



Find  
Your Place  
at the  Bender JCC  
of Greater Washington

## *A Place for Belonging*

FY20

Impact Report

July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020







### JCC MACCABI GAMES

More than 100 teen athletes represented Team Greater Washington at the JCC Maccabi Games in Atlanta, GA and Detroit, MI in August 2019. Dana, whose two sons participated, says that the JCC Maccabi Games have been life changing for them. “They enjoyed the competition, made lifelong friends, and connected to their Jewish faith.”



### CAMP JCC

In summer 2019, Camp JCC welcomed 125 children, teens and young adults age 4 to 21 with disabilities. They participated fully in a camp experience — including social, cultural, and sports and recreation activities — alongside 470 typically-developing siblings and peers.

Allison’s son is a Camp JCC camper. She explains why the first day of camp at the Bender JCC is her favorite day of the year: “It is a day of possibility, of inclusion, and of true belonging for my son, who has Down syndrome.”



### SPIN STUDIO GRAND OPENING

In response to members’ requests and to stay competitive in the fitness marketplace, the Bender JCC added a dedicated spin studio. Members have reacted enthusiastically. “They love the new bikes, the effects of the color changing rope lighting and the music,” says the group exercise coordinator, who also reports that members who never considered spinning prior to the creation of the new studio are now taking spin classes regularly.

Our fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020) started off robustly, with our typical schedule of dynamic and stimulating programs, classes and events, some of which are highlighted in this report.

Twenty-five percent of the Bender JCC’s annual budget comes from generous donors, enabling us to provide the warmth of community to so many who otherwise would not have the opportunity to participate at the Bender JCC. We offer \$500,000 in financial assistance and support services annually to ensure that programs and services are available to all.

### ARTS & IDEAS

The Lessans Family Literary Series hosted authors such as Sara Rose (*D-Day Girls*), Michael Dobbs (*The Unwanted*), and Marra Gad (*The Color of Love*) who discussed their books in front of audiences of engaged and thoughtful readers. We celebrated International Women’s Day with a program centered on the book *Yes She Can*, an intimate look at Barack Obama’s presidency through the eyes of some of the young women who were on his staff.

For 48 years, the Polinger Artists of Excellence Concert Series has presented rising stars and renowned artists to our community of music lovers. The Bender JCC has also forged a partnership with Mount Vernon Virtuosi, an orchestra of talented young artists who perform at the Center for children and adults.

In commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Maryland-Israel Sister State Committee — in partnership with the Bender JCC, the Israeli-American Council, the American Society for Yad Vashem and the Israeli Embassy — presented two inspirational exhibitions at the Bender JCC: *BESA: A Code of Honor* (Muslim Albanians who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust) and *IsraAID: Stories of Courage and Resilience*.



H. Randall Morgan, Jr., Maryland-Israel Sister State Committee; Her Excellency Floreta Faber, Ambassador of Albania; and Marlene Yahalom, American Society for Yad Vashem

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stephen Fleishman, president and founder of Bethesda Bagels, was a featured speaker at Bagels & Business, a networking and learning series for emerging and seasoned professionals. Other community engagement initiatives include She Says, created on the belief that when women come together to share information and experiences, new opportunities and ideas are born, and Think + Drink, during which young professionals meet for a drink and to engage in moderated discussions with Israeli artists, activists and experts across a variety of disciplines.



### ADULTS

Our programs keep our community’s older adults active and engaged. The Selma Sweetbaum Senior Satellite Program gives seniors the chance to exercise, socialize, hear a lecture, attend a performance and enjoy a hot kosher meal every Monday through Thursday at sites in Rockville and Wheaton.

Coming of Age welcomes senior adults for trips, continuing education and entertainment. With approximately 200 members, our Men’s Club provides an opportunity for socialization, support, learning and fun.



### SUDDENLY, IN MARCH...

Though we had to close our doors in mid-March 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, we remained committed to keeping our community connected and engaged, swiftly pivoting to find creative and meaningful ways to offer our programs virtually. Our FY21 Impact Report will highlight those efforts.

### DINNER OF CHAMPIONS

The 28th Annual Dinner of Champions took place on November 23, 2019, setting a new fundraising record in support of the Bender JCC’s inclusive summer camp for children and young adults. Additional fundraising the night of the event raised money to build an accessible ramp so that campers who are unable to use steps can more easily access the outdoor tent area, the epicenter of Camp JCC.



At the Dinner of Champions, Robert and Carol Burman were presented with the Irene and Abe Pollin Humanitarian Award in recognition of their exemplary service to the community and making a difference to society.

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Bender-Dosik Parenting Center holds programs designed to create bonding opportunities between young parents and their babies or toddlers, and for young families to meet and form social and supportive relationships. Jewish holidays were observed in child-friendly and meaningful ways. Jewish Family Ambassadors continued reaching out to families throughout Montgomery County to bring them fun-filled Jewish experiences where they live.



### SERVING THE COMMUNITY

In early 2020, the Bender JCC took delivery of the Wandering J, our branded van designed to engage Jewish families throughout the area. Made possible through funding from The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the JCC Association of North America, the van has also been put to meaningful use as we have partnered with community organizations to deliver food and goods to our neighbors who are in need due to the pandemic.





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<sup>z"l</sup> of blessed memory

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