





**Sam Stromberg**

Shalom Friends,

I don't know about all of you, but my head is still spinning from a busy summer full of fun, memories, and some incredible achievements for our Jewish Community Alliance. In my second year serving as your JCA Board Chair, it is truly remarkable to think about all we accomplished in the last year and all we have yet to do!

*Mazel tov*, JCA! It was an honor to enjoy an evening with my JCA family members at the 2023 Florida Times-Union Community's Choice Awards Gala this August. Thanks to your votes, our JCA accepted five Best of Bold City awards during the ceremony. We were recognized with the Best Fitness Center/Gym with the Best After School/Summer Camp, Best Private School, and Best Preschool programs. Plus, we earned the title of Best Tour Guide/Guide Service in all of Jacksonville!

The cooler weather around Jacksonville this season is a sign that our children are busy growing and learning with the new school year, fall sports are in full swing, and our signature Jewish Cultural Arts Festival will soon be underway! Kicking off this year with our first-ever Jewish Pop-Up Market on Sunday, October 29, this family-friendly event will have something for every generation. You don't want to miss this annual JCA tradition; turn to page 4 to learn more about what's happening at our celebration of Jewish art, literature and films.

Speaking of books, we have new ways to share in your love of reading at the JCA. Turn to page 9 to learn more about our new Little Free Libraries and how you can take a book and share a book right at the JCA. Our Jewish Educator Rachel Sandler also has a mitzvah planned this October that will help us share our love of literature with the entire community. We are collecting new and gently used books! You can learn more about our Monthly Member Mitzvah to benefit our partners at The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services and River Garden Hebrew Home on page 10.

Chances are, you likely spotted our CEO Adam Chaskin on the front page of the Florida Times-Union with First Coast YMCA President and CEO Eric Mann, or you watched the media coverage of our Together Against Hate: Promoting Unity in Our Community initiative that began at JFCS last month. I am beyond proud that Adam and Eric ignited this collaboration to denounce hate in our community. I urge you to turn to page 3 to read more about this initiative designed to educate and inspire our neighbors to create a safe and welcoming community – and hope you will join us in this important cause.

On behalf of Adam and the leaders of our ambitious capital campaign, Building Our Future Together, I am so pleased that to date, we have raised more than \$10.7 million to renovate and update our JCA. The progress being made with Thomas Duke Architects on the redesign of our campus promises a bright future and will ensure that the JCA remains an integral place in Jacksonville for many years to come.

Please keep reading this issue of our Alliance News to discover all that is happening on campus in the coming months. The incredible staff at the JCA continue to go above and beyond so that everything we do honors our founders' mission and vision to create a sense of community that connects our Jewish traditions and heritage while we provide a safe place for all of our neighbors.

Honored to serve,



Sam Stromberg  
Board Chair

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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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Sam Stromberg .....Board Chair  
Adam Chaskin.....Chief Executive Officer  
Chelsea Jarrell .....Director of Marketing  
Lee Lemay.....Graphic Designer  
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 service is for a maximum of 90 mins.
- Kid Kare is offered by reservation system via the My J app.



*In memory of...*

**SETH CARLIN DAVIDOW**  
by The Board and Staff of the JCA

**GARY ROSENTHAL**  
by Michele Steinfeld

**MARJORIE 'MARJ' ROTHSTEIN**  
by Adam and Regina Chaskin  
Rochelle and David Stoddard  
The Miller Family  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**MARY CHASKIN**  
by The Miller Families  
Mauri and Alan Mizrahi  
Rachel and Craig Morgenthal  
Rochelle and David Stoddard  
Martin and Suzan Goetz  
Jo-Ellen and Adam Unger  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**LISA ANSBACHER'S MOTHER**  
by The Spring/Miller Family

**ELEANOR JOHNSON**  
by Margie Gordon  
Barbara Adelman  
Pam Lipton

**MARTIN 'MARTY' EDWARDS**  
by Karen and Philip Adler  
Ellen and George Rubens  
Judy and Steve Silverman  
Michele and David Steinfeld  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

**TRACEY VANDROFF**  
by The Miller Families  
The Spring/Miller Family  
Rochelle and David Stoddard  
Staff and Board of Gabriel House of Care  
Britt Bauguss  
Adam and Regina Chaskin  
The Board and Staff of the JCA

*For a speedy recovery...*  
**DAVID STEIN**  
by Rochelle and David Stoddard

*In honor of...*  
**20 YEARS OF PERSONAL TRAINING WITH CLINT NEAL AND GRANT HELM**  
by Louise L. Rapp

**ZACHARY SETZER'S BAR MITZVAH**  
by Linda Bloom

**SAM STROMBERG'S BIRTHDAY**  
by Rochelle and David Stoddard

**WHITNEY KUVIN'S BIRTHDAY**  
by Rochelle and David Stoddard

**EIFFEL GILYANA'S BIRTHDAY**  
by Rochelle and David Stoddard

**THE NAMING OF THE BUD SHORSTEIN CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES**  
by Rochelle and David Stoddard

**JENNIE AND STEVE BERMUDEZ' NEW GRANDCHILDREN, ROBERT AND SOPHIA**  
by Michele and David Steinfeld

**GIGI AND DAN SHWARTZ: BIRTH OF CHILD**  
by Spring and Miller Families

**ALEX AND SCOT ACKERMAN: BIRTH OF GRANDCHILD**  
by Spring and Miller Families

**MIKE ABRAMSON**  
by Karen and Philip Adler

**RIO ROBINSON**  
by Karen and Philip Adler

**The Stephanie Green Fund**  
*In memory of...*

**MARTIN 'MARTY' EDWARDS**  
by Nancy and Mark Green  
Jeff and Penny Marks

**MARY CHASKIN**  
by Nancy and Mark Green

**LISA ANSBACHER'S MOTHER**  
by Nancy and Mark Green

**TRACEY VANDROFF**  
by the Waverly Neighbors

**General donations**  
*Our thanks to...*  
**HARRISON WENDLAND**



By Beth Milograno,  
Communications &  
PR Specialist

Let's listen, learn and grow together - even when conversations are challenging.

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. Our hope is that through educating and inspiring our neighbors we can build a more inclusive Northeast Florida.

Spearheaded by our CEO Adam Chaskin and the President and CEO of the First Coast YMCA Eric Mann, Together Against Hate is made possible by our talented JCA and First Coast YMCA staff members, and through funding from CSX, the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida: Next Gen *B'nai Tzedek* Grant Award, and the Team Up Project: a national collaboration between Catholic Charities USA, Habitat for Humanity International, Interfaith America and YMCA of the USA.

Mark your calendars to join us at our upcoming Together Against Hate events.

**LGBTQAI+ Rights & Advocacy with JASMYN**  
Tue, Oct 10 | 7 pm  
Friday Musicale, 645 Oak Street

**Antisemitism**  
Tue, Nov 7 | 7 pm  
Jewish Community Alliance, 8505 San Jose Boulevard

**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)

# THE CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL BEGINS OCTOBER 29!



## By Heather Terrill, J Institute Director

It's time for one of our favorite annual events, the JCA Cultural Arts Festival. A tradition for nearly three decades, this self-sustaining, ever-expanding festival is prided on being free and open to the community thanks to the generosity of our sponsors. Without our sponsors and supporters, we would not be able to host such an amazing event!

Bring your family, friends, or just yourself and come on out for our first-ever Jewish Pop-Up Market on Sun, Oct 29 from 11 am - 2 pm. Featuring arts, crafts, jewelry, clothing and accessories, we will have family-friendly fun with Kona Ice, JBake, PJ Library, music by *Koltrain*, a bounce house, face painting, and so much more!

Starting Oct 29, for three weeks straight, our exciting lineup of events will provide something for everyone. A few highlights include our signature Ladies' Night Out on Mon, Oct 30, which begins with massages and mixology at 6 pm. Then at 7 pm, the fun continues as we welcome Cyndie Spiegel author of *Microjoys: Finding Hope (Especially) When Life is Not Okay*. Founder of *Dear Grown A\*\* Women*, a keynote speaker and community builder, Cyndie will share the *microjoys* that have kept her going through tough times and will show us how we can learn to see *microjoys* in our own lives.

A hundred years after the publication of his notorious antisemitic screed, *The International Jew*, the ghost of Henry Ford returns to Detroit to face a troubling legacy. *10 Questions for Henry Ford* is a feature-length documentary/art film based on archival documents, oral histories, Ford's personal notebooks, as well as the automaker's tragic relationship with his forgotten son, Edsel. This film will be followed up with a discussion and Q&A with director Andy Kirshner on Thu, Nov 2 at 7 pm.

On Tue, Nov 7 at 7 pm as part of our **Together Against Hate: Promoting Unity in Our Community** speaker series, Florida Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Sarah Emmons will be at the JCA to discuss the rise of antisemitism and what is being done to initiate change. Then, Rabbi Diana Fersko, author of *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*, continues the conversation virtually to share her exploration of why people are reluctant to discuss antisemitism and what empowers us to fight against it.

This year's grand finale event is a visit from Adam Mansbach! The one and only author of, *Go the F\*\*\* to Sleep* will be at the JCA on Thu, Nov 16 at 7 pm to share his new book, *The Golem of Brooklyn*. Described to be a "dazzlingly imaginative, ferociously funny story of an art teacher, a bodega clerk and a five-thousand-year-old clay crisis monster," we cannot wait until this *New York Times* bestselling author makes his Jacksonville debut at the JCA!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND VISIT [JCAJAX.ORG/CAFEST](http://JCAJAX.ORG/CAFEST) TO REGISTER TODAY!**



**SUN, OCT 29 | 11 AM – 2 PM**



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



**SUN, OCT 29 | 11 AM – 2 PM**

**Jewish Pop-Up Market**



**MON, OCT 30 | 6 PM**

**Cyndie Spiegel** *Microjoys: Finding Hope (Especially) When Life is Not Okay*



**THU, NOV 2 | 6 PM**

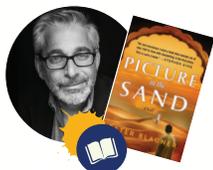
**Vandromm Art Gallery**  
**Opening Reception**



**THU, NOV 2 | 7 PM**

**10 Questions for Henry Ford**

Sponsored by Susan and Ron Elinoff



**FRI, NOV 3 | 12 PM**

**Peter Blauner**  
*Picture in the Sand*

Streaming at River Garden



**SUN, NOV 5 | 3 PM**

**The Narrow Bridge**



**TUE, NOV 7 | 7 PM**

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



**Rabbi Diana Fersko**  
*We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*

Streaming at the JCA



**WED, NOV 8 | 7 PM**

**One More Story**



**THU, NOV 9 | 7 PM**

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



**FRI, NOV 10 | 10 AM**

**10 Questions for Henry Ford**

Streaming at River Garden  
Sponsored by Susan and Ron Elinoff



**MON, NOV 13 | 7 PM**

**The Story of Annette Zelman**



**TUE, NOV 14 | 12 PM**

**Sara Confino**  
*She's Up to No Good*

Streaming at the Ponte Vedra Library and River Garden



**WED, NOV 15 | 7 PM**

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



**Larry Loftis**  
*The Watchmaker's Daughter*

Streaming at the JCA



**THU, NOV 16 | 7 PM**

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

Events are at the JCA unless stated otherwise.

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



## We Keep Growing Thanks to Donors Like You!

By Kendall Sisisky Valliere, Development Director

For 27 years and counting, our Jewish Book Festival brings literature and authors from across the country and around the world to educate, inspire, and engage our neighbors. Since our celebration of Jewish literature began, the festival evolved to include films, artwork, speakers, musicians - and even magicians. Excitement permeates our campus as we prepare for another year, where the Jacksonville Jewish Cultural Arts Festival presented by the JCA brings cultural arts to our beautiful city to share knowledge, experience, passions and perspectives with our community.

Now, with hundreds of people in attendance every November, we cannot help but *kvell* – because of the generosity of our donors and supporters each year, we can share these incredible cultural arts experiences with our community at no cost. Last year we welcomed more than 800 people at just 10 free community-wide events. This year, as we plan 12 events in three different locations throughout Jacksonville.

Our Cultural Arts Festival really puts the JCA mission into action. We are proud to serve as a town hall for the exchange of ideas, and a place that welcomes people from different backgrounds and faiths to promote understanding and unity. With another great line up of cultural arts programs and the first-ever Jewish Pop-Up Market, we simply cannot wait until the 2023 festival kicks off on October 29.

Turn back to page 5 for more details and the full schedule of festival events happening at the JCA, River Garden and the Ponte Vedra Library this year. I hope to see you at the Cultural Arts Festival this year!

If you would like to support cultural arts programming at the JCA, visit [jcajax.org/cafest](http://jcajax.org/cafest).





# PAC PRESENTS

# NEWSIES

Sat, Dec 2 and 9 at 7:30 pm | Sun, Dec 3 and 10 at 1 pm

## By Shelly Higgins Hughes, Theatre Director

In the summer of 1899, the newsboys of New York City took on two of the most powerful men in the country — Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst — and won! Inspired by true events, the Broadway show *Newsies* is a testament to the power of standing up and speaking out no matter your age or current life situation.

The JCA Theatre Department will kick off our 27th season with 70 talented young performers who will take the stage December 2, 3, 9 and 10 to bring this little piece of history to life.

With incredible musical numbers like *Carrying the Banner*, *Seize the Day*, and *King of New York*, families better get ready; this show and our incredible cast members are sure to keep audiences captivated!



## Starring

Harry Aaronson, Anya Anderson, Zohar Arad, Anastasia Beltz, Rylynn Bennett, Josie Bides, Maggie Bullock, Trysden Butz, Charlie Cohlma, Sophie Cohlma, Max Csar, Josh Draper, Molly Draper, Jake Dunn, Annabel Fernandez, Zachary Fritchman, Neshama Laya Gross, Devon Hall, Ellen Hedrick, Milly Hedrick, Amelie Holstein, Emma Holstein, Dafna Holzer, Rena Holzer, Evie Horne, Eliana Horovitz, Hannah Ruth Hutto, Rayna Kempner, Caroline Kennelly, Charlie Kerschner, Sophie Kerschner, Maya Lockenbach, Fiona McCullough-Orr, Harper Miles, Laine Morgan, Abraham Murray, Luke Murray, Ariel Mutzari, Leona Mychka, Elliott Neihaus, Leora Neihaus, Noah Neihaus, Ava Owen, Giada Pilla, Anna Porkert, Pavel Ratchev, Shelby Rauchwarger, Charlotte Russell, Amit Sakofs, Andi Shapiro, Henry Smith, Adaline Sowada, Saige Sowada, Emma Stanley, Olivia Stanley, Desmond Taylor, Donovan Taylor, Sicily Thames, Drew Torres, Hannah Trest, Zach Trest, Jillian Turk, Brenna Walter, Erin Wax, Levi Welch, Tali Werner, Veda Wray, Clara Zeno.

**For ticket information, please contact the Theatre Department at (904) 730-2100 ext. 248.**



## We are Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten

By Natalia Fisher, ECE Director



Safely nestled on the JCA campus sits our Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten, where we inspire the youngest minds in our community.

Our school is a special place. It is a place that promotes laughter, discovery, moments of amazement, courage, and lots and lots of questions!

Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten is not just a place where children spend their time; it is a place where children are given time and opportunity to embark on a journey toward independence and building the person they will become.



This is a place where educators carefully watch children as they play to gain insight into how they understand the world and expertly build experiences so the children can go further. Our school is a place where the moments of learning are captured to help us tell their story.

As a constructivist school, drawing inspiration from the Montessori method of teaching and the Reggio Emilia Approach to Learning from Italy, we are grounded in Jewish values, commonly referred to as lenses.

For example, through the lens of *Tzelem Elohim*, we see every individual as being created in the divine image. Additionally, we see the potential for greatness in all children and believe that each is worthy of respect, dignity and love. Further, the Jewish lenses give us the foundation of our teaching and learning philosophy, infusing every interaction with kindness, compassion, and a deeper understanding of the unique gifts and talents that children possess.

With classrooms designed as carefully curated environments, we often refer to the space as the third teacher. When a



classroom is inviting to children it allows them to engage, explore and experiment. Children can foster a sense of community and collaboration - in our school, every child's unique perspective is celebrated.

We understand that learning is an active process and children are co-constructors of their own understandings. Our constructivist approach to teaching and learning helps us to create a dynamic environment where wonder and curiosity continuously drive instruction.

At Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten, education is not just about imparting knowledge, it is about nurturing the divine image within each child and empowering them to become lifelong learners and compassionate individuals who contribute positively to the world.

**If you are interested in learning more about Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten and would like to schedule a play date or a tour of our campus, please email [ganyeladim@jcajax.org](mailto:ganyeladim@jcajax.org).**





# Alumni Mitzvot Share LOVE *of* BOOKS



**By Theresa Levy, Alumni Coordinator**

Take a book. Share a book. Our JCA campus now houses not one, but two Little Free Libraries thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of two of our Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten alumni.

Touted to build community, inspire readers, and expand access to books, the Little Free Library, take a book, share a book, exchange happens at small house-shaped book boxes all over the country, where neighbors share their favorite books. Since its inception in 2009, Little Free Libraries has proved to be a great way to make books available for people in need and a way to share books you finished.

“My dad and I spent many nights before my bat mitzvah building the Little Free Library,” explains Talia Algee, 13, who says when she is not playing softball or studying, she is engrossed in reading and that’s the reason why she decided to bring a Little Free Library to the lobby of the JCA. “I chose the JCA because I know all the kids there would love it and I wanted to give back to a place that has been a second home for me and my family for a long time.”



Our second Little Free Library on campus is set to be installed in our JCA’s Kid Kare. Donated by the family of our former school librarian, Susan “Bunni” Meiselman, the bright blue Little Free Library is filled with books shared in Bunni’s memory.

“Mom loved her time as the librarian at Gan Yeladim,” says Shana Meiselman, whose children, Jadon and Abigail attended our school. “Nothing made her happier than sharing her love of books with children.”

**The next time you are at the JCA, we encourage you to share in our love of books! Please pop by our Little Free Libraries and if you feel so inclined, take a book and share a book!**

In addition to the mitzvahs that brought our campus Little Free Libraries, we believe that sharing books falls under the Jewish Value of *Tikun Olam*, repairing the world. Reusing loved books, making them accessible to others and sharing that experience will help us all make the world a better place.



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 stories and photos from attending preschool and kindergarten at the JCA with me by email, [theresa.levy@jcajax.org](mailto:theresa.levy@jcajax.org).

***Todah Rabah!***

**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.

**We have spots in our Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes for the 2023-24 school year.**

Parents who are interested in scheduling a tour and play date should email [ganyeladim@jcajax.org](mailto:ganyeladim@jcajax.org) or call (904) 730-2100 ext. 235.

## Sharing Jewish Heritage and Knowledge

By Rachel Sandler, Jewish Educator

If you've met our Community *Shlich*a Tal Mola or attended any of our *shlichut* programs at the JCA, then you know how fortunate we are to have a *shlichut* program in Northeast Florida. Thanks to our partnership with the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida, these unique programs give the entire community an opportunity to learn about Israel.

Dedicated to sharing her Jewish heritage and knowledge with us, Tal is starting her second year as our Community *Shlich*a and says she is excited to continue her work by creating more programs that increase Jewish awareness, knowledge and pride.



In my first year as a shlich in Jacksonville, I've had the privilege of experiencing incredible highlights that have truly enriched my journey. One standout moment was our vibrant Israeli *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* community celebration, where I had the chance to collaborate with various agencies and synagogues, uniting our community in a joyous celebration of Israeli culture and heritage. While hosting Israeli teens through the Partnership2gether program, I spent an enriching week with them and American teens, forging connections and lifelong friendships. Teaching Hebrew classes to my dedicated students has also been immensely rewarding, fostering a sense of connection to our heritage. As I look ahead to the next year, I'm excited to build upon these connections and continue the bond between Israeli and American communities - making each day an opportunity for growth and cultural exchange.

- Tal



You are invited to join Tal at her next program on Wed, Oct 11 at 6:30 pm for a free screening of the film *Ajami*, featuring the stories of Jewish, Muslim and Christian characters. Don't forget to mark your calendar for Thu, Nov 30 at 6:30 pm to celebrate *Sigd* with Tal. Bring comfortable shoes and your appetite; the Ethiopian Jewish holiday is celebrated with delicious food and lots of dancing!

**Join in our Monthly Member Mitzvah this October! We are collecting new and gently used books for adults and children to benefit our partners at The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services and River Garden Hebrew Home. Please drop all donations off at the Traditions Cart in the JCA lobby by Oct 31.**



 **Jewish Federation & Foundation**  
of Northeast Florida  
Israeli Community Shlich



# BRING YOUR SHADES, THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!

By Evan McInnis, Youth Services Director

After a summer spent creating memories that will last a lifetime for children in Camps Habonim, Sabra and Yalla this summer, the mentors you know and love in the JCA's Youth Services department returned from a summer of fun at the Jacksonville Jewish Center to some pretty big changes.

Without further delay, I am excited to share our hopes and dreams for your children and introduce our new leaders within Youth Services. Wishing Amanda Collins the absolute brightest future outside our JCA, Evan McInnis (that's me!), transitioned to become the director of our phenomenal team. I am thrilled to use my seven years of experience to continue building on the legacy of those who came before me.



Not new to our JCA or to your wonderful children, Julia Breen was promoted to be our assistant director. With her experience as assistant camp director and more than four years on our team, Julia is bringing even more fun and ideas to inspire your kids in her new position this school year. A Jacksonville native and recent graduate of the University of North Florida, Julia holds a bachelor's degree in social work. She is passionate about creating nurturing environments for children and Julia says the most meaningful part of her work is designing programs to inspire young minds.

"There's something so magical about watching kids grow, explore and learn," says Julia. "It's an incredible feeling to watch as we build creativity, confidence and a sense of belonging for children all while they gain memories and bonds that will last a lifetime."

If you haven't met her yet, Lea Melvin is the newest addition to our team. Lea grew up in New Jersey before moving to Jacksonville as a teenager. Also a UNF graduate, Lea has a bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in biomedical science. That's right, Lea is bringing a lot of knowledge to our STEM curriculum at the JCA that will help your children thrive.

"I hope to expand the enrichment programs' repertoire and reach so we can include more children from a variety of backgrounds," explains Lea. "My position really allows me to positively influence children to help them foster an understanding of themselves and the world around them – plus, making slime with kids is so much fun!"



Our team cannot wait to bring JCA's youth programs to new heights! As our program evolves to better serve our youngest members, we can provide quality programming to children, teens and your entire family. In the coming JCA Program Guides, you will see activities designed to encourage teens to engage in *mitzvot*, a way for us as a community to give back to Jacksonville's most vulnerable citizens. We are planning teen excursions and hangouts as we always seek to provide safe, welcoming and engaging programs for the next generation of leaders. We also have more family activities like art and game nights in the works, and we are looking at even more ways to bring families together at our JCA.

Last year, we were honored to receive a grant from **Johnson & Johnson** which allowed us to purchase a slew of Chromebooks and allowed us to facilitate in-house coding classes as well as other tech-based activities. Thanks to the magnificent Development team, our applications are in for this year. I cannot say too much of course - but we hope that through more grants and donations this year, we will be able to introduce classes like woodworking, 3D printing and robotics to children at the JCA.

It's safe to say, things are looking bright around here with lots of promising new programs and adventures to come! Be sure to bring your sunglasses when you visit Youth Services.





# Jacksonville JCA at the 2023 JCC MACCABI GAMES® Teens Bring Home Gold Medals and Golden Memories



By Adam Chaskin, CEO

**Mazel tov:** Talia Algee, Taylor Finklehoffe, Micah Hirsch, Micah Jaffa, David Kempner, Eli Kuvin, Juliet Leonard, Ben Levinson, Joseph Morgenthal, Gabe Morris, Noah Neihaus, Charles Rathet, Zev Shapiro, Zachary Trest, Avner Tzabari, and Brennan Zaner!

On the field, the court and in the pool - our Jacksonville JCA Maccabi Games® athletes joined more than 1,800 teenagers from around the world to compete at the games in Fort Lauderdale hosted by the David Posnack Jewish Community Center this summer.



Micah H., Micah J., Ben, Noah, Zev, Zachary, Avner and Brennan played on our JCA's flag football team. David, Joseph, Gabe and Charles, made up our 3v3 basketball team, while Talia, Taylor, Eli and Juliet, lapped the competition in the pools. Joined by myself, volunteer coaches Andrew Jaffa and Benjay Kempner, and the JCA delegation head coach Rio Robinson, our athletes experienced a remarkable week of sports and comradery that they will never forget.

The JCA flag football and basketball teams won on the first day of the competition, plus all of our swimmers won medals and advanced to the finals. By the end of the week, JCA swimmers had a haul of Maccabi Games medals: Taylor earned six medals including one gold, Juliet won three medals

including one gold, Eli won nine medals including one gold, and Talia won the very prestigious Midot Medal for displaying core Jewish values that define the Maccabi Games and the JCC mission. The six values: *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), *Kavod* (respect), *Rina* (joy), *Ga'ava* (pride), *Lev Tov* (big-hearted), and *Amiut Yehudit* (Jewish peoplehood), guide the Maccabi program and help us remember the greater mission of the games - to make the world a better place.

Throughout the week, JCC Maccabi offers many opportunities for athletes to engage with other Jewish teens. Our team participated in a *mitzvah* project on the first day of the games and donated new shoes to students in need, the gifts also included an encouraging note from our JCA athletes. As the week ended with closing ceremonies and a casino night for all to enjoy, it was hard to look around the event and not find a smiling teenager.

Even though our flag football and basketball teams did not advance to medal rounds this summer, each had a truly valuable, winning experience at the Maccabi Games. Perhaps another delegation head said it best when describing the impact this event has on our youth, "These athletes come from different cultures and backgrounds, and expressions of Judaism. Some of them don't even speak the same language! What unites them all and gives them common ground to create friendships is sports and the fact that they are all Jewish. That's the magic of JCC Maccabi Games."

**The JCC Maccabi Games happen every summer with Jewish athletes, ages 13 - 16, eligible to participate.**

**For more information about the games in 2024 and how to get your teenager involved, please email Daniela Mickey at [daniela.mickey@jcajax.org](mailto:daniela.mickey@jcajax.org).**





## Welcome Coach Daniela Mickey!

By Beth Milograno, Communications & PR Specialist

If you have not met her yet, Daniela Mickey joined the JCA family as our new Sports and Recreation Director this August. Affectionally called Coach D, Daniela is a lifelong member of the Jewish Community Centers of North America - and having grown up at a JCC she is no stranger to all that happens inside the J.

“I grew up at the Mexico City JCC and took part in the Israeli dance program, soccer, tennis and gymnastics,” explains Daniela who says when she first came to visit our JCA she experienced *deja vous*.

“ I have the fondest memories of being a child and walking through the halls of our JCC with my Dad, who seemed to know everyone and would always stop for a chat,” says Daniela. “The same thing happened when I was on my tour here and I instantly felt part of a wonderful community. Everyone stops to talk, catch up and share their excitement about whatever it is they are doing here that day. That experience brought back fond memories.”

After moving to Charlotte, North Carolina, as a teenager, Daniela began her career as a camp counselor at the Levine JCC in Charlotte and worked there every summer throughout high school and college. Daniela’s career then brought her to San Diego, California, where she taught art and science, and became a certified yoga instructor. When Daniela moved

back to Charlotte in 2015 the first place she looked for work was at the Levine JCC where she rekindled her love of sports as the agency’s Sports and Fitness Coordinator.

“I really enjoy being part of the sports community and all that happens at JCCs to encourage children and adults to participate and focus on their wellbeing,” says Daniela. “I am very much looking forward to mentoring children and teens in our sports programs, and I cannot wait to get stopped in the halls for a chat as I get to know the families here.”

Daniela, her husband Jonathan, and their two daughters, moved to Jacksonville from Fernandina Beach in 2022. When Daniela is not busy being Coach D, she can be found cooking, practicing yoga, weightlifting, crafting and hanging with her 15-year-old “street terrier” named Flapjack.





# Thank You, USA Swimming Foundation!

By Dustin Rulien, Aquatics Manager

As a skill that promises fun and safety for a lifetime, there are still many people in our community who unfortunately do not have access or funding to learn the vital skills necessary to swim or survive in the water.

Whether it be looking for objects underwater before jumping in, learning proper breath control, or floating on your back when too tired to keep swimming – we believe these survival skills which many take for granted are imperative. This is why I am proud to share that thanks to a grant from the **USA Swimming Foundation**, our JCA partnered with the **Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida** to provide no-cost lessons to children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to learn how to swim.

Within the ancient text in the Talmud, containing Jewish sayings, ideas and stories, there is a list of things that parents are obligated to do for their children after birth. Among the list of expectations is that parents are obligated to teach their children how to swim. As we work to uphold our JCA's mission to enhance the quality of life for our entire community, this program was developed to provide local children with the tools and knowledge needed to protect themselves in and around the water. Throughout the six-week sessions, children will learn how to evaluate conditions, move safely in the water, swim in clothing, and help other swimmers while protecting themselves. It is our belief that through these critical life skills, we can reduce the risks of drowning in our community.

Please email me at [dustin.rulien@jcajax.org](mailto:dustin.rulien@jcajax.org), if you have questions about our swim lessons or how our new aquatics program with the Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida is positively impacting our community.



## Get Ready, Get Set - Go Register for the Youth Mini-Triathlon!

Calling all athletes ages 5 – 12! Gather your swim gear, bikes, helmets, and running shoes, and get ready to compete at our Youth Mini-Triathlon on Sun, Oct 29. Young athletes will race in age-appropriate groups as they run a mile, bike a mile, then swim distances according to their age group. Medals will be awarded for first and second place in each age group. Participation medals will be distributed to athletes after the triathlon.

**Sun, Oct 29 | 10 am**  
Athletes must arrive by 9:45 am

Scan to register your athlete by Tue, Oct 19





## Let's Get on the Courts!

By Lucas Ramos Campos, Tennis Pro

I am excited to share some new opportunities on our Har-Tru clay courts for JCA tennis players this season! Our Junior Tennis programs are ready to welcome young players who want to have fun and improve their skills on the court.

The Tennis Aces clinics for children, ages 3 - 6, now happen twice a week. Parents have the option of enrolling their children in Tuesday or Wednesday clinics, or both. We are also opening one more day for the Pee Wee Tennis, ages 4 - 8, which is held on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Junior Quick Start clinics happen every Tuesday for children, ages 8 - 13, who want to enjoy a fun group practice. Our Varsity Tennis group meets weekly on Wednesdays to focus on competitive practice with teens, ages 14 - 18, who want to step up their game.

In addition to the changes in the Junior Tennis programs, we are excited to welcome back the Tennis 101 Clinic. Players who are 18+ and are interested in learning the basics of the game can develop their skills every Monday at 5 pm.

Believe it or not, that's not all that's happening on our clay courts. Clinics and matches for our women's teams are in full swing! Our Drop-in Men's clinics are held from 6:30 - 8 pm on Mondays and offer our members a great opportunity to improve their game and connect with the JCA tennis community. The players on our Working Women's teams take the court on Tuesdays from 6:30 - 8 pm. Players looking for intense exercise are also invited to join our Cardio Tennis clinic which starts every Sunday at 8:30 am.

We are excited to offer many options to tennis players of all ages! I cannot wait to see you at the courts; please remember that clinic spots are limited. Do not hesitate to register and reserve your spot today. Visit [jcajax.org](http://jcajax.org) or email [lucas.ramoscampos@jcajax.org](mailto:lucas.ramoscampos@jcajax.org) for more details.

Check out our clinic times for your children and teens, then register them to start playing today!



### Tennis Aces | Ages 3 - 6

Tue and Wed | 3:30 - 4 pm

### Pee Wee Tennis | Ages 4 - 8

Wed and Thu | 4:30 - 5:15 pm

### Junior Tennis | Ages 8 - 13

Tue | 4:30 - 5:30 pm

### Varsity Tennis | Ages 14 - 18

Wed | 5:30 - 6:30 pm



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

8505 San Jose Boulevard  
 Jacksonville, Florida 32217  
 (904) 730-2100

[jcjax.org](http://jcjax.org)



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 of Northeast Florida and the Jewish Community  
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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.

# 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 latkes, hotdogs, 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!**