2024
JCYS
ANNUAL
REPORT

Nurturing

THE NEXT GENERATION

JCYS

JEWISH COUNCIL FOR YOUTH SERVICES

MISSION

Guided by Jewish values and culture, Jewish Council for Youth Services (JCYS) provides educational and recreational programs for Chicagoland's children and, through board service, develops the next generation of Jewish civic leaders.

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A Message From Leadership

At JCYS, nurturing the next generation is at the heart of everything we do. From early childhood education and summer camps to leadership development for young Jewish professionals, our work inspires growth, encourages curiosity, and fosters community. Despite the ongoing war in Israel and rising antisemitism in the United States, the JCYS community flourished this year. In times like these, we are stronger together—and this report is proof of that.

We continued to invest in our early childhood education programming this past year. We understand that the foundation for lifelong learning and success begins at a young age. Our educators curate stimulating classroom environments where children develop critical skills, build a strong sense of self, and connect with Jewish values. We are proud of the strides we have made in enhancing our curriculum, providing professional development for our educators, and creating spaces for families and children to grow together.

This year, we also expanded our Board of Directors through an intentional Designate recruitment process. Our Board Members and Designates are passionate individuals eager to learn from Board Alumni and contribute to the future of JCYS. Their energy and talent are essential as we strive to prepare them for a lifetime of leadership, service, and philanthropy.

Samantha Jakubowski joined our team as new CEO in November 2023. Like the children and leaders we serve, she spent much of her time this year learning—about our programs and services, our 117-year history, our deep communal bonds. As we look to the future together, we are exploring innovative approaches to education and recreation, and expanding our outreach to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our community.

To all of you who have been part of this incredible journey—whether as donors, parents, Board Members, Board Alumni, or staff—your support has been the cornerstone of our success. Your belief in our mission empowered us and helped make a significant difference in the lives of our littlest learners. We hope you will join us as we continue to grow in our 118th year.

With gratitude and excitement,

Samantha Jakubowski
Chief Executive Officer

Carly Newman
Board President

JCYS History

JCYS has responded to the varying needs and shifting demographics in the Chicagoland area throughout its long history. Though our programs continue to change and evolve to meet the demands of the community, our commitment and dedication to service—and to those we serve—remains constant and is what has sustained this agency for more than a century.

1907

JCYS—first known as "Young Men's Associated Jewish Charities" and later as "Young Men's Jewish Council"—was founded. The agency's initial purpose was to engage a group of young male leaders in securing financial support for various Jewish charities and philanthropies in Chicago.

1910s

While the leadership experience continued to be a key part of the agency's mission, JCYS sought a new direction—to directly serve the youth of Jewish immigrants who desperately needed social and recreational services. The organization chose to pursue this goal through outdoor recreation and camping, establishing Camp Wilson near Long Lake, IL on land owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway.

1920s

After purchasing 40 acres of land on Wooster Lake so that the summer camp could thrive in a home of its own, the agency recognized the growing need for city programs during the school year. Activities included championship teams in baseball, wrestling, track, ping-pong, and debate.

1940s

Upon the passing of Illinois Governor Henry Horner, who was Young Men's Jewish Council president in 1915 and integral to the summer camp's beginnings, JCYS's summer camp on Wooster Lake was renamed "Camp Henry Horner" in his honor.

1970s

Women started to play a larger role in the workforce and JCYS responded by adding preschool programs and parent-child activities. The agency experienced significant growth with the addition of the George W. Lutz Family Center in Highland Park and the Michael R. Lutz Family Center in Lakeview.

1989

The agency changed its name from "Young Men's Jewish Council" to "Jewish Council for Youth Services" to honor the growing role of women in the organization and to better reflect the age group most served through its programs.

1990s

The agency acquired the former Elms Swim & Tennis Club in Highland Park, renovated it, and renamed it the Lillian L. Lutz Recreation Center.

2000s

Extending the reach of agency services, Northwest Family Center in Buffalo Grove opened as an early childhood education center, offering infant care for the first time in JCYS history.

2016

The new Michael R. Lutz Family Center opened in Chicago's growing Wicker Park neighborhood, becoming the only Jewish institution in the area to provide early childhood services.

2018

Strengthening its tradition of volunteer service and leadership development, the agency launched the JCYS Leadership Circle, a formal leadership development program for the Board of Directors.

2019

The JCYS Board of Directors approved the sale of Camp Henry Horner to Camp Nageela, a Jewish camping organization. This sale included both the camp site and the Camp Red Leaf program, marking a significant transition in the agency's history.

The Iris & Steven Podolsky Family Center was built and opened in the heart of Chicago's Lincoln Square and Ravenswood neighborhoods, hosting the beloved staff and programming from the former Michael R. Lutz Family Center in Lakeview.

2022

JCYS successfully returned to pre-pandemic operation levels across all family centers. With the Board of Directors' approval, the agency conveyed its interest in the Lillian L. Lutz Recreation Center to Agudath Israel of Illinois, strengthening a partnership with Chicagoland's greater Jewish community.

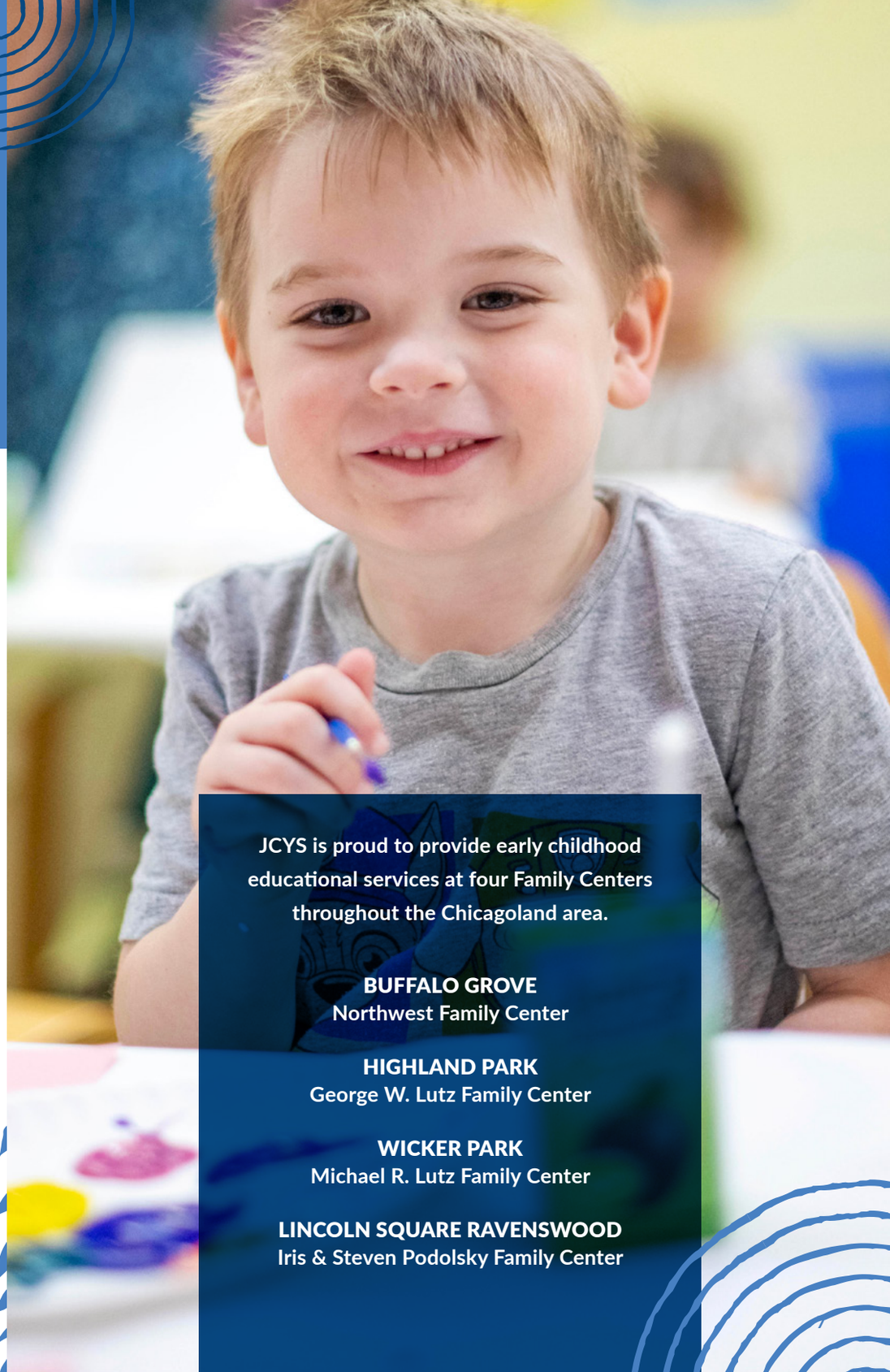
Early Childhood Education

JCYS Family Centers provide a nurturing educational environment for children and a supportive community for families to learn and grow together. We are proud to provide infant care (6 weeks – 14 months), toddler care (15 – 23 months), and preschool (2 – 5 years) programming to families in Buffalo Grove, Highland Park, Lincoln Square Ravenswood, and Wicker Park.

Our early childhood education programs are grounded in play-based and Reggio curriculums, designed to nurture each child's spirit, imagination, and confidence. Essential to our curriculum are the Jewish values of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Tzedakah (social justice and charity), and Chesed (acts of loving kindness). These values are incorporated into daily activities and interactions.

This integrated approach supports the development of:

- Social and emotional intelligence
- Behavioral and problem-solving skills
- Physical health
- Academic readiness and cognitive development



JCYS is proud to provide early childhood educational services at four Family Centers throughout the Chicagoland area.

BUFFALO GROVE
Northwest Family Center

HIGHLAND PARK
George W. Lutz Family Center

WICKER PARK
Michael R. Lutz Family Center

LINCOLN SQUARE RAVENSWOOD
Iris & Steven Podolsky Family Center

Summer Camps

For over a century, JCYS has known that fun, independence, and friendship make for a memorable summer camp experience. That rich tradition and expertise in camping inspire our current programs and activities.

From classic outdoor camp experiences to refreshing swims and urban exploration, JCYS offers a diverse range of innovative summer programs across the Chicagoland area.

BUFFALO GROVE

Sunflower Camp
(6 weeks – 3 years)

Lil' North
(Rising PreK – Rising Kindergarteners)

North Suburban Day Camp
(1st – 8th graders)

HIGHLAND PARK

Sunflower Camp
(6 weeks – 5 years)

WICKER PARK

Sunflower Camp
(6 weeks – 5 years)

LINCOLN SQUARE RAVENSWOOD

Sunflower Camp
(6 weeks – 4 years)

Big City Day Camp Kindergarten Camp
(Rising Kindergarteners)

Big City Day Camp
(1st – 5th graders)

Community Events

116TH ANNUAL MEETING | AUGUST 29, 2023

Board Members, Board Alumni, and staff gathered for an evening of review and celebration at the 116th Annual Meeting. The event featured the installation of the 2023-2024 Board of Directors, heartfelt speeches from outgoing Board President, Irine Sorser Turin, and incoming Board President, Carly Newman, recognition of staff milestone anniversaries, and a reflection from retiring CEO Barbara Haworth.

CEO MEET AND GREET | MARCH 7, 2024

Past Presidents, Directors for Life, Board Alumni, and Board Members were invited to network with one another and chat with JCYS's new CEO, Samantha Jakubowski. This event, co-chaired by Ben Altshul and Robert Friend, provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from Samantha, who reflected on her first 90 days with the agency and expressed her enthusiasm for guiding JCYS toward a bright future.

SPRING EVENT: SAMBA WITH THE STARS | APRIL 4, 2024

This year's spring event, Samba with the Stars, was held at Carnivale and co-chaired by Zack Karmin and Ian Shaffer. More than 200 guests mingled during the cocktail hour, enjoyed inspiring speeches, and were captivated by Samba1's performance and dance lesson. Thanks to JCYS's supporters, the event was a huge success and raised over $200,000 for early childhood education and leadership development programs.

Board of Directors

JCYS owes much of its success to the vision and dedication of its Board of Directors, both past and present. As part of our mission, we are committed to developing young Jewish professionals for a lifetime of community service and philanthropy.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Carly Newman.....President
Josh Beren.....President-Elect
Irine Sorser Turin.....Immediate Past President
Max Fargotstein.....Vice President of Development
Suzanne Hershman Secler.....Vice President of Leadership Development
Rachel Seserman Patzik.....Vice President of Strategy and Innovation
James Arogeti.....Treasurer
Noah Jaffe.....Assistant Treasurer
Leah Knobel.....Secretary
Sarah Gryll.....At Large

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(Executive Director Emeritus)

Dr. Edward A. Newman*
(Medical Director for Life)

**indicates deceased*

Leadership Circle

The JCYS Leadership Circle, the agency's ongoing leadership development program, provides Board Members and Designates to the Board with comprehensive leadership education throughout the year, including customized trainings, discussions, and hands-on experience as fiduciaries.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 – BOARD BASICS

Suzanne Hershman Secler, Vice President of Leadership Development, reviewed responsibilities as detailed in the Board Covenant; discussed the importance of conflict-of-interest policies; and encouraged current Board Members and Designates to grow relationships with alumni, ask difficult questions as fiduciaries, and seek chairperson roles.

OCTOBER 25, 2023 – LEADERSHIP SOCIETY LUNCHEON, SPONSORED IN LOVING MEMORY OF DAVID SCHULMAN BY HIS FAMILY

David Schulman, of blessed memory, dedicated fifty years to JCYS. He had a passion for leadership development, served as a role model and mentor, and instilled in others the importance of not just leading, but teaching others to become leaders themselves. The agency is profoundly grateful that his family chose to sponsor this luncheon as a lasting tribute to David's commitment in nurturing future Jewish communal leaders. This year, Past Presidents and Directors for Life came together to hear a holistic report on the agency by senior leadership and honor David's legacy at JCYS.

OCTOBER 26, 2023 – ONBOARDING A NEW CEO

Ezra Jaffe, Past President, discussed best practices and the board's role in a CEO transition, drawing on his past board experience both at JCYS and other nonprofit organizations. He emphasized the importance of a collaborative Board-CEO partnership through frequent and transparent communication, creating connections with local leadership, and providing opportunities for stakeholders to interact with the new CEO to understand their vision and background.

JANUARY 25, 2024 - COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Board profiled their working styles through the DiSC assessment (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness). They discussed the best methods of working together and communicating with one another based on their styles and preferences.

FEBRUARY 8, 2024 – JCYS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT BOOT CAMP

Board Members and Designates participated in the fourth annual JCYS Leadership Development Boot Camp, a full day of customized, interactive learning created in partnership with Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Nonprofit Management.

This day of learning and enrichment included lunch with Board Alumni and sessions geared towards experienced board members: Principles of High Performing Boards; The Board's Role in Strategic Planning; Board Evaluation; and Identifying Nonprofit Risk, a fan favorite on the importance of fiduciary oversight.

MARCH 20, 2024 – JCYS FINANCE OVERVIEW

James Arogeti, Treasurer, and Sonya Solomon Piell, CFO, reviewed the fundamentals of nonprofit budgets and audits, focusing on the key differences between nonprofit and for-profit organizations and how to ask relevant questions to further understand financial statements. James also reviewed the risk assessment completed by the finance committee and catalyzed by Boot Camp learnings.

Program & Financial Data

June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024

JCYS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

School Year Programming	546
Summer Camp Programming	683
Special Events	255
TOTAL	1,484

SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUE*

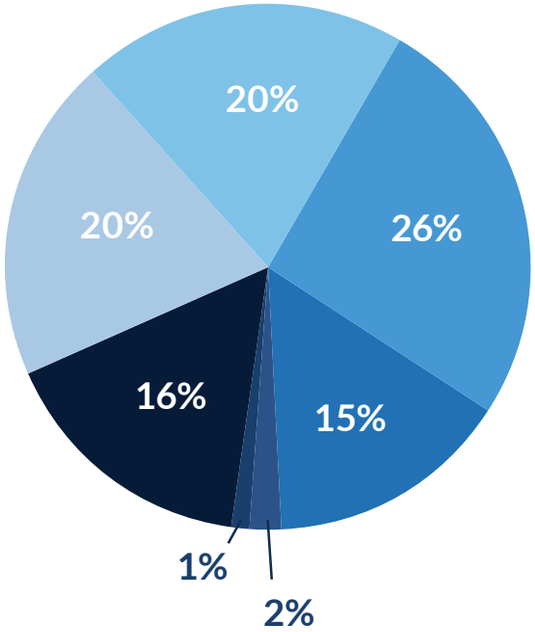
- PROGRAMMING FEES & OTHER 94%
- FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS 2%
- SPECIAL EVENTS 2%
- INDIVIDUALS INCLUDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1%
- GOVERNMENT 1%

*Based on unaudited figures

DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENSES*

DIRECT PROGRAM EXPENSES - 84%

- NORTHWEST FAMILY CENTER 20%
- MICHAEL R. LUTZ FAMILY CENTER 20%
- GEORGE W. LUTZ FAMILY CENTER 26%
- IRIS & STEVEN PODOLSKY FAMILY CENTER 15%
- NORTH SUBURBAN DAY CAMP 2%
- BIG CITY DAY CAMP 1%
- NON-PROGRAMMING & GENERAL EXPENSES 16%



*Based on unaudited figures

Donors

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Thank you to the donors who are part of JCYS's planned giving program.

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Lisa Jericho
Alyssa and Jeremy Knobel
Iris and Steven Podolsky
Dan and Nancy Pollack
David* and Carol Schulman

**indicates deceased*

CORPORATE AND MATCHING GIFTS

Gifts made from June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024

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ANNUAL EVENT SPONSORS

Annual Sponsorships made from June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024

Samba - $30,000

Wintrust Financial Corporation

Forró – $18,000

Setna iO

Cha-Cha-Cha! – $10,000

Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC
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Mamba – $7,500

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Carimbó – $5,000

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$10,000 - $49,999

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David Chaimovitz and Rachel Klein
Ronald H. Ringer Foundation
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The Family of David Schulman
Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation, Inc.

$5,000 - $9,999

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Carrie and Daniel Goodman and The Crown Family
Highland Park Community Foundation
The Jewish United Fund
Lederhausen Foundation

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