



20 ANNUAL 26 REPORT



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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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

For nearly 120 years, JCYS has been helping children, families, and emerging leaders build lives rooted in purpose and community.

Every day, families entrust us with what matters most—their children. They come to JCYS for exceptional early childhood education, enriching summer experiences, and a caring community where children are known, nurtured, and celebrated. For many, JCYS also becomes an entry point into Jewish life, where lifelong friendships are formed and values like *chesed* (loving kindness), *tzedakah* (justice and giving), and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) are woven into everyday experiences. We are proud to welcome families of all faiths and backgrounds into a community where these values are lived and shared.

As Jewish communities navigate growing challenges, we remain committed to strengthening Jewish life by creating places where children can grow, families can belong, and community can flourish.

The needs of families continue to evolve. Parents need greater support, children benefit from expanded social-emotional resources, and the cost of providing safe, high-quality care continues to rise. Yet our commitment remains unchanged: ensuring that every family who seeks a JCYS experience has the opportunity to access one.

Our mission also extends beyond serving children. Through service on the JCYS Board of Directors, we continue to develop the next generation of Jewish civic leaders whose vision and stewardship will strengthen our community for years to come.

As you read this report, we hope you see more than numbers and milestones. We hope you see children discovering confidence, families finding belonging, leaders stepping forward to serve, and the remarkable impact that is possible when a community chooses to show up for one another.

Thank you for believing in JCYS and helping our mission thrive for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Samantha Jakubowski
Chief Executive Officer

Max Fargotstein
Board President



A SCHOOL YEAR OF MEMORABLE MOMENTS

195

DAYS



of school filled with learning,
playing, and growing together

1,932

HOURS



of meaningful moments
and new discoveries

39

SHABBATS



filled with traditions,
connection, and challah

480

STUDENTS



bringing wonder, joy, and
curiosity to our classrooms

COUNTLESS FRIENDSHIPS FORMED

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

At JCYS, children explore, create, and learn through a play-based, Reggio-inspired approach that builds on their interests and encourages curiosity and discovery. Along the way, they build confidence, form friendships, and begin to understand the world around them. Through kindness, sharing, and caring for others, Jewish values are woven into everyday moments in ways that are joyful and just right for their age.

Children are seen, heard, and celebrated for who they are, supported by educators who nurture their growth. Over time, relationships deepen, and a strong sense of community takes shape.





SUMMER CAMPS

Summer at JCYS is a chance for kids to play hard, explore freely, and share unforgettable moments with friends. From swimming and outdoor play to city adventures and creative projects, our camps give children ages 6 weeks to 13 years the space to grow, connect, and discover new interests, all while staying grounded in the same values that guide our school-year programs.

2025 SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

660

INFANT - 8TH GRADE **CAMPERS**



4

CAMP PROGRAMS:
SUNFLOWER CAMP
LIL' NORTH
BIG CITY DAY CAMP
NORTH SUBURBAN DAY CAMP

1

UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER
MAKING MEMORIES, BUILDING
FRIENDSHIPS, AND ENJOYING
THE SUNSHINE



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Our Child & Family Development Specialists partner with families and educators to support each child's growth and help families navigate school, home, and changing needs over time. They strengthen every classroom, while also helping children with additional needs access specialized services

Summer 2025 & School Year 2025-2026

40% of all children at JCYS were supported directly by our Child & Family Development Specialists

136

**CHILDREN
CONNECTED**



to outside therapeutic
supports

20

**CHILDREN
REFERRED**



to early intervention
services

34

**CLASSROOMS
SUPPORTED**



across four
centers

*"Support at the right time
can change a child's trajectory."*

- JCYS Staff Member



SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT

JCYS is strongest when our community reflects the families we serve.

Scholarships open the door for more children to take part in daily classroom moments and the relationships that grow over time. For many families, this support makes it possible to access care when they need it most. It provides consistency and stability for children during times of change or challenge, supporting their continued growth and wellbeing.

The result is a community where children and families feel welcomed, connected, and supported.

Summer 2025 & School Year 2025-2026



\$128,430

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AWARDED

\$2,676 AVERAGE FULL YEAR
AWARD PER CHILD **\$3,132** AVERAGE FULL YEAR
AWARD PER FAMILY

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO

48 CHILDREN 41 FAMILIES

IRIS & STEVEN PODOLSKY FAMILY CENTER EXPANSION

Every great journey begins with a first step—or, in our case, a first classroom.

This year, JCYS began an exciting expansion of our Iris & Steven Podolsky Family Center in Lincoln Square Ravenswood, adding a new infant classroom that will welcome eight more babies and their families into our community. As the only Jewish organization in Chicago offering licensed infant care, this project responds to a growing community need while creating more opportunities for families to begin their JCYS journey from the very start.

For many, that first classroom becomes the beginning of something much bigger: years of learning, lifelong friendships, meaningful Jewish experiences, and a community that grows alongside their family.

We are deeply grateful to Iris & Steven Podolsky, Jewish United Fund, the MUMU Fund, and our other generous donors whose investment is making this vision a reality. Together, we are expanding access, strengthening our community, and ensuring that even more children and families can thrive at JCYS for generations to come.



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Throughout the year, JCYS hosts events that do more than raise critical funds—they strengthen the relationships that are at the heart of our mission. From bringing together Board Members, alumni, donors, educators, and community partners to creating joyful experiences for the families we serve, these gatherings foster connection, celebrate Jewish community, and ensure that every member of the JCYS community feels they belong.

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Leadership development extends well beyond the Board room. This year, JCYS continued to strengthen connections across generations of leaders through meaningful opportunities for learning, mentorship, and collaboration.

In March, our Board Boot Camp featured a distinguished panel of Board Alumni—Lisa Jericho, Alan Solow, and Eric Birkenstein—who shared lessons from their own leadership journeys while offering thoughtful guidance on current Board opportunities and challenges. Last June, our annual Leadership Luncheon, sponsored by the Schulman Family in memory of David Schulman, brought together JCYS Past Presidents, Directors for Life, current Board Members, and senior staff for a meaningful conversation about the state of the agency, ensuring that the wisdom of our past continues to inform and inspire the future.



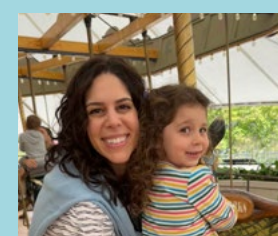
TASTE OF JCYS

This spring, supporters gathered at The Dalcy for Taste of JCYS, an inspiring evening celebrating our mission and investing in our future. Guests enjoyed exceptional food, meaningful storytelling, and an exciting live auction, helping the event raise record-breaking funds in support of scholarships, exceptional educational programming, leadership development, and the growing needs of children and families across our community.

WILD FOR JCYS FAMILY DAY

Last fall, more than 450 children, parents, staff, Board Members, alumni, and sponsors gathered at the Lincoln Park Zoo for our inaugural JCYS Family Day. Designed as a community-building celebration, the event brought together families from all four JCYS Family Centers for a day of fun, friendship, and connection beyond the classroom.

While Family Day included sponsorship support, its greatest success was measured in something less tangible: relationships. By creating opportunities for families, educators, alumni, and supporters to gather, celebrate, and build community together, Family Day reinforced what makes JCYS special—a place where children grow, families belong, and lifelong connections begin.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For more than a century, JCYS has served as a launchpad for Jewish civic leadership. Our Board of Directors brings together passionate professionals committed to strengthening our agency while developing the skills, relationships, and values that inspire a lifetime of service. We are proud to recognize the remarkable leaders whose dedication continues to shape the future of JCYS and our community.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Max Fargotstein – President
 Benjamin Altshul – President-Elect
 Josh Beren – Immediate Past President
 Zack Karmin – Vice President of Development
 Jason Zenner – Vice President of Leadership Development
 Leah Knobel – Asst. Vice President of Leadership Development
 Ian Shaffer – Vice President of Strategy and Innovation
 Dan Thalheimer – Treasurer
 Morgan Marcus – Secretary
 James Arogeti – At Large
 Katie Nowicki – At Large

BOARD MEMBERS

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 Roni Cohen
 Allie Dresner
 Robert Friend
 Hilary Galant
 Ryan Hess
 Lianne Epstein Jacobs
 Noah Jaffe
 Courtney Rosenfield Kalter
 Ellie Kirshenbaum
 Bradley Levin
 Jordan Multack
 Michael Neff
 Josh Olian
 Adam Vishny

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 Jordon Cooper
 Ariana Katz
 Jacob Kupferman
 Hazel Levine
 Michael Zilber

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	Howard M. Landau*	Philip P. Sachs*	
		Monte H. Sadler*	

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Herbert J. Friedman*	Susan Rochlis*	
Howard Friend	James L. Rolfe	
Mark L. Goldberg*	Robert Rosenbacher	
Mark Goodman	Sidney Rosset*	

*indicates deceased

FINANCIAL DATA

June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES

\$13,793,332*

DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING EXPENSES

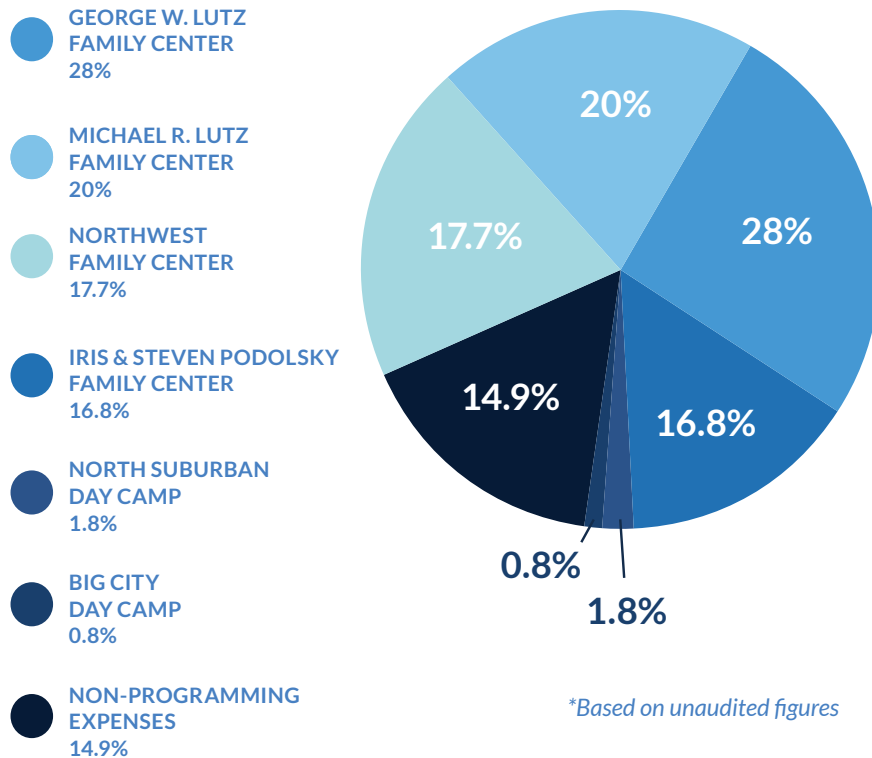
85.1%

Direct Program Expenses

14.9%

Non-Program Expenses

OPERATING EXPENSES DETAILS



TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE

\$13,477,706*

SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUE

Programming fees & other	90.5%
Public Support	9.5%

PUBLIC SUPPORT DETAILS

INDIVIDUALS INCLUDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS
4%

SPECIAL EVENTS
2.9%

FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS
1%

GOVERNMENT
1.6%

LEGACY & LEADERSHIP GIVING

VISIONARY CIRCLE

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

Dr. Howard N. Allen	Iris and Steven Podolsky
Maurice Fantus*	Dan and Nancy Pollack
Millard J. Grauer*	Susan Rochlis*
Lisa Jericho	David* and Carol Schulman
Alyssa and Jeremy Knobel	

*indicates deceased

DESSER ALUMNI CAMPAIGN DONORS

Gifts made from June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026

\$5,000 +

Lesley and Jim* Anixter
Janet and Steven Anixter

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Rand and Rhonda Diamond
Dana and Lee Gordon
Podolsky Family Foundation

\$1,000 - \$2,499

S. James Perlow
Allan and Lynne Reich
Alan P. and Andrea Solow
Kathy and Ron Sonenthal
Steven and Amy Topel

\$500 - \$999

Carolyn and Eric Birkenstein
Michael and Adriana Capone
Tom and Lara Field
Mark and Linda Goodman
Jon A. Levey
Betty and Thomas Philpsborn
Philanthropic Fund
Ron Rosenthal
Greg Stewart and Debby Hecht

\$250 - \$499

Melissa and Jeffrey I. Bleiweis
Brian and Jamie Fields
Minnie and Ronald Goldsmith
Amy and Daniel A. Kaufman
David and Erin Kohn
Gary I. and Emily Levenstein
Alyne and Jim Rolfe
Lauren and Gary Wool

\$249 and below

Ron Field
Arnold Gorchow, DDS
Alyssa and Jeremy Knobel
Nancy and Rick Kreiter
Wendy and Ben Roth
Marianne and Stuart Taussig
Gregg F. and Bruni Witt
Lois Zisook

*Indicates deceased

Photography for this year's
Annual Report provided by:

Kathryn Centorcelli
Jeremy Lawson Photography
Alina Piagentini
Sanz Photos

TASTE OF JCYS SPONSORS

Taste of JCYS sponsorships made from June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2026

Chef's Table - \$25,000

Setna iO
Wintrust Financial Corporation

The Signature Dish - \$15,000

Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Tasting Menu - \$7,500+

Associated: Insurance and
Risk Management Advisors
Bulldog Security
Duane Morris, LLP
Levenfeld Pearlstein LLC
The Lewis Greenwood
Foundation
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP
Bob and Lynne Wolfberg

Main Course - \$5,000

adNet Technology
Management
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Corporate Valuation Services
Gilbert and Jacqueline Fern
Foundation

Lianne and Daniel Jacobs
JMB Insurance
Karmin Family Foundation
Polk Bros. Foundation
RSM
David and Tanya Solomon
Stankowicz Family
Phyllis Tabachnick
Vedder
Janet Winter

Small Plate - \$3,600

Josh and Samantha Beren
The Edgewater Funds
FGMK, LLC
Samantha and Alex Jakubowski
Merel Family Law
Neal and Laurie Price
Stewart-Miller, Inc.

Side Dish - \$2,500

Beermann LLP
BMO
Cresa Chicago
Friedman Family
Hilary and Zachary Galant

Maria Garvy
Hall Estill
Ezra and Marla Jaffe
Marcy and Randy Kahan
Adam and Jen Levine
Much Shelist P.C.
Old Republic National Title
Insurance Company
Thalheimer Family

Take-Home Treat - \$1,250

Baird Foundation
Jon and Sarah Karelitz
Alyssa and Jeremy Knobel
and Family
Lockton Companies
Dan and Nancy Pollack
David Rice
Rosenfield Family Foundation
Kathy and Ron Sonenthal
Warady & Davis LLP
Gary and Lauren Wool
Franny and Mike Zucker

DONOR HONOR ROLL

To everyone who gave between June 1, 2025 and May 31, 2026—thank you.

Your generosity powers every program, scholarship, and moment of connection at JCYS.



View the full list of 2025-2026 donors
by scanning the QR code



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