JCC Budapest was founded in 1994 by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), launching Hungary's Jewish revival after the fall of the Iron Curtain.
Today, it serves as the center of Jewish life in the heart of Budapest. In 2022, JCC Budapest became an independent local NGO, and in 2024, our supporters established Friends of JCC Budapest as a registered 501(c)(3) in the United States. To learn more about joining our cadre of overseas friends and investors, please visit **www.friendsofjccbudapest.org.**

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October 2026

JCC Budapest
Where Generations Meet & Community Grows

JCC Budapest Bálint Ház

JCC Budapest is a unique space where Hungarian Jews can be true to themselves, despite the local and global challenges impacting the Jewish people.

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JCC Budapest: *Where Generations Meet & Community Grows*

So much has changed in the world since JCC Budapest first opened its doors in 1994, unlocking a portal to post-Communist Jewish revival in Hungary. As Hungarian Jews found their way to the new JCC, we began a journey of discovery together, learning where we came from and what we were reaching toward.

The vision of our founders – the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Bálint family from England, together with the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities and the Budapest Jewish Federation – was to reconnect us with our ancient Jewish roots so we could build a vibrant Jewish future together.

Today, there are many doors within our JCC. Behind each is a session, activity, meeting, or conversation representing the numerous facets of the Jewish experience – holiday celebrations and Jewish learning, social justice and social life, culture and the culture of giving, history and our own contemporary Jewish stories.

As the world outside the JCC constricts, our programs widen the path to Jewish identity. New connections made here strengthen the community at large. We welcome one another, redoubling our commitment to diversity and accessibility.

We serve newborns to centenarians, and we are expanding cross-generational programming to pass core Jewish values l'dor v'dor, from generation to generation, because that is the key to the future.

At JCC Budapest, we continue to embrace the challenges of our times by creating opportunities that enlarge our Jewish footprint in Hungary while keeping our doors – and our hearts – wide open.



From door to door and l'dor v'dor

Meet
Marcell Kenesei, CEO



A kehilla, or community, where every generation belongs and contributes is the heart of Jewish life. That's our value as a JCC.

JCC Budapest is a home across generations. What does that mean to you?

When I first walked into the JCC 29 years ago, I'd only recently discovered that I was Jewish. The JCC soon became my place – where I learned about my Jewish heritage, connected with fellow Jews, and found my purpose.

Over the past 30+ years, we've offered the same opportunity to Jews of all ages, backgrounds, and perspectives. We have seen survivors develop (or renew) their connection with their Jewish roots and witnessed teenagers begin their own journeys of Jewish discovery.

Humans are inherently social. We want to share our lives with others. Our greatest responsibility as a JCC is, therefore, to create a positive environment where every Jew can find community and purpose within it.

Hungary is one of the few countries in the world where the Jewish community is growing. Talk about the JCC's vital role in that story.

We are proud that we helped rekindle the flame of Jewish life in Budapest after the Holocaust and decades of Communism. By now, several generations have grown up in our JCC, with no memory of a time when we weren't a prominent feature on the city's Jewish landscape.

Building a community requires us to reach beyond the past and the present. We are creating an invaluable commodity for future generations of Jews here, while serving as a role model for other JCCs throughout Europe. We must remain in constant motion – adapting to a changing world, bringing in new members, and passing the torch to new leaders.

What do you hope JCC Budapest will mean to the next generation and what will it take to get there?

I hope our JCC will mean the same to them as it does to us: a warm, bustling, judgment-free space that leads with Jewish values to embrace every Jew who walks through our doors. On the other hand, I want it to evolve into something greater.

We work hard to demonstrate that active community membership is one of life's most meaningful choices. There's been a wonderful snowball effect. We are witnessing a growing number of participants as well as increased volunteerism and grassroots support.

My hope is that this momentum will continue, that the JCC will become the place for Hungarian Jews, offering them opportunities no one will want to miss out on. We will no longer need to expend energy on marketing. Our story will speak for itself.

Our Impact: By the Numbers

Established 1994/Years of Operation: ***32***

JCC Budapest is one of Hungary's largest Jewish NGOs and the largest JCC in Central and Eastern Europe.

Estimated Jewish population in Hungary: ***100,000-120,000***

80% of Hungarian Jews reside in Budapest.

Actively identified & affiliated Jews: ***20,000 +***

Engagement

Total program attendance
50,000

JCC Programs
247

Partner programs
580

Number of visitors
1,600+

Flagship Program Attendance

9,000

Judafest
6,000

ZSIFI (Jewish & Israeli Film Festival)
3,000

Online Engagement

7.2 million

Number of website views
359,000+

Hungarian newsletter subscribers
8,000+

Friends of JCC Budapest English newsletter subscribers
1,100+

Volunteers & Ambassadors

200+

Giving

Hungarian giving circle donors
272

Friends of JCC Budapest donors
216

Jewish Camping

JCamp & Camp Jichak Family Camp attendance
374

Flagship events

Each year, our signature events reach far beyond the walls of our JCC, attracting thousands of people, both Jews and non-Jews alike, including many new faces. These programs entertain and enchant, inspire and educate, combating mis-conceptions about the Jewish community while spreading Jewish positivity through-out our beautiful city.





ZSIFI 2025 **Jewish & Israeli Film Festival**

Attendees: **3,000**

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION
Our 14th annual Jewish and Israeli Film Festival showed 11 feature and 9 short films, all available in Hungary exclusively through ZSIFI. Many of the screenings filled the theater to capacity, proving the ongoing relevance of Jewish and Israeli films to Hungarian audiences.

We returned to a five-day format in 2025, adjusting the festival schedule to better match audience viewing habits and reach higher occupancy rates. As always, we offered special screenings for students.

KABBALAT SHABBAT @ THE MOVIES
We hosted a kiddush reception after the Friday night screening of Bad Shabbos, creating an opportunity for socializing and community-building around the film.

OFF SCREEN
To deepen audience engagement, we cultivated important film-related conversations with community personalities, historians, and filmmakers.

WHAT'S NEW?
The new Friss Hús Short Film Award, selected by a professional jury, went to the Israeli film If I Ever Forget You. It joined our other juried ZSIFI film awards, including one chosen by students to bring in the perspective of the younger generation.

I attended several screenings at ZSIFI, but the powerful Iranian-Israeli film Tatami stayed with me most because it explored topics beyond the usual conflicts. We left deeply moved. I am especially grateful because without the festival, I would likely not have had the opportunity to see it.

Tamás, ZSIFI participant





IN THE WORKS

A year-round film club for Shalom Club seniors

A partnership with FilmFreeway, a digital show case for international small-budget films made by first-time filmmakers

Increased ZSIFI visibility within Hungarian art circles and physical cultural spaces



Judafest

Attendees: **6000**

100 servings of cholent consumed at the community wide luncheon

Our annual Judafest street festival remains Hungary's largest and most anticipated Jewish communal event. With a packed schedule of exciting cultural programs, Judafest offers Jewish and general audiences of all ages a taste of authentic Jewish life.

We continued to work with the 7th District Municipality, and for the first time, collaborated with the organizers of the Shalom Street Festival. This widened our partnership tent to create more access points of connection for both festivalgoers and local Jewish organizations.

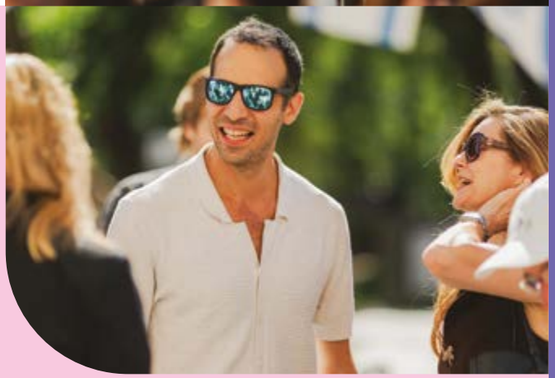
Most importantly, we transformed Klauzál Square in the heart of the old Jewish ghetto – the site where the Nazis and Arrow Cross rounded up Jews in 1944 – into an unforgettable public celebration of Jewish joy. What could be more symbolic and meaningful than that?

AM YISRAEL, ONE FAMILY

This year, Judafest had a little extra international flavor. After spending a week with us getting to know Jewish life in Budapest, a delegation from our partners at the Jewish Federation of San Diego joined the festival with a booth of their own. They shared a taste of their community with ours—and baked challah with 100 participants.

Taking Jewish Joy to the Streets







Traveling to Budapest on behalf of the Jewish Federation of San Diego was incredibly impactful. Despite living thousands of miles apart, our shared music, traditions, history, and values created an immediate sense of connection and belonging. I returned home with a deeper understanding of Jewish life in Budapest and a renewed sense of what it means to be part of Am Yisrael.

– Debbie Kornberg,
Chair, Israel & Global Peoplehood Committee
Board Member, Jewish Federation of San Diego

Jewish Knowledge & Learning

We have created a vibrant space where Jews of all ages can come together to learn about their heritage and explore what it means to be Jewish in Hungary today.





DIY Judaism

Holiday grants distributed since launch in 2022: **60**

Generations gather around the Jewish calendar to celebrate the holidays and experience the joy of being an integral part of the JCC community.

ShaBOX
Our holiday boxes are the heart and soul of our popular DIY Judaism initiative. They include practical tools like recipes and dinner ingredients, game ideas, and holiday guides that give recipients the confidence to recreate that special JCC holiday energy at home for family and friends. In 2025, we provided 15 of these holiday grants for Rosh Hashanah and Chanukah.

Lighting candles and reciting the blessings was a powerful moment. It truly brought the holiday into our home.

– Enikő, Chanukah grant recipient





WHAT'S NEXT?
In 2026, we will award **10** additional holiday grants to support Shabbat dinners across the city.



Family Holiday Programs

Total participants:
705

Family holiday events make space for children, parents, and grandparents to celebrate side by side while learning about the Jewish holidays through fun, hands-on activities.

SUKKOT
60 participants built and decorated the communal sukkah at the Rumbach Synagogue and left with meaningful ideas for celebrating the holiday at home.

CHANUKAH
300 people enjoyed a joyful introduction to holiday customs at the JCC with a concert, candle-lighting, crafts, and, of course, sufganiyot.

PASSOVER
85 attendees joined our family seder, which reimagined the Exodus unfolding in the age of social media. JCC Family Board members brought Moses, Pharaoh, and the Israelites to life on a continuous livestream of TikTok-style updates out of Egypt.

PURIM
260 participants attended a lively holiday party with costumes, music, and games. Interactive storytelling introduced children to Megillat Esther, while parallel programs gave parents the chance to participate and relax.



WORTH THE TRIP
"As Jews living in the countryside, about 150 miles from Budapest, it's not easy for us to take part in Jewish community events. From our very first time at the JCC for a Chanukah program, people greeted us like old friends. We knew we'd return."

- Gabi, Family holiday participant



It's hard to choose a favorite holiday at the JCC, but we'd have to say it's the Purim Ball. Our refrigerator is covered with the must-have photos we take each year. It's a special joy for our whole family, one the kids start preparing for as early as summer.

– Kata, Family holiday participant



For Young Audiences

We provide numerous points of connection that give our young people a sense of belonging from an early age and allow them to move through relevant JCC programming as they grow.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS
Our informal education series brought classes from the Scheiber Sándor and Lauder Javne primary schools to the JCC for shared holiday celebrations. At each program, students engaged with traditions and customs in ways that were playful, accessible, hands-on, and fun.

ON LOCATION: JEWISH BUDAPEST
For sixth graders from the Scheiber Sándor School, the year culminated in a walking tour of iconic Jewish sites in our neighborhood. The outing turned the city into a classroom while matching Jewish history to familiar places in contemporary Budapest.

PRESERVING OUR STORIES
The Personal Histories project creates a deeply personal connection between high school students and the survivors who entrust them with their own experiences of the Holocaust. The students then transform the stories into live public theatre performed where the events took place, making the urban landscape part of the storytelling.

In 2025, the project culminated in a performance of Escape Route on location near Pozsonyi Street, part of Budapest's international ghetto during the war. The students became the next generation to carry the survivors' memories, a responsibility that keeps these stories relevant today.





I think it helps to hear what actually happened from people who lived it, not just to read about it in history books.

– Lili, Personal Histories Student participant



Camping Out

JCamp participants:
174

30%
first-time campers

Thanks to our ongoing partnership with JDC, both JCamp and Family Camp took place on the beautiful campus of Camp Szarvas – JDC/Lauder International Youth Camp, located about two hours outside Budapest.

CAMP AS COMMUNITY
This season's JCamp served as an important entry point into Jewish community life for our Hungarian campers, who had the time of their lives. We also had the privilege of creating a relaxing, joyful experience for our Ukrainian campers and members of JCC Budapest's special needs All Hearts community.

To explore themes of community and belonging in a fun, age appropriate way, campers were divided into small groups to work on team projects. They designed a group flag, composed a group anthem, and made a short film. On closing night, the entire camp came together for a memorable celebratory hora.

ALL-IN-THE-FAMILY
The warm, relaxed atmosphere of Camp Jichak Family Camp is often a young family's first taste of Jewish life. Children enjoy the best of traditional camp activities and informal Jewish learning. A parallel program gives parents the space to relax and learn while building a circle of Jewish friends. Everyone comes together for shared events like communal meals, Shabbat, a street party, and a camp-wide bingo game.

WHAT'S NEW?
This summer, we created more opportunities for campers to interact with a broader peer group beyond their small kvutzot, or bunks. The goal was to help them expand their social connections and build community.

Camp has a great sense of community, where I can talk to other Jewish children about Jewish topics, something I can't do at school.

– Eszter, Hungarian camper





It was amazing to see how completely our children immersed themselves in the unique spirit of Szarvas at such a young age.
The whole camp functions like one big family. From now on, there's no question about it. We're making Family Camp a yearly tradition.

— Zoli, Former Szarvas camper and recent Family Camp parent

Community Engagement

We are the heart of Jewish life in Budapest, a multigenerational space where people discover their unique role in the Jewish community and make connections that continually recharge our JCC energy.





Sharing Our Voices

JCC Budapest is committed to providing a platform for open dialogue and honest conversation because they are the building blocks of a strong, compassionate, judgement-free community.

A NIGHT OF THINKING AND DEBATING

One of our premier initiatives, Shavuot is more than a holiday steeped in exclusively religious and Jewish topics. It serves as a space for Jewish civic engagement – a night of thinking, learning, questioning, debating, and gathering around the critical issues shaping the future of Hungary and our Jewish community.

Participants in our 2026 Shavuot all-night learning event took a deep dive into the theme Nation Builders, a topic that gave them the chance to reflect on recent Hungarian elections. The evening featured **14** diverse programs, including cultural lectures, theatrical performances, and conversations about public affairs.

The Shavuot program is interesting because you find yourself in open conversation with people you've never met before. One always leaves having learned something new.

– Csilla, Shavuot participant



FUN FACT

The first Dafke! event was held at the 2025 Shavuot Night of Learning. It was so well-received, it took on a life of its own.



DEBATE AS A JEWISH VALUE

Public discourse in Hungary has become an echo chamber. The same is true of the Jewish community when it comes to hot topics like Israel, politics, and Jewish identity. We launched Dafke! to create a safe space for people to discuss divisive issues with an open mind – and without fear of being personally attacked.

Geared for adults over 30, Dafke! is a moderated, participatory debate series that views critical thinking as a Jewish value. The goal is not for debaters to agree, but for them to respectfully listen to one another even when they do not.



Getting Engaged

Total Program Attendance: **229**

At JCC Budapest, learning and community-building go hand in hand at every age.

OPEN UNIVERSITY
Led by the rector of Budapest's Jewish Theological Seminary University of Jewish Studies, this bi-weekly JCC lecture series creates a welcoming space where adults age 30+ can access traditional Jewish texts like the Talmud, whether they have prior Jewish knowledge or not.

Lectures apply foundational Jewish teachings to the personal, social, and ethical questions participants encounter in their everyday lives. In special sessions, our Shalom Club senior community members examine ancient texts through the lens of their own life experiences.

FEAST FOR THE SENSES
This creative, laid-back series provides a welcoming entry point for empty nesters and adults aged 30-60 without children who are looking to learn about Judaism without the usual formalities. Participants experience the Jewish holidays through each of the senses as they engage with literature, visual art, memory, music, and cuisine. Since many of our other holiday programs are family-centric, Feast for the Senses also fills an important programming gap.



GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING
JCC Budapest joined this meaningful intercontinental event by offering a new online-only English program and a hybrid lecture in Hungarian, attracting a wider audience. These sessions demonstrated how ancient Jewish tradition remains open to dialogue across generations and different learning styles.

WHAT'S NEW?
Feast for the Senses regularly swaps out its curriculum so participants can explore new aspects of Jewish tradition year after year.





Shalom Club

Annual program participation:
5000

Newsletter subscribers:
535

Our senior community continues to grow, thanks to diverse initiatives that support well-being, Jewish connections, and social engagement of its members.

CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS
This year, we created more opportunities for meaningful inter-generational connections. The Shalom Club's KohnCerto choir performed on several occasions with the Lauder Javne School's Shirim choir. Club members also played board games with our youth, reporting that these get-togethers fulfilled their longing for regular contact with the younger generation.

TIME CAPSULE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
On International Holocaust Survivors Memorial Day, Shalom Club members and guests shared personal stories and began building a community time capsule packed with family photographs, Holocaust-era documents, and personal objects. The ceremonial burial took place in the fall.

I love JCC Budapest. It's like a second home to me, especially the newly renovated Shalom Club space.

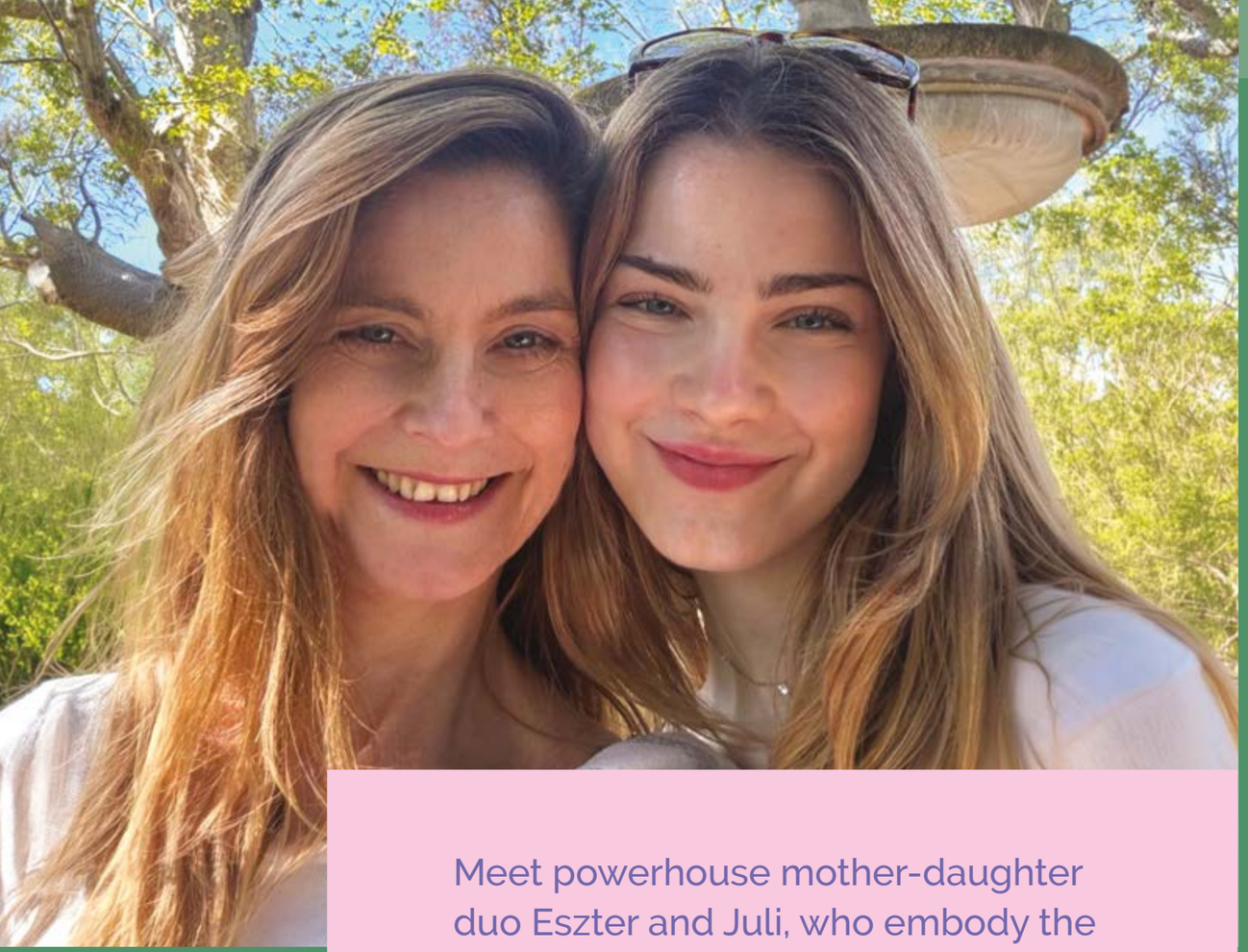
– Kati, Shalom Club member



WHAT'S NEW?
JCC Budapest became a partner in UP60, a pilot initiative led by the MAZS Foundation and developed with JDC support in cooperation with the Mazsihisz Charity Hospital. Inspired by an Israeli model, UP60 supports individuals as they prepare for and navigate the transition into retirement and senior life.



For members who live alone or far from their families, the Shalom Club often provides their only chance for direct social interaction.



Meet powerhouse mother-daughter duo Eszter and Juli, who embody the JCC's commitment to connect with Jews of all generations.

Building Community Across Generations & Continents

Eszter, a member and supporter, currently serves as leader of the Israeli Circle within Budapest's Jewish Community Forum. Juli, a participant in our JCC Budapest Global Ambassadors Program (GAP), is the International Relations Coordinator for Hashomer Hatzair in Hungary.

Like Mother, Like Daughter: *Meet Eszter & Juli*



Eszter

What did it mean for you as a parent to see Juli connect with Jewish life beyond Hungary?

We are an international, multicultural, and multilingual family, but our children deeply value their Jewish identity. The GAP San Diego trip in 2025 was a wonderful opportunity for Juli to learn from young Jews in other parts of the world and to feel a strong sense of Jewish belonging.

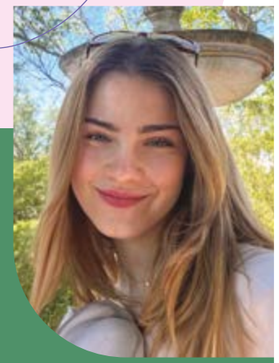
An experience like this helps the next generation see that we all share the same heritage, despite differences in background and Jewish expression. It also provides them with a solid foundation for their future contributions to the Jewish people. I'm very happy that our son Beni will take part in GAP this year.

What role does the JCC play in your family?

The JCC's mission is more important than ever to us and to our community, especially at this time of increased anti-Zionism and antisemitism. We are grateful for the welcoming and dynamic space Marcell and his team have created.

Their work helps us convey Jewish values of mutual respect, responsibility, and lifelong learning within our wider society. And it encourages young people to ask important questions, think critically, and engage confidently with their Jewish identity and the world around them.

Juli



What has stayed with you most from your participation in GAP?

Taking part in this program was one of my most memorable summer experiences. When we first met our hosts in San Diego, I felt nervous. But that feeling soon gave way to excitement as we toured together and stayed up late at night talking. The American kids were open and friendly, and we bonded with them quickly.

Did the experience change how you think about Jewish community, Jewish identity, and your connection with other young Jews?

It definitely did! First, I got to know an entirely different type of community. At the same time, I saw that the people were ultimately similar to me and our community in Hungary, even though they do things differently from what I'm used to.
The experience strengthened my connection to other Jewish kids. Hopefully, these will be lifelong friendships.

GLOBAL AMBASSADORS PROGRAM (GAP) 2026
Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of San Diego, this one-week exchange program brought together 36 Jewish youth from Budapest, San Diego, and Sha'ar Hanegev. Participants stayed with Hungarian host families and made their way through a packed itinerary. They learned, explored, built lasting friendships, honed their leadership skills, and discovered the diversity of Jewish life across their communities.

WITH GRATITUDE
We are deeply thankful to the Jewish Federation of San Diego for its ongoing support.
How wonderful that our partnership continues to grow and thrive, reinforcing the feeling that we all belong to one big global Jewish community.

GAP provides a solid foundation for our kids' future contributions to the Jewish people, their communities, and Israel. We are so grateful.

– Eszter

Social Responsibility

We embrace the core Jewish values of mutual respect and responsibility, while leveraging resources, partnerships, and the hard work of our volunteers to make our JCC and the world around us a kinder, happier place.





Everyone's Welcome

We gave out **550 pieces** of JCC Budapest 'Hate Is Not Kosher' merchandise as gifts.

PRIDE & LGBTQ+

JCC Budapest marched at Budapest Pride as part of a Jewish coalition committed to the shared values of dignity, equality, and belonging for all. Standing together, we demonstrated strong public support for LGBTQ+ inclusion in Jewish community life.

JEWISH PRIDE COALITION MEMBERS

- Bét Orim Reform Jewish Community
- Camp Jichak – Family Camp
- Camp Szarvas/JDC-Lauder International Youth Camp
- Centropa Foundation
- Csányi 5
- Embassy of Israel in Budapest
- EszterHáz Association
- Hanoar Hatzioni Hungary
- Hashomer Hatzair Hungary
- Haver Informal Jewish Education Foundation
- JCC Budapest
- JDC Hungary Foundation
- Jewish Community Forum Association
- Kibic Magazine
- Limmud Hungary Foundation
- Machol Hungaria
- Manóra Association
- MAZS – Hungarian Jewish Social Support Foundation
- MERKAZ – Hebrew & Israeli Cultural Center
- Mozaik Jewish Community Hub
- Szim Shalom Progressive Jewish Community
- Szombat Magazine

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

With support from its partner organizations, JCC Budapest organized Hungary's first-ever Minorities for Minorities Conference, which was the culmination of the EU-funded Remembering the Past, Avoiding the Future project. Held at Central European University in Budapest, the conference addressed the shared experiences and challenges of Jewish, Roma, LGBTQ+, and disabled communities.



SHOUTOUT TO OUR PARTNERS

Budapest Pride
Central European University
Haver Srbija
UCCU Roma Informal Educational Foundation



We are proud to embrace diversity while promoting inclusion.

THE MEANING OF A MITZVAH

The Mitzvah Program teaches high-school students that even the smallest gesture of kindness can have a huge impact. Participants explore the concept of social responsibility, then set out to do good deeds at four of our partner institutions.





My takeaway from the program is that we should pay more attention to older people. What surprised me most was how good it feels to help others.

– Lili, Mitzvah Program youth participant

This year, we focused on nurturing connections between youth and the older generation. Our students visited residents at the Újpest Jewish Care Home, played games with clients at the BMSZKI temporary shelter, led a crafts session with volunteers at Friends of the Elderly, and organized a gathering with members of the JCC's Shalom Club.

HEART-TO-HEART

All Hearts is our community for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Families and caregivers are also welcome. Members meet weekly for Israeli folk dancing, arts and crafts, birthday celebrations, and Jewish holiday programs that make them feel at home at the JCC. These activities enhance their lives while enriching the experience of everyone in the JCC community.



50 core All Hearts members



Our All Hearts community led a pop-up charity workshop.



HERitage

JEWISH WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE

1st
Cohort

14
women

Our just-launched HERitage Jewish Women's Collective fills an important gap by creating a safe, inclusive space where Jewish women of all backgrounds – religious and secular, young and old, students and professionals – can connect, lead, and co-create their own meaningful Jewish communal experiences.

Participants will receive microgrants and ongoing mentorship to implement at least four community programs annually. In alignment with the JCC's commitment to tikkun olam, the collective will also design volunteer initiatives to strengthen ties with other Jewish NGOs.

LONG-TERM GOALS

The HERitage Jewish Women's Collective will grow in number, becoming a self-sustaining network that enriches Jewish communal life and addresses broader issues such as identity, mental health, and social well-being.

MEET OUR INAUGURAL COHORT

- Emese Danks – Communications and Child Safeguarding Specialist
- Nóra Fejtő – Head of Sales
- Eszter Győri – Program Coordinator
- Eszter Harsányi – Managing Director and Founder, NestingPlay
- Luca Kis-Kovács – Singer, Voice Actress
- Dóra Köves – Actress, Entrepreneur
- Flóra Kriskó – Office Manager
- Valéria Kuna – Musician, Reform Rabbi Candidate
- Klára Lajta – Entrepreneur, Sommer Confectionery
- Judit Lőwy – Partnerships Manager
- Anna Markovics – Head of Fundraising
- Judit Markovics – Head of Public Procurement
- Kata Nádas – Tour Guide
- Adél Schein – Psychologist





A Culture of Giving & Gratitude

The Jewish traditions of tzedakah and communal responsibility fell by the wayside during the Communist era. JCC Budapest aims to revive them by inspiring local philanthropy, bringing us closer to our dream of becoming a Jewish community that supports itself.





A Giving Mindset

272
supporters

*By reaching out to their personal networks, our **12** fundraising ambassadors helped us reach our 3 million HUF goal.*

GIVING IS KOSHER
Launched last year, our community-based philanthropy initiative is both an awareness campaign and a fundraising appeal. We hope to build a recurring donor base that views tzedakah as a responsible investment in our JCC's future. With help from our fundraising ambassadors, we are also creating a new understanding: that giving and belonging go hand in hand.

COME TO DINNER
In April, we organized our first fundraising dinner, welcoming 50 guests, including old friends and new supporters. The event raised 3 million HUF. It also marked an important step in advancing our Giving Is Kosher objectives. That night, we transformed a beautiful meal into a loyal donor community.





I am very grateful for everything you have given me and so many others. I am also very happy that I had the opportunity to give something back.

– Márton, Giving Is Kosher supporter

*In 2025, we raised a total of 6 million HUF, roughly **$20,000**, from local donors.*



It's an Honor

JCC Budapest Volunteers & Ambassadors: **200 & growing**

Éva's Life Lesson

"Man is not born to hate; man is born to be kind."

ÉVA FAHIDI AWARD

JCC Budapest hosted the first Éva Fahidi Award ceremony, honoring activists whose work reflects Éva's powerful legacy.

The event took place in October, close to what would have been her 100th birthday. The esteemed guest list included representatives of several national media outlets, the International Auschwitz Committee,and the embassies of Finland, Germany, and Switzerland.

WHO WAS ÉVA?

Writer and Holocaust survivor Éva Fahidi lost 49 family members in Auschwitz-Birkenau. After decades of silence, she began speaking publicly about her experiences, dedicating the rest of her life to Holocaust education and a battle against prejudice.

CHANUCATALYST

Each year, we recognize individuals and organizations whose work has elevated Jewish life in Hungary. We host the award ceremony around the Festival of Lights, connecting our honorees to the heroes and lights of the Jewish past. Nominees and winners are selected by community vote.





Community is one of the most important things in life. It's important to help one another whenever we can.

– Anna, JCC volunteer

Organizational Development

JCC Budapest continues to focus on strengthening its institutional core – our programs, professional team, lay leadership, cadre of volunteers, and membership – with an eye toward a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable Jewish future.





Have you heard the BIG news?

JCC Budapest Gives the Hungarian Szarvas Community a Year-Round Home

SAME BUT DIFFERENT
For decades, Camp Szarvas – JDC/Lauder International Youth Camp has provided a transformational Jewish summer experience for Hungarian children, teens, madrichim, and families, helping to shape their Jewish identity and deep sense of Jewish belonging.

This new partnership with JDC creates opportunities for Hungarian Szarvas participants to further develop the relationships, learning, and community connections nurtured at camp, bridging the summer and their year-round Jewish lives.

WHAT WILL STAY THE SAME?
JDC and the Szarvas leadership team will continue to operate the camp, providing a meaningful, memorable summer experience while retaining the camp's signature, high-caliber educational and international character.

WHAT WILL CHANGE?
The new connection between JCC Budapest and the Hungarian Szarvas community will create an important generational continuum as children attend camp, teens become madrichim, madrichim move into young leadership positions, and families find their place at our JCC.





JCC & the JDC

AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP
JDC's visionary thinking and faith in the future of Hungarian Jewry launched JCC Budapest more than thirty years ago. Today, the flourishing of our JCC powerfully reflects the long-term impact of that partnership.

In our new iteration as an independent NGO, JDC remains our closest strategic partner, providing funding, professional support, training, multifaceted consultancy, and mentorship. But our relationship is about far more than running a successful JCC. Together, we are building on JDC's original vision to ensure a vibrant future.

ABOUT JDC
The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) is the world's leading Jewish humanitarian organization. Founded in 1914, JDC has been essential to the survival of millions of people and the advancement of Jewish life in over 70 countries around the globe. For more information, visit **www.jdc.org.**

JCC MOLDOVA X JCC BUDAPEST
Leaders of Moldova's KEDEM Jacobs JCC visited Budapest for a JDC-supported professional study trip focused on strategy, governance, sustainability, fundraising, community development, and institutional growth. During the visit, participants engaged with the leadership and professional teams of JCC Budapest, JDC Hungary, and other organizations within the Hungarian Jewish ecosystem, exchanging experiences and exploring approaches to building strong and sustainable Jewish communities.

Friends of JCC Budapest

Friends of JCC Budapest was established as a 501(c)(3) in the United States in 2024 to connect people in North America and around the globe with the Budapest Jewish community through partnerships, shared values, and real-life human connections. We work alongside JCC Budapest to strengthen Jewish life in Hungary and deepen ties with Jewish communities throughout the Jewish world.

For more information, visit **www.friendsofjccbudapest.org.**



It's been moving to witness JCC Budapest's expanded creative programming and outreach to the Jewish community at this difficult time for European Jewry. It serves as an important and optimistic beacon of hope.

– Gary Zimmerman, Friends of JCC Budapest



Who We Are

Steering Committee

- **Joel Beckman, Co-Chair**
- **Cathi Luski, Co-Chair**

- Daniel and Roy Balint-Kurti, representing the Balint Charities, London
- Marilyn and Bob Gellert, New York
- Irina Rich Langer, New York
- John Merey, Palm Beach
- Stan Rabin, Dallas
- Traci Rollins, representing the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
- Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas
- Fred and Shari Schenk, San Diego
- David Wax, San Diego
- Beth Wayne, representing the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
- Gary Zimmerman, New York/Palm Beach
- Nini Krever, representing the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County

A warm welcome to our newest members: **John Merey, David Wax, and Gary Zimmerman and Nini Krever.**

A special thank you to **Katty Rosenstock** for her contributions and dedicated service to our JCC as the representative of the **Federation of Greater Dallas.**

"The JCC's growth and the growth of the Jewish community in Hungary have been extraordinary. We are so excited to see what lies ahead over the next several years." **- Cathi Luski and Joel Beckman**

NORTH AMERICA-BOUND

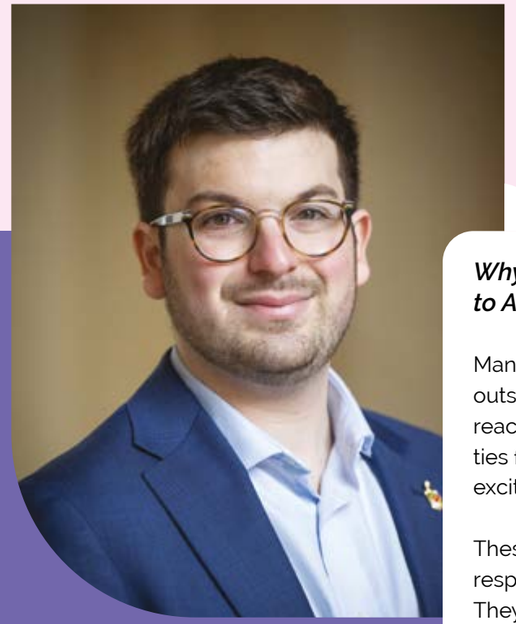




WHAT'S NEW?
We recently established a programmatic partnership with the Toronto Jewish community to bring Hungarian athletes to the 2026 Toronto Maccabi Games. The relationship will hopefully open doors to other opportunities for both communities.

EXECUTIVE CONNECTIONS
Executive Director Marcell Kenesei and Friends of JCC Budapest Executive Director Dan Alpert made trips to connect face-to-face with 11 communities throughout North America, including Atlanta, Dallas, DC, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Palm Beach, San Diego, San Francisco, Toronto, and Westchester.

Meet Dan Alpert, Executive Director, Friends of JCC Budapest



Why does Jewish life in Hungary matter to American Jewry?

Many American Jews care about Jewish communities outside the US and Israel, but they don't know how to reach them. Enter JCC Budapest, which creates opportunities for human-to-human connections that get people excited about what's happening in Hungary today.

These connections reinforce the value that all Jews are responsible for one another, no matter where we live. They inspire us to partner on Jewish learning and growth. What matters is that we know the history, and we know the potential for the future. When we work together, we grow together.

What have you learned from introducing American Jewish communities to JCC Budapest and Jewish life in Hungary?

Many people are surprised to find out that Hungary is home to the third-largest Jewish community in mainland Europe. What I've discovered is just how much Jewish communities around the world have in common – traditions, tunes in our synagogues, values, and more.

Even more so, our JCCs share their secret to success, tailoring the same programming to fit local community needs. We see this when we visit JCCs throughout North America. The biggest lesson is really to continue learning from one another. We all become stronger JCCs as a result.

What is your hope for the future of American and Hungarian Jewish communities?

Between Friends of JCC Budapest, our team at JCC Budapest, and our supporters across the US, we've built a strong foundation of meaningful, lasting relationships. We've also seen the fruits of those connections.

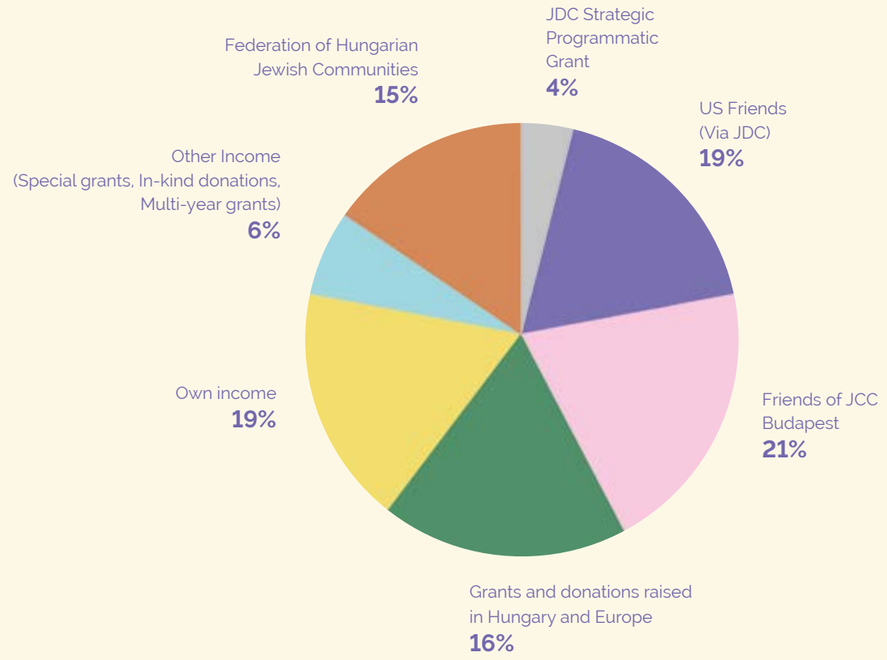
We are excited to continue making meaningful interactions possible on different platforms to bring Hungarian and American Jews together. They allow us to get a first-hand look at one another's successes and challenges. They will continue to be a critical focus of our work going forward.

Finance Report

Income

	USD
JDC Strategic Programmatic Grant	**70 000**
US Friends (Via JDC)	**328 000**
Friends of JCC Budapest	**350 000**
Grants and donations raised in Hungary and Europe	**275 000**
JDC special grant	**95 000**
Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities	**250 000**
Own income	**330 000**
Travel Service	200 000
Program Revenue	100 000
Venue Rental Income	30 000
Total Income	**1 698 000**

Income Breakdown

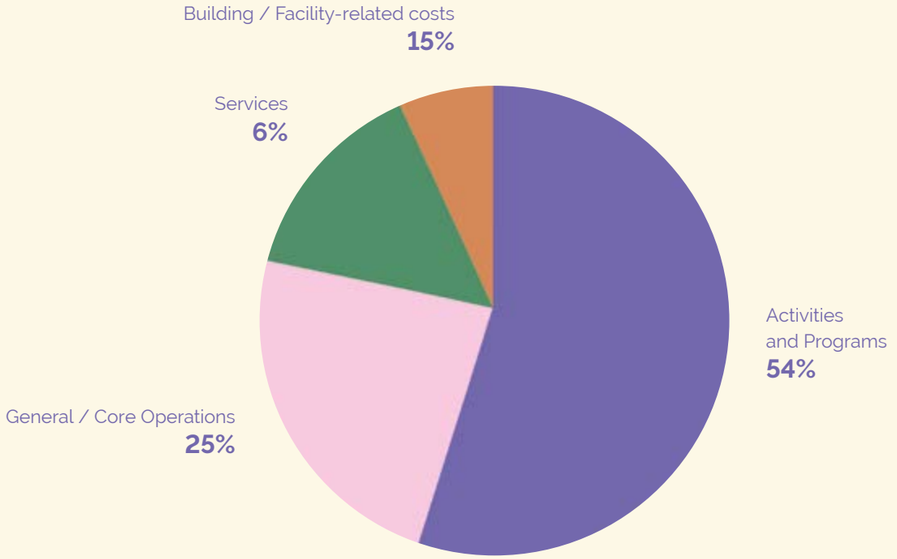


Finance Report

Expenditures

	USD
Activities and Programs	**921 000**
Adults and Families	457 000
Children and Youth	96 000
JCC Without Walls	84 000
Optimal aging, wellbeing (Shalom Club)	103 000
Social Responsibility	181 000
General / Core Operations	**431 000**
Staff	174 000
IT	35 000
Operations	126 000
Marketing	24 000
Fundraising	72 000
Services	**96 000**
Travel Service	90 000
Rent	6 000
Building / Facility-related costs	**250 000**
Utilities, Maintenance, Security	250 000
Total Expenditures	**1 698 000**

Expenditure Breakdown





The JCC Budapest Travel Experience

TRAVELING TO HUNGARY?
Our unique trips offer visitors a behind-the-scenes look at everyday Jewish life – going beyond history, memory, and heritage tourism.

Our tailor-made itineraries connect individuals, families, missions, and groups with the people and organizations shaping our Jewish community today.

Our journeys are designed to give back. All proceeds are reinvested to support over **200 JCC programs each year.**

We know Jewish Budapest.
Let us show you around.

For more information, visit **friendsofjccbudapest.org/visitorcenter.**

Number of visitors since launch in September 2025:
1,600+

Unfiltered Jewish Journeys. Experience Beyond Tourism.

We have so many misconceptions about one another – until we meet in person, when we suddenly find points of connection. It's moving to see this happen between visitors and members of our community, encounters that wouldn't happen on a typical tour.

– Edina & David, The JCC Budapest Travel Experience organizers



Photo: Lili Chripkó



You made our seminar in Budapest a massive success. It had a major impact on our educators from across Europe and their communities. Thank you for being our incredible partner on this."

– ANU Museum representative

To us, every friend of JCC Budapest is a *m*ensch.

BE A MENSCH

Your commitment to *our mission* makes everything we do possible.

Thank you for your faith in us.

Diamond Mensch

10,000 USD and above

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)
Anonymous
Balint Charities
Cathi and David Luski
Dorot Foundation
Drs. John and Daisy Merey
Eva Gero & John Cillag
Gary Zimmerman
Gellert Goldreich Family
George & Martha Rich Foundation (Langer Family)
Janet and Jack Baum
JCC Global (Roadburg Foundation)
Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas
Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
Jewish Women's Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County
Joel and Shari Beckman
Lisa and Victor Kohn
Lori and David Moore
Louis B. Thalheimer and Family
Nicky Yakubovich
Shari and Frederick Schenk
Sharon and David Wax
Stan and Barbara (z"l) Rabin
Susanna and David Green
The Alexander (z'l) and Valerie Viterbi Fund at the JCF of San Diego
The Jack Buncher Foundation
The Kramer Family
The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
The Rosaline Katz Family Foundation
United Jewish Federation of Tidewater

Platinum Mensch

5,000 – 9,999 USD

Harriet and Marc Suvall
Carol and Ted (z"l) Levy
Honorable Lynn Schenk
Howard and Lisa Miller Philanthropic Fund
Judi Gottschalk
Kushner Companies Charitable Foundation
National Center to Encourage Judaism
Sandra and Edward Weinstein
Sydelle Sonkin
The Plum Foundation
Vivian Lieberman

Gold Mensch

2,500 – 4,999 USD

Alan Reinitz, In honor of Blanka Reinitz z"l
Cheryl Fishbein & Phil Schatten
Gregg Hamerschlag
IKAR
Ilan Kottler
Irene Fayne
James E & Diane M Vogel Family Philanthropic Fund
Julie Platt
Martine Fleischman
Na'amit & Zev Nagel
Rafael Pastor, in memory of his grandfather Karoly Wilhelm (1886-1951), a prominent leader of the Budapest Jewish community in the 1940s.
Steven E. and Gloria F. Vogel Family Philanthropic Fund
Susan and Eric Weisman

Silver Mensch

1,800 – 2,499 USD

Abby Goldstein
Amy Lebovitz
Betsy and Richard Sheerr
Carol Becker
Doron Epstein
Immerman Family Fund
Isaac Sonnenfeldt
Janie and Adam Frieman
Laura Solomon
Meira Fleisch
Michael Novick
Michele Levin
Robyn Schneider
Traci and Jeffrey Rollins
Wendy Sandler In honor of Joel Beckman
Zigman Giving Fund

Bronze Mensch

360 – 1,799 USD

A Richard Barros and Andrea L Barros
Alan Gill
Alan Rothenberg
Alicia Weinstein in honor of Sandra Weinstein
Alyssa and Gabriel Mass
Amy and Jonathan Bergner
Arleen Priest
Barry Feldman
Barry Mitzner
Berry Meyerowitz in honor of Rachel Meyerowitz
Beth and Hawkeye Wayne
Bob and Jayne Goodman
Bruce and Debby Powell
Bruce Freyer in honor Joel and Shari Beckman
Carolyn Wilkov
Cheryl Rattner-Price
Cynthia Gersony
Daniel Kramer
David and Deborah Kornberg
David Rabin
Edward Webman
Elissa Oshinsky in honor of Marilyn Gellert
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Herbert Lichtenstein
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Jewish LGBTQ Donor Network
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Johanna Chanin
Judith Darsky
Katty Rosenstock
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Leslie Richmond
Leslie Teicher
Linda Schottenstein Fisher
Lori Rosenthal, dedicated to Rachel Meyerowitz
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Michael D. Weinberg
Michael Lewis
Michael Oliver
Michael Paley in honor of Bob and Jayne Goodman
Nancy Sternberg
Oliver Steinberg
Philip Lieberman
Phyllis Zaren-Zohar
Richard Biller
Ronald A. Nagel
Ronald Kaplan
Samuel Spector
Sara Cass
Scott Zeger
Steven Fayne
Susan and Bernard Feldman Family Fund
The Lelkes-Palgon Charitable Fund
Wendy Kantor

Mensch

BELOW 360 USD

Adir Koschitzky, dedicated to Rachel Meyerowitz
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Andreas Petrou-Zeniou
Anonymous
Barbara Craft in honor of Susy Oster
Ben Jablonover
Benjamin Alpert
Benjamin Lehrman
Bill Gellert
Carol Caplan
Cheryl K Warner in honor of Gabriella Horowitz Kovacs
Daniel Alpert
Daniel Zaas in honor of Erika Gold
David Altschul
David Dulberg
David Steinberg
Dikla Schaap
Eileen and Mark Wesley
Elia Gross
Elianne Friend Koschitzky
Eszter Neuman in honor of Tamás Lengyel
Evan Sanders
Frances and Joel Grossman Charitable Fund
Franceska Isaly
Frederic Schragger
Gerald Creem
Gerald Goldman
Gideon Epstein
Glenys Lindenberg
Hadar Boker
Henry Morton, dedicated to Rachel Meyerowitz
Holly Boker
Honey Levick
Howard Goren
Janet Dashevsky
Jay Liebowitz
Jil Levick
Joanna Kramer
Jody Alpert
Jonathan Allen
Jonathan Cutler in honor of Herbert Lichtenstein
Jordana Price
Jordyn Loring
Jose G Hernandez
Judy Acs
Julia Winston
Julian Bussgang
Karen and John Singer Family Philanthropic Fund
Lauren Douglas
Linda Foley
Linda Rattner Nunn
Linda Singer
Lois Fioretti
Lynne Rubin
Maarten Heilbron
Mara Goldstein
Marissa Porter
Max Alpert

Mensch

Michael and Ruth B. Margolin Fund
Michael Berkman
Michael Mintz
Michelle Berman
Mickael Sabah
Mindy and Andrew Feldman
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Moshe Shamah
Peter Weinberg
Rabbi Danny Burkeman
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Steven VanGrack
Susan Hock in honor of Joel Beckman
Toni Greenberg
Victor Ney
Wanda Grasu in honor of Dan Alpert
Yaron Deckel
Zach Silver

BELOW 360 USD

Hungarian Giving Circle

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Balla Ágnes
Bánki Róbert
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Zsohár Árpád
Saas Petra és Tausz Péter

+184 supporters

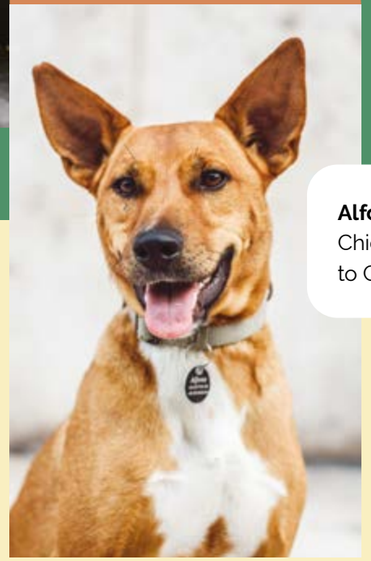
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KULT7 Erzsébetváros
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European Union of Jewish Students
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Machol Hungaria
Hungarian Association of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Jews
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All In – Mazsihisz Youth Group
MAZSIHISZ Charity Hospital
Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association (MAZSIKE)
MERKAZ – Hebrew and Israeli Cultural Center
Mozaik Jewish Community Hub
Moishe House Budapest
Orange Grove Charity Center
NestingPlay
Orlai Productions
Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies
Rumbach Sebestyén Street Synagogue
Rumbi Jewish
Szarvas Camp – JDC-Lauder International Jewish Youth Camp
Personal History Production
Szim Salom Progressive Jewish Community
The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)
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Taglit Birthright Israel Hungary
Új Kelet Live
Uránia National Film Theatre
World Jewish Congress (WJC)
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Budapest Jewish Cultural Festival
National Film Institute Hungary (NFI)
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Tom Lantos Institute
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Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and Its Institutions (BMSZKI)
Municipality of the City of Debrecen
International Auschwitz Committee
CTeen Hungary
ETELE Cinema
Labrisz Lesbian Association
Háttér Society
BZSH Technical School of Foreign Trade
Maimonides Jewish High School
Judapest Store / Judapest – Jewish Budapest Curated
Dohány Street Synagogue
Camp Jichak – Family Camp
I Love Hungary Club
Kesher Hungary
Puskin Cinema

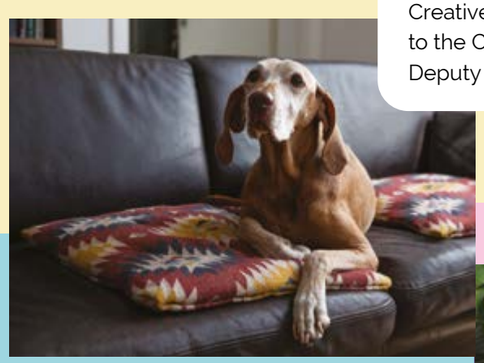
Who let the dogs *& cats* in?



Nala
Executive Assistant to the Head of Fundraising



Alfonz
Chief of Staff to CEO



Vilma
Creative Consultant to the Creative and Deputy Director



Smuci
Head of All Eyes at the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival



Maróka
Communications and Purr Support Manager

L'HITRAOT!

It's been yet another year of growth and change. New programs have opened new doors of connection, welcoming new faces of all ages to our JCC.

We moved closer to our dream of self-sustainability and continued to be a source of Jewish light.

We listened to our community members, never allowing our JCC to become an echo chamber.

We held our heads high as proud Jews who know our history.

The times continue to be challenging for Jews everywhere, but we still see good in the world and hope for better days.

No matter what, we remain true to our values.

And we continue to pass them from one generation to the next because they are ourfuture. In fact, our values are everything.

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