



# Fall 2025 Foundation Focus

News from the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City

# The Season for Smarter Giving

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In turbulent times, our community's strength shines through the generosity of those who give to the causes that matter most. Whether it's supporting vulnerable families, sustaining cherished institutions, or nurturing the next generation of Jewish life, every act of giving affirms our shared values of compassion and responsibility. When the world feels uncertain, philanthropy becomes an anchor, reminding us that we can shape a better future through kindness, foresight, and thoughtful charitable giving.

While we have just concluded the High Holidays, it means the secular year's end is rapidly approaching. Keep in mind that when you support your favorite causes before the last minute rush, it allows organizations to plan more effectively. It also allows them to deploy resources where they're needed most, and focus on securing additional gifts, including from new donors inspired by your generosity. Timely giving strengthens the entire nonprofit ecosystem and magnifies every dollar's impact. For that reason, we encourage all who plan to give to do so early. Take this time to replenish your Donor Advised Fund (or open a new fund), especially with the strong market conditions, and resolve to make your grants as timely as it is comfortable. Together, through thoughtful and proactive generosity, we can ensure that our community's light continues to shine brightly for generations to come.

With best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year,

Joshua Stein, President & CEO, and Joseph Hiersteiner, Board Chair



# Recent Highlights...



## The Inside Scoop

We invited our communal partners to join us for networking and ice cream.



## Connecting Our Giving Community

Lynn & Bill Intrater hosted an engaging conversation about "Creating a Fund with a Vision."



## J-LEAD Sasone Volunteer Event

J-LEAD families created sensory kits for the Jewish Federation's Sasone program.



## Roberta's Retirement

We celebrated the long-time service of Roberta Goller, JCF's grants manager.



## Wayside Waifs Site Visit

We toured their impressive facility and met many adorable dogs and cats.



## Building Blocks Conference

We hosted our communal partners for a day of planned giving education.



## Raising Charitable Children: A Morning of Inspiration and Practical Tools

On Sunday, September 14, the Jewish Community Foundation, in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City and Jewish Experiences, hosted Raising Charitable Children, a special event for parents and grandparents of children up to age 18. The session, which took place in the Social Hall of the Jewish Community Campus, included a Vaad-supervised brunch, presentation by family philanthropy expert MiaLisa Millares, and break-out groups where participants had the opportunity to connect and learn together.

Millares is the executive director of Doing Good Together, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering families to raise kind children who contribute to their communities. The presentation offered eight core strategies for embracing family giving practices, including creating a family mission statement, engaging in volunteer projects, and fostering meaningful conversations around kindness and giving. Millares also shared insights from research and real-life stories that highlighted the benefits of philanthropy for both families and communities.

Following the presentation, attendees broke into small group discussions based on the ages of their children or grandchildren. Guided by trained table hosts, these conversations allowed participants to share personal experiences, ask questions, and brainstorm ideas. Some of the key takeaways included:

- Many participants expressed a desire to focus their charitable giving on Jewish organizations, emphasizing the sentiment: “Who else will support them if not us?”

- Families were inspired by the idea of weaving conversations about giving into everyday life - especially around mealtimes - to normalize generosity and service.
- Several attendees discussed the value of volunteering alongside their children, seeing it as a powerful way to model compassion and community involvement.
- Ideas like establishing regular family meetings to talk about kindness and giving were well received, with some families planning to start this tradition immediately.
- One table suggested keeping a “kindness journal” to record acts of generosity and service, helping children reflect on their impact over time.
- Creating a family mission statement around values like giving, empathy, and justice was seen as a meaningful way to align family actions with shared beliefs.
- Parents and grandparents appreciated the reminder to intentionally talk with kids about moments of service, whether big or small, to reinforce the importance of caring for others.

One participant, Lindsey Lipsky, reflected, “I learned so much from this program—more than I expected. MiaLisa’s ideas were not only inspiring, but also incredibly practical. The breakout sessions were especially helpful. Talking with other parents who are raising kids the same ages as mine gave me new perspectives and ideas I hadn’t considered. I’m already thinking about how to implement some of these strategies with my own young children. It’s empowering to know that small, intentional actions can make a big impact.”

The event concluded with opportunities to explore local resources for youth philanthropy. Exhibits from communal organizations provided additional inspiration and information about ways families may get involved.

For more information about engaging your family in philanthropy, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at [sdicken@jcfkc.org](mailto:sdicken@jcfkc.org) or (913) 327-8286.



## Meet Our 2025-2026 B'nai Tzedek Youth Council

Our B'nai Tzedek Youth Council recently held its first meeting of the school year. The Youth Council is a leadership cohort within the B'nai Tzedek teen philanthropy program, which offers high school students hands-on experience in Jewish communal leadership and philanthropy. Youth Council members plan the annual B'nai Tzedek Shuk (philanthropy fair), recruit new B'nai Tzedek fundholders, and serve as ambassadors for Jewish giving.

Pictured: Drew Liss, Gabrielle Sosland, Jonah Stein, Leora Stein, Vivien Wishna, Norah Pabst, Garett Van Buskirk, Elia Ellis, Uriel Noorallah, and Jake Sosland. Not pictured: Ruby Sokol, Eric Fine, Mira Buchbinder, Logan McNay, and Shefer Rudnick.

# Fostering Philanthropic Traditions

Peggy and Zandy Davis have long been committed to giving back. As fundholders with the Jewish Community Foundation, their Donor Advised Fund (DAF) has been a meaningful vehicle for supporting causes close to their hearts. Recently, they made a thoughtful decision to restructure their fund into four separate DAFs - one for each of their adult children.

Now in a stage of life where they're utilizing the tax advantages of Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from their retirement accounts, Peggy and Zandy found themselves contributing directly to their favorite charities. While this shift made sense financially, it also meant they were using their DAF less frequently. Still, they didn't want to lose their relationship with JCF, which has been a trusted partner in their philanthropic journey.

"We were talking with the team at JCF about how we weren't using our Donor Advised Fund as much anymore, and they came up with this really creative idea," said Peggy. "Instead of letting it sit idle, we could split it into individual funds for each of our adult children. That way, they'd be connected to JCF's expertise and resources as they think about their own philanthropy."

By establishing these individual funds at JCF, Peggy and Zandy ensured that their children would have access to guidance, tools, and a community that could help them make thoughtful decisions about their giving, whether in Kansas City or in their own communities.

"Not all of our children live in Kansas City," Zandy noted, "but we hope this encourages them to use JCF as a resource when thinking about their own philanthropic values and needs in their own communities."

Their decision reflects a growing trend among JCF fundholders who see philanthropy as a way to foster meaningful connections and shared values across generations. For more information about Donor Advised Funds or engaging future generations in giving, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at [sdicken@jcfkc.org](mailto:sdicken@jcfkc.org) or (913) 327-8286.



# The Susan Fisher Fund: A Gift That Will Keep Giving

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The Jewish Community Foundation has recently had the privilege of working on a meaningful legacy gift from Susan Fisher that beautifully reflects her lifelong values and enduring connection to Kansas City.

Though Susan spent much of her adult life in England, she was born and raised in the Kansas City area and never lost her sense of belonging to the community that shaped her. Upon her passing in September 2023, Susan established a 10-year charitable lead annuity trust (CLAT), creating the Susan Fisher Fund at the Foundation. Her intention was clear: to give back to the community that supported her mother, Zelda Cohen, during her later years, especially the services that allowed Zelda to remain in her home independently.

A portion of the annual distribution is being granted to Jewish Family Services (JFS) to support two of its most impactful programs: Jet Express, a volunteer-based transportation service for older adults, and Help@Home, which provides in-home support to help seniors live safely and independently. These programs reflect Susan's gratitude for the help her mother received and her desire to uplift others in need of similar assistance.

"These generous gifts supporting Help@Home and JET Express allow JFS to provide high quality, dependable minor home repairs and access to services that help older adults maintain their independence in their own homes and provide safe, door-to-door transportation to older adults who are no longer able to drive," said Debbie Bass, JFS chief development officer.

The remainder of the fund will continue to be stewarded by JCF, in partnership with JFS and Susan's daughter, Michelle Sylvester. Together, we'll identify additional opportunities within JFS that align with Mrs. Fisher's charitable vision—ensuring that her legacy evolves thoughtfully and continues to meet the needs of the community.

"I'm looking forward to working with JCF to identify additional areas that will benefit vulnerable seniors in our community," said Michelle. "My grandmother, great aunt and uncle benefitted from the various outreach programs



*Zelda Cohen, Michelle Sylvester, and Susan Fisher*

offered and I'm excited to be able to give back on their behalf."

Mrs. Fisher worked with Donald Friend, her attorney, to create the CLAT. "One of my goals in working with Susan was to make sure her wishes were accomplished as she wanted and hopefully in a tax-efficient manner," said Donald. "I think the CLAT accomplished her goals."

This gift is a wonderful example of how JCF collaborates with individuals, their families, and their professional advisors to bring their philanthropic visions to life. Whether through legacy planning, Donor Advised Funds, or more complex giving vehicles like charitable lead annuity trusts, we help donors create personalized giving strategies that reflect their values and make a lasting impact. We are honored to help carry Susan Fisher's legacy forward.

For more information about achieving your unique charitable goals, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at [sdicken@jcfkc.org](mailto:sdicken@jcfkc.org) or (913) 327-8286.

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## Maximize Your Impact with the Fund Your Favorite Match

Open a new Donor Advised Fund and we'll match one charitable gift to your favorite nonprofit - up to \$1,000!

A Donor Advised Fund is a charitable giving account through which you can easily and efficiently support all of your favorite charities (Jewish AND secular). A fund offers significant tax and planning advantages, the ability to streamline your giving, and access to JCF's philanthropic expertise and exceptional personal service.

Contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at [sdicken@jcfkc.org](mailto:sdicken@jcfkc.org) or (913) 327-8286 for details.





## High Holiday Baskets

Thanks to generous underwriting by the David Cohn Family Foundation, in loving memory of David's parents Sanford and Barbara Cohn, Foundation staff and volunteers recently assembled and delivered special baskets of apples and honey to 120 professional advisors and nonprofit partners. The baskets are a simple way of expressing our gratitude for these valuable partnerships and sharing wishes for a sweet and fruitful new year.

We're grateful to David Cohn (pictured) for his support of this wonderful project.

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## Meet Our New J-LEAD Co-Chairs

We are thrilled to welcome Becky Barnett and Abby Lane as our new J-LEAD Steering Committee co-chairs. J-LEAD (Jewish Leadership, Education, Action and Development) is the Foundation's giving circle for adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. By pooling together resources and collectively making grant decisions, J-LEAD members are able to achieve a greater good than any one member could alone. Since the program began in 2005, J-LEAD has granted nearly half a million dollars to the Jewish community.



### **Becky Barnett**

"Giving back has been a core value in my life since childhood - something my family instilled in me early on. As a social worker and former Jewish communal professional, I'm honored to co-chair J-LEAD in its 20th granting year and build upon its legacy of collective impact. I love that J-LEAD not only brings young adults together to meet real needs in our Jewish community, but also helps us teach our children the power of working together to make a difference."



### Abby Lane

“I’m honored and excited to co-chair J-LEAD this year. For me, J-LEAD has served as a pathway to a deeper investment and connection in the Jewish community. I’ve had the opportunity to learn about giving - both financially and with my time - alongside my peers, friends, and family. As J-LEAD celebrates 20 years of collective giving, I’m excited to help build and sustain this legacy of investing in the incredible organizations in our community serving the Kansas City area.”

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## Harvest the Joy of Giving!

Make the most of a Donor Advised Fund (charitable giving account) at the Jewish Community Foundation.

**Grow Your Fund:** Contribute to your fund to ensure you’re able to support your favorite charities on your own timetable - and receive significant tax advantages by donating appreciated stock!

**Leverage Our Resources:** Utilize JCF’s expertise to achieve your unique philanthropic goals.

**Match Your Interests with Community Needs:** Contact us to be connected with nonprofits that support your passions.

For more information about maximizing your fund, contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at (913) 327-8286 or [sdicken@jcfkc.org](mailto:sdicken@jcfkc.org).



# Year-End Giving Calendar

In order to best serve you during this busy season, please keep the following deadlines in mind when doing your 2025 year-end giving:

## **Grants From Your Fund**

To ensure delivery of your grant prior to year-end, please submit your grant requests as soon as possible. Because the end of the year is a busy time for our accounting department, we appreciate the early submission of your grant requests. Grant requests submitted by Tuesday at noon will result in a check being mailed by Friday of the same week. The final date to submit grant requests in 2025 is Tuesday, December 23.

## **Contributions Into Your Fund (To be eligible for a 2025 tax deduction)**

Checks must be received in the JCF office by 4:30 pm on Wednesday, December 31, or if placed in the mail, postmarked by December 31.

Stock must be received into a JCF account by December 31. Stock transfer times vary, so if you are planning to make a stock gift this year, please contact both your broker and our CFO, Elizabeth Peden, at (913) 327-8166 to ensure timely handling of your donation. Please be sure to notify our office of the security you plan to donate so we can match your gift with your fund.

Please be mindful that gifts of mutual funds may take longer to process than stocks. Be sure to initiate these gifts early.

Credit Cards will be accepted any time, but keep in mind that the transaction must be posted to your credit card account by December 31. Credit card company processing times vary, so make sure to initiate your credit card donation early.

If you have any questions please contact Elizabeth Peden at (913) 327-8166.





## Leiba, our new grants manager, is at your service!

Leiba Estrin recently took over the role of JCF grants manager, previously held by Roberta Goller, who retired in August.

Leiba is ready and available to meet all of your year-end granting needs. She can be reached at [lestrin@jcfkc.org](mailto:lestrin@jcfkc.org) or (913) 327-8285.

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## New Funds at the Foundation

### **Donor Advised Funds**

Robert & Sara Aeder Donor Advised Fund  
Jeffrey Goldenberg Donor Advised Fund  
Zach & Linsey Mallin Donor Advised Fund  
Scott & Carla Oppenheimer Giving Fund  
Puritan Analytics Foundation  
Barry Sevett Family Charitable Foundation

### **B'nai Tzedek Funds**

Eli Berger B'nai Tzedek Fund  
Baila Greenberg B'nai Tzedek Fund

### **Restricted Funds**

Susan Fisher Fund  
Robert & Barbara Palan Restricted Fund 5



# Announcing 2025 Community Legacy Fund Core Grants

In its core granting cycle, the Jewish Community Foundation's Community Legacy Fund has awarded \$341,138 to 22 unique Jewish community organizations. These grants are intended to help enhance and maintain the quality of Jewish life in the Greater Kansas City area. Core grants support the general operating expenses (core expenses) central to the accomplishment of an organization's mission.

"We are deeply grateful to the Community Legacy Fund for their generous support, which helps us continue the vital work of supporting refugees and immigrants in our community with dignity and compassion," said Morgan Merrell, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) director of grants. "At a time when harmful rhetoric too often overshadows the humanity of those seeking safety for their families, this partnership affirms our shared commitment to tikkun olam, the Jewish principle of repairing the world. Together, we are building communities rooted in justice, hope, and belonging."

The Community Legacy Fund is comprised of permanent endowments from which grants are awarded to agencies whose applications are reviewed and evaluated by the Foundation's Grants Committee and Board of Trustees. The Foundation's Grants Committee is a dedicated group of lay leaders who thoroughly review each application and engage in thoughtful dialogue about how to best allocate resources to make the most meaningful impact. In addition to its core granting cycle, the fund has an innovation/emergency cycle that supports high-quality, new programs that provide an innovative approach or solution to an existing or emerging community need, or respond to financial or humanitarian emergencies.



*Clients of Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), one of the organizations receiving operational support from the Jewish Community Foundation's Community Legacy Fund*