



JEWISH COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

Foundation Focus

WINTER 2025

2025: A Year of Promise

Each new year is filled with promise and at the Jewish Community Foundation, that is certainly the case as we enter 2025 with a record-breaking \$317 million under management. These funds provide a vision of a brighter future through the impact they will make on our community and beyond. We are excited to embrace the opportunity to work with generous community members by helping to navigate charitable plans and offer our expertise in crafting customized giving strategies. This year, we have planned an extensive array of programming and site visits to engage stakeholders to learn together about topics of interest and better understand the ways various community organizations serve their constituents. We hope to see you at one or more of these opportunities to expand your philanthropic perspectives.



Speaking of beginning the year with promise, we recently announced the establishment of the Mark Edelman Theater Fund. This new fund honoring Edelman's life's work brings \$20 million of resources to the Foundation that will continue to impact the performing arts in Kansas City and throughout the United States and Canada, following the tradition established by Theater League over the past decades. In addition to those funds that make the headlines, JCF continues to develop charitable funds at all levels and with varied goals established by our donors. Each fund begins with a conversation and an opportunity to help generous community members better understand how to make their vision a reality. In the year ahead, we look forward to meaningful conversations and the sparks of new ideas that will help shape the community of the future.

Wishing you a wonderful 2025!

Joshua Stein, President & CEO, and Joseph Hiersteiner, Board Chair



JCF Encourages Community to “Be the Change” at 65th Annual Meeting

JCF honored the leadership of outgoing Board President Frank Lipsman and welcomed Joe Hiersteiner as the new Chair.

More than one hundred Foundation fundholders and supporters gathered on the evening of December 11th for the Jewish Community Foundation’s 65th Annual Meeting and Installation of Officers and Trustees. Guests enjoyed socializing, refreshments and an engaging program which reflected on a successful year of impactful philanthropy for every age and stage of life. The event also celebrated the dedicated leadership of outgoing Board of Trustees President Frank Lipsman and welcomed Joseph Hiersteiner as the Foundation’s new Board Chair.

The theme of the event was “Be the Change,” based on the quote, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world” by Mahatma Gandhi. The program began with remarks from honorary event chairs Gail and Gary Weinberg, close personal friends of Lipsman and his wife, Janet Mark. The Weinbergs set the tone for an evening of gratitude and recognition of Lipsman’s inspiring commitment to the community. They noted, “Over the years, we’ve watched Frank in

many leadership roles, as it seems he has been chair or president of almost every agency in our community. Frank is an exceptional leader. He is a great calming voice and always reflects wisdom and intelligence.” Another friend of Lipsman’s, Rabbi Doug Alpert of Congregation Kol Ami, followed with an insightful D’var Torah.

During the business meeting of the program, Foundation membership approved an amendment and restatement of the Jewish Community Foundation bylaws to ensure alignment with best practices in nonprofit governance and the strategic direction of the Foundation. The revisions included addressing JCF’s governance practices to allow for more regular leadership transitions, and changing Josh Stein’s title of Executive Director to President and CEO to be consistent with nonprofit best practices and industry trends.

Investment Committee Chair Brian Scharf shared an update on market performance and announced that, thanks to the generosity of Foundation fundholders, JCF assets have reached an all-time high of \$310 million. JCF is honored to be the trusted steward of these resources which will make an extraordinary philanthropic impact.

Guests enjoyed a touching video about JCF’s programmatic highlights of the year, which featured community members active in the Foundation’s B’nai Tzedek, J-LEAD, Donor Advised Fund and Create a Jewish Legacy programs. Josh Stein recognized the immeasurable contributions of JCF leadership and staff, and shared an exciting update about the Foundation’s growth, noting that legacy gifts are trending at 140% of 2023 levels and new fund creation has increased more than 65% over last year.

In recognition of Lipsman’s leadership, Immediate Past President Alice Jacks Achtenberg presented Lipsman with a special tribute book which included messages from those he had worked with during his tenure. She shared a portion of her own tribute to Lipsman, which read, “You gave generously of your time to the entire Jewish community and we are all better and stronger because of you. Working with you made it clear how any organization, especially JCF, is enhanced by your leadership.”

Lipsman graciously addressed the audience. “Serving as President of the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Community Foundation has been an honor that I won’t forget,” he said. “I have forged friendships, learned a lot about philanthropy from staff and both current and past leadership and broadened my own views of tzedakah. Most of all, I have learned that philanthropy comes in all shapes and sizes, and the important thing is that we all do what we can to help others.”

Lipsman then introduced Joe Hiersteiner as the new Chairman of the Board of the Foundation. Hiersteiner expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead the Foundation and invited each member of the Foundation Family to help further the organization’s mission. One major focus of Hiersteiner’s work as Chair will be helping create a new 3-year strategic plan for the Foundation. “An important part of that plan will be a commitment to enhance our outreach efforts seeking new donors and enhancing our attention to the wants and needs of existing donors,” he said. In looking towards the future, Hiersteiner acknowledged the uncertainty many people are struggling with in the current polarized political climate. “In the face of this uncertainty, we have to redouble our efforts to support those who are marginalized, those

who need a leg up, those who are discriminated against, those in need,” he said. “We can rest comfortably in the knowledge that despite everything going on around us, the Foundation is in capable hands,” he reassured.

The following Trustees were elected: Ben Abelson, Ace Allen, Carol Barnett, Lindsay Fineman, Michelle Goldsmith, Susan Himmelstein, Pamela Kanter, Linda B. Lyon, Robert V. Palan, Rosanne Rosen, Miles Ross, and Catherine D. Singer. The following Officers were also elected: Joseph L. Hiersteiner, Chair; Martha Gershun, Vice Chair; Lara Krigel Pabst, Vice Chair; Brian M. Scharf, Vice Chair; Catherine D. Singer, Treasurer; and Gary Weinberg, Secretary.

New \$20 Million Fund Established to Support the Performing Arts

The Mark Edelman Theater Fund is the Foundation’s largest resource dedicated to the performing arts and will continue Theater League’s long tradition of supporting local theater companies.

We are pleased to announce the creation of a new fund dedicated to supporting professional theater companies in Kansas City and throughout the United States and Canada. Through the generosity of Kansas City-based Theater League, Inc., the Mark Edelman Theater Fund will begin making grants in the first quarter of 2025.

“We are so honored to be entrusted with the stewardship of this incredible community asset, dedicated to enriching the arts, locally and beyond,” said Josh Stein, President and CEO of the Jewish Community Foundation. “We look forward to continuing that legacy.”

The fund is named after Theater League founder and President Mark Edelman. “We are delighted to honor Mark and his achievements on behalf of the theater community here in Kansas City and beyond,” explained Theater League board member and Past President of JCF Alice Jacks Achtenberg. “This is a richly deserved recognition of his life’s work supporting the performing arts.”



Josh Stein, Mark Edelman & Alice Jacks Achtenberg

“I’m honored to receive this recognition from the Theater League’s board,” responded Edelman. “It’s my fervent hope that, under the wise stewardship of JCF, these funds will act as an external endowment for theater companies enhancing the quality of life in the communities they serve with the thrill of live theater.”

An initial grant of \$20 million from Theater League to JCF will establish the fund. Edelman will guide the fund at its inception. It is anticipated that grants totaling \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 will be distributed annually from the Edelman Theater Fund. The fund is JCF’s largest resource dedicated to the performing arts.

“Theater League has long been a major supporter of theater companies here in Kansas City,” explained Edelman. “This new fund at the Jewish Community Foundation will continue that tradition of giving to these important organizations.”

Edelman founded Theater League in 1977. The organization presented an annual series of the Best of Broadway in Kansas City and communities around the country until 2019, when its programming was taken over by the American Theatre Guild. Under Edelman’s leadership, the League produced two seasons at Starlight Theatre, renovated the Midland Theatre, built the Quality Hill Playhouse, produced the syndicated public radio show 12th Street Jump and contributed substantially to theater companies from the Coterie, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival and Unicorn Theatre to KC Rep, TYA, Music Theatre Heritage and KC Actors Theatre. Edelman’s late wife Karin Lichterman and her mother Beverly - the League’s long-time general manager - were instrumental in the early success of the organization.

Meet Thaddeus Diamond, new J-LEAD Co-Chair



Thaddeus Diamond is the new co-chair of J-LEAD, the Foundation’s giving circle for young adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s. Thaddeus is a native New Yorker who has adopted Kansas City as his new home. He and his wife Kelsey have three young children and enjoy being part of the local Jewish community. “We send our children to the Jewish Community Center for preschool, enroll in Barney Goodman for summer camp festivities, and pray and learn at Beth Shalom synagogue,” said Thaddeus. “The people and programs that make up our community have provided us with more than just a home away from home, they’ve given us a sense of meaning and community in such a short time in a city that neither my wife nor I grew up in. That inclusion is the driving reason I have gotten so involved in giving back.”

Thaddeus graduated from Yale and began his career as a software engineer. He was one of the founding engineers on the Amazon Alexa. For the past several years Thaddeus has worked in multiple corporate director roles for publicly traded healthcare companies.

“I am SO excited to be the co-chair of J-LEAD this year!,” said Thaddeus. “Helping organize our young professionals to be able to give back, while at the same time getting to know new people and have fun volunteering and hosting events is amazing. I truly cannot wait to serve you all and give back to the Kansas City community that is our home.”

Thaddeus will work with co-chair Bradley Friedman to guide J-LEAD as the program enters its 20th year. Since the program’s inception, J-LEAD members have collectively donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to nonprofit organizations dedicated to serving our community. For more information about J-LEAD, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at sdicken@jcfkc.org or (913) 327-8286.

The B’nai Tzedek Shuk is Coming!

Save the date for the Foundation’s annual youth philanthropy fair.



The B’nai Tzedek Shuk will take place on Thursday, April 3rd at the Jewish Community Campus. The Shuk is a highlight of the B’nai Tzedek program, which introduces teens to the joys of tzedakah by inviting them to establish their own personal charitable giving accounts at the Foundation. Once a year, B’nai Tzedek fundholders may donate 10% of their funds to a Jewish charity, either locally or in Israel. The Shuk gives fundholders the opportunity to learn about the missions of community organizations and discover how their donations can make a positive impact. In many instances, the Shuk is the first time teens are introduced to the wide array of diverse organizations working in the community.

For more information about B’nai Tzedek, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at sdicken@jcfkc.org or (913) 327-8286.

Meet Our New Trustees

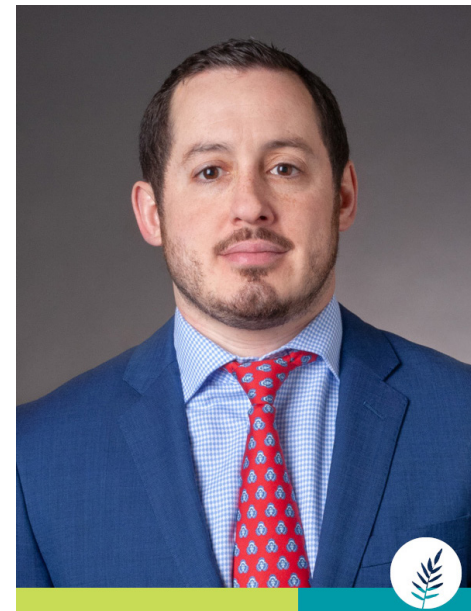
Ben Abelson

Ben is the Portfolio Manager and Sr. Analyst at American Century Investments. He also has a background in mergers and acquisitions in the energy and utility industries. He is a former Chair of J-LEAD, the Foundation's young adult giving circle, and served on the Investment Committee of the Jewish Federation of Baltimore.

“The Foundation plays such a critical role in funding a wide range of needs for our broad KC Jewish community that might otherwise not be met,” said Ben. “I think of the Foundation as a critical financial support structure for the entire community.”

As a Trustee, Ben hopes “to be able to continue the legacy of excellence JCF has had in maintaining and growing its investment pool to best aid our community.”

Ben will serve on the Foundation's Investment Committee.



Lindsay Fineman

Lindsay is a proud professional volunteer and has been an active leader of the Jewish Federation for many years, both in Kansas City and Chicago, and JFNA. She is a past Chair of the J-LEAD program and is the current chair of JCF's Flo Harris Foundation. Lindsay serves on JCF's Grants Committee.

“JCF makes such a tremendous difference in Kansas City because, not only does it encourage current or potential Donor Advised Fund holders to proactively and intentionally prioritize philanthropy in their daily lives, but it also provides the tools, resources and wealth of knowledge that its fundholders often need to maximize the impact their donations can make,” she said.

“Throughout my volunteer work at JCF, I've been so thankful to see the way our foundation has been able to pivot in times of hardship and crisis,” said Lindsay. “When



times are hard, JCF responds - and it can only do so because the Board of Trustees helps ensure that funds are allocated effectively to meet both current and future needs, encourages people to reinvest in our community to help sustain it, maintains a strong commitment to Jewish values while it supports both Jewish and general community nonprofits, and educates future philanthropic community leaders.”

Miles Ross

Miles is retired from positions as partner at CBIZ CPAs and as senior executive at WageWorks (now Health Equity). He is a current Board member and past treasurer of Congregation Beth Shalom, past alumni chairman of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity at Mizzou, and is a volunteer counselor in the AARP’s Tax-Aide program.

“The Foundation educates and innovates with programs that maximize the tax benefits of charitable giving,” said Miles. “It plays a crucial role in sustaining the Jewish organizations that support our community today and into the future.”

As a JCF Trustee, Miles wants “to help the community understand JCF’s role in supporting our Jewish organizations today and sustaining them for generations to come.”

Miles will serve on the Foundation’s Audit Committee.



Resolve to Give Smarter in 2025



There are many advantages to thinking about your charitable giving early in the year, including:

- Helping nonprofit organizations meet their budgets all year long which ensures their ongoing needs are addressed.
- Leveraging employer matching gifts programs early in the year when dollars are available and there is plenty of time to process the paperwork.
- Increasing predictability of cash flow and therefore being proactive, not reactive, in supporting the causes you love.
- Giving you time to thoughtfully include your children and grandchildren in the charitable giving conversation.
- If you're over age 73, being able to avoid the year-end scramble to process a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA directly to an eligible charity, such as a Restricted Fund at JCF, by executing a QCD in the first quarter.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Galblum Dicken at sdicken@jcfkc.org or (913) 327-8286.

New Funds

Donor Advised Funds

Amy & Marshal Allshouse Charitable Fund
Brian & Ilyssa Block Donor Advised Fund
Maggie Fried & Misha Kestler Donor Advised Fund
Amelia James Helzberg Donor Advised Fund
Arthur Charles Helzberg Donor Advised Fund
Benton Feld Helzberg Donor Advised Fund
Leo Harmon Helzberg Donor Advised Fund
Oliver Montgomery Helzberg Donor Advised Fund
Hermanson Family Charitable Fund
Ozar Elyachar Family Donor Advised Fund
Kenneth & Teri Sackin Donor Advised Fund
Kevin & Renee Taylor Donor Advised Fund

Restricted Funds

Mark Edelman Theater Fund
Michael Klein FC Fund
MCHE Jack Mandelbaum Innovation Fund
Arlene & Leo Shalinsky Restricted Fund # 7
Barbara & Jerry Shapiro Legacy Fund
Blanche Sosland Lion of Judah Endowment
Josh & Jane Sosland Federation Endowment Fund
Village Shalom - Epsten Gallery Board Fund
Village Shalom - Heller Bettinger Music Fund
Village Shalom - Polsky Family Arts Endowment
Village Shalom - Polsky Family Arts Fund

