



# Promoting Lifelong Jewish Learning

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS





## From Our CEO

Last summer, I had the privilege of assuming the CEO position at Jewish LearningWorks. Since then, I have been asked many times what it's like to be a CEO during a pandemic. I always respond that for better or worse, I don't know any other way. What I do know is that I am extremely proud of our work this year, and deeply grateful to those donors who have sustained us, many of you for decades.

Amidst the swirl of societal change surrounding us, our commitment to Jewish learning that enriches lives remains unchanged. We've encouraged teachers and senior educators to expand their knowledge of social emotional spiritual learning (SESL), blended or online teaching, adolescent mental health, and adaptive leadership. And as sponsors of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Library, the only full service Jewish library on the West Coast, we continue to provide public programs, eBooks, book club services, and in-person circulation and reference services to thousands. Together, our goal is to offer meaningful and relevant ways for children and adults to connect to Jewish ideas, and grow as learners and community members!

I hope you'll take a few minutes to explore our shared accomplishments over the past year, and get a glimpse at just how beautifully Jewish Learning - Works!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Sheanin".

**Dana Sheanin**

Chief Executive Officer



# From Our Board President

Growing up in a strong Jewish family and community I learned the joy of being a Jewish educator from a young age. I started as a Torah Tots teacher at my synagogue as a youth leader, and watched how my time with young children on Shabbat filled me with energy to get through the stress-filled weeks of being a teenager.

I was reminded of this years later when I volunteered to launch PJ Library in the Bay Area, and saw again how important Jewish education is to inspire and strengthen our community.

Today Jewish education is far more diverse than when I was a child, but just as important. And Jewish LearningWorks plays an important role in training the educators that do this work, while providing them with the community they need to thrive, particularly during the pandemic as they are called to learn and teach in an entirely new way. I'm proud of our commitment to professional learning that goes beyond what would have once been considered outside of 'Jewish education', such as our work in Youth Mental Health First Aid. I'm also proud at how quickly we are able to develop programming to meet new interests or needs, both for professionals and at the Library.

This year especially, your support helped us sustain educators and socially distanced adult learners in an extraordinary way. Our Board joins me in expressing our gratitude for your partnership.

B'Shalom,



**Sharon Weinberg**

Board President



# Our Mission

Jewish LearningWorks elevates the field of Jewish education by nurturing educators, inspiring innovation, and promoting Jewish literacy.

Our approach to educational excellence focuses on professional learning for Jewish professionals, and the Jewish Community Library.

# Our Values

Our relationships in the community and with each other are guided by our core values:

*Manhigut* - Leadership

*Sakranut* - Curiosity

*Kesher* - Connectedness

*Achrayut* - Mutual Responsibility

*Hagshama Atzmit* - Self Actualization





# Knowledge, Skills and Tools to Succeed

*“I believe Jewish LearningWorks’ role in the community is to ensure our Jewish educators are equipped to effectively serve their students. Not only because of the high value Judaism places on education, but because without quality Jewish educators, the entire community is in jeopardy.”*

- Rachel Halevi, Program Manager, Jewish Teen Foundation at the JCF



*“I know when I come to a Jewish LearningWorks event I won’t be let down. I am a better educator, parent, community member, and human because of the offerings that I’ve taken advantage of.”*

- Tori Starks, Teen Program Manager, Congregation Emanuel

*“Jewish LearningWorks is a community treasure as it is really the only organization in the Bay Area community that focuses intently on lifting up Jewish communal professionals. This kind of support for the field cannot be overstated.”*

- Aliza Cramer Elias, Director of the Institute for Curriculum Services



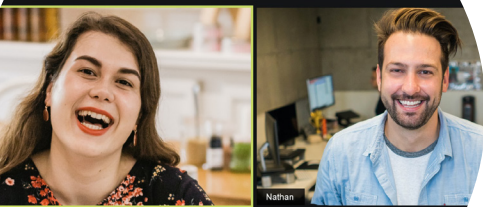
*“Thank you endlessly for the nearly two decades of support you all have generously offered me. I was fresh out of college when I started working for BBYO, it’s hard to believe how long ago it was and how far we’ve all come.”*

- Erica Aren, Senior Administrator, Golden Bridges

# Transforming Jewish Education to Meet the Moment

48

programs



100%  
online

Like the rest of the world, the Professional Learning team at Jewish LearningWorks learned a whole new way to practice its craft in the first six months of the pandemic. While building off a small existing distance learning program, **we were challenged to create an expansive set of virtual learning opportunities** for educators that would hold onto the human-centered approach to education that we highly value.

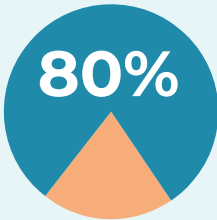
In a typical year, our event calendar is quiet for eight weeks. However, **in the summer of 2020, we offered weekly sessions to 252 educators** which included “A Relational Approach to Distance Learning,” “Distance Learning for Emergent Readers,” a community of practice for congregational education directors, and two different weekly drop-in series.

As we moved into the school year we became more confident and comfortable with our skills as facilitators in digital spaces. **Our methods may have changed, but the core of our work was strengthened.** We helped educators find their own growth edge and explore the context of Jewish values within a framework of a pandemic and social and political upheaval. Above all, we created spaces for people to ask questions and seek answers together with their colleagues.



# Training and Supporting Diverse Educator Networks

## A YEAR IN REVIEW



said they  
would apply  
new ideas  
and skills to  
their work



of Bay Area Jewish  
organizations sent  
participants to our  
programs last year

**69** educators trained on how to pivot to virtual classrooms in the Spring of 2020

**48** coaching and customized training sessions

**50** parents and teachers participated in a series on supporting teens through the pandemic

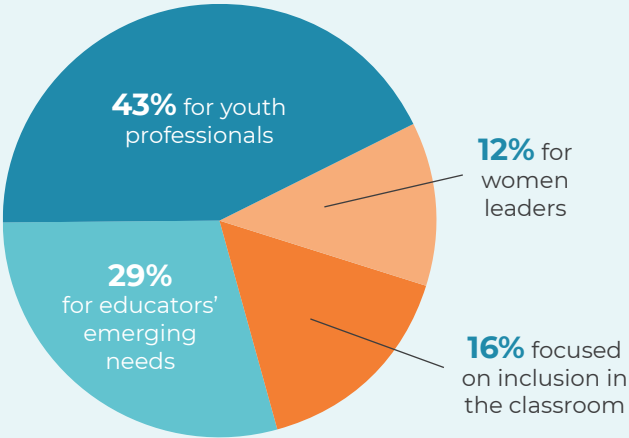
**30** organizations received training, consultation or support for children with special needs

**51** professionals trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid

**30** educators trained in racial literacy

**150** hours of subsidized coaching for women leaders

### Professional Learning Programs



# The Jewish Community Library

The Jewish Community Library, a program of Jewish LearningWorks, serves as **a unique ground for discovery, where both Jews and non-Jews can explore the Jewish tradition, history, and culture** from many angles.

The Library offers a physical collection of nearly 40,000 items, as well as a robust eBook collection, book group support, and more than 60 virtual public programs annually.

Over the course of the pandemic, our eBook circulation grew exponentially.

As our book talks and other public programs moved online, we expanded our reach, drawing growing numbers of participants from the Bay Area and beyond.

These programs have been **particularly important to seniors, reducing their isolation during their many months of sheltering at home.**





# Connecting the Community to Jewish Life

**66**

virtual  
events

**4,430**

attendees

more than

**900**

eBooks for  
adults and  
children, free  
to Bay Area  
residents

More than **39,000** books, DVDs, CDs,  
and periodicals in our collection.

**2,140** eBooks and **315** audiobooks circulated  
to **397** unique users.

More than **100** sets of books went to **38** book groups  
in nine Bay Area counties.

*“The library’s wide resources and space provide not only a place to research and expand your knowledge through literature and video resources, but also a comforting, almost meditative space.”*

- Ron Lezell

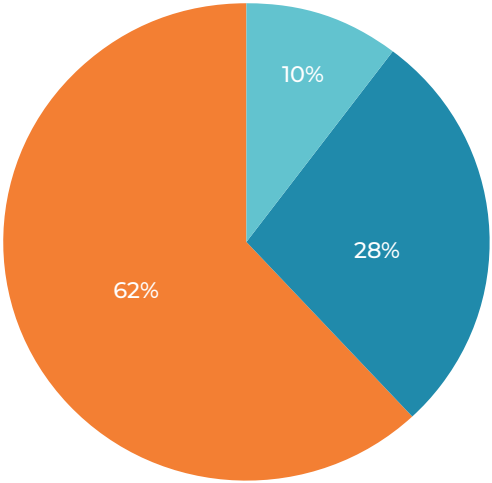
*“During the pandemic, the opportunity to have books packaged and prepared for pickup has been tremendous to keep seniors engaged, with their culture, when there was nothing else available.”*

- Sam Mehr

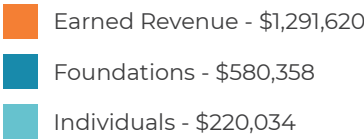


# 2020–2021 Financials

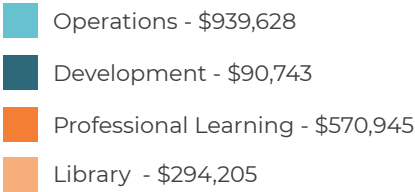
## REVENUE



A critical piece of Jewish LearningWorks’ financial health relies on your generosity. Thank you for making so much important work possible last year.



## EXPENSES



Our direct expenses were reduced in 2020–2021 due to the shift to all virtual programming during the pandemic.



A photograph of two individuals, likely educators, in a professional setting. The person in the foreground is a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white face mask, glasses, and a white long-sleeved shirt with a dark tie. She is looking down at a surface. The person in the background is a man wearing a dark cap, glasses, a dark face mask, and a dark t-shirt. He is leaning over the woman and pointing his right index finger towards the same surface. The entire image has a dark teal overlay. The text is positioned on the right side of the image.

*We are honored to  
have spent the past  
year **holding the  
hearts, minds and  
hands of educators**  
and community  
members **harnessing  
the power of digital  
learning** through  
our collective  
experience of  
Covid-19.*

# Living our Values

## STAFF PERSPECTIVE

It's a great privilege to work alongside my colleagues at Jewish LearningWorks. They are not only my co-workers, but my teachers. I came to treasure this all the more during this strange time we're living through.

**For more than a year during the pandemic, our entire staff met for a half hour every Tuesday morning via Zoom. Half of the time was devoted to work, with the other half allotted to a rotation of team members sharing a *kavanah* or teaching.**

The work portions of our meetings were enormously valuable, particularly given our need to think creatively in response to the pandemic. But what I valued most were the teachings, which ranged from songs to reflections on personal heirlooms to examinations of biblical portrayals in art. It was a reminder that wisdom can be shared in many ways and even in a 15-minute time slot. **Jewish learning has always been about both learning from text and learning from people, and I'm grateful that my job has regularly afforded me the opportunity to do both.**

**Howard Freedman**

Jewish Community Library Director





# Welcoming Liora Brosbe

The Jewish LearningWorks team was delighted to welcome our newest Senior Educator, Liora Brosbe, last summer. Liora's portfolio includes family engagement, special needs inclusion, and social, emotional, and spiritual learning (SESL.) JLW's commitment to special needs inclusion stretches back decades. Our belief that every child should be enthusiastically welcomed in any Jewish educational setting underpins Liora's work. **Her role is focused on providing sensory toolkits, creating training on best practices to respond to learning challenges, and offering customized observations and consultations.** Last year she also expanded our SESL work — introducing the educator community to the principles of trauma informed teaching, and identifying the importance of creating truly equitable learning environments.

Liora brings a rich background as a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and Registered Drama Therapist, a storyteller, and as the East Bay's PJ Library liaison and family engagement concierge. Liora is not the first Brosbe to work at Jewish LearningWorks. Her mother, Ellen Brosbe retired in 2015 after nearly 20 years working with the organization, serving the community as a dedicated force in nurturing and supporting Jewish educators. L'dor v'dor from Ellen to Liora and welcome!



# Following My Jewish Curiosity



Reading has always helped me to understand and refine my sense of myself as a Jew, and it continues to do so. But not until I found the Jewish Community Library did I have a place I could count on to have the Jewish books I want and need. Over the years, I've found that Library staff and programs have regularly provided me insights and ideas about the books they offer, encouraging me to follow my Jewish curiosity wherever it may lead me.

A few years after I found the Library, I asked if I could help as a volunteer, and next March will mark 30 years that I've volunteered at the Library. From my seat behind the circulation desk I've seen people who are touched by every aspect of our Library, including those served by our Book Club in a Box program, those who take out books about Jewish history, who read our selection of Jewish literature, or who borrow texts in and about Yiddish and Hebrew. They reflect the many ways that the Bay Area enables and encourages people to be Jewish, and I feel we help make Jewish ideas and heritage accessible to all of them.

During the pandemic, the Library has been able to provide exactly what people have needed while sheltering in place, and now beginning to venture out. **I invite you to come in person, explore the eBook collection or attend a virtual event at the Jewish Community Library. You will be drawn, just like me, to this preeminent cultural treasure in the Bay Area.**

**Judy Baston**

Friends of the Library Co-president and Library Volunteer

# Elevating Skills and Connections

Being a part of the Jewish LearningWorks' community has supported my growth as a professional in a variety of ways. Years ago, as a new youth professional, opportunities like the Tikea Fellowship increased my skills and knowledge, and put me in touch with a dozen other professionals from across the Bay Area, many of whom I'm still connected with.

As my professional focus changed from direct service to executive leadership, the value Jewish LearningWorks has brought to me extends well beyond me as a professional. Over the years, they have been a wonderful partner for me and the Peninsula JCC in providing high quality, innovative and practical training and learning opportunities.

One of the most valuable aspects of Jewish LearningWorks is its role as a convener in the community — a place that brings educators together from across the Jewish community — from day schools, synagogues, JCCs, independent organizations, and more. **I invite you to join their professional development programs for Jewish educators and leaders. You will learn from incredible educators, and connect with a community of like-minded professionals throughout our Bay Area Jewish Community.**

## Stephanie Levin

Professional Learning Participant & Chief Engagement and Innovation Officer at the Peninsula JCC





TODAH RABAH



JewishLearningWorks

jewishlearning.works  
info@jewishlearning.works