A Year of Gratitude

annual report 2017
At The Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City (The J), we often utilize our tagline, “live up”®, to convey how we want our Members and guests to feel when they experience The J. Our intent is to create and sustain a positive atmosphere, in which everyone can “live up” to all they can be, every day.

This past year, thousands of Members and guests have let us know – through our surveys and many communications – The J changes lives, for the better, and they’re grateful for it.

Now, it’s our turn to be grateful. We’re grateful for...

• The opportunity to make a genuine difference in the community.
• Our Members, and to all our participants.
• Our passionate, dedicated and hard-working Staff.
• Our small army of volunteers and lay leaders.
• Our generous donors.
• Those who have left a Legacy at The J – ensuring The J will continue our positive impact in the community.

Additionally, The J continued to be the place for the community to gather, strengthening our reputation for being greater Kansas City’s hub for health, learning and well-being:

• Cultural programming attendees throughout the community listened, learned and leveraged new information, growing spiritually and with a greater understanding of the world around them.
• Meshugge CrossFit™ competitions embodied the “live up” philosophy, at which participants created and pushed personal limits of strength, endurance and perseverance.
• Our annual fundraiser, KC SuperStar, attracted hundreds of young people from high schools throughout the metro area, in a high-energy singing competition sweetened by the opportunity to win a college scholarship.
• Jewish Culture Fest brought people together from a myriad of faiths and backgrounds.

In this year of gratitude, we once again thank you. We’re grateful for your involvement in making The J and “live up” a reality.

Jim Sluyter, President & CEO

Ace Allen, Board Chair

Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City
The diversity of your Members has enriched my life over the last 30 years!
The Meshugge Crossfit™ community came together to raise funds for a renovation and expansion that added 70% more space and enabled the program to continue to grow.

Summer Day Camp attendance increased by 14% from 2016 to 2017 to experience an all-time high of 630 children enrolled.

We are grateful for the continued opportunity to serve our community with exceptional programming and recognize all of the donors, volunteers, staff, community partners and Members that make it possible.

J Membership continued to flourish, growing this past year by 100 memberships, to an all-time high of more than 3,200 memberships.

18 Jewish, Muslim and Christian teens baked desserts that were served to 266 people during the sold out reception that followed the presentation of *Hummus, The Movie*, during our KC Jewish Film Festival.

21 individual, area schools had children that participated in the After-School Care program.

10 classrooms and six bathrooms were completely updated as part of the CDC’s renovation.

With Gratitude
2016/17 highlights

- More than 2,200 youth participated in J Baseball which was up from 79 in 2016.
- Masters and Pre-Masters swimmers made 7500 visits to Aquatics.
- The Park and Youth Fitness Zone had 10,125 check-ins.
- Encore! instructed 974 dance classes and performed 143 dances.
- 9,100 patrons attended White Theatre productions.
- Held more than 4700 group exercise classes.
- 334,000 dollars in J financial assistance were awarded to help families in attending Camp, the CDC and many other programs.
- The Kansas City Jewish Film Festival expanded its boundaries, hosting two films in KC's urban center, and increased its revenue by 39% over last year.
- 1,100,000+ dollars raised from our 7th annual KC SuperStar fundraiser.
- The Child Development Center formed a new partnership with The Temple, Congregation B’nai Jehudah, allowing us to expand our professional, caring part-time care.
The J is a community where all different types of people are accepted – where anyone can feel at home.
For more than 20 years, The J has been delivering a cherished gift to the Jewish community and the greater Kansas City community, in the form of a Jewish Arts Festival and now, Jewish Culture Fest.

When the first tents went up in 1994, the planning group was small and the ultimate outcome was unknown. Now, with 10 festivals and more than 60,000 attendees under our belt, this signature event continues to evolve and bring together individuals, families, affiliated and non-affiliated, from all levels of observance, plus a strong representation from the general Kansas City community and surrounding areas.

The celebration of Jewish food, music, art and culture has always been the centerpiece of these Festivals. This year, our “Schmoozapalooza” theme proved to be spot-on as an expression of how Festival guests enjoyed a day of catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances, all within a fun and informative setting.

It truly “takes a village” to research, plan, promote and execute our Festivals, so our sincere thanks–and gratitude–to the hundreds of volunteers, Steering Committee members, Donors, J Board and our wonderful staff, for a mission well-accomplished.

The J cultivates a community of engaged folks from various age and cultural backgrounds. There are so many opportunities to do a variety of things to keep a person active, enlightened and entertained!
A planned Legacy gift to The J supports our long-term sustainability and ensures our organization – a community meaningful to you – will continue well into the future.

We proudly participate at The Jewish Community Center, an organization at the crossroads of our diverse Jewish community and the greater Kansas City community. The J provides a great tent in which all are welcome, all have a place, and all have an opportunity to make themselves and the world better.

Our commitment of time and resources aims to help The J best achieve its mission: enhancing wellness, meaning and joy within an environment built upon Jewish values, heritage and culture.

The J’s very existence stands in testament to the famous challenge from Rabbi Hillel, “When I am for myself alone, what am I?”

We are not alone, and must work together in order to live together. To thrive, we must support the institutions that strengthen our community.

As we look back on our lives, we want to be able to say, “This is who we are and what we have done to help build our community.”

Along with your gift of lasting, positive impact, these donations – often made through a will or trust – can provide attractive tax benefits as well.

The experience of belonging to The J has not only made us healthier through fitness activities, it has also enriched our lives. This community fosters camaraderie, lasting friendships and lots of joking and laughter – and we experience that here every day. We believe this type of environment is deserving of investment – to ensure future generations are able to enjoy the same type of fulfilling community that we have found with The J.

Spotlight

Legacy Donors

Ace Allen & Donna Oberstein
Legacy Donors

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For more information on Legacy Giving, contact Cindy Bodker, Director of Development:
CindyB@thejkc.org or (913) 981.8807

Please let us know if you have left a Legacy gift to The J to ensure we honor your intended purpose.

Spotlight

Legacy Donors

Dave & Jan Knopke
Legacy Donors
Our J simply wouldn’t be the same without Herb.

Recognized locally for his numerous philanthropic pursuits and accomplishments, and nationally for his unparalleled passion and achievements in fundraising for the Jewish community, Herb Buchbinder is a genuine star, a **SuperStar**, in fact.

Herb’s support of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City spans more than a quarter of a century, beginning with The J’s classic fundraiser, **SportsNite**. As events such as **SportsNite** evolved into The J’s current signature fundraiser, **KC SuperStar**, Herb has led a fundraising effort that has capitalized on the concept of a high school singing competition and propelled it into a fundraising bonanza. All of this is fueled by Herb’s limitless energy, drive and talents to “break records,” in every possible way.

Herb’s fundraising for The J, particularly via **KC SuperStar**, has enabled us to attain many of our financial objectives, both immediately and for the long-term. With Herb’s earlier fundraising for The J, his efforts helped in directly supporting the physical renovations of our facility as well as the replenishment and re-growth of endowment funds, a significant revenue source towards building for today and sustaining for the future.

Today, Herb’s extraordinary efforts directly impact a variety of programs and services, including offering financial assistance to families who would not otherwise be able to send their children to the Child Development Center, Camp or to any of the numerous other programs at The J. Herb, with the loving support and understanding of his wife, Bonnie, have spent many years working to leave their mark on The J, and by their actions have been creating a Legacy for The J one year at a time. Bonnie has been there every step of the way, not only as a previous Co-Chair of **KC SuperStar** in 2014 and 2015, but as a **KC SuperStar** Committee Member since this fundraiser’s inception. The record-breaking success of **KC SuperStar**, and previously of **SportsNite**, have set the stage for The J to thrive, and have positioned us to successfully impact our community for decades to come.

The J isn’t the only organization to be a fortunate recipient of Herb’s fundraising prowess, as we are in exceptionally good company. The desire to give back, and the success of Herb and Bonnie in super-exceeding all expectations, has been recognized and appreciated by many, far and wide. The Buchbinder’s other philanthropic interests include: Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, KU Hillel, Children’s Mercy Hospital, Kansas City Zoo, KU athletics, Operation Breakthrough, Truman Library, Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, and many, many others.

There are stars, and there are **KC SuperStars**, but there is only one J **SuperStar** – Herb Buchbinder.

Thank you, Herb. Your efforts have truly propelled The J forward, and we are grateful for the Legacy your efforts are creating.
What can we say about two individuals who forever—and literally—transformed the landscape of Johnson County and The Jewish Community Center?

*Thank you* is just the beginning.

Lew & Shirley White and their family spent an incredible amount of time, in a myriad of activities, at the former locations of The J, particularly when “The Center” was housed in its mid-century modern building at 8201 Holmes in Kansas City, Missouri during the 1960’s and 1970’s.

For Jewish families throughout KC, that was the place to be, and to be seen, during those years. And, The Jewish Community Center saw a lot of the Whites, including during theatre productions at the Resident Theatre, and at special children’s shows staged there such as “Kiddie Kapers.”

As the Jewish Community Center moved on to a temporary location after departing its Holmes base, the Whites, along with other prominent visionary Jewish families, would become the force driving a new, permanent facility for The J. The White’s daughter, Sandi Fried, fondly remembers accompanying her parents on Sunday “road trips” to the Johnson County countryside where they would scout locations for land to develop—one of these parcels would eventually become the Jewish Community Campus, a new concept in which The Jewish Community Center would be housed with other major Jewish institutions.

As the White’s and other Jewish leaders’ dream became reality in 1988, the all-new Jewish Community Campus and state-of-the-art Jewish Community Center opened with great fanfare and equally great components, including the Campus’s social hall, The J’s high-tech fitness center, pools, sports & recreation facilities and childcare center, and more. But, a theatre was not included in the initial facility. “Theatre” productions were staged in the social hall—not an optimal arrangement.

Remembering how shows at the Holmes location were often the focal point of the facility, the Whites decided that it was time for Lewis & Shirley White

*A Legacy That Lives On*

Pictured on left (*from left to right*):
The White Family breaks ground on the future home of The White Theatre.

Linda White, Ed Fried, Sandi Fried, Cyprienne Simchowitz, Shirley White, Jerry White
a new generation in the community to experience the joy of a true community theatre. Thus, Lew & Shirley moved forward with creating and funding a first-class theatre for The J, a dream of Lew’s, with Shirley seeking to make his dream a reality.

Shirley took special pride in adding a personal touch to many of the aesthetics and accoutrements of the new theatre space, down to the details of selecting the fabric for the seats. And, in 2005, the Lewis & Shirley White Theatre opened its doors to a beautiful 500-seat facility, where an extraordinary community theatre beckons theatre-goers from all backgrounds and tastes. Each season, The White Theatre hosts productions featuring the very best of local community talent, with something for everyone, from The Merchant of Venice to Mary Poppins.

The White Theatre, as many have exclaimed, “Feels like Broadway, just right in our own neighborhood.” This was all made possible, and will continue to be here for future generations, thanks to the foresight, passion and love for The J by Lew & Shirley. The J is forever grateful for these enduring gifts to the community, and for this exquisite gathering point for thought, discussion and entertainment – a Legacy that is certain to live on for generations.

Mary Poppins at The White Theatre was such an excellent, colorful production! The performance was top-notch with unbelievable talent. Nothing can compare to live entertainment – that’s accessible and great for the entire family!
My daughter attended J Camp this summer. She has never been a very confident or talkative child, but after just a week with you, she is talking and smiling more. Thank you from my family and I. You all made a huge difference in just a short amount of time.
Staff and Members are such a tight-knit community committed to health, fitness and friendship. During a recent health challenge in our family, our J friends supported us in ways we never would have expected. The love we felt was amazing! The J is more than a place to workout. This is a place where we've found an extension of our family.
Operating Income

- Federation/United Way: 5% (494)
- Contributions & Grants: 9% (935)
- Dues: 26% (2,779)
- Program Fees: 53% (5,664)
- Other: 7% (787)

Total: 100% (10,659)

Operating Expenses

- Financial Assistance & Subsidies: 7% (734)
- Admin Expenses: 7% (785)
- Building Rent: 10% (1,017)
- Program Expenses: 15% (1,636)
- Salaries & Benefits: 61% (6,433)

Total: 100% (10,605)

Financial Assistance & Subsidies Provided to J Community

- Membership: 34% (251)
- CDC: 33% (245)
- Heritage Center: 11% (81)
- Camp: 14% (103)
- Other Programming: 7% (53)

Total: 100% (733)
I love the people working out and the Staff watching us. I’ve been a Member for 72 years and love all The J has to offer.
$50,000+
Bonnie & Herb Buchbinder
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Sam Price Family Foundation
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