



Jewish Community Center
of Greater Buffalo

IMPACT REPORT

2023 – 2024



DEAR VALUED MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE JCC,

In 2023-24, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo continued to make a fundamental impact on countless members, friends, staff, and our community. Through membership, programs, donations, and community support, together we have improved our agency and propelled our vision forward on our journey to continuous improvement and growth.

Over the last fiscal year, we have much to be proud of. The state of our JCC is strong. Though we have had challenges this year related to lingering pandemic-related issues, the October 7th terrorist attacks in Israel, and the general state of our world, inside the walls of our centers, we continue

to create a welcoming space for all. None of this is possible without you: our members, friends, and community partners who believe in our mission to provide the best possible programming in fitness, aquatics, childcare, summer camp, adult programs, theater, and more.

Your commitment to our JCC is inspiring, and ensures that our mission will continue for many years to come. We are personally grateful for your support and most importantly, your belief in us.

We are pleased to present this year's Impact Report that highlights the past year with a look at our financial position, our programs, and the impact our members make each day. Without you, there is

no way we can do what we do for the community.

Thank you for your commitment to our journey to advance our agency forward.

Warmly,



Irwin Gelman, PhD
President, Board of Trustees



Patricia Simonson
Chief Executive Officer





OUR MISSION & VISION

Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo's core mission is to be the town square for building and strengthening the Jewish and Western New York communities by providing recreational, educational, cultural, and social programs and services consistent with Jewish values. The JCC's vision is **"Building a Stronger Community."**

As a not-for-profit multi-service agency open to everyone, the JCC is a diverse community that helps all age groups thrive and flourish. We offer fitness and wellness services, summer day camp, preschool, and school-age child care, family recreation, youth enrichment, adult programs, cultural arts programming, our beloved Jewish Repertory Theatre, and Israel programs and events! We are unrivaled in our passion for helping the whole family.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Irwin Gelman, President

Rion Kweller, Vice President

Ron Benderson **, Vice President

Jordan Balsom, Treasurer

Rabbi Sara Rich, Secretary

Matthew Burwick Carrie Rich

Ann Marie Carosella Sheryl Schechter

Peggy Kahn Sullivan Douglas St. Cyr

Michael Komm Everett Weiss

PAST PRESIDENTS

Richard Ament*

Barry Appelbaum

Robert Berghash

Jerome Brock*

Debra Chernoff

Max L. Dozoretz*

Raymond Fink

Lawrence Franco

Susan Freed**

Gordon Gross*

Gretchen Gross*

Robert Hayman*

Andrew Isenberg

John Jacobowitz*

Leonard Katz

William Kaufman*

Harold Kirschenbaum*

Kevin Kulick*

Risé Kulick**

Alon Kupferman**

Stuart Lerman

Joel N. Lippman*

Joseph Markel*

Ethel Melzer**

Haiman S. Nathan*

Leonard Rochwarger*

Richard Romer

Samuel Sanes*

Andrew Shaevel

Donald Sheldon*

Gary Schuller*

Bruce Wisbaum

* of blessed memory

** Voting Honorary Trustee

EXECUTIVE AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Executive Team

Patricia Simonson, Chief Executive Officer

Mark Horowitz, Chief Operating Officer

Joseph Modicamore, Chief Financial Officer

James Morgan, Chief Facilities and Security Officer

Pam Marin, Interim Director of Human Resources

Brittany Bassett-Baran, Executive Assistant

Senior Leadership Team

Alexander Eadie, Senior Director of Advancement

Jason Stowell, Senior Director of Business Development

Barbara Reden, Senior Director of Early Childhood

Sharon Kostiner, Senior Director of Member and Staff Relations

THE JCC'S NEW C-SUITE: PATTY SIMONSON AND MARK HOROWITZ

article republished from the December 2023 issue of the Jewish Journal

Long-time JCC professional Patty Simonson is the new Chief Executive Officer for the Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo and Cantor Mark Horowitz has been named Chief Operating Officer. Patty and Mark have known each other as professionals and friends for almost 35 years. They have always had great respect for each other as colleagues and leaders in the Jewish community and are looking forward to combining their talents and vision to move the JCC of Greater Buffalo into a future that sees the JCC as the town square of Jewish Buffalo and the community beyond.

A dedicated staff member of the JCC since 1979, Patty graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from Canisius College, and a Master of Arts and Science degree from Adelphi University. During her tenure at the JCC, she has played an instrumental role in managing the day-to-day operations, program growth and development, staff and member engagement, community relations, talent management, and oversight of Camp Centerland. In her role as Chief Experience Officer, she helped create memorable experiences for the employees and members of the JCC.

The JCC has also announced that Cantor Mark Horowitz is the new COO. Most of Mark Horowitz's career has been centered on early childhood Jewish education and was previously the founding Executive Director of the Sheva Center for Innovation in Early Childhood Jewish Education and Engagement at the JCC Association of North America. Horowitz's roots are in classrooms filled with two-year-olds, where he thrived as a teacher for many years. Mark is an ordained Cantor from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and was Cantor and Educational Director at Temple Beth Am in Williamsville and later led the Bureau of Jewish Education.



WELCOME NEW JCC PRESIDENT, SHERYL SCHECHTER



We are pleased to introduce to our members and the community, new JCC President Sheryl Schechter. Sheryl has been a member of the JCC Board of Trustees for the last several years, and has lead the JCC Life and Legacy team with Past President Sue Freed.

Sheryl is a practicing Licensed Master Social Worker since 2000. She is the owner of Schechter Counseling, a private therapy practice, since 2012. Her work with geriatric persons, individuals with dementia, and their care partners focuses collaboration on all aspects of health and wellness. This includes physical, emotional, and cognitive methods for everyone involved. Sheryl believes that this is the key to dignified care, and life itself.

Sheryl brings this approach to all her relationships and is the driving force behind the goals she has for her term as JCC President. Working as a team is integral to building trust within an organization, and with Patty Simonson and Mark Horowitz in the lead, Sheryl hopes to create a stronger relationship between the Board of Trustees and the JCC staff. She is a believer in creating a culture of respect and philanthropy, where trustees, volunteers, and staff work together to build an even greater JCC for our community.



Thank you, Irwin! As of June 17, 2024, JCC President Irwin Gelman, PhD's term has come to an end. We are grateful for Irwin's steady leadership over the last two years. Among his accomplishments, he helped oversee the JCC CEO transition to Patty Simonson, helped lead efforts to continue the agency's post-pandemic financial turnaround, and has been instrumental in charting a vision for the future of the Board of Trustees, including new committees and task forces to work on various facets of the agency now and for the future. Irwin will now transition into the illustrious group of JCC Past Presidents, using his knowledge and insight to continue to assist the JCC wherever needed.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRUSTEES

The following 5 individuals have been appointed to a one-year term as Trustees of the JCC:



Eric Alcott recently retired after a distinguished career in fundraising at the University at Buffalo, where he served as Associate Vice President for University Advancement for the Health Sciences and helped lead the Boldly Buffalo campaign. Eric has served in various volunteer roles for many organizations, including Houghton College, Central Christian Academy, Westminster Economic Development Initiative, Camp Hickory Hill, and The Motion Project. He and his wife Deb live within walking distance of the Holland Family Building, and are long-time members of the JCC.



Lisa Allen is currently the owner of her own private practice, the Law Offices of Lisa J. Allen, PLLC. She focuses her legal practice on Trusts and Estates, Elder Law and Disability Advocacy. Lisa currently serves on the board of directors of the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies and also chairs their Professional Advisors Group, in addition to being involved in many other legal and community non-profit organizations, such as the University at Buffalo Law School and People Inc.



Glenn Pincus is a retired attorney. He served as an Erie County Assistant District Attorney for 28 years. In 2010 he entered private practice with the Hogan Willig law firm, focusing in civil and criminal litigation and appellate advocacy, and retired in 2017. Glenn and his wife Janet have three adult children, Ben, Rachel, and Daniel. They are proud grandparents and their granddaughters are now learning to swim in the same pool at the JCC that they taught their own children to swim in back in the early 1980s.



Randal Spivack is an accounting and management consultant. His business, R.I. Spivack Consulting, provides management, planning, restructuring, bookkeeping, hiring, and incorporation services to both for-profit and non-profit organizations. His community service includes serving as Treasurer of the Amherst Senior Citizens Foundation, as well as serving on the boards of Compass House, the Jewish Federation Apartments, and Lou Gehrig Youth Baseball and Softball.

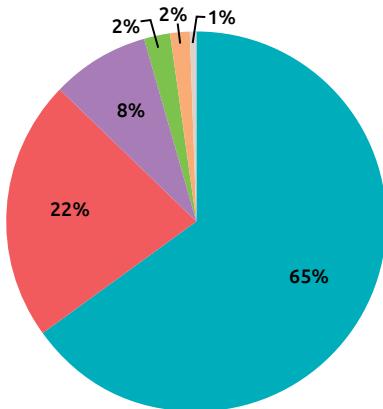


Amélida Weinmann has served as co-chair of the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Super Sunday and is currently recruitment chair for the International Lion of Judah Conference. Amélida is also a Trustee at Temple Beth Zion, where she was co-chair of the Kol Nidre fundraising campaign, the Alternative High Holiday Service and Luncheon Committee. She is currently co-chair of the Ritual Committee. Amélida is a current board member of the Hispanic Women's League, and was also a founding board member of the Greater Buffalo Community Foundation Cultures of Legacy Giving Initiative. She lives in North Buffalo with her spouse, Peter Allen Weinmann. They have four children.

In addition, the following 2 Trustees have been re-elected to 3-year terms. Rabbi Sara Rich, the senior rabbi at Temple Beth Tzedek, has served the JCC Board of Trustees as Secretary for the last three years. Her term as an Officer has ended, and she now begins a term as a Trustee. Carrie Rich, a mental health practitioner in private practice, completed a 1-year term as a Trustee and now begins a 3-year term as a Trustee.

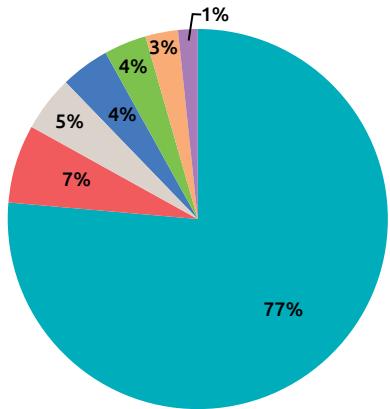
We would like to extend a special thank you to Susan Freed, JCC Past President, for chairing the Nomination Committee.

FINANCIAL RESULTS



REVENUE

Contributions & Grants	\$931,715	8%
Fundraising	\$32,405	1%
Membership Fees	\$2,482,531	22%
Program Fees	\$7,324,969	65%
Federation and United Way	\$205,833	2%
Other Income	\$205,833	2%
Total Revenue	\$11,233,830	100%



EXPENSES

Printing and Marketing	\$172,597	1%
Professional Fees	\$554,066	5%
Occupancy	\$783,827	7%
Employee Compensation	\$8,935,810	77%
Miscellaneous Expense	\$328,347	3%
Program Expenses	\$412,193	4%
General & Administrative	\$484,280	4%
Total Expenses	\$11,671,120	100%

a decrease of \$428 thousand mainly due to the decrease in coronavirus CARES Act funding the Agency received from the prior fiscal year. The Agency finished the fiscal year with \$11.2 million in total revenues, \$1.1 million, or 10.5 percent, higher than the prior fiscal year.

Regarding expenses, inflation rates coupled with the conflict in Israel has led to the rising cost of doing business, witnessed by the increase in operating expenses. The Agency finished the fiscal year with \$11.7 million in total expenses, an increase of \$1.5 million, or 14.4 percent, from the prior fiscal year. Controlling costs continues to be a focus of the finance department in the coming year. It will be challenging with the new landscape COVID-19 and the Israel conflict has carved. However, the Agency remains confident that with our talented staff, passionate members, and community we will remain resilient and proud. The Agency remains focused on providing a safe and enjoyable experience for our members. The graphs presented in this report will give you some idea of the financial performance and position of our Agency.

Our Agency continued its strong revenue growth recording its fourth consecutive year of increases. Net program fees of \$7.3 million were \$1.1 million, or 16.9 percent, greater than the prior fiscal year. Leading the way in program fees is Early Childhood who finished with over 5 thousand child days, the largest total in program history. Although membership units are still behind our pre-pandemic peak, growth continued to be strong this fiscal year with net membership revenue up \$410 thousand, or 19.8 percent, from the prior fiscal year.

It is anticipated that the Agency will recover additional membership units and surpass our pre-pandemic peak within the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Offsetting these gains was Contributions, Fundraising and Grants which totaled \$964 thousand,

2023-2024 Year in Review



NET PROGRAM FEES



NET MEMBERSHIP REVENUE



JCC Security Enhanced

Under the leadership of Chief Facilities and Security Officer James Morgan, the JCC formed a new Security Committee in response to the October 7th terrorist attack in Israel. The committee, made up of staff, volunteers, and lay leadership, was convened to assess the JCC security needs, develop staff training protocols, and develop deeper relationships with law enforcement partners in the community. We look forward to the committee's continued work to create an environment at the JCC and Camp Centerland where everyone feels safe and secure.



In July 2023, the JCC was awarded \$150,000 from the New York State Securing Communities Against Hate grant program, to help develop security upgrades and enhancements.

Legislator Jeanne Vinal Helps Secure Grant Funding

In December 2023, Erie County Legislator Jeanne Vinal helped secure an allocation of \$400,000 in the 2024 Erie County Budget to the JCC.

This grant will be used to fortify and enhance physical security for our facilities and Camp Centerland, and include staff training. “I am incredibly grateful for Legislator Vinal’s efforts to secure this funding. This grant will be transformational in meeting our security needs for our center and camp, both now and into the future,” said Patricia Simonson, JCC Chief Executive Officer.

“The Jewish Community Center is a pillar in the Western New York community,” said Dr. Irwin Gelman, President of the JCC Board of Trustees. “Since the horrific acts of October 7th in Israel and the rise of antisemitism both locally and globally, it is our priority to ensure that the JCC campus is a safe place for thousands of community members that rely on our services daily. We cannot thank Legislator Vinal enough for her support.”

Anti-Jewish bias incidents have increased 20% since 2021, and over 300% since Oct. 7, 2023, and the need to improve existing security systems in our facilities is vital. This grant, secured by tireless advocacy and effort reflects Legislator Vinal’s commitment to the well-being, safety, and enrichment of the local community, ensuring that JCC remains a hub for cultural, educational, and recreational activities for all.

“I have come to know Legislator Vinal’s passion for cultural institutions. She is a champion of the arts, working diligently for the success of the Jewish Repertory Theater. This latest show of support for the long-term security of our center is a testament to her commitment to the district and her role in county government,” said Alexander Eadie, Sr. Director of Advancement.





Early Childhood Centers

Over the past year, we have seen continued growth at both of our Early Childhood Center locations. Our NAEYC-accredited programs offer children the opportunity to learn through a multi-sensory approach through educational and engaging activities such as reading, dance, swim, music, Hebrew, soccer, yoga, arts and crafts, and play with their peers. They learn cognitive, social, and physical development skills which prepare them for success in Kindergarten and beyond.

Early Childhood Child Days Holland (per month)



Early Childhood Child Days Benderson (per month)





at the
Irving M. Shuman Campgrounds

Camp Centerland

In 2023, Camp Centerland saw over 2,500 camper weeks surpassing registration records for all previous years. In addition, we served over 650 individual children who participated in the fun and enriching camp experiences that we offer. We also held the second annual Gretchen Gross Awesomesauce Day, in memory of our friend, former JCC President, and Camp Committee Chair Gretchen Gross. It was a celebratory day which paid tribute to her legacy and dedication to the JCC. We offered food, arts and craft activities, and more. Throughout the entire camp season, campers enjoyed swimming, rock climbing, zip lining, archery, ropes course, recreational sports, and specialty camps in photography, esports, dance, theater, and more. Most importantly, they enjoyed making friends, learning lifelong values and skills, and creating lasting memories during their time at camp. Finally, Assistant Camp Director and Benderson Kids' Place Site Supervisor Nick Utz, who has worked at the JCC for nearly 18 years, earned a much-deserved promotion to Camp Director.

We are proud to announce that the Gretchen S. Gross Memorial Endowment, set up to provide funding for youth photography and Camp Centerland scholarships, has surpassed \$100,000 in commitments and pledges. Support the fund with a gift today, to ensure Gretchen's legacy.



Camper Days



Kids' Place

We experienced another wonderful year at Kids' Place, offering school-age children fun and educational activities for all ages to enjoy. This comprehensive after-school program is offered at both of our locations. In addition to dedicated homework time, a healthy snack, and plenty of activities, children enrolled in Kids' Place can add enrichment activities such as dance lessons or swim lessons on to their experience.

This year, we also welcomed Jackie Brant, our new Kids' Place Site Supervisor at the Benderson Family Building, who has proven to be a wonderful addition to our dedicated Kids' Place and Camp Centerland staff. Jackie has years of experience in education, serving youth, and building programs and we are excited to see the program continue to grow under her leadership.

Kids' Place Child Days Holland (per month)



Kids' Place Child Days Benderson (per month)





33rd ANNUAL

ARTIE AWARDS
presented by
Buffalo Toronto Public Media

NOMINATIONS

OUTSTANDING PRODUCTION OF A PLAY
Kindertransport, Jewish Repertory Theatre of WNY

OUTSTANDING LEADING ACTRESS IN A PLAY
Darleen Pickering Hummert, Crossing Delancey

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A PLAY
Ellen Horst, Kindertransport

The Jewish Repertory Theatre's 21st season offered a selection of moving, thought-provoking, and entertaining productions. We are proud to say that we sold over 400 subscriber ticket packages for the second straight year! During this season, we received several Artie Award nominations including for Outstanding Production of a Play for *Kindertransport*, Outstanding Leading Actress in a Play for Darleen Pickering Hummert in *Crossing Delancey*, and Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Play for Ellen Horst in *Kindertransport*. For this year's special engagement event, we featured a limited run of *Survivors* in conjunction with CenterStage Theatre and the Louis S. Wolk Jewish Community Center of Greater Rochester, which was crafted from the actual testimonies of WNY Holocaust survivors. This new play put a human face on this important period, drew a sold-out audience, and was enjoyed by all those who attended.

In addition, the JRT was awarded the Erie County Cultural Capital Grant, totaling \$68,000. Funding from this grant will be used toward making capital improvements such as purchasing new risers, theater curtains, and perhaps most exciting, comfortable new seating for all our patrons! Look for these improvements beginning with our 22nd season in October 2024.

Cultural Arts

The JCC Cultural Arts programs continued to attract many individuals to its events. We offered inspiring speakers, art galleries, our beloved People of the Book Author Series, day trips to iconic sites in WNY, the Poolside Summer Concert Series, the Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival and more. In addition, former JCC Sports and Recreation Coordinator Erica Baas began her new role as Director of Cultural Arts and Engagement. She now oversees all Cultural Arts programs and events, totaling over 40 separate programs per year.



Israel Engagement

At the JCC, we prioritize outreach in educating our members and the broader community about the country, the land, and the people of Israel. The JCC holds a different program about Israel and Judaism each month, introducing speakers, musicians, artists, and more to benefit the community. Highlights from this past year, include our annual Purim Carnival, cooking demonstrations, the weekly Limud speaker series, and more.



Fitness and Aquatics

We continue to provide a wide variety of aquatics programming to individuals of all backgrounds in our community. By offering programs such as Storm Swim Club, Water Babies, Toddler Splash, Au-Some Swimmers, and private swim lessons, we have something for individuals and families of all ages, abilities, and experience levels. These programs are held in 3 heated pools at both of our locations and allow people to receive the benefits of swimming in fun, safe environments. Our fitness programs also continue to thrive and grow. With our two fitness centers, complete with cardio equipment, free weights, a dedicated personal training room, functional training space, yoga studios, pickleball courts, racquetball court, multi-sports court, cycling studios, and much more, we make it simple and fun to reach your fitness goals.



With funding received from a grant through the Sephardic Foundation for the Aging, we were able to expand our popular Rock Steady Boxing program to the Holland Building. This program is for people with Parkinson's Disease, and helps them maintain mobility through boxing. The grant allowed us to train new coaches and purchase new equipment to expand and enable even more people to participate.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Though we are unable to list every single donor who made contributions to the JCC over the last year, we are incredibly grateful to all who have supported us in our mission. Our donors believe in us, and make our community center the vibrant place that it is each and every day. Our success and our future would not be possible without your support!

A few highlights:

- Donor Retention is 36%
- 531 gifts have been made to the JCC; 137 of those are first time donors
- 226 donors were retained, and an additional 69 were re-activated
- Gifts came in from 18 different states, including California, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Iowa, and of course New York.

We are personally grateful for your support of the JCC. Your commitment is inspiring! Kol Hakavod!

Advancement Department:

Alexander Eadie, Senior Director of Advancement: aeadie@jccbuffalo.org or 716.929.6258

Veronica Fabrizio, Donor Engagement Specialist: vfabrizio@jccbuffalo.org or 716.204.5388





In July 2021, 11 agencies throughout Jewish Buffalo came together in a community-wide effort to participate in the Life and Legacy program. This program promotes after-lifetime giving to benefit Jewish synagogues and organizations. To date, the JCC has received 60 legacy commitments, totaling over \$2 million in future endowment funding. We are honored to be stewards of these community assets, and are incredibly grateful to the members of our community who have decided to generously commit to a gift in this way. List current as of June 10, 2024:

- Morton & Natalie Abramson
- David H. & Joan B. Alexander
- Lisa A. Allen
- Jordan & Nikki Balsom
- Matthew & Sara Burwick
- Edward M. & Carin B. Case
- Jeff & Deborah Clark
- Lisa Corrin
- David & Janet Desmon
- Andrew Deyell
- Nathan Doherty
- Feuerstein Family Foundation
- Marvin L. Frankel (z'l) and Marcia Rashman Frankel
- Dr. Phi Glick & Dr. Drucy Borowitz
- Susan J. Freed
- Michael Frisch
- The Gareleck Family: Ellyn Stevenson, Betsy Feuerstein & Nancy Pickard
- Irwin Gelman
- Rob & Shira Goldberg
- The Goodwin Family Foundation
- Leslie Mark Greenbaum
- Rabbi Brent & Jill A. Gutmann
- Lynn L. & Richard L. (z'l) Hirsch
- Cantor Mark Horowitz
- Anne & Benjamin Kaiser, z'l
- Alison & Kevin Keane
- Risé P. Kulick
- 86 North Philanthropic Foundation
- The Lackner Carosella Family Foundation
- Irving & Donna Levy
- Steven & Marian Lustig
- Cathy & S. David Miller
- Monica Neuwirt
- David J. Oestreicher, CPA, MBA, CFP
- The Rawl Family
- Susan & Eric Recoon
- Rabbi Sara & Ezra Rich
- Laurence Rubin & Debra Chernoff
- Sheryl & Jonathan Schechter
- Charlene Celano & Andrew T. Schneider
- Andrew & Amy Shaev
- Stuart C. & Caren D. Shapiro
- Patty & Randy Simonson
- Beth & Rick Steinberg
- Lorne H. Steinhart
- Errol Craig Sull
- Peggy Sullivan
- Jake Warner
- Janet Wisbaum, z'l
- Howard & Karen Wiseman
- Barbara & Jack Yellen
- Richard & Karen Zakalik
- Elisabeth C. Zausmer & Angel A. Gutierrez
- Anonymous (7)



For more information on how to leave your own Life and Legacy commitment, visit www.jewishphilanthropies.org/life-and-legacy or contact Senior Director of Advancement Alex Eadie at aeadie@jccbuffalo.org or 716-929-6258.

THANK YOU TO OUR PAST & CURRENT PARTNERS

We are grateful to the following organizations for supporting the JCC of Greater Buffalo with corporate sponsorships benefitting scholarships, financial aid, and programs, as well as grant funding for a wide variety of equipment, programs, and services.
We sincerely apologize for any omissions:

Corporate Sponsors



Accrisoft



Foundations



The Sephardic Foundation on Aging



The Covenant Foundation



Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo



BUFFALO
RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
Forward



Jcamp180.
From STRENGTH to STRENGTH

M&T Bank



Council on the Arts



United Way
of Buffalo & Erie County



Live Like Luca
THE LUCA E. GALANTI FOUNDATION



NONPROFIT SECURITY
GRANT PROGRAM

Community Partners



jewish family services | wny

Buffalo
Jewish
Federation



FOUNDATION
FOR JEWISH
PHILANTHROPIES



LAYOUT & DESIGN: Sarah Schuppenhauer, Creative Design Specialist

Benderson Family Building • 2640 North Forest Road • Amherst, NY 14068 • 716-688-4114

Holland Family Building • 787 Delaware Avenue • Buffalo, NY 14209 • 716-866-3145

