



**Asheville Jewish
Community Center**

Community Impact Report

Strengthening Jewish identity, celebrating Jewish culture, and building community

Celebrating Jewish culture and sharing Jewish traditions



In 2018...

1,290

people participated
in swimming
activities at the David
Zimerman Pool

65

community elders in
area residential homes
participated in
monthly Shabbat
celebrations

221

children learned
about
Rosh Hashanah
through music and
food tasting

350

children and adults
celebrated the joyous
holiday of Purim at the
JCC's annual Carnival

268

participants ran or
walked the JCC's
annual Jewish holiday
road races

157

campers learned
Hebrew songs and
turned Jewish values
into action at
Camp Ruach day camp

Shalom and Hilde's House are a home-away-from-home for my daughters. Their teachers are like a part of our family. Their friends and their friends' families are part of our village. And beyond this, I am constantly amazed by the depth and breadth of what they learn at "school."

- Anonymous JCC Parent

The Asheville JCC Values

Kehilah (Community)
Metsuyanut (Excellence)
Limud (Learning)
Hachnasat Orchim (Welcoming Guests)
Tikkun Olam (Repair of the World)

Vision

The Asheville Jewish Community Center provides opportunities for everyone in Western North Carolina to connect to Jewish life and culture. We focus on ensuring that community members are supported through every life stage, with programs that enhance community life and a sense of belonging. We continuously evaluate our programs, expanding and improving them to support our vibrant, evolving community.

Barbara's Story



My husband and I joined the JCC shortly after we moved here in 2008. What a great decision that was! On our first outing with the adult group, a hike to DuPont Falls, we met four couples who we are still friendly with to this day. I soon joined the committee that plans the monthly activities and for the last ten years I have been the Chairperson of The Adult Group, or TAG for short. It gives me great pleasure to be part of the committee who organizes our monthly activities. The TAG committee members always find things to do and places to go that I would not have known about.

The JCC is such a welcoming, inviting, and caring community of people. One is always greeted with a hello, how are you, how is your family, good to see you, and other sincere niceties. What a warm, comfortable feeling that is. Always. The JCC and the TAG group have enhanced my love for this area. I especially appreciate the close friends I have made through the years. The JCC and the TAG group, has made Asheville the place for me.

- Barbara Wasserman

Enriching lives for people of all ages
in our community



More than
4,000

people are a part of
our thriving JCC
Community

111

adults took part in
social activities and
recreational outings

100%

of JCC staff learned
about Jewish values
through professional
development meetings

More than
600

children received
Jewish-values based
learning

38

infants reached
developmental
milestones under the
guidance of Hilde's
House educators

89

swimmers between the
ages of 6 and 16
improved their
swimming skills
through the JCC
Gefilte Fish swim team



Promoting health and building
community through aquatics and
wellness programs



Samantha's Story



Samantha has a love of the water, but she had never been taught to swim and we wanted her to be safe around water and in pools. When we were looking for someone to help us teach Samantha to swim, it was hard to find the right place and the right fit. But we finally found Wendy, the JCC Aquatics Director, through the JCC and Camp Tikvah, the JCC's camp for children with autism. When Samantha first started swimming at the JCC, she wouldn't do certain things –she wouldn't put her head under water, and she wouldn't float on her back. She would have a melt down, but Wendy gave her what she needed. Samantha would try to get out of it, but Wendy knew Samantha had potential. Wendy has not only made Samantha safe, she's completely exceeded our expectations and made Samantha a swimmer.

At the JCC, we've been able to get the individual lessons for Samantha that we weren't able to get other places. It's been about two years now, and Samantha has a very special bond with Wendy. We're so grateful for this!

- Ken and Janet Sawyer

Fostering cross-cultural understanding and celebrating the arts through Israeli programming



567

people saw the world through the eyes of Israeli film makers in the Israeli Film Series

108

adults discussed literary themes and cultural influences in the Israeli book club

120

children of all faiths celebrated Passover at the JCC

Seeing films set in the Middle east (not all have been solely in Israel), hearing the Hebrew language and viewing a range of ethnicities across the life span has been a rich experience. For me, the Israeli Film initiative at the JCC is pivotal in my decision to continue my membership.

- Libby Libner



Tiffany's Story



I consider myself privileged to be part of the JCC and the opportunities I have been given to experience Jewish culture professionally through my work with Shalom Children's Center. I was nominated and then was accepted into a 3-year fellowship with the Sheva Center Leadership Institute for Early Childhood professionals, with the goal of growing Jewish early childhood education. In 2018, I participated in a 10-day study tour of Israel, during which I was given the opportunity to witness first-hand how innovation, technology, history, and identity intersect to form the foundation for a uniquely Israeli early childhood approach. Here in the States, with the guidance and mentorship of the Sheva Center Faculty, we translate these early learning concepts and concepts about Jewish identity and culture through the Seven Core Elements and the Seven Jewish Lenses. The Core Elements help us structure our approach to include family engagement, intentionality in our curriculum and environments, professionalism among our educators, and reveal Israel as a source and resource for learning Jewish concepts in accessible, everyday ways. Through the Sheva Lenses, the diverse teaching faculty, families, and students of Shalom are provided opportunities to access Jewish values, beliefs, and traditions in ways that are most relevant and meaningful to them. Our "masa," or journey together as a school, is amplified and celebrated as the journey of those who came before us, in many times and many places, yet we strive to never lose focus on the present time and needs of our little Asheville community.

- Tiffany Hagemeyer, Early Childhood Program Coordinator

Building a better world
through education
and community collaborations



More than
50

at risk children
learned to swim
through the JCC's
partnership with
Children First

88

school age children
received homework
help, played outdoors,
and participated in
weekly Shabbat
celebrations in JCC's
after school program

58

teens developed
job skills in JCC's
teen leadership
development
programs

Dorian's Story



When I first started coming and volunteering at the JCC, I started to learn with kids about the Hebrew language, which to me was very cool. Then, the following summer I became a Leader in Training, and I learned that kids are taught about life differently here. And when we all come together to the J, we are like a family, full of different people who are peaceful and loving, all from different backgrounds. The fact that I was an LIT helped me make connections with many people I never would have met without the JCC. Throughout my time at the JCC, the individuals that I work with have slowly become my family. This is what the J is to me, and it's why I love it. - Dorian Johnson

Koby's Story



Our son Koby has been in childcare at the JCC since he was eight months old, and it has been a wonderful part of our family's life since he started there. My husband Yonton grew up in Israel and speaks Hebrew with his family and with Koby at home, so when we learned that – in addition to being an excellent program – Koby would be able to have extra Hebrew exposure at Hilde's House we were very excited.

We are always especially excited when he learns new Hebrew words, like the day my husband picked him up and he pointed out the "dag" in the classroom, the aquarium! Many of Koby's first words were in Hebrew and it was great to have teachers who could understand and encourage him.

One of the most significant impacts on Koby has been the love of music he's developed. He began to learn and sing the Tot Shabbat songs that the song leader, Penny, sings to the kids every week early on, and we would often hear him singing "I am happy, I am good" to himself on the monitor as he went to sleep in his crib at night.

His love of music became a huge part of our lives when he discovered the toy ukulele at Hilde's House and began playing it at every opportunity. At home he would pretend other toys were ukuleles and "strum" them while he sang Penny's songs.

Eventually we got Koby his own "home ukulele" and more recently a small guitar, and now we are frequently treated to entire set lists of Penny songs. Koby announces "I'm Penny, I'm at the JCC!" and then strums his guitar as he sings "Bim Bam," "Dinosaur Knocking on my Door," "My Roots Go Down," and lots of holiday songs (we are still singing about hamentaschen and trees blowing in the wind!). He always ends his performances by saying "Shabbat Shalom you guys!"

- Molly Maynard

When your kids are home for the summer, it's tough being away from them. When your kids are enrolled in the Camp Ruach program, all those worries melt away! It's the most interactive, engaging and fulfilling camp around! Our kiddos always want it to last longer!

- Molly Mesibov

