

A young boy wearing a blue shirt, blue shorts, a white helmet, and a safety harness is ziplining through a forest. He is holding onto the zipline handle and looking forward. The background is filled with tall trees and a clear blue sky with some clouds.

SHAPING FUTURES

A CAMPAIGN FOR JCC BUFFALO

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo (JCC) is the heart of Buffalo's Jewish community. For 80 years, Western New York residents, whether new to the community or with long-time roots, are welcome at the JCC.

We are a place of belonging, where strong relationships are developed and friendships are made. We are a place where people of all backgrounds connect and create enduring memories. We are a place where health is promoted and the quality of life is enhanced for all ages. We are a safe and nurturing place for our youngest members to learn, play and grow.

The JCC'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 through a Jewish lens – loving kindness, life-long education, diversity, justice, respect, and repairing the world. These values impact our entire community, making it a better place to live and work.

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, 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.







THE OPPORTUNITY

Our **greatest** opportunity is to invest in our equipment, refresh our facilities, and build and retain membership through incredible programs and services that set the JCC apart from other fitness and community centers in WNY.

It is in this spirit that the JCC is embarking on a new capital campaign that will touch all areas of our business.

We are an enterprise in constant motion, evolving from generation to generation and changing each day with the future in mind. That guiding principle has helped us succeed for nearly 80 years, and will continue to guide us now.

As our vision and operations progress, we want our facilities to:

- Embrace community needs at our current scale and future aspirations
- Foster excellence in how we serve people each day
- Support new opportunities to deliver services and build a comparative advantage
- Address complex realities of today's security and regulatory environment

Beyond fitness and wellness, our JCC is built on a foundation of mission-driven programs that enrich the lives of our community. These include our award-winning Camp Centerland, Kids' Place afterschool care, and two accredited Early Childhood Centers, all dedicated to serving youth. We also take pride in the Jewish Repertory Theatre of WNY, as well as our vibrant cultural arts initiatives and engaging programs for older adults.

To accomplish this, we will need **\$7 million in philanthropic support**. Thanks to an incredible commitment, **every gift** raised in 2025 will be matched dollar for dollar. We invite you to learn about these projects, their connection to our vision and goals, and the impact they will have on people and our community.





A person in a pink tank top and black leggings is performing a squat in a gym. The background is a blurred view of the gym floor and other people.

FITNESS & WELLNESS

The JCC Association of North America cites that on average, 74% of all daily JCC visits across the country are related to a health, fitness, or wellness-based activity. Our internal data reveals that 66% of visitors to the Benderson Family Building or Holland Family Building come for a fitness-related activity. This makes the quality of our fitness facility and user experience the most influential factor driving membership recruitment and retention.

Our lifeblood is our membership, and the health of our membership relies on the quality of their experiences inside our walls and on our grounds.

Over the last year, JCC leadership has worked hard to study the needs and expectations of our members, in addition to trends both locally and nationally in the fitness industry.

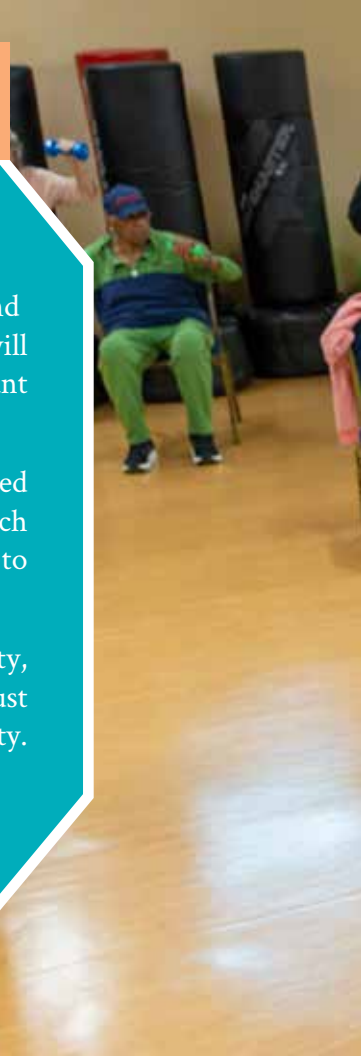
Some of our findings include:

- Membership at the Benderson Family Building in Getzville is stagnant. Since the high watermark in February 2020 before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, membership at the Benderson Family Building is down a net of 258 membership units with little growth. The agency as a whole, including the Holland Family Building, is down over 600 membership units from our pre-pandemic high.
- The Benderson Family Building and Holland Family Building fitness facilities need to be refreshed. The equipment at Benderson is 13 years old, the equipment at Holland is approaching 15 years old, and we are no longer competitive in this space. The cost to repair equipment is exceeding its value. This is a story that continues to be repeated as time passes.

FITNESS & WELLNESS

- We need to move towards wellness opportunities and develop more “boutique” experiences within our box gym model. This includes things like rest and recovery rooms and equipment, programs and services for special populations, adaptive fitness solutions, programs for youth and teens, and medical wellness programs. Shiny new equipment is great, but the programs that will ultimately help the people using that equipment has always been one of the JCC’s most important assets, and that will not change. Without our members, there are no programs.
- Families at the JCC have expressed a desire to bring back the babysitting program, which was offered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize the need for families with young children to reach their fitness goals and having safe and secure babysitting while working out is essential for that to happen. We pride ourselves on serving families and meeting their needs.

Our strategic advantage has always been rooted in the strength of our members and the community, the support of our partners, and the excellence of our programs. This fitness renovation is not just about upgrading our facilities; it’s about elevating the experience for every member of our community.





Gretchen Gross Memorial Endowment



In 2022, the JCC established the Gretchen S. Gross Memorial Endowment to support scholarships for camp and youth photography classes at the JCC in Gretchen's name, forever. Gretchen, a JCC Past President and the Camp Committee Chair, was tragically killed in 2021, and this fund honors her memory and passion for Camp Centerland.

After the initial support of friends and family who contributed to these efforts, the time is now to commit to helping the JCC increase its impact while cementing Gretchen's legacy through the endowment. We have set a goal of \$250,000 to ensure we can continue to provide and expand these incredible opportunities for our community in a way that will honor Gretchen for generations to come. Gifts to this fund will ensure that children will be able to attend camp regardless of financial need.





CAMP CENTERLAND

Members of JCC leadership and lay leaders formed a committee of 10 to participate in JCamp 180's Camp GPS strategic planning program in the winter of 2024. This program, led through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, challenged us to think about Camp Centerland's future and where we want to go in the next 5 – 10 years and beyond. The resulting strategic plan, after months of meetings, work, and research, lays out comprehensive and attainable goals for camp that include everything from enrollment and facility improvements to new scholarship funding sources and so much more.

As one of the nation's top-200 summer day camps as named by Newsweek magazine in 2024, and following three years of upward growth trajectory since summer 2021, now is the time to solidify Camp Centerland's future for the next generation of campers.



YOUTH SERVICES

Early Childhood

Our NAEYC-accredited Early Childhood Care Centers continue to represent the very best in childcare and kindergarten-readiness programs in the WNY area.

We recognize that childcare is a financial burden on many families as costs continue to skyrocket. Our campaign will aim to increase scholarship fund availability so that no family is turned away from either of these programs due to financial hardship or distress.

Kids' Place

For school-aged children, Kids' Place remains a leader in after-school care. More than a place to simply do homework, Kids' Place is where children come to continue their learning outside of the classroom. Through enrichment activities like music lessons, swimming, dance, theater, e-sports, and soon-to-be-added STEM activities like robotics, sewing, and game design, we are working to create a program that stands out from its competitors with a robust value proposition for parents, and a safe and secure space for children to thrive outside of school hours.









CULTURAL ARTS

Jewish Repertory Theatre

The Jewish Repertory Theatre is an integral part of the WNY theater community. Through our productions, audiences of diverse beliefs and backgrounds explore both the uniqueness of Jewish heritage and cultural experiences, as well as those that are shared with others. Drama illuminates the human condition, and the JRT strives to bring this into focus through the lens of Jewish theatre. The Jewish Repertory Theatre is theatre for everyone.

Through this campaign, our goal is to create a permanent JRT Endowment Fund to support the theatre's ongoing needs—from licensing fees and actor stipends to routine maintenance, marketing, and more. This fund will provide long-term financial stability, ensuring the Jewish Repertory Theatre thrives for generations to come.

Cultural Arts and Aging Well Programs

From the “Cover to Cover” Jewish Book Festival, the Buffalo International Jewish Film Festival, day trips, lectures, concerts, discussion groups, painting classes, card games, mah jong, and so much more, the Cultural Arts program at the JCC offers a robust array of services for adults of all ages. In fact, we offer over 40 events per year to choose from! The campaign will raise critical funds to help these programs continue to flourish and grow at a high level.

JEWISH LIFE

At the JCC of Greater Buffalo, we are more committed than ever to reinforcing the “J” in JCC—embracing our Jewish identity, values, and traditions that shape our mission. To further this commitment, we are raising essential funds to expand programs that educate and engage our community on Israel, Judaism, and Jewish heritage through thought-provoking speakers, inspiring musicians, talented artists, and more.



Named in honor of JCC Past President, Alon J. Kupferman, the Israel Engagement Fund will help support Israel engagement and education programs at the JCC.

During his presidency, a focus on Israel programming was a cornerstone of his vision for a strong JCC. Alon would often go out of his way to show appreciation and give feedback on the support and creation of Israel programs. When

his parents came from Israel to the United States, they worked at the JCC, and that connection has always been critical for him. This fund is a fitting way to honor his leadership and commitment to the JCC.

This fund ensures that the JCC will always have a strong connection to Israel, its history, and its people.









PEOPLE. PROGRAMS. PURPOSE.

At the very heart of this effort are three essential pillars: people, programs, and purpose. Imagine these pillars as three legs of a stool: without one, the others are out of balance. This is the driving vision behind this campaign and the future of the JCC.

- Our **people** are the reason we do what we do. To serve all members of the family and community, regardless of background, is the core of our existence. We are a community center for all.
- Our **programs** are what makes the JCC hum. From group fitness classes, to lectures, performances, concerts, discussion groups, and swim lessons, to day trips, luncheons, community-wide events, and so much more, our breadth and depth of programs are unmatched in Western New York.
- Our **purpose** dictates our mission; to build and strengthen our community while focusing on our Jewish values. We are proud of where we have come from, and excited for our future. Every decision we make is made with a clear understanding of how it will benefit our center now and in the future.

CAN WE COUNT YOU IN?



Between both of our campuses and the Irving M. Shuman Campground, magic happens every day. Children are taught, seniors share meals, deep friendships are formed and reinforced. Memories are created that last a lifetime and are passed down through generations. It's the place that draws our community in and sees to its needs.

Being part of the JCC in Buffalo is a gift.

It is our responsibility (and honor) to pay that gift forward with all the generosity and support in our hearts. For almost 80 years, we have been able to weave the very fabric of the broader community through the lives we touch ... and, with your help, our work will continue for generations to come.

Can we count you in to make a gift in support of the Shaping Futures campaign? With your help, we will remain an epicenter for the Jewish community while inviting and encouraging the broadest possible participation of those who share our core values and find strength in the relationships born inside our walls every day.

To learn more about how you can help us achieve our vision
and join our Campaign go to jccbuffalo.org/shaping-futures
or contact Alexander Eadie at: 716.929.6258

