



Our JCC Promise & 2024 impact report

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A message from the JCC's CEO, Shelly Prant.

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Meet Shelley and Herb Koffler. They have been a generous and integral part of our JCC since its inception.

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Help to ensure our JCC will continue to have a positive impact. *BE A HERO* and give a gift today.

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# BE A HERO

## GIVE A GIFT TODAY

## JUST PART OF THE FAMILY

JCC members and staff alike look forward to their weekly greetings from Liliana Rubinchik, complete with a dazzling smile, and if you're lucky, a big hug. Liliana and her dad, Alex Rubinchik, have been members of the JCC for over 20 years.

The Rubinchik family came to the US from Russia in January of 1995, when Liliana was 3 years old. Alex recalled that Marina Efroymsen (2024 Harold B. Albert award recipient), who was working with Jewish Family Services at the time, assisted their family as they settled into life here in Albuquerque.

After putting down roots, Alex tried several gyms, eventually landing at the JCC. "I came here (to the JCC) and I stuck. People would invite me to different gyms, but I said no. I love it here - It doesn't feel like a big gym. It's like a family," he said.

The Rubinchik's ties to the JCC run deep - Alex's sister Sofya is also a long-time member of the JCC, and his late parents, both WWII veterans and doctors, lived in Shalom House and frequented the JCC. Liliana was in elementary school when she and her dad first became members. She grew up spending summers attending Camp Chai and taking swim lessons.

Now, as an adult navigating the autism spectrum, Liliana thrives on routines. She has worked with JCC personal trainer Josh Wichner three times a week for several years. Training sessions between Liliana and Josh usually include walking, basketball, or soccer, and they always end with a new toy for her expansive stuffed-animal collection. According to Alex, it is always the highlight of her week.

"When we're at home, Liliana talks about Josh all day," Alex said. "Josh has fun with her, gives her toys. She loves him."



*Liliana and dad, Alex Rubinchik*

As for Alex, he enjoys working out upstairs, swimming laps in the pool, and more recently has become a regular participant in the Open Pickleball sessions.

"I watched the Pickleball games from the second floor and decided to learn. Chris Blackwell taught me the game, and now I'm addicted," Alex said.

Outside of being a great place to exercise, Alex appreciates the JCC for everything it offers. "Liliana likes to meet all the people here - she says hi, she gives hugs, everyone knows her and she loves it," he said. "We don't just come here to train and go home. We've met so many nice people. You meet new people, you know everyone, it's nice to walk in and see friends."



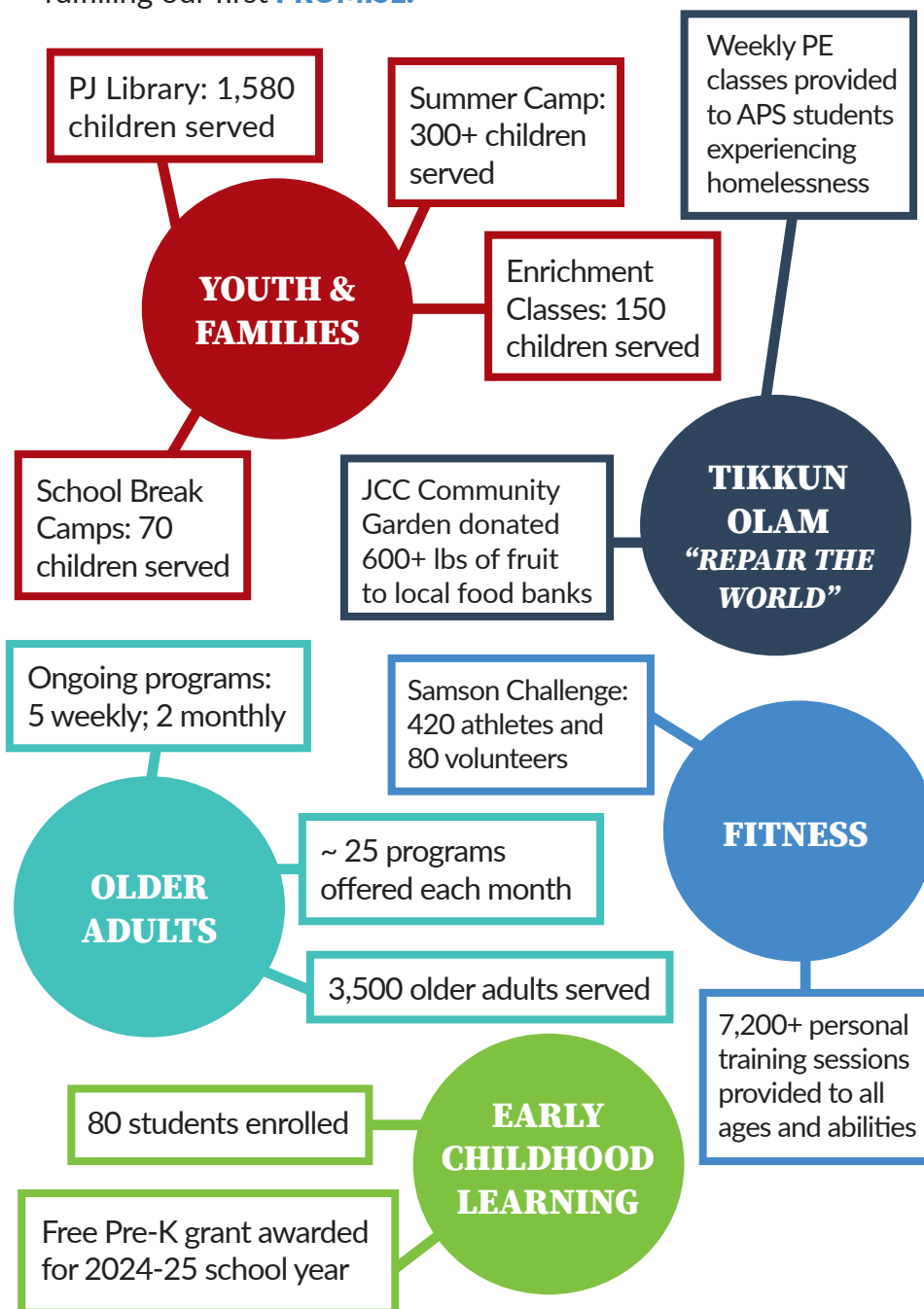
*Liliana with her trainer, Josh Wichner*

# OUR JCC PROMISE

Our JCC is a non-profit organization. The fees we charge for membership and programming never cover 100% of the costs associated with producing and providing them. We never want to turn anyone away. Your gifts to the J-Forward Fund are critical to serving EVERYONE who wants to participate at the JCC.

## This Appeal is OUR PROMISE:

1. Our first **PROMISE** is to continue the important work of the JCC, providing a place of enrichment and connection FOR ALL in our community and beyond.
2. Our second **PROMISE** is to report with transparency how we are fulfilling our first **PROMISE**.



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Community Members,

At the Ronald Gardenswartz Jewish Community Center (JCC), we believe in the power of community and the impact that we can make together. Every day, we work to create a warm and welcoming space where children, adults, seniors, and families find connection, inspiration and growth. Every year, thanks to the support of generous partners like you, we provide opportunities that empower and inspire our community. We invite you to join us in supporting programs that touch countless lives.

**For our children:** JCC camps foster physical fitness, teach new skills, create friendships and build confidence. The David and Martha Cooper Family Enrichment Center provides premier learning and socialization for infants to Pre-K. Scholarships are awarded for both programs, and for JCC membership. Our PJ library program ensures Jewish children receive free age-appropriate books, encouraging a love of reading while learning about Jewish values and traditions.

**For our families:** From family-centered activities and holiday celebrations to youth programs and events, we are a place where families create lasting memories and make life-long friends.

**For our adults:** We offer a variety of fitness and wellness programs that foster a healthy lifestyle. Our arts, culture and education programs (ACE) feed the mind and the soul.

**For our Older Adults:** We offer a space for seniors to stay engaged, active, and connected. Our older adult programs focus on wellness, friendship and continued learning.

Your support will make a real difference. Whether it is a child learning how to swim, an individual or family learning about their heritage, a person meeting their fitness goals, or an older adult's new friendship, your gift helps to make these special moments possible. Together we can continue to build a thriving JCC, and a more connected community that benefits us all.

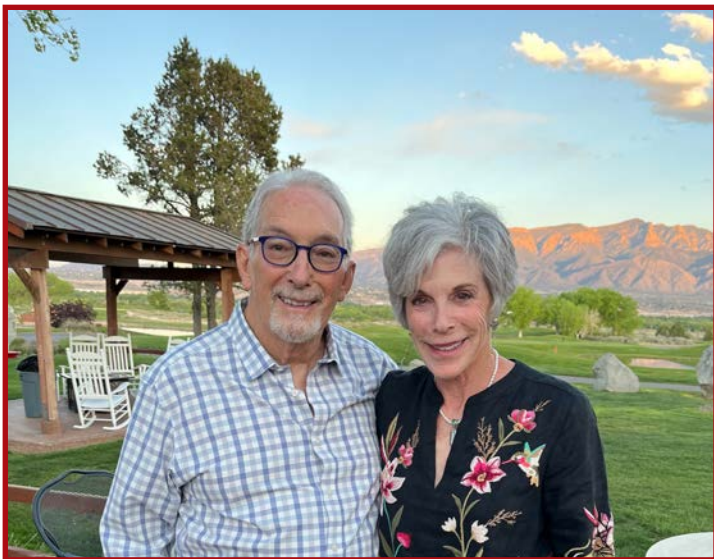
**Please help us continue this vital work and be a part of the impact!**

*Shelly Prant*

Shelly Prant, JCC CEO



# CREATING A LASTING LEGACY



“For folks who don’t know many Jewish people, the JCC provides many opportunities for non-Jews to learn about who we are,” Shelley said. “There are so many stereotypes out there, and when you don’t know people, you don’t know what to think of them. Whether I’m in a class, or upstairs, or at a book event – there are people coming to the JCC who aren’t Jewish, and they all have a better idea of who we are. It’s really important to me that this is an opportunity for us to learn about one another.”

From their early participation on the JCC’s planning committee over 25 years ago, to Shelley and Herb’s past memberships on the JCC Board of Directors, and the Koffler’s ongoing and generous financial contributions, their legacy is woven into the very fabric of our JCC.

When asked what moves the Kofflers to give to the JCC, this is their answer: “The concept of Tzedakah comes to mind,” Shelley said. “We want to support programs that are important to us now. We get great pleasure from knowing that we can support the JCC, and many other causes, both Jewish and otherwise. It just makes us happy to do it. It’s as simple as that.”

Herb added, “There are lots of nice places in Albuquerque to exercise - I could have gone to the University’s gym and used their facility. But this is where we go. We see friends, and we have met wonderful people. The guys I talk with in the locker room probably wouldn’t have been a part of my life without the JCC, but now they are friends. We want to help the JCC thrive – we will give and do what we can to make that happen.”

**S**helley and Herb Koffler are with us for the long haul, and there’s no place they’d rather be. The couple has been instrumental in writing our JCC story.

The Kofflers moved to Albuquerque in 1974 from Cincinnati, OH when Herb was recruited to UNMH to team with the first neonatologist in the state at that time. Herb amassed an impressive resume during his 25 years with UNMH. Along with providing bedside clinical care, teaching medical and nursing students and physicians in practice and conducting research, he developed the statewide standards for neonatal (newborn ICU, or NICU) care. He trained hospital staff involved in delivery services state-wide to stabilize critically ill newborns until his transport team could transfer them to UNMH’s NICU. Additionally, he started a program for the state to cover those transportation costs for the families in their care. This is just scratching the surface – Herb’s impact on NICU care in New Mexico and beyond is expansive.

Shelley’s career centered on children and education. After receiving her master’s degree in Special Education, she went on to a 25-year career with APS: first classroom teaching, then staff development, and then in ADA-compliance. During her time with APS, she became a teacher at the Children’s Hospital, where she taught hospitalized children who were ill.

Outside of work, Shelley and Herb raised their two sons through it all. At that time, they recall that outside of the Jewish congregations, there were limited activities for the Jewish children in Albuquerque. When the prospect of a JCC in Albuquerque became a reality, they were excited, and wanted to be a part of it.





# 8.3 Acres and Beyond

**Every Day. Every Week. Every Month. Every Year.**

*Your gift benefits Children, Families, Adults, Retired Seniors,  
All Nationalities, All Religions, All Shapes, Sizes, and Abilities.*

Your gift is critical to maintaining creative programs available to every person who walks through our doors; each with rich, beautiful, impactful stories and experiences.



**Donate Now!**

Your gift is critical to 11 different departments that ensure we create and maintain a place for people to come together, support the community, learn, make new friends, feel respected, safe, nurtured, and stronger in every way.

## **Join us NOW to reach our match of \$60,000 by December 31, 2024!**



Life & Legacy is a program dedicated to ensuring YOUR JCC is here Every Day, Every Week, Every Month, Every Year for generations to come. Please contact Emily Blaugrund Fox (505-418-4471 or [emilyf@jccabq.org](mailto:emilyf@jccabq.org)) to discuss how you can become a member of the Life & Legacy program through your estate plan.

**Give online by scanning the QR code above or visit [jccabq.org/donate](http://jccabq.org/donate). Donations can also be made via phone at 505-418-4471.**

