

WINTER 2024

PROGRAM GUIDE

FEBRUARY 4 – APRIL 6

REGISTRATION OPENS:

MEMBERS | JANUARY 8

PUBLIC | JANUARY 15



SPOTLIGHT ON INCLUSION

The Bender JCC recently launched a three-year plan to expand inclusion services and build the community everyone deserves.

WE INVITE YOU TO TAKE THIS JOURNEY WITH US.

LEARN MORE INSIDE. 

JDAIM
FEBRUARY
Jewish Disability Awareness,
Acceptance & Inclusion Month



Look inside the Winter Program Guide

Special Edition: Spotlight on Inclusion

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM)



Brandon Chiat,
Chief Marketing Officer, Bender JCC

Observed each February, Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified initiative to raise disability awareness and support efforts to foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

While JDAIM brings the issues of disability inclusion to the forefront in February, inclusion is something the Bender JCC focuses on year-round. Like all of the Bender JCC's efforts to create connections throughout the Greater Washington region, our work for those community members with disabilities is not limited to a designated month but is a mission we recommit ourselves to daily.

We invite you to take this journey with us. Building an inclusive community is never complete; there will always be needs to address, and we recognize that the work of inclusion belongs to all of us.

Our approach to community engagement seeks to break barriers, beginning with our campus. The Bender JCC is committed to becoming an "all-abilities" facility, from the wheelchair-adaptive harnesses that allow individuals with limited mobility to reach new heights on our climbing tower or swim in our pools to our new Paul S. Berger SportsPlex — a premier athletics venue purposefully-built to be accessible by all.

We're also becoming more inclusive with our marketing. Our expanded Winter Program Guide includes articles highlighting our community's diversity. Intentionally

designed with accessible colors and fonts, our Winter Program Guide also features "resource round-ups" to amplify our support for community members of all abilities, and ensure that every individual can enjoy a meaningful and well-rounded experience.

On behalf of the Bender JCC staff, thank you for reading our Winter Program Guide. We hope the stories inspire you and the resources connect you to our community. See you at the J this winter!

With friendship and gratitude,

Brandon

Inside this Special Edition

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Empowering Friendship



Josh Bender,
Chief Executive Officer, Bender JCC

When we think about inclusion at the Bender JCC what often comes to mind is our amazing Lessans Camp JCC, the Bender Early Childhood Center (ECC), our beautiful outdoor and indoor pools — both heated and open year-round — and dozens of specialized programs serving many individuals and families, each of them coming to us from unique backgrounds and with distinct needs.

I love to walk around the building every day because I can't help but notice the depth and breadth of experiences taking place in our programmatic spaces all at the same time. In talking with members and staff, I am routinely amazed at how the most fundamental human needs of belonging and connection inspire their participation. Our wonderful programmatic experiences set the stage for Bender JCC's most important work: building relationships and creating friendships. As members and staff, we all recognize the importance of a place where friends, colleagues, neighbors, classmates – *anyone* – can discover that someone cares for us.

The authentic relationships make our community unique. The Bender JCC aspires to be a community where members help one another become who they want to be, and invest in each other's success, by sharing information, skills, and very often, attentive friendship.

As part of our three-year strategic plan to expand inclusive programming year-round at the Bender JCC, we recently created a neurodiversity affirming social skills group for teenagers with disabilities called "Empowering Friendship." The teens socialized together while learning important skills such as self-advocacy, consent and boundaries, self-determination, and more. The class filled to capacity as soon as registration opened, reminding us that everyone, regardless of their ability, desires and deserves friendship. I overheard one of the teenage participants proudly tell their parents: "I made a new friend."

The Bender JCC encourages inclusion through friendship. A member's son recently signed up for our teen membership to work out in our Weinberg Health and Fitness Center. This young man could have gone to one of the many fitness centers and health clubs in our area, but he specifically chose the Bender JCC because he looks forward to seeing our security guard, Ali, who welcomes and embraces him every time he walks through our front doors. Recognizing that we all share the universal need for human connection is an important step towards becoming a more inclusive community. Each of us, through our behaviors, actions, and words, shapes the environment that creates belonging and friendship.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Josh Bender in black ink.

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Rachel Assal Albert

**DEVELOPMENTAL
SUPPORT COORDINATOR,
BENDER ECC**

Rachel Assal Albert is the Developmental Support Coordinator at the Bender JCC Early Childhood Center, where she works to ensure that the children have access to resources, internal support and services through Montgomery County, or private therapists. She especially loves being in the classrooms with the children and joining in on the everyday experiences in the Bender Early Childhood Center! She proudly holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Early Childhood Special Education.



Brandon Chiat

**CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
BENDER JCC**

Brandon Chiat is the Bender JCC's Chief Marketing Officer, and all-around "nice Jewish boy" turned creative professional who believes thoughtful stories can connect people of all backgrounds. Brandon is a former Jewish summer camper, an alumnus of two Jewish day schools, and grew up in Jewish Community Centers; the first home run he ever hit was on a JCC baseball field. When he's not wordsmithing, Brandon is likely buried in a new novel, crossing cities off his bucket list, or playing guitar. He lives for live music.



Josh Bender

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
BENDER JCC**

Josh Bender has spent the last 20 years in leadership roles spanning the JCC, Jewish camping, synagogue, and Jewish Day School worlds. He brings an eclectic background in both executive and educational leadership in the Jewish non-profit sector. Josh is a graduate of DSLTI, a leadership program at the Jewish Theological Seminary, holds a Master's Degree in Jewish Education from Baltimore Hebrew Institute of Towson University, and a bachelor's degree from Penn State University in English Writing. Josh grew up in the JCC movement in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania where he learned his love of sports, song leading and playing the guitar in JCC camp and youth groups. Josh is married to Julie and has 4 children, Noah, Jacob, Ethan, and Sophie.



Kate Falls

**INCLUSION DIRECTOR,
BENDER JCC**

Kate Falls is a proud Bender JCC "lifer." Kate started as an Inclusion Counselor at Lessans Camp JCC and came back summer after summer to be a part of the camp team. Kate joined the Bender JCC full-time in June 2023 as Inclusion Director. Kate loves local coffee, live music and spending time with friends. Kate received her bachelors degree in Special Education from Towson University, where she went on to teach in Baltimore as a special educator.



Steve Blanks

**DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS,
SEEC**

Steve has served as the Director of Partnerships since 2019, having previously joined SEEC in 1999 as the Director of Medical Day programs and, later, Director of Workforce Development. Steve acts as a liaison for the Board's Governance Committee, supports the Executive Committee, and serves as special projects lead for agency-wide initiatives requiring executive oversight. As a veteran of the employment field for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, Steve has presented at various regional, national, and international industry conferences. Steve has a unique interest in this field, as his eldest brother has a developmental disability and is successfully living and working in the community in Kansas City, Missouri.



Jermaine Stanley

**BOARD MEMBER, BENDER JCC
FOUNDER, STANLEY
CONSULTING GROUP**

One of Bender JCC's newest board members, Jermaine is a Cybersecurity and Information Tech Risk leader, a rising voice in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Technology, and an influencer who is effective at gaining consensus at all levels of management. As a technology leader with a reputation for building teams, mentoring, and creating diverse and inclusive cultures, Jermaine strives to help companies promote DEI within their organizations.

AQUATICS

Caroline Cardullo,
Director

301.348.3890 | ccardullo@benderjccgw.org



Youth Group Swim Lessons

Skip dates: February 19

Level 1: Water Exploration (3 – 5 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 4 – March 31 | 10:00 – 10:30 AM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM
\$170/members | \$185/public

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Level 2: Primary Skills (4 – 6 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 4 – March 31 | 10:30–11:00 AM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM
\$170/members | \$185/public

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Level 3: Stroke Readiness (4 – 6 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 4 – March 31 | 11:00 – 11:30 AM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 4:30 – 5:00 PM
\$170/members | \$185/public

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4 | 4:30 – 5:00 PM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Level 4: Stroke Development (6 – 12 years old)

Sundays | February 4 – March 31
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM | \$190/members | \$210/public

Group Swim Classes

Waterbabies (6 – 18 months)

Sundays | February 4 – March 31 | 9:00 – 9:30 AM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Watertots (18 months – 3 years old)

Sundays | February 4 – March 31 | 9:30 – 10:00 AM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Adult Swim Classes

Wednesdays | February 7 – March 27 | 5:00 – 5:30 PM
\$190/members | \$210/public

Private and Semi-Private Swim Lessons

One-on-one (private) or two-on-one (semi-private) swim instruction exclusively for Bender JCC members.

To schedule your lesson, contact Caroline Cardullo at 301.348.3890 or ccardullo@benderjccgw.org.

Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program

Helping children, teens, and adults with orthopedic-related disabilities to enjoy aquatics, this program matches participants with a coordinator, physical therapist, and adaptive water instructors to teach basic swimming skills.

For details, contact Caroline Cardullo at 301.348.3890 or ccardullo@benderjccgw.org.



A Lifetime of Belonging:

Special Olympics Medalist Peter Annulis Grew Up at the Bender JCC



Kate Falls,

Inclusion Director, Bender JCC

Peter Annulis first came to the Bender JCC as a six-year-old to take swimming lessons with his siblings. Over the years, Peter progressed from lessons to participating on swim teams. Now 19, Peter competes in the Special Olympics, having won gold and silver medals in the 2022 competition, and was the fastest swimmer in Maryland for the 100-meter breaststroke.

Peter's mother, Lisa Annulis, sent Peter to the Bender JCC for swimming lessons because of the inclusive environment. Connecting with Caroline Cardullo, The Bender JCC's Aquatics Director, convinced Lisa she made the right choice. "It was such a great match and I felt like [Peter] was accepted," Lisa said.

Peter has become more independent because of his aquatics experiences at the Bender JCC. "I drop him off at the J, and he goes in," Lisa said. "He's got his badge; he goes downstairs, gets changed, and swims 26 laps!"

Peter's commitment to wellness at the Bender JCC extends beyond the pool to the group exercise studios and fitness center where he works-out with personal trainer Alana Del Sordi. "[The Bender JCC] helps keep Peter fit," Lisa said. "Alana helped us figure out that Peter could do Zumba."

To gain employment experience, Peter volunteers at the Bender JCC, working with Health and Fitness Coordinator Paul Macias to keep the Weinberg Health and Fitness Center clean and operating smoothly. "Peter loves working with Paul and feels good about the work he's doing," Lisa said. "These professional experiences continue all the great things Peter's already learning [at the Bender JCC]."

Peter engages differently with the Bender JCC as a young adult than when he and his siblings first started taking youth swimming lessons. "The Bender JCC has opened up a whole new world for Peter," Lisa said. "I didn't imagine all this when he started swimming."

Not only has Peter grown up at the Bender JCC, but the Center has also grown with him. "There's so much here," Lisa said. "[The Bender JCC] continues to expand opportunities for members with disabilities; it's a place where he can keep growing."

Peter shared that he is proud of himself for working and taking the bus. Lisa added that Peter has made many friends at the Bender JCC: "The security guards and front desk staff know Peter by name and say hi to him every time he walks in."

Lisa credited the Bender JCC's "can do attitude" and inclusive environment as helping Peter and their entire family feel a true sense of belonging.



"The Bender JCC is a big part of Peter's world," Lisa said. "I appreciate that the Bender JCC offers so many meaningful experiences for Peter, which makes it so I don't have to work so hard to find those opportunities elsewhere. We felt so fortunate to find this place that's close to us, that has this great reputation [of working] with individuals with disabilities and helping them grow [throughout] all stages of their development, not just when they're six and learning to swim, but through all their transitions into adulthood."

"I can't imagine my life without [the Bender JCC]," Peter said. "This place is awesome!"

The Bender JCC staff and members feel the same way about Peter: he is awesome, we appreciate his valuable contributions to our community, and we can't imagine life at Bender JCC without him!



RESOURCE ROUND-UP

Health and Wellness

Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program

BENDER JCC PROGRAM

A program for people with orthopedic-related disabilities to enjoy aquatics.

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Spirit Club

Inclusive fitness center that offers personal training and group exercise classes.

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Hapoel Tel Aviv Shavim

BENDER JCC PROGRAM

An inclusive soccer league for teenagers (middle and high school) to play together on one field.

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ZamDance

A dance and music fitness class for people with disabilities.

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Sports Plus

Fitness classes for children, teens and young adults with autism and developmental disabilities.

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Mike Holmes,
Director

301.348.3894 | mholmes@benderjccgw.org

HEALTH & FITNESS

PERSONAL TRAINING

First time clients can get a "Jumpstart":

- Three, 60-minute sessions/\$149
- Three, 30-minute sessions/\$99

Visit benderjccgw.org/training to meet our trainers and to book your session.

PICKLEBALL

Beginner Adult Pickleball Instruction

February 6 – April 9

Tuesdays | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Pickleball Pick-up Games

Choose from two convenient drop-in times:

INDOORS - The Wasserman Gymnasium

Wednesdays | 10:00 AM – 12 PM

Fridays | 3:30 – 5:30 PM

Outdoor Pickleball will resume in the Spring season.

GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

Paul Macias, Health & Fitness Coordinator

301.348.3891 | pmacias@benderjccgw.org

Choose from 20+ weekly GroupEx classes. Please note that class options, times, and locations are subject to change. Check the GroupEx calendars on our website for the most up-to-date information.

Abs, Back, & Stretch

Thursdays | 10:00 AM

Aqua Fit

Tuesdays + Thursdays | 11:00 AM

Balance & Strength

Mondays | 11:45 AM + 12:45 PM

Wednesdays | 12:00 PM

Butts and Guts

Tuesdays | 10:30 AM *Virtual Only*

Cardio Sculpt *Virtual Only*

Wednesdays | 8:15 AM

Cardio Strength

Mondays | 10:30 AM

Fit Fusion

Thursdays | 9:00 AM

Flow Yoga

Mondays | 9:30 AM

Tuesdays | 12:00 PM

Gentle Yoga

Thursdays | 12:00 PM

Hatha Yoga

Wednesdays | 6:00 PM

Ignite Dance Fit

Mondays | 6:00 PM

Les Mills BODYCOMBAT

Thursdays | 10:45 AM

Studio C

Les Mills BODYPUMP

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays | 6:15 AM

Tuesdays, Thursdays | 6:30 PM

Saturdays | 8:00 AM

Pilates

Sundays | 11:00 AM

Mondays | 7:00 PM

Saturdays | 8:00 AM

Cardio Challenge

Fridays | 9:30 AM

Spin

Tuesdays | 6:00 PM

Cycle

Thursdays | 8:00 AM

Saturdays | 7:00 AM

Sunrise Yoga

Saturdays | 9:00 AM

Tai Chi

Mondays | 12:00 – 1:00 PM

\$99/members | \$149/public

Tone Up & Shape Up

Fridays | 12:00 PM

Total Body Fitness

Tuesdays | 9:30 AM

Thursdays | 10:00 AM

Zumba

Sundays, Wednesdays | 9:30 AM

Tuesdays | 8:00 AM + 5:30 PM

Saturdays | 10:15 AM

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.



YOUTH SPORTS

Kindy Diallo,
Director

301.348.3852 | kdiallo@benderjccgw.org



YOUTH KARATE

All karate classes run through June.

Participants are welcome to join mid-session for a prorated class fee.

Skip dates for all karate classes:

Monday: February 19, April 22, 24, May 27

Wednesday: April 24

Lil Dragons (ages 3 – 5)

Wednesdays | Through June | 3:15 – 4:00 PM
\$430/members | \$450/public

Kid Tiger (ages 5 – 8)

Mondays | Through June | 4:15 – 5:00 PM
\$430/members | \$450/public

Wednesdays | Through June | 4:15 – 5:00 PM
\$520/members | \$550/public

Mondays & Wednesdays | Through June
4:15 – 5:00 PM | \$960/members | \$1,000/public

Beginner (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | Through June
5:00 – 5:45 PM | \$960/members | \$1,000/public

Intermediate/Advanced (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | Through June
5:45 – 6:30 PM | \$960/members | \$1,000/public

Adult/Black Belt (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | Through June
6:45 – 7:30 PM | \$960/members | \$1,000/public

MULTI-SPORTS & RECREATION

Superheroes (ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 3:00 – 3:30 PM
\$155/members | \$165/public

Preschool Soccer (ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 3:45 – 4:15 PM
\$155/members | \$165/public

Youth Soccer (ages 6 – 10)

Mondays | February 5 – April 1 | 4:30 – 5:10 PM
\$155/members | \$165/public

Tball, Kickball, Hockey (ages 3 – 5)

Tuesdays | February 6 – April 2 | 3:00 – 3:30 PM
\$185/members | \$195/public

Basketball Clinic (ages 3 – 5)

Tuesdays | February 6 – April 2 | 3:45 – 4:15 PM
\$220/members | \$240/public

Basketball Clinic (ages 5 – 8)

Tuesdays | February 6 – April 2 | 4:30 – 5:00 PM
\$220/members | \$240/public

Pickleball (ages 6 – 12)

Tuesdays | February 6 – April 2 | 5:00 – 5:30 PM
\$220/members | \$240/public

Tumble Tots Gymnastics (ages 3 – 4)

Wednesdays | February 7 – April 3
3:00 – 3:30 PM | \$230/members | \$240/public

Super Tots Gymnastics (ages 3 – 5)

Wednesdays | February 7 – April 3
3:45 – 4:15 PM | \$230/members | \$240/public

Gymnastics Level 1 (ages 5 – 8)

Wednesdays | February 7 – April 3
4:30 – 5:10 PM | \$230/members | \$240/public

Gymnastics Level 2 (ages 8 – 12)

Wednesdays | February 7 – April 3
5:10 – 5:50 PM | \$230/members | \$240/public

Tennis + Volleyball (ages 3 – 5)

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4
3:00 – 3:30 PM | \$185/members | \$195/public

Superstar Basketball (ages 3 – 5)

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4
3:45 – 4:15 PM | \$185/members | \$195/public

Basketball Level 1 (ages 5 – 8)

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4
4:30 – 5:05 PM | \$185/members | \$195/public

Basketball Level 2 (ages 8 – 12)

Thursdays | February 8 – April 4
5:10 – 5:45 PM | \$185/members | \$195/public

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.



Susan Fischer,
Chief Program Officer

301.348.3892 | sfischer@benderjccgw.org

DANCE & MUSIC

Youth Dance

All dance classes run through May.

All classes include age-appropriate instruction in a combination of disciplines, including ballet, jazz, hip-hop, musical theater and tap. Students will learn a piece to showcase at our May 21 spring performance.

Skip date: February 19, March 25, April 22, 29

Preschool Dance (Ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 5 – May 20 | 3:30 – 4:15 PM
\$555/members | \$575/public

Tuesdays | February 6 – May 21 | 3:30 – 4:15 PM
\$555/members | \$575/public

K – 1st Grade Dance (Ages 5 – 7)

Tuesdays | February 6 – May 21 | 4:30 – 5:30 PM
\$555/members | \$575/public

2nd – 5th Grade Dance (Ages 7 – 11)

Tuesdays | February 6 – May 21 | 4:30 – 5:30 PM
\$670/members | \$700/public

Private Music Lessons

Virtual and in-person private instruction available in a variety of instruments including piano, percussion, strings, and woodwinds.

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767 to discuss support and accommodations.

Potomac Soccer

LIL'FUTURES

Soccer Clinics
Boys and Girls 2015-2018

March 12-April 23
Bender JCC SportsPlex
5-6pm

\$175/Six Sessions

For All Skill Levels!
Register Here: potomacsoccer.org/programs/lil-futures
Questions? info@potomacsoccer.org

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Lauren Dworkin,
Director

301.348.3837 | ldworkin@benderjccgw.org



BENDER-DOSIK PARENTING CENTER

Jennifer Radosh, Director of JFamily Programs
301.348.3848 | jradosh@benderjccgw.org

Bim Bom Bags: Tu B'Shevat

Wednesday, January 17
\$18/members | \$20/public

Shabbat Shalom Playgroup

Fridays | December 1 – February 9 | 10:30 – 11:00 AM
Skip date: December 29
Free RSVP

Baby and Me Yoga

Mondays | November 27 – February 5 | 8:45 – 9:30 AM
Skip dates: December 25; January 1, 15
\$200/members | \$210/public

Rhythm'N'Ruach

Choose from two convenient class times:

Tuesdays | November 28 – February 6 | 4:00 – 4:45 PM
Thursdays | November 30 – February 8
10:00 – 10:45 AM
Skip dates: December 26, 28
\$250/members | \$260/public

Books & Bubbles

Wednesdays | November 29 – February 7
10:30 – 11:00 AM
\$70/members | \$80/public

Silly Soccer

Saturdays | December 2 – February 3
10:00 – 10:30 AM
Skip date: December 30
\$225/members | \$235/public

Music Together

Choose from two convenient class times:
Saturdays | January 6 – March 9
9:00 – 9:45 AM & 10:00 – 10:45 AM
\$260/members & public

- \$175 additional for the first sibling of a registered child age 8+ months at the time of registration.
- \$75 additional for the second sibling of a registered child age 8+ months at the time of registration.
- Free for siblings under eight months or over six years at the time of registration.

Crafty Kids: Creating Judaica Keepsakes

Sundays | January 7 – February 11 | 3:30 – 4:15 PM
\$180/members | \$190/public

Crafty Kids: Creating Israeli Inspired Art

Sundays | February 25 – April 7 | 3:30 – 4:15 PM
\$180/members | \$190/public

FIT4BABY

Mondays | January 8 – April 22 | 10:00 – 11:30 AM
\$199/members & public

Stroller Strides at the J

Tuesdays | November 14, 2023 – March 1 | 10:00 AM
\$25 per class/members & public

VIRTUAL Growing Grasshoppers

Sundays | January 21 – March 17 | 8:30 AM
FREE

VIRTUAL Baby Lap Time

Sundays | January 7 – March 10 | 8:30 AM
FREE

JEWISH FAMILY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

benderjccgw.org/jfa

The Bender JCC welcomes parents raising Jewish children into our community. Our Jewish Family Ambassadors (JFAs) are here to listen and share with you, and to connect you to other families and opportunities in our Jewish community. If you live in Montgomery County and are raising a Jewish child up to five years old, please register at benderjccgw.org/jfa.

Emma Hertzberg, Family Engagement and Social Action Coordinator

301.348.3756 | ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org

BENDER-DOSIK GRANDPARENTING CENTER

benderjccgw.org/grandparenting

The Grandparenting Center is dedicated to strengthening and celebrating the grandparenting experience.

GRAND Sleepover

Saturday, January 27 | 5:30 – 7:00 PM
\$36/members & public

DELIVERING GOOD NETWORK

MLK Jr. Day of Service

Monday, January 15 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM
\$10/members & public

President's Day of Service

Monday, February 19 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM
\$5/members | \$5/public

B. Changemakers

Sundays | January 21 – May 19 | 1:00 – 5:00 PM
\$250/members & public

Volunteer Opportunities

The Delivering Good Network is the Bender JCC's centralized and sustained social action effort focusing on five key areas of impact: environment, housing, hunger, immigrants, and inclusion. Visit benderjccgw.org/dgn for more information.

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.

The Power of Play



Rachel Assal Albert,
*Developmental Support Coordinator,
Bender ECC*

Play is a powerful tool for learning, and is essential in the development of a child's social-emotional growth. Most child development specialists define play as spontaneous, voluntary, fun, flexible, and relationship based.

Here are three reasons why play is important for a child's development.

1 . Play supports responsive relationships.

Playing with our children offers a wonderful opportunity to let loose, be silly, and share moments of laughter. We give space for our children to share their ideas. Not only do we get a chance to listen to our children, but also to actively respond, sometimes by expanding upon their brilliant ideas or even gently challenging them. Dynamic interactions like play serve as a catalyst for developing a deeper connection with our children and strengthening the bond we share.



2. Play develops core life skills.

When we play with our children, we offer them an opportunity to hone essential life skills within a secure and forgiving environment. Playtime opens avenues for our children to actively practice and cultivate abilities such as negotiation, compromise, and resilience.

3. Play reduces stress.

We all want to be heard! When we feel heard, we feel less anxious. How often have you reached out to a friend with a question or a statement, only to be met with silence? This non-response can trigger a genuine physiological stress response and escalate feelings of anxiety, which is why it is important to truly listen and respond to our children's initiation when playing with them. Doing so reinforces a child's sense of value and importance. When we stay on their topic and follow through with the child's initiations or actions, we are showing the child in a concrete and tangible manner that we value and respect them.

How can you best support your child's play?

Harvard University's "Serve and Return" method outlines a "5 Steps Brain-Building" process to engage in meaningful play with your child. The method can be adjusted to support play with babies to preschoolers. By adhering to these five steps, you concurrently address the three areas we previously emphasized.

On the Serve and Return website, you will find videos to support learning and a PDF guide in English and Spanish. Developing an understanding of the significance of play,

coupled with familiarity with the Serve and Return method, equips you with the tools to carve out a few moments each day to engage in meaningful play with your child. Play is an investment in your child's growth and development, and it strengthens your parent-child bond.

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RESOURCE ROUND-UP

Support for Young Children

Speech Development

Information on speech milestones for young children.

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Child Find (Montgomery County)

Free developmental screenings for children aged 3-6. Offered through Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

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Benefits of Sensory Play

Information on the different sensory systems activated by play.

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Brain Builders

BENDER JCC CLASS

Brain Builders is a class for preschool students, to develop executive functioning, self-regulation and social-emotional awareness skills.

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Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program

Free local services for newborns to 34.5 months old.

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Come As You Are:

Inclusion Means Belonging



Kate Falls,
Inclusion Director, Bender JCC

What does it mean for our community to be inclusive? Inclusion goes beyond programs or platitudes and is bigger than any one person.

Inclusion is belonging, the feeling of being welcomed, valued, and needed by our community. Regardless of ability, each of us should feel that our community accepts us “as we are,” and for “who we are.” All members — including people with disabilities — deserve to feel equally at home at the Bender JCC.

Simply bringing people together does not guarantee an enduring community. Likewise, shared interests do not ensure genuine friendships. Inclusion is our glue, the foundational principle which connects us.

The Bender JCC will always be a welcoming place where people of all abilities, backgrounds, identities, and religions can pop-in for a workout in our fitness center or swim laps in our pools. But those who seek to belong to something greater than themselves will get the most out of their community. We don't just offer activities, classes, and services; our vision is that these shared experiences connect us to people who genuinely care.

Our commitment to care is why Health and Fitness Director Mike Holmes notices when regulars have been absent from the gym. If



you've ever received a “check-in” call from Mike, you know it is because he genuinely cares for each member of our wellness community.

Inclusion requires big, bold actions like designing new programs for underserved populations and ensuring that every part of our campus is physically accessible. Perhaps more importantly, our culture of inclusion takes root through small gestures and interactions, like our fitness staff modifying a workout for a longtime client whose physical needs have changed.

Our inclusive mindset transcends age and life stage, like when our youngest friends in the Bender Early Childhood Center



empathetically discuss and celebrate their differences. Interacting with those different from us can be uncomfortable at any age, so our culture of inclusion gives us the grace and safety to try.

Inclusion is not a switch we turn on and off but a dial we hone, a practice we must commit to daily. While the Bender JCC's legacy of inclusion spans decades, in many ways, we have only just begun our work. Programmatically, our community is best known for Lessans Camp JCC's summer program. But camp is just the start. As a community, we can do more to expand our culture of inclusion beyond seven weeks in the summer to a 365-day-a-year

commitment where inclusion permeates every facet of the Bender JCC.

Our staff has launched a three-year plan to expand inclusion at the Bender JCC and build the community everyone deserves. We invite you to take this journey with us to help create an inclusive community. The work is never complete; there will always be needs to address. The work of inclusion belongs to all of us and benefits everyone, not only people with disabilities.



Kate Falls,
Director

301.348.3767 | kfalls@benderjccgw.org

INCLUSION

Real World Ready

Wednesdays | February 7 – March 27 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM
\$200/members | \$215/public

Hapoel Tel Aviv Shavim - Soccer

Saturdays | Through June | 10:00 - 11:00 AM
Free

Brain Builders

Mondays | February 5 – April 2 | 3:30 - 4:15 PM
\$200/members | \$215/public
Skip date: February 19

Empowering Friendship

Tuesdays | Through January 30 | 4:30 – 6:30 PM
\$160/members | \$175/public

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767 to discuss support and accommodations.

RESOURCE ROUND-UP

Friendship, Fun, & Recreation

Real World Ready

BENDER JCC CLASS

Teenagers and young adults with disabilities practice critical functional skills in a supportive and flexible environment, including vocational, social, and leisure skills.

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Empowering Friendship

BENDER JCC CLASS

A neurodiversity-affirming social skills group for teenagers with disabilities. Each week, teens will enjoy relaxed, student-centered social and leisure time and develop independence by practicing critical life skills including self-advocacy, consent and boundaries, self-determination (goal setting), and more.

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Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle offers a variety of social programs for people with disabilities as well as programs for parents and families.

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ArtStream

A theater program for adults with disabilities.

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Why Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity STILL Matter, Now More Than Ever



Jermaine Stanley,
Board Member, Bender JCC
Founder Stanley Consulting Group

Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity (IED) stand as pillars of societal progress, and their relevance has only deepened in the current landscape. As we navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing world, the imperative to champion IED principles becomes more pronounced than ever. These principles not only foster a fair and just society but also fuel innovation, resilience, and sustained growth.

The world today is marked by unprecedented interconnectedness, with global challenges that require collaborative solutions. In this intricate web of issues, the value of diverse perspectives cannot be overstated. Inclusion ensures that every voice is heard, bridging gaps in understanding and creating a collective strength that transcends individual limitations.

Diversity of thought, grounded in a culture of inclusion, is a powerful catalyst for innovation and problem-solving, essential attributes for tackling the complex issues humanity faces, from climate change to public health crises.

Equity serves as the foundation upon which a just society is built. Persistent disparities in access to education, employment, and healthcare create barriers that impede progress. In a world that is becoming more cognizant of social inequalities, the pursuit of equity is not only a moral imperative but also a pragmatic strategy. By dismantling systemic barriers, societies can unlock the full potential of their diverse populations, fostering an environment where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive.

The current societal landscape is marked by a heightened awareness of social justice issues. Movements advocating for equality and justice have gained momentum, prompting individuals, organizations, and governments to reevaluate their practices. The imperative for equity is underscored by the need to rectify historical injustices and

build a future that is more inclusive and just. It is a call to action that resonates globally, cutting across geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries.

In the corporate realm, the business case for IED is stronger than ever. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse and inclusive workplaces outperform their counterparts in various aspects. Companies that prioritize IED not only attract a wider talent pool but also benefit from increased creativity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. In a competitive global marketplace, businesses that embody IED principles are better positioned to adapt to change, connect with diverse consumer bases, and build resilient, future-ready teams.

Moreover, the demographic landscape is evolving, with younger generations placing a premium on values such as inclusion and social responsibility. Companies that align themselves with these values are not only meeting the expectations of the workforce but also appealing to a broader consumer base. The business world is increasingly recognizing that IED is not just a moral imperative but a strategic advantage that contributes to long-term sustainability and success.

In conclusion, the relevance of inclusion, equity, and diversity has not waned; rather, it has intensified in the face of evolving challenges. These principles are not fleeting trends but enduring cornerstones of progress.

As we navigate a complex and interconnected world, embracing IED is not just a choice; it is an imperative that shapes a more equitable, innovative, and resilient future.

Now, more than ever, the world needs the transformative power of inclusion, the rectifying force of equity, and the enriching impact of diversity. It is through these principles that societies and organizations can forge a path toward a brighter and more inclusive tomorrow.

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Frieda Enoch,
Director

301.348.3809 | fenoch@benderjccgw.org

COMING OF AGE

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR ACTIVE ADULTS (60+)

JTalks: Journeys Through TV & Film Series

Wednesdays in February

\$36 (when you register for entire 4-part series ~or~ \$10/session)

A Look Back at 70 Years of TV News

Wednesday, February 7 | 2:00 PM | \$10

A History of the TV Talk Show

Wednesday, February 14 | 2:00 PM | \$10

The Hollywood Career of Judy Garland

Wednesday, February 21 | 2:00 PM | \$10

Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks

Wednesday, February 28 | 2:00 PM | \$10

Sip & Share Sisterhood

Women's group is back at the J for bi-monthly gatherings. Join us for a hot beverage and conversation every other Monday at 1:00 PM. Sip & Share Sisterhood is a warm and welcoming get-together designed exclusively for women seeking connection, camaraderie, and stimulating conversations.

Mondays | March 4 - April 15 | 1:00 PM | Free

CoA Coffeehouse: Bacharach & Broadway

Thursday, April 11 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM | \$32

The food. The ambience. The camaraderie. The MUSIC!

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.

"OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO..."

National Portrait Gallery

Wednesday, March 13 | 11:30 AM | \$45

Private Tour: Hollywood's Golden Era Exhibit

NYC Overnight

Wednesday, March 27 - Thursday, March 28

\$1,195/pp, double room; \$1,295/single room (all inclusive)

Broadway Show (A Beautiful Noise); Dinner Cruise; Docent led Tour at Museum of the City of NY; Central Synagogue Private Tour

CINEMA J

Bella!

Two Screenings:

@ Leisure World

Thursday, March 7 | 1:30-3:00 PM | \$10 in advance/\$12 at the door

Leisure World Clubhouse II

3300 N. Leisure World Blvd., Silver Spring, MD 20906

@ The Kreeger Theater

Thursday, March 7 | 7:00-9:00 PM | \$12

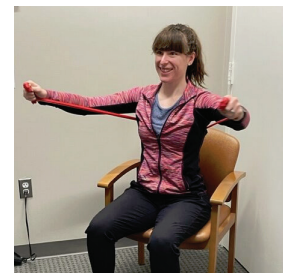
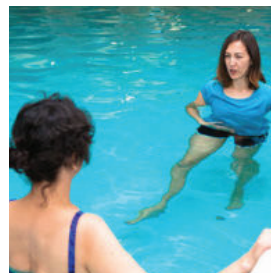
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HEBREW CLASSES

Rivka Degani,
Director

301.348.3810 | rdegani@benderjccgw.org



The price for all Hebrew classes is \$560.

Hebrew Aleph 1

Requires a mandatory multimedia program fee of \$75, due at registration.

Wednesdays | February 7 - June 26

4:00 – 6:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

Skip date: June 12

Hebrew Aleph 2

Mondays | February 19 - July 15

4:40 – 6:30 PM | *hybrid class!*

Skip date: April 22

Hebrew Bet

Thursdays | February 8 - June 20

6:15 – 8:15 PM | *hybrid class!*

Intermediate Hebrew Gimmel

Choose from two convenient class times:

Mondays | February 19 - July 8

3:45 – 5:45 PM | *virtual class!*

Skip date: April 22

Wednesdays | January 24 - June 19

6:00 – 8:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

Skip dates: June 12

Hebrew Dalet

Choose from three convenient class times:

Tuesdays | January 30 - June 25

6:00 – 8:00 PM | *virtual class!*

Skip date: April 23, 30

Thursdays | February 8 - June 20

4:00 – 6:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

Fridays | February 16 - June 28

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

Advanced Hebrew (Level 1)

Thursdays | February 8 - June 20

7:00 – 9:00 PM | *virtual class!*

Advanced Hebrew (Level 2)

Choose from three convenient class times:

Mondays | February 19 - July 8

6:30 – 8:30 PM | *virtual class!*

Skip dates: April 22

Wednesdays | January 31 - June 19

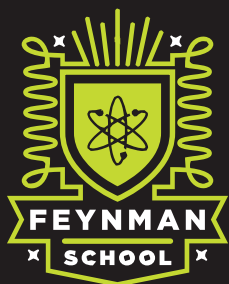
9:00 – 11:00 AM | *hybrid class!*

Skip dates: April 12

Wednesdays | January 24 - June 12

7:00 – 9:00 PM | *virtual class!*

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.



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www.feynmanschool.org



Marcie Blackman,
Director

301.348.3808 | mblackman@benderjccgw.org

ARTS & ADULTS

2023-2024 POLINGER ARTISTS OF EXCELLENCE CONCERT SERIES

Brentano: String Quartet
Sunday, March 10 | 7:00 PM | \$50

Israeli Chamber Project
Sunday, April 14 | 7:00 PM | \$50

Horszowski Trio: Piano
Sunday, May 5 | 7:00 PM | 7:00 PM | \$50

2023-2024 MOUNT VERNON VIRTUOSI
MOUNT VERNON VIRTUOSI CELLO GANG
Sunday, March 10

Family Concert | 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Free
General Public Concert | 2:00 – 3:00 PM | Free

ESOL
Virtual Only
Wednesday, January 3 - March 6 | 9:30 - 10:30 AM

In-person Only
Wednesday | January 3 - March 6 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Skip date: January 10

U.S. CITIZENSHIP
Tuesday | January 2 - March 5
10:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Skip date: January 9

CANASTA
Tuesday | January 23 - February 27 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
\$140/members | \$150/public

CERAMICS

Beginner/Intermediate Adult Ceramics

Monday | October 2 - December 4
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
\$370/members | \$380/public
Skip date: October 30

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

Join us for a great day of programming near you! Exercise, socialize, hear a lecture, attend a performance and enjoy a delicious kosher meal. Lunch – suggested \$5 donation. For more information, please contact Rachel Elazar at relazar@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3849.

GOLDMAN ART GALLERY

I Define Who I Am: The Art of Make Studio
Saturday, January 6 - Saturday, January 27
Reception: Saturday, January 6 | 12:00 PM

ADULT JAZZ AND LYRICAL DANCE

Tuesdays | January 9 – February 13
\$100/members | \$120/public | 7:00 - 8:00 PM

BRIDGE

Sunday | January 7 – February 11
\$140/members | \$160/public | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LESSANS FAMILY LITERARY SERIES

The Rye Bread Marriage
By Michaela Weissman
Wednesday, February 14 | 6:30 PM
\$18/members | \$18/public

All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.

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Why Inclusion is Important



Steve Blanks,
Director of Partnerships, SEEC

I've been a baby brother my whole life. My brother, Robert, has always included me in everything he does, and everything he wants to do. He currently works full-time in Kansas City, Missouri, lives in his own house that he takes care of himself, and has an active social life. What's so special about that? Robert was born with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD). When we were kids, the options ahead of him were limited. Special schools and programs would separate him from others. The idea of work seemed impossible.

As I got older, I realized that more people with disabilities were beginning to be included in everyday activities, from home to work life. In fact, Robert started to work part-time with a nonprofit as an office assistant. I was floored by his dedication, commitment, and skills, and by the impact it had on the business. His success inspired me. I thought maybe I could help others like my brother to follow their career dreams, and I jumped at the chance to work in the field. I was fortunate to get hired at SEEC, a Montgomery County developmental disability provider based in Silver Spring. For almost 40 years, SEEC has led local services spearheading meaningful work for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As I was beginning my new career, my older brother was excelling in his.

Here are a few facts and figures that show why inclusion is important.



1. Only 16% of people with IDD have jobs.¹

2. Thousands of people with IDD still work in segregated “workshops,” legally being employed for pennies per hour.

3. The poverty rate of people with disabilities is double the national average.²

4. Households with people with disabilities have net earnings of 57% of the US average.²

Despite 30 years passing since the ADA's incredible landmark work that paved the way for significant inclusion, people with disabilities are still not wholly included in life's core activity of work. As a result, massive wealth and income gaps emerge. Fortunately, Employment First efforts across the country are taking aim at reversing this segregation. Maryland, thanks to dedicated advocacy by persons with disabilities and the community, became one of the first states to ban below sub-minimum wage segregated work, which had been an anchor holding back inclusion for many.³

Inclusion means so much for many of the people SEEC supports, from Darren celebrating his 20th anniversary working with the federal government to John landing his first job after school and earning enough to move into his own apartment. People with IDD across Montgomery County are showing off their abilities and creating change at a grass roots level. Local businesses like Dawson's Market in Rockville are embracing people with disabilities to address their staffing needs. People with disabilities are beginning to not

just be included, but to be regarded as vital to the economic engine for organizations across the country. A recent report by Accenture⁴ lays out compelling arguments why inclusion matters, citing significant gains across income, profit and productivity for those businesses embracing disability initiatives.

My brother just celebrated his 60th birthday and 30th work anniversary. He made a career, created income for himself, and was able to build wealth through his earnest savings, as well as buying a home. He makes me incredibly proud and continues to be a role model for others. I am proud of what he achieved and hope to celebrate many other people with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieving their dreams of inclusion success.

Sources:

1. Source National Core Indicators Survey, 2021
https://idd.nationalcoreindicators.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/IPS-21-22-Employment_FINAL.pdf
2. Source Prosperity Now
<https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/resources/Financial-Stability-of-People-with-Disabilities.pdf>
3. <https://disabilityrightsmd.org/maryland-to-phase-out-14c-subminimum-wage/#:~:text=The%20Ken%20Capone%20Equal%20Employment,with%20disabilities%20inMaryland%20by%202020.>
4. Accenture Report on Disability Inclusion
<https://www.accenture.com/content/dam/accenture/final/accenture-com/document-2/Disability-Inclusion-Report-Business-Imperative.pdf>

RESOURCE ROUND-UP

Employment & Independent Living

MAKOM

Community living agency that offers support for adults with IDD, including programs such as housing (both group and independent living), in-home support, and employment.

SCAN TO

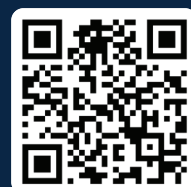


LEARN MORE

Sunflower Bakery

A bakery that trains and employs adults with disabilities, while emphasizing vocational and life skills.

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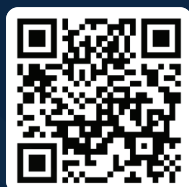


LEARN MORE

Main Street

Main Street is an inclusive apartment community that offers housing for people with disabilities, as well as recreational programming.

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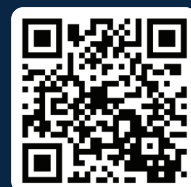


LEARN MORE

SEEC

SEEC is a progressive non profit agency providing a wide range of communal support — including employment services & placement throughout Montgomery County — to help people with IDD live lives of their choosing.

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