [jcjax.org/fitness](http://jcjax.org/fitness) for Kid Kare policies and to download My J.



*In memory of...*

**MARY CHASKIN**

by Susan and Ron Elinoff  
Joanne Cohen

**TRACEY VANDROFF**

by Thelma Nied  
Marla and Pennie Rosin-Borrousch  
Barry and Maddie Light  
Michael and Barbara Schneider

**MARILYN GOODMAN**

by The Miller Families  
The Flagler Family

**RABBI ARNOLD H. MILLER**

by The Flagler Family  
The Spring and Miller Family  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**THELMA OLEXA**

by Adam and Regina Chaskin  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**MARTIN 'MARTY' EDWARDS**

by the New York State Court Reporters  
Association

**KIMBERLY JANIS**

by Jo-Ellen and Adam Unger  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**ALAN CHEPENIK**

by Adam and Regina Chaskin  
The Miller Families  
Karen and Philip Adler  
Thelma Nied  
Hollie and Hank Arnold  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**STEPHEN MARK LATIMER**

by The Board and Staff of the JCA

**ZELDA BETH FELLMAN**

by The Board and Staff of the JCA

*For a speedy recovery...*

**RICKY FOX**

by Karen and Philip Adler

**MARK KALLICK**

by The Miller Families

**General donations**

*Our thanks to...*

**DAVID UBILE**

**GORDON MATTIS**

**KRISTA AND DAVID PIZZI**

**PATRICIA ANDREU**

**SONDRA RESNIKOFF**

**MR. AND MRS. STEPHEN JENSEN**

**NORTHEAST FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS**

**AGILITY PRESS**



By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

**Antisemitism**

Tue, Nov 7 | 7 pm

**Let's listen, learn and grow together - even when conversations are challenging.** At the next Together Against Hate event, Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Florida Regional Director Sarah Emmons will address the rise of antisemitism and what is being done to initiate change. Plus, streaming live at the JCA, Rabbi Diana Fersko will address our audience and share her book, *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*.

**Together Against Hate: Promoting Unity in Our Community** is a speaker series and initiative presented by the Jewish Community Alliance and the First Coast YMCA to address topics impacting our area including prejudices in faith, race, antisemitism, ethnicity, LGBTQAI+, gender, and diverse abilities. Together Against Hate is made possible by funding from CSX, the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida, and the Team Up Project: a national collaboration between Catholic Charities USA, Habitat for Humanity International, Interfaith America and YMCA of the USA.

**Our hope is that through education we can build a more inclusive Northeast Florida. Mark your calendars to join us at our upcoming Together Against Hate events.**

**Diverse Abilities with The Arc Jacksonville**

Tue, Dec 5 | 7 pm

Jessie Ball duPont Center, 40 East Adams Street

**Interfaith with OneJax and the Interfaith Center of Northeast Florida**

Thu, Jan 18 | 7 pm

Main Library Downtown, 303 North Laura Street

**Racing Against Hate 5K Run/Walk**

Sun, Feb 25 | 1 pm

Winston Family YMCA,  
221 Riverside Avenue



**Scan the QR code**

to learn more and register to save your spot at our Together Against Hate events!

**Questions?**

Email Rachel Sandler at [rachel.sandler@jcjax.org](mailto:rachel.sandler@jcjax.org) or Heather Terrill at [heather.terrill@jcjax.org](mailto:heather.terrill@jcjax.org)




JCA  
CULTURAL  
ARTS  
FESTIVAL  
2023



## A FEROCIOUSLY FUNNY FESTIVAL FINALE!

By Heather Terrill, J Institute Director

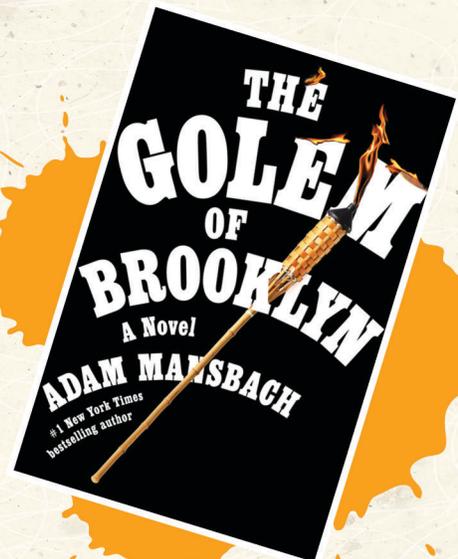
We are planning a laugh-out-loud grand finale at our 2023 Cultural Arts Festival! Featuring author, Adam Mansbach, known for his #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Go the F\*\*k to Sleep*, Adam will make his Jacksonville debut at 7 pm on Thursday, November 16, sharing his new book, *The Golem of Brooklyn*.

In *Ashkenazi* Jewish folklore, a golem is a humanoid, created from mud or clay and then animated through secret prayers with its main purpose being to defend Jewish people against threats and violence. Not to give away too much before you start reading, but Adam's new book is full of tongue-in-cheek humor, as it begins with a Brooklyn art teacher who steals an absurd amount of clay to create his own golem. After the teacher, a nonobservant Jew, accidentally brings his creation to life, he cannot communicate with the Yiddish-speaking giant, so he enlists a bodega clerk and an ex-Hasid to translate.

An epic romp through Jewish history and the American present that wrestles with the deepest questions of our humanity — *The Golem of Brooklyn* addresses conflicts between faith and skepticism, tribalism and interdependence, and vengeance and healing.

To say we are excited about Adam's upcoming visit to the JCA is an understatement. Adam was the 2009-11 New Voices Professor of Fiction at Rutgers University, a 2012 Sundance Screenwriting Lab Fellow, and a 2013 Berkeley Repertory Theatre Writing Fellow. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Esquire*, *The Believer*, *The Guardian*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, *The Moth Storytelling Hour*, and *This American Life*. Mansbach is also known for his 2016 debut screenplay, the Netflix Original *BARRY*, which was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and an NAACP Image Award.

Adam's written works include, *Rage is Back*, *The End of the Jews* (winner of the California Book Award), and *Angry Black White Boy*, which is taught at over a hundred schools and was adapted into a prize-winning stage play in 2008. Additionally, his middle grades series, *Jake the Fake Keeps it Real* which is co-written with Craig Robinson, was a Scholastic Book Club Main Selection and winner of the 2021 Grand Canyon Readers Award. With Dave Barry and Alan Zweibel, Mansbach wrote *For This We Left Egypt*, a finalist for the Thurber Award for American Humor, and the bestselling *A Field Guide to the Jewish People*.



**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS**  
and register to meet Adam Mansbach  
at our grand finale Cultural Arts Festival  
event on Thursday, November 16 at 7 pm.



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



**THU, NOV 2 | 6 PM**

**Vandroff Art Gallery  
Opening Reception**  
On display through Nov 29



**FRI, NOV 10 | 10 AM**

**10 Questions for Henry Ford**  
Streaming at River Garden  
Sponsored by Susan  
and Ron Elinoff



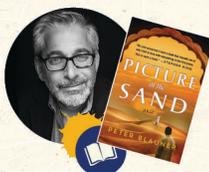
**THU, NOV 2 | 7 PM**

**10 Questions for Henry Ford**  
Sponsored by Susan  
and Ron Elinoff



**MON, NOV 13 | 7 PM**

**The Story of  
Annette Zelman**



**FRI, NOV 3 | 12 PM**

**Peter Blauner**  
**Picture in the Sand**  
Streaming at River Garden



**TUE, NOV 14 | 12 PM**

**Sara Confino**  
**She's Up to No Good**  
Streaming at the Ponte Vedra  
Library and River Garden



**SUN, NOV 5 | 3 PM**

**Let's Talk About Israel**  
Presented by Myron Flagler



**WED, NOV 15 | 7 PM**

**Richard Hurowitz**  
**In the Garden of  
the Righteous**



**TUE, NOV 7 | 7 PM**

**Sarah Emmons**  
In connection with  
Together Against Hate



**Larry Loftis**  
**The Watchmaker's  
Daughter**  
Streaming at the JCA



**Rabbi Diana Fersko**  
**We Need to Talk  
About Antisemitism**  
Streaming at the JCA



**THU, NOV 16 | 7 PM**

**Adam Mansbach**  
**The Golem of  
Brooklyn**



**WED, NOV 8 | 7 PM**

**One More Story**



**THU, NOV 9 | 7 PM**

**Steven Hartov**  
**The Last of the Seven**

Events are at the JCA  
unless stated otherwise.

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY  
THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR SPONSORS**



## Reimagining Art and Education with the Cummer Museum

By Natalia Fisher, Early Childhood Director



An exciting journey began this August as our educators embarked on a renewed and reimagined partnership with the **Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens** to enhance the educational experience for our students. Fueled by a shared passion for the arts and a mutual commitment to fostering creativity and critical thinking

through Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), this partnership is a testament to the transformative power of art – not to mention its ability to inspire and educate.

A research-based educational technique that believes thoughtful, facilitated discussion of art can activate transformational learning, VTS uses open-ended questions and guided discussion to help participants explore and interpret visual art.

Promoting critical thinking, communication skills, and the ability to make connections across different domains, this technique is not only reserved for looking at art but can be used while reading, conversing and collaborating.

Our partnership with the Cummer Museum is designed to be dynamic and experiential. Teachers in Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten will participate in professional development opportunities, while the educators and practitioners from the museum visit our school to engage in VTS with our students in Junior Kindergarten.

By integrating VTS in our constructivist approach at Michele Block Gan Yeladim, we are enhancing our education program and providing a platform for personal growth and self-expression to students. This partnership is about building an appreciation for art while we empower minds, foster dialogue, and nurture a deeper connection to the world of culture and creativity.

Together we are reimagining the narrative of art and education in Jacksonville and beyond!

### 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/](http://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

By Theresa Levy, Alumni Coordinator



## Groundbreaking Firsts from one of our First Alumni

By Theresa Levy, Alumni Coordinator

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) Assistant Chief Randi Glossman is a person of firsts. She was the first Jewish female officer in Jacksonville, the first female Sergeant Commander of the Crisis Negotiation Unit and traveled from coast to coast to educate law enforcement agencies in small communities about hostage and crisis management. However, in my opinion, topping her list of firsts - Assistant Chief Glossman was a student in the very first class to graduate from Gan Yeladim. Perhaps the values she gained from our school are what have kept her on the path of always helping others.

"I value my heritage in a way that I am proud of who I am and always do the right thing. I am all about doing what is right for people," says Glossman. "I have a service mentality, born and bred in me."

Raised by a family of educators who placed a high value on learning, her mother, Madelyn Glossman, was a teacher in New York City and in Jacksonville. Her father, Dr. George Glossman, was also a teacher and worked in administration at Duval County Public Schools for 39 years.

"When I told my parents I wanted to be a police officer, they said I needed to attend college first," explains Glossman. "I graduated from Wolfson High School and attended Florida State University for a year. I returned to Jacksonville and finished my bachelor's at the University of North Florida. Several years later I earned my master's degree in criminology."

Priding herself on professionalism, excellent customer service and continuously learning so she can always do her part to keep our city safe, Glossman says she found her calling in serving the people of Jacksonville.

"This is a profession where you are willing to put your life on the line for someone you do not know. I continue to keep current and attend frequent training throughout the year; our mission is to be part of the community," says Glossman. "When an officer shows up on a call, they may have just left the scene of a tragic death so remember that they are human too."



Parents and guardians who are interested in scheduling a tour and play date at Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten should email [ganyeladim@jcajax.org](mailto:ganyeladim@jcajax.org) or call (904) 730-2100 ext. 235.

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](mailto:theresa.levy@jcajax.org) **Todah Rabah!**



## Announcing the 2023 Educator Support Network

By Kendall Sisisky Valliere, Development Director

For more than 10 years, our JCA has designed its Educator Support Network (ESN) as a professional development resource for early childhood educators throughout Northeast Florida. With more than 1,000 educators served, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the upcoming ESN programs promise another year of inspirational learning and professional growth for educators in our community.

The next series of our Educator Support Network begins in the spring of 2024 and is possible thanks to a grant from the **Jacksonville Children's Endowment at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**. This funding allowed us to reenvision and redesign our longstanding ESN program to adapt to the needs of local educators.



Through hands-on opportunities rooted in mentorship and inquiry-based learning, educators will experience best practices and gain confidence in implementing these practices in their classrooms. Through this year-long pilot redesign of our ESN we will be working to build more partnerships with early childhood programs

that reach underserved communities. In 2024, Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten will partner with the University of North Florida (UNF) to offer professional development at our school and the UNF Preschool.

By providing mentorship programs that build collaborative relationships, we hope that educators will gain the tools they need to feel successful in the classroom and remain long-term childhood educators to better support early learning development.

We are so fortunate to partner with local educators and ensure the best outcomes for even more children in Northeast Florida. Our thanks to **The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida** for making the 2024 Educator Support Network possible and acting as the building block for our early childhood consortium.

**For more information about the JCA's Educator Support Network presented by Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten, please email [ganyeladim@jcajax.org](mailto:ganyeladim@jcajax.org).**



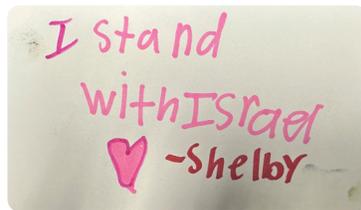


Our young thespians at the JCA are busy preparing for their next performance of *Newsies* on Dec 2, 3, 9 and 10. We felt it was important to share some thoughts and prayers with the victims and their families in Israel. Check out these amazing kids and their expressions of love and support for Israel.

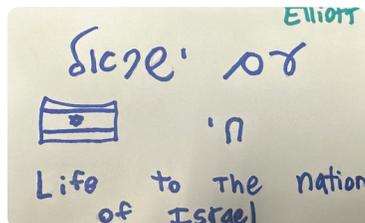
**OUR JCA THEATRE DEPARTMENT STANDS WITH ISRAEL!**



Dear the People of Israel, What is happening in Israel right now is terrible. Innocent People are getting Killed every day. I hope things get better and we have to remember to never loose our hope. *Zohar*



I hope that everyone will be ok. My brother is in Israel right now and I'm so scared for him. I hope that he will be ok. I'm praying for him & everyone else in Israel. *-Neshama*





## Chanukkah Preps Are Underway at the JCA

By Rachel Sandler, Jewish Educator

As winter approaches and the nights get longer, we prepare for Chanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. Our eight-day Chanukkah celebration begins as the 24th evening of Kislev turns into the 25th of Kislev, which is December 7 this year.

Chanukkah celebrates two things: the miracle of when a day's worth of oil burned for eight and when a small group of Jews, led by Judah Maccabee, were victorious against the Syrian-Greek Army. Even though the group was outnumbered and not prepared for battle with weapons or experience, the Maccabees were triumphant because of their strategy and bravery.

We celebrate Chanukkah in a variety of ways at the JCA. Mark your calendars to join me at our family-friendly celebrations this year! On Mon, Nov 13 at 4:30 pm, we will gather to paint menorahs with our family and friends to take home this Chanukkah season. Everyone is invited to participate, please register for Paint A Menorah by Wed, Nov 8.

Individuals and families are invited to participate in our JCA's annual Menorah Making Contest. Menorahs will be on display for voting in the JCA lobby Dec 6 – 17. There is no cost to be part of the contest; please bring your homemade menorah to the front desk between Dec 1 – 5 to enter. Menorah makers are allowed to use any materials except premade menorah kits or food. The homemade menorah should also have eight candle spots in a straight line and a ninth, *shamash*, candle that is higher or lower than the rest.

Free and open to our entire community this year, the JCA's annual Chanukkah Extravaganza happens on Thu, Dec 7 at 5:45 pm! The celebration begins with songs and the lighting of our giant chanukiah in the JCA parking lot. After the lighting, you are invited inside the JCA to enjoy latkes, hot dogs, and a variety of Chanukkah activities. Space is limited so please register and pick up your tickets at the front desk. We will light the chanukiah outside the JCA throughout Chanukkah; please join us at 5:45 pm on Dec 7, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

**Don't delay, visit [jcajax.org/arts-culture/jewish-education/](https://www.jcajax.org/arts-culture/jewish-education/) to register for our upcoming Jewish Culture/Education programs today!**





## What Kind of Ship Doesn't Sink? A Fellowship

By Evan McInnis, Youth Services Director

Not sure if you have noticed anything different about me lately but starting just eight short months ago, I started to grow my career alongside Jewish Community Center professionals who make it their mission to engage and support teenagers all over North America.

As one of the 17 fellows of the Jewish Community Center Association of North America's Merrin Fellowship Cohort XII, I am receiving extensive training on ways to engage Jewish and non-Jewish teens while I work with my team at the JCA to create meaningful and memorable experiences that will help our teens discover what drives them.

As a member of the fellowship, I visited Washington D.C. and New York, and will travel to Israel in the future to further learn how to better serve the teens and young adults through Jewish values. As someone who has never left the country and rarely leaves the Southeast, I find myself quoting the rock band, Talking Heads, when I ask myself, 'How did I get here?'

After a lengthy application process in late 2022, I was invited for the first round of interviews for this highly competitive fellowship. In early 2023, I was invited back for another round of interviews with the head of Professional Development for the JCC Association of North America.

A few weeks later, on February 25, which also happens to be my birthday - I was accepted into the fellowship from a pool of more than 60 applicants. I really attribute this opportunity to being a birthday miracle - not to mention this professional development opportunity is one of the best gifts I ever received.

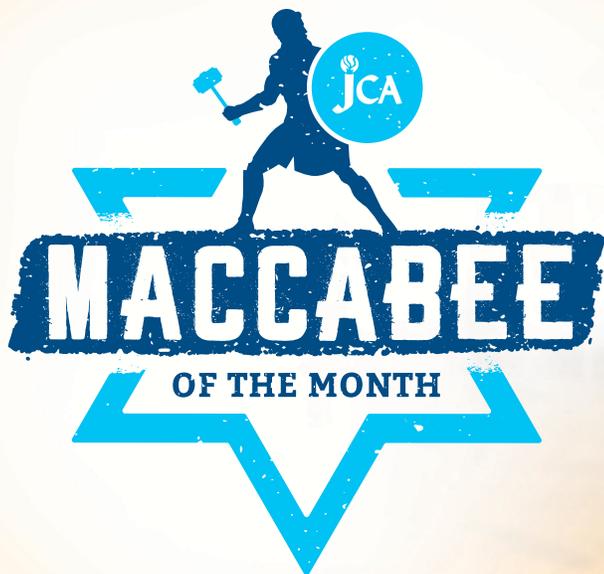
In the following weeks, we embarked on our 18-month fellowship comprised of webinars, in-person retreats, and countless chances to build our knowledge while learning from each other and subject-matter experts. After our initial Zoom introductory sessions, in May 2023, my fellow Merrin Fellows and I spent several days at a beautiful JCC Overnight Camp just outside of Washington D.C. in rural Maryland. While there, we learned ways to foster relationships between teens, how to create a culture of belonging, ways to identify the key traits of a leader, as well as various team-building exercises designed to cultivate cohesion and openness. As our first in-person gathering, it was an amazing experience to collaborate with other Jewish Community Center professionals, network with them, learn together and quickly become close friends.

With regular meetings on Zoom and constant connection through social media, our entire group is eagerly waiting for the next in-person seminar in Israel. For now, the Israel seminar is postponed because of the war in the region. I am truly looking forward to embracing the opportunity to serve Israeli communities and the chance to witness some of the work the nonprofits in Israel are doing for teenagers. From organizations dedicated to serving runaway teens to programs designed to encourage creativity in science, technology, and engineering - I know I speak for the entire group when I say we cannot wait to travel to Israel to witness, participate and bring all we learn home. We are all very prayerful that our leaders will find a way to restore peace in the Middle East.

In the coming months, please keep an eye out for some new programs in our Youth Services department! We have plans to perform mitzvot and cultivate a community of belonging in our JCA and we cannot wait for your children to be part of it.

**If you ever have any questions or want to know more about the programs we have available for children in grades K - 8, please email me at any time, [evan.mcinnis@jcajax.org](mailto:evan.mcinnis@jcajax.org).**





## The Mighty Maccabees!

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

“I’m not fighting it. I am beating it,” says Ralph Daniel who was recently diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease, a brain disorder that causes unintended or uncontrollable movements like shaking, stiffness as well as difficulty with balance and coordination. Despite these difficulties, our Maccabee of the Month is facing the disease with an admirable amount of strength and endurance. “Everything with this disease is fairly new to me, but I am taking each day at a time - and coming here is helping.”

Ralph and his wife Joan first joined our Jewish Community Alliance in 2009 with the goal of staying healthy and fit through their retirement years. While Joan enjoys our aquatics programs and group fitness classes we offer, Ralph says with his diagnosis, his personal trainer Bobby Barone recommended our new FightFit class at the JCA to help Ralph fight back against the effects of Parkinson’s.

“Coming to FightFit class and being at the JCA improves my physiology and helps the social aspect of my life because I can be here with friends,” says Ralph. “My motivation to keep going comes from within but it also comes from being here.”

New to the JCA but not to the Jacksonville area, the FightFit program was created in 2005 by Jason Watson and is designed specifically for Maccabees like Ralph with Parkinson’s or other balance issues teaching them to persevere through their disabilities. Combining elements of boxing, strength training, functional movement, and

high-intensity interval training into a diverse and dynamic workout, FightFit instructors like Lori Lunitz, who with more than 15 years of experience, uses a variety of exercises in class to target every major muscle group.



“We use 100 unique workouts from a library of 250 exercises to target muscle groups while avoiding burnout and overuse,” explains JCA FightFit Instructor Lori Lunitz. “I have been working with a core group of fighters for 5-6 years now and I see how the program improves them or has prevented some of their symptoms from progressing.”

Lori leads her group of FightFit Maccabees in person and virtually from our gym every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 9:30 am, “I love the people I work with and being part of their fight only inspires me to live my best life. To see these fighters work to stay fit makes me realize there are very few good excuses not to take care of yourself.”

“I’m no Rocky Balboa,” laughs Ralph. “But it does feel good when I do this class. I like being with friends while I do it, and I know that I am doing something to keep myself going.”

**Our JCA has a team of personal trainers who are certified to lead the FightFit program. If you are interested in learning more about the program and how you can benefit from FightFit, please email Eiffel Gilyana for more details at [eiffel.gilyana@jcajax.org](mailto:eiffel.gilyana@jcajax.org).**



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



# MAKING MILESTONES HAPPEN

## The Importance of Sports at an Early Age

**By Daniela Mickey, Sports and Recreation Director**

Some of the most important milestones our children reach happen at the earliest ages. It begins with gross motor skills, like rolling, sitting, standing and walking, which are all integral to a child's development.

As children learn how to properly use their bodies, they become more complex and start doing things like walking on tiptoes, spinning, walking backward, jumping and so much more. In our preschool and youth sports clinics at the JCA, we focus on play, mobility and agility as the best ways to strengthen and develop a child's earliest gross motor skills.

Studies show mobility and agility not only impact a child's development but they also impact how children age. Children crave play and therefore, those who find a love for sports at an early age, grow into healthier and more active adults.

In a basketball or soccer clinic, we might learn how to dribble and stop a ball. Then, we gamify the experience of dribbling a ball in a different way, like through a game of "Red Light/Green Light," and children are learning the

skill while giving their full attention to a new game. When parents sign their children up for our youth clinics, whether it be soccer, gymnastics, basketball, running or volleyball, kids develop their gross motor skills in our fun, enriching environment at the JCA. What they do not know is that we are also working on following directions, strengthening muscles, and what it is like to be part of a team.

On their first sports team, children develop a sense of belonging which does amazing things for self-esteem. Seeing improvement in ourselves when we play sports is a powerful force that motivates kids to keep showing up while they learn the value of self-worth. I am proud to say our sports leagues aim to do just that. The main focus of every clinic is never winning or being the best, instead, we learn, grow, and refine our skills all while having a whole lot of fun!

**We love seeing our JCA's youngest athletes moving through our programs while consistently improving their skills. If your family is interested in learning more about the leagues and clinics available for children ages 3 – 14, visit [jcjax.org/sport-recreation](http://jcjax.org/sport-recreation) for more information or email me directly at [daniela.mickey@jcjax.org](mailto:daniela.mickey@jcjax.org).**



## A Multigenerational Staff Member – Extraordinaire!

By Dustin Rulien, Aquatics Manager

Chances are, if your child takes swim lessons, you swim laps in our pools, or your family frequents the halls of our JCA, you know and probably have a great amount of respect for our veteran lifeguard, John Robertson. While most of our members know John by the pool, what many do not know is that other than his guard whistle and rescue tube, John wears several hats around the JCA.

“What I enjoy most about my job are the people I work with.” When asked about his favorite part of working at the JCA - as a lifeguard, lifeguard instructor, swim instructor, aquatics facilities operator, pool maintenance specialist, PE manager on duty, and front desk substitute – John says he loves it all and those around him. “Whichever job I am doing at the moment, there are people who support and help me, and those people support and help me in my personal life too.”



There’s no question that our JCA community feels like a family. The best part of working here is being a part of the growth and development of the youngest generation of members who come here. Perhaps the most rewarding, are our multigenerational staff members like John, who not only grew up experiencing our programs but also work here.

“I started coming to the JCA as a child. My parents sent me to summer camps many times and enrolled me on the swim team,” says John who explains during that time his late mother, Patti Robertson was a receptionist at the JCA.

I personally remember Patti as an encourager, who was always contributing hope and a smile to everyone’s day. John’s older sister, Alex, followed in their mom’s footsteps, working as a lifeguard (who was actually certified in the same class I was) and took on an additional role on the JCA’s reception team.

John was 15 when he earned his Lifeguard certification from the Red Cross and joined the JCA staff too. An instrumental member of our aquatics department through the last 11 years, John continues to grow his career with us. In the last three years, he earned advanced certifications as an Aquatic Facility Operator and Water Safety Instructor, and the certification he is most proud of is Red Cross Certified Lifeguard Instructor.

**Remember, it’s never too late to learn to swim. Get in the pool with John or any of water safety instructors; we have programs available for all ages, even through the winter months. Visit [jcajax.org/sport-recreation/aquatics](http://jcajax.org/sport-recreation/aquatics) or email me directly at [dustin.rulien@jcajax.org](mailto:dustin.rulien@jcajax.org) to learn more about the programs we have available.**



# KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME



## By Lucas Ramos Campos, Tennis Pro

The mental aspect in the game of tennis is just as important as the physical aspect. When players are trying to improve their game, most tend to focus on techniques and conditioning while overlooking the importance of the mental part of the game.

Since tennis is mostly an individual sport, players must rely on themselves to make smart decisions during a match. There is no place for substitutions or backup players when things are not going as expected in a tennis match – it is up to the player to adjust and try to find answers to different situations.

The same rule of thumb applies when playing doubles. Trying to get the best out of your partner by communicating well and staying positive during a match will make your game more successful. It is easy to have a hard time on the court and get lost if you both are not able to stay mentally strong.

Competition is a big part of sports and tennis is no different. Tennis players are very competitive, always fighting for the win. That winning feeling is also addictive.

It feels so great to win a match that players want to keep going to experience the winning feeling over and over again.

At the same time, there is much to learn from losing on the court. Experiencing a loss makes players want to be better during the next match. Skilled tennis players can showcase their abilities on our Har-Tru courts resulting in incredible matches between friends or during our JCA Tennis League matches.

Wins and losses are part of the game but being able to stay mentally strong will give any player an advantage. With the amount of repetition in a tennis game, players can also train their minds to be positive during difficult situations.

**So, let's play; join us on the courts or just come to watch and cheer for the exciting matches that happen with our tennis teams. Our JCA tennis season is in full swing! If you are interested in learning more about the programs available for children and adults at beginners, intermediate, or seasoned levels of play, please visit [jcjax.org/sport-recreation/tennis](http://jcjax.org/sport-recreation/tennis) or email me at [lucas.ramoscampos@jcjax.org](mailto:lucas.ramoscampos@jcjax.org).**



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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.

# WE'RE HIRING!



**JOIN OUR JCA FAMILY.**

Scan the QR code to visit  
[jcjax.org/careers](http://jcjax.org/careers) and apply today.



# Chanukkah EXTRAVAGANZA

**THU, DEC 7 | 5:45 PM**

You are invited to the JCA for the lighting of our  
 giant outside chanukiah! Featuring our world  
 famous hotdogs, latkes, songs, and plenty of  
 entertainment, make plans to join us this year!  
 Admission tickets will be available at the front  
 desk. First come, first served; space is limited.

**TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!**



**FREE TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY!**