




THINK GOOD,
AND IT WILL
BE GOOD.

RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL



Jewish Community Center
of Greater Ann Arbor

2030
VISION



Thirty-five years after the Ann Arbor JCC was founded in 1984, it continues to grow and thrive. And just as the ancient story of our People tells of a journey with a goal – the Promised Land – so must each generation create its own goals and narrative. For the rising generation, may this vision stand as inspiration and direction for our community to flourish. May its shared existence serve as an invitation to all to find the touchpoint that excites you, and to engage.

Our Next Chapter: A 2030 Vision for the JCC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISIONING PROCESS

Broad input from board, staff, partners, and the greater community shaped the JCC 2030 vision:

- Six 90-minute sessions at the JCC, Temple Beth Emeth, and Congregation Beth Israel
- 150+ contributors including individuals and representatives from all Jewish organizations in Washtenaw County
- Facilitation and consultation by Adaptive Alternatives LLC

BROAD THEMES

Three concepts unified the contributions shared during the community visioning sessions:

- Continuity – nurturing the existing strengths at our core
- Expansion – greater capacity, flexibility, and innovation in facilities and programming
- Partnerships – sustaining organizational relationships across the community

COMMUNITY VISION

The vision for the future of the JCC inclusively embraces the hopes and motivations of all demographic groups with a stake in the JCC's future. Elements of the narrative were contributed by invested community members.

- Babysitting Corps
- Café
- Collaborative programming at partner sites
- Dedicated chapel space
- Enhanced camp and retreat center
- Expanded & diverse Early Childhood Center
- Expanded health and wellness programs
- Expanded senior services and outreach
- Expanded youth and teen programming
- Financial accessibility
- Fitness center and pool
- Garden
- Hosting Maccabi Games and Arts Festival
- Kosher kitchen
- Large parking lots
- Larger JCC campus with natural space
- Library and media center
- Mitzvah Corps
- Parent lounge
- Physical accessibility
- Playgrounds, outdoor and indoor
- Senior assisted living facility
- Spirituality programming
- Staff lounge
- State-of-the-art security system
- Tech-equipped conference center
- Theater facility
- Transportation services
- Visual arts studio and gallery
- Warm & welcoming lobby

NEXT STEPS

The vision is the first step in creating a strategic plan to guide deliberate action to build our future. You can expect:

- The JCC Board will undertake a multi-step process over several months to determine organizational priorities and then identify, based on interest and feasibility, immediate-, medium-, and long-range options.
- Strategic feasibility and prioritization will be determined with substantial input from current partners, today's community leaders, and the leaders of tomorrow.
- The JCC will continue to solicit input and promote engagement as we work toward this vision as a whole community.

If we dare to dream together, then work to make our dreams come true, the individual ideas in the JCC 2030 vision can become a reality. The extent to which this vision materializes will depend on our collective collaboration and engagement.

To join the dream team or share your input, please contact team captain (and JCC Executive Director) **Dave Stone** any time: davidstone@jccannarbor.org or (734) 971-0990.

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THE VISIONING PROCESS

Writing the Next Chapter

This is the first public draft of the Vision for the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. Our goal was to engage the community in this inclusive visioning process designed to help guide the JCC's future by proactively seeking diverse, multigenerational input.



This document is the result of a series of 2018 community, partner, board, staff, and individual meetings from May through December. Six ninety-minute visioning sessions were held at the JCC, Temple Beth Israel, and Temple Beth Emeth. Over 150 community members participated including the Community Leadership Council with representatives from all Jewish organizations in Washtenaw County. We view this as an iterative and inclusive process with the community to guide the JCC into the future. In wide-ranging discussions with representatives from all generations, people shared what they saw as the major strengths of the JCC today, and how they envisioned it building on that foundation as we look ahead.

To be clear, this document is not a prioritized strategic planning summary of goals, objectives and action steps. Stepwise strategic planning will follow the finalization of the vision, with ongoing evaluation as we move forward. This document is inclusive of all feedback voiced by our community members during the visioning sessions. We recognize that current and new community partners, on their own or in collaboration with the JCC, may provide some of the services and programs that are included in the Vision. **We welcome a multitude of community partners to make these dreams a reality.** We know that other opportunities may present themselves as new possibilities shift, align, and gather support over time.

The inputs to the visioning process are being shared in the form of “What if?” stories from the point of view of the imagined characters who represent the collective hopes and dreams voiced in the community visioning sessions. This is the beginning of the process that could make some of these ideas a reality over the decades ahead.





OVERARCHING THEMES

Continuity, Expansion, Partnerships



There were three themes that emerged during the community visioning sessions:

Continuity

BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Expansion

SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL ADDITIONS

Partnerships

IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION WITH
OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

CONTINUITY

During the community visioning sessions, we started with the question:

“What makes you proud about the JCC today?”

The idea was to start with the strengths. The J can be proud of many current strengths including the Early Childhood Center, programs like the film festival, and our people to people connections exemplified by our staff.

EXPANSION

The next question invited an exploration of possible of expansions. We asked:

“What would make you proud about the JCC in the future?”

When we invited participants to dream big without considering obstacles, our community responded with ideas that included: a fitness center, professional meeting spaces with cutting-edge technology, spaces and programming for seniors, collaborative programming at partner sites (such as the Michigan Theater, congregations, JFS), new spaces and programs for teens, indoor and outdoor playgrounds, camp expansion, transportation services, performing arts spaces and programs, and a café just to name a few. These ideas will come alive in the stories that follow.

PARTNERSHIPS

The J is committed to and can only implement many of these ideas in partnership and collaboration with every organization in the Jewish community. We currently have partnerships on space, staffing, and programming with the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor, the Jewish Cultural Society, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, and the Washtenaw Jewish News. We have partnered on programming with nearly every Jewish agency outside our building including Beth Israel Congregation, Chabad of Ann Arbor, Temple Beth Emeth, Hadassah, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, ORT, Aleph, BBYO, Camp Tamarack, Camp Habonim Dror, and others.

We are also proud of our collaborations with both the University of Michigan’s Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and Eastern Michigan University’s Center for Jewish Studies. Apples and Honey starts the Jewish New Year off with a community-wide event. The annual Arts Around Town: Jewish Book and Arts Festival has made use of community venues such as the Michigan Theater, Literati Book Store, Zingerman’s Greyline, and the University of Michigan’s various venues. In addition to expanding our partnerships in Washtenaw County, we are partnering with the JCC of Greater Detroit to host the 2019 JCC Maccabi Games and Arts Fest and the Michigan United Conservation Club to provide environmental programming to our day camp and hopefully the ECC as well. We are excited about our community’s application to the Grinspoon Foundation to receive LIFE and LEGACY funding that will create a community-wide effort for major gifts and endowments.

IN SUMMARY

The J will continue to be an anchor and bridge builder in the Jewish community. The J is where all of greater Ann Arbor celebrates, learns about, and nourishes Jewish identity across generations and organizations. We strive to provide depth and meaning in people’s lives. The J is where people come to meet, play, learn, and explore. Beyond a sense of community and belonging, the J serves as a hub of exploration, reflection, and engagement with the difficult issues in our lives. We serve not only those who identify as Jewish but anyone in the community who has an interest in or passion for personal learning and growth. The JCC helps make Ann Arbor the very open and inclusive city that it is today.



THE JCC STORY

They Said It Couldn't Be Done ... But We Did it

In the beginning, when the feared and futuristic world of 1984 had finally come to pass, a group that would later be revered as the Founders said, “Let there be an entity called The Jewish Community of Washtenaw County.”

And the People quaked.

Said one in a timid voice, “Are there enough of us to support such an organization?” Thunder crashed. The Founders replied, “Our community is growing. Someday our ranks will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens and the sands on the shore.” [Genesis 22:17]

Not to be silenced, another naysayer asked the machers, “Nu, where will we get the money?” The Heavens opened and the waters gushed forth. Chided the Founders, “The Earth was not created in a day. Is any miracle impossible if you have generous donors and committed volunteers?”

Spake the spies: “We scouted the YMCA. We looked like grasshoppers to ourselves and so we must have looked to them! [Numbers 13:33] There’s no room for us in this town.” The Founders explained. “We shall neither compete nor duplicate, but rather cooperate and supplement.”

“Where will we find a place?” grumbled one last doubter. Impatient, the Founders declared, “If our People found an entire land, eppes, we can find a building. We shall begin somewhere and wander until we establish a permanent home.” Lightening flashed, pointing the way to 2300 E. Stadium Boulevard.

And so, over the next two years, the organization thrived under the guidance of a Board of Directors. It sponsored early childhood and day camp programs, interest groups, arts and cultural events, and fundraising campaigns. The Founders saw that it was good. So did the People.

Forty months later, from what passes as a mountaintop in Ann Arbor, the People saw a shuttered school for sale at 2935 Birch Hollow Drive. Overcoming the naysayers again, they purchased it in 1986. Thence followed over a score of years of growth, marked by hiring talented Executive Directors and committed staff, welcoming volunteers, administrative separation from Federation, lease arrangements with multiple Jewish community groups, structural renovations, creation of the Early Childhood Center, a new site for Camp Raanana, programs and activities to appeal to all ages and enthusiasms, family events, Jewish book and movie festivals, and so much more.

In 2009, a voice emanated anew from on high. “Thou shalt henceforth be known as the Jewish Community Center of Ann Arbor.” And so, as surely as Avram was renamed Abraham, Sarai became Sarah, and Jacob evolved into Israel, the People embraced their new name. While forever known as the JCC in the People’s hearts, they adopted the JCCA’s rebranding as the “J” in 2015.

And now in our fertile Land, we are ready to write chapter and verse of the next “Book.” In 2018, with this goal in mind, the Board undertook to create a vision for 2030. Read on to discover our community’s dreams for the future and how you can help to make them come true.



THE VISION

We Should Live So Long



WHAT IF IN 2020

On a brisk fall day, Joyce and Natalie Leventhal-Rubin drop off their pre-K daughter Rosie and infant son Elijah at the ECC. The mothers are confident the building's state-of-the-art security system keeps their children safe, yet glad it is unobtrusive. Except for Grover of course, whose visibility is as welcoming as it is reassuring. After high fives all around, they greet Moira at the reception desk located straight ahead in the refurbished lobby and head to the children's rooms down a hallway festooned with toddler-made finger paintings. Rosie's classmate Hunter zooms past in his wheelchair, demonstrating his latest wheelies trick. Behind him are Jayden and his dad Malcolm., "I asked Santa to bring me a wheelchair for Christmas," Jayden confides to Rosie.

In Elijah's classroom, his primary caregiver Livia asks his mothers how he slept last night and digested the new solid food he tried (sweet potato). She puts Elijah on a colorful blanket next to Ibrahim, whose family is Muslim, and Camilla, who is Mexican and Native American. The babies babble to each other and mouth toys while Livia murmurs encouraging words ("Ibrahim, you shook the rattle") and plays peek-a-boo with them. In the pre-K room, children slip their letter-link cards into the chore

chart and make plans for work time. Rosie and her friends Ayelet and Ha Rin plan to make new labels for the classroom's recycling bins. On the way out, several parents stop to read the new ideas their children have added to the "How to be a Mensch" list.

The Leventhal-Rubins get in line at the J Café just off the lobby. The beverages, pastries, salads, and sandwiches are prepared in the J's kosher kitchen, and the café is open from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Joining others who have time before heading off to work or school, they carry their coffee and babka to the Parent Lounge, check out the family resource table with materials from the JCC and Hebrew Day School, and relax and chat on the couches. Jayden's father says he loves the ECC, which a coworker recommended as "the best center in town." Ha Rin's mother chose the ECC because she and her husband wanted their child to learn about another religion. Elijah and Rosie's moms concur that they chose the ECC so their kids could meet non-Jewish and non-white children. "The attitudes they acquire now will last a lifetime," adds Camila's father. They all smile. The ECC is an incubator for Tikkun Olam.

Two couches over, parents waiting for their "Mommy and Me" prenatal wellness and baby exercise class to start, plan a play date for their second-graders who became friends at Raanana day camp this past summer. Surprised, Ha Rin's mother says she thought the camp was only for Jewish children.

Natalie explains, "It's for all kids, same as the ECC, with an equally impressive program." She describes the collaboration with Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), which has helped to expand the nature programming and promote environmental awareness and sustainability among the kids.

"It may be the only local camp of its kind," says Jayden's dad. "Kids have too much screen time these days." Ha Rin and Ibrahim's folks are ready to sign them up as soon as early registration opens in a couple of months.

"My sixth grader is still friends with kids he met at camp years ago," says Ayelet's mom, a Modern Orthodox woman. "I'm going to have his birthday party here now that the JCC has a kosher kitchen."

Another parent, whose family belongs to the Jewish Cultural Society, wonders whether she should have her daughter's b'nai mitzvah reception at the J too; the kosher kitchen would be acceptable to her more religious in-laws.

"It depends on how many guests you're expecting," says Ayelet's mom. "The kitchen is small, although I've heard there are plans to expand it if and when the JCC moves to a larger space."

"When is that?" ask the Leventhal-Rubins, excited by the prospect.

"Who knows?" is the answer. "It takes money. And time to find the right place."

"We should live so long!" the mothers say in unison.

Odds are they will. The JCC's application to the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Life and Legacy Program was accepted, instituting a new model of collaborative fundraising in the Jewish community. With Foundation training, the J, Federation, Jewish Family Services, Hebrew Day School, and other key groups, now approach each prospective major donor together. Rather than making individual "asks," we present a collective "wish list" of initiatives. Donors then decide which one(s) they are interested in funding and request the "close." Training also covers follow-up procedures to ensure that pledges become a reality. The participating organizations are united in welcoming this process, agreeing that a gift to one benefits entire the Jewish community.



Midweek during a February thaw, the J Van, which is contracted from Jewish Family Services' transportation system, makes the daily round of public and private elementary, middle, and high schools to pick up students enrolled in its after-school programs. Among those who get onboard are second-graders Avigail Horowitz and Zion Johnson, seventh-graders Eitan Levy, Mateo Diaz, and Shira Katz, and juniors Pihu Desai and Lev Cohen. The van driver, Mo, a retired teacher, hands out drinks and snacks; these high-octane kids can't wait until they reach the J to refuel.

Morgan, the J's full-time Youth Program Coordinator greets everyone by name as they disperse to their chosen activities, joined by students from Hebrew Day School. The elementary school students race to the gym where they release the day's pent-up energy playing Buffer Ball. Avigail and her girlfriends challenge Zion and the other boys to a match. Several middle schoolers head to the Homework Helper Lab for algebra assistance. At the Game Group, Shira tries to top her score on Vapors, her favorite electronic game. Eitan and Mateo prefer old-fashioned board games, which are back in style, moving into day eleven of their Monopoly marathon. Meanwhile Pihu joins her friends in the Coding & App Development Club, and Lev plays the new social protest song he wrote

for his fellow garage band members, The Stiz. Down the hall, the Babysitting Corps is finishing a unit on "Toddlers and Teens: What Don't You Understand About 'No?'" Later, they'll post their availability for the next two weeks on the bulletin board in the Parent Lounge, which has a list (downloadable) to match families and sitters. The endowed service, which subsidizes the cost of babysitting, enables parents to attend events at the J and elsewhere. Another group, the Needle Arts Association, is learning tatting, which keeps their itchy fingers busy shuttling thread in lieu of tapping on keyboards. All the students are abuzz about next month's cooking class, 8G-Topping Pizza. More boys than girls are signed up. The reason: They get to eat whatever they cook, the grosser looking the better.

No-school days are even busier than the after-school programs. Students take field trips to art, science, and history museums; go to sports venues; and visit other places of interest. They often invite classmates who otherwise may not go to or even know about the J, which has turned out to be a great recruitment tool. Many also participate in the Student Mitzvah Corps, another endowed service. Within the J, the Corps assists in the ECC or does simple maintenance jobs on the grounds and around the building. Venturing out, they visit

Assisted Living Facilities, rehab centers, and hospitals to befriend residents of all backgrounds. They also help various non-profits, holding the hands of adults who are less adept with social media. Ever optimistic, students reassure older folks that they too will be social media whizzes in no time. To which grownups invariably reply, “I should live so long.”

To keep elementary, tween, and teen programs vital, Morgan has created a Program Planning Council to brainstorm ideas for future offerings. Recent student suggestions include fashion design, a debate team, Candidate Canvas Corps (for upcoming midterm and presidential elections) and building a self-driving car or short-distance spacecraft. Morgan, other staff, and community members mentor the students as they develop both practical and far-out ideas. Who knows what they might actually implement, or create next year, and the one(s) after that?

Lest you infer the JCC caters primarily to adolescents (who take it as their right), it serves all age groups. Noteworthy is the continued growth of health and wellness programs. We now have a “boutique” fitness room with selected equipment, used by adults aged 18 to 80 and up. Over the past two years, staff consulted local gerontology experts to purchase exercise gear that meets the needs of both the “young” and “old” elderly. The J has also established collaborative memberships with two existing full-scale fitness facilities in different parts of Ann Arbor, the downtown Y and County Rec Center, while exploring options to build its own. Our ‘Nutrition Across the Life Span’ classes are fully enrolled. In addition to physical health, the J’s classes, lectures, and support groups address emotional well-being, likewise encompassing different life stages. Popular recent offerings: “When a Loved One is Depressed”; “Aging with Grace and Gratitude”; and “My Teenager Says I Suck.” (No rejoinder yet from the student Program Planning Council.)





WHAT IF IN

2024

“And the winner is ... Noam Diamond.” The twelve-year-old pumps his fist. He’s won the raffle to lay the cornerstone for the new five-acre JCC campus, land that was formerly an Ann Arbor research park. On this cool day in mid-April, a week before Passover, Noam is at the groundbreaking ceremony with his parents, Aaron and Leah, and his younger sister, Yael. The crowd of three hundred has been divided into small tour groups, each led by someone from the architectural firm and a JCC staff member. The Diamonds swipe through the blueprints they’ve downloaded on their mobile devices. Moshe Gould and his husband Dominic Hernandez, in the same group, lean on their canes with one hand and carry a printout of the grand plan in the other.

“The main building will house the enlarged ECC and Teacher Lounge, multipurpose rooms for programs and classes, a commercial-size kosher kitchen and eating venues, administrative offices, and rental space we can lease to other Jewish, educational, and community groups,” announces Dave, the J’s Executive Director.

“There, there, and there” the architect points, “we’ll build the Fitness Facility and Pool, a Conference and Events Center, and playgrounds for each ECC age group as well as paths and outdoor exercise areas for youths, teens and adults.”

“We’ll preserve as much natural wooded area as possible,” adds Dave, “and enhance it with an annual tree-planting fund drive.”

“What about that field over there?” asks Leah.

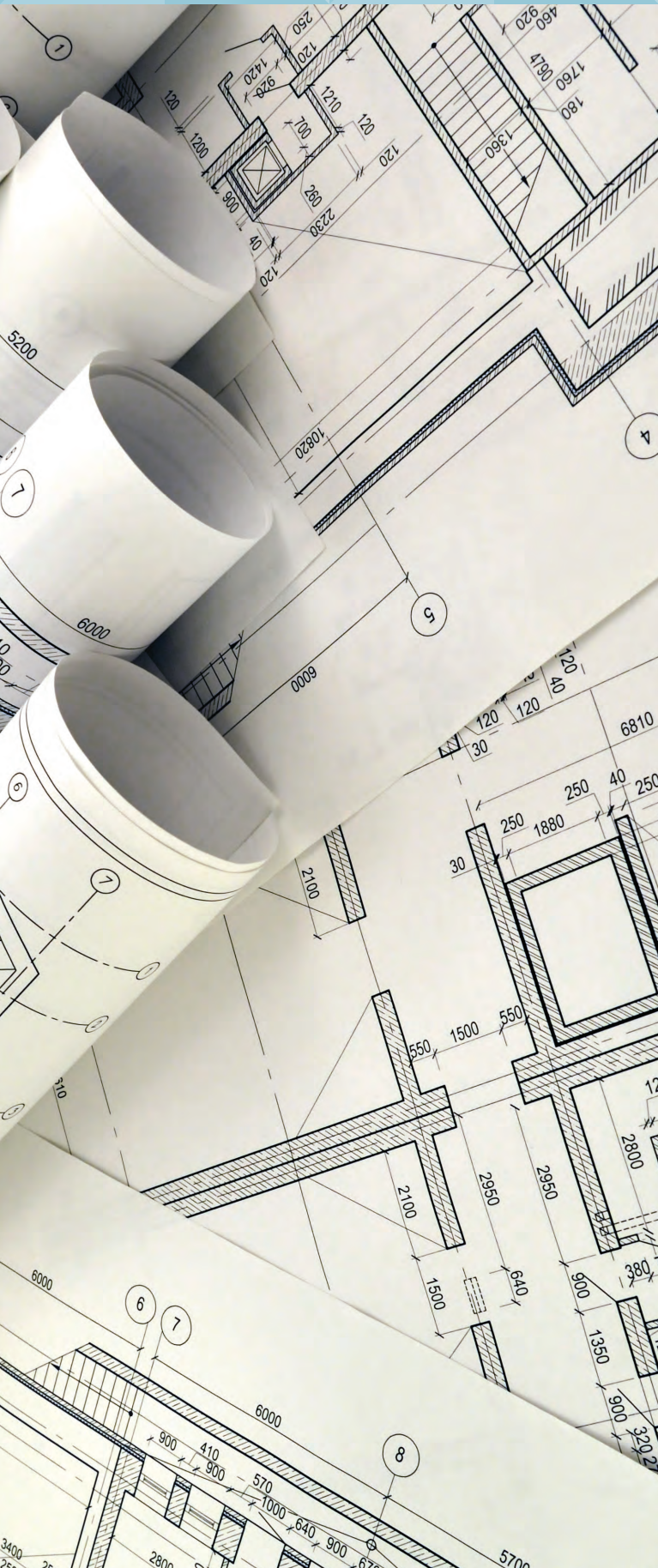
“A huge garden to grow vegetables and fruits to supply our various food services, catered events, ECC lunches, cooking classes. Also, meal deliveries by the Student Mitzvah Corps.”

“The JCC has the money for all these things?” Aaron is skeptical.

“We have funds to build the conference center. The fitness facility is partially paid for. We hope it will be self-supporting but we’re also seeking an endowment to maintain it and hire staff, including trainers. Funding for the garden is growing ...” Dave smiles slyly, “organically.”

Aaron’s look of doubt gives way to a cautious nod of approval. Yael is ready to sign up for the gardening club now, Noam to navigate between the future buildings on his skateboard. Moshe surveys the large tract. “I’m not growing younger. I’m worried about getting around.”

“Self-driving, all-weather golf carts,” suggests Leah.



“Great idea,” grins Dave and makes a note to share it with the Transportation and Accessibility Committee.

As construction gets underway, the existing building remains a friendly hub of activity where every visitor is assured of a warm greeting and place to relax, pursue an existing passion, and/or discover a new one. The J also creates an environment where staff feel supported and connected. The latest improvement, created by reconfiguring some offices and storage areas, is a small sacred or spiritual space. Dedicated last fall, and furnished with a gift from an anonymous donor, this quiet, meditative room, or “JCC Chapel,” is available for use by individuals and groups. When it opened, Dominic, who is Catholic, wondered whether he’d be allowed in. “It’s non-denominational,” Moshe had reassured him. “Everyone is welcome.”

Arts, cultural, and educational programs also continue to thrive, adapting to changing interests and drawing on our resource-rich community. Onsite and offsite, programs are offered together with local congregations, U-M and EMU, and other Jewish and non-Jewish partners. For example, in conjunction with the new chapel, our rotating scholar-in-residence convened a spirituality lecture series. To emphasize its inclusiveness, the J hosts activities for the LGBT community, interfaith and blended families, and grandparents raising children, among others.

Back at the groundbreaking, Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Gould marvel at the upcoming opportunities for elderly, gay, interracial, and interreligious families.

“That’s us in a nutshell,” quips Moshe. “We are the JCC.”

Dominic concurs. “Whoever thought we’d live so long?”

WHAT IF IN 2026

“John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt,” sing Aniyah, Orit, twins Talia and Tamar, Yun, and Yashvi. Their beds made and the floor (sort of) swept, Camp Raanana’s third-grade girls’ bunk marches off to play field hockey with their equally high-spirited counselors, Abby and Noa. Meanwhile, bunk counselors David and Yonatan coral the fourth-grade boys – Denzel, Abdul, Alon, Uri, Juan, and Deepak – down to the lake for an early morning swim. Impervious to the still-cool air, the boys leapfrog, swat one another’s tushes, and trade the latest farting robot jokes.

In 2025, after receiving a generous donation and conducting a multi-year pledge drive, the J purchased its own Camp and Retreat Center. The facility is located in the Pinckney Recreation Area on the site of a former private camp whose long-time owners retired. Last year, taking advantage of the athletic fields, lake, art and crafts shed, rec hall, and forested areas, the JCC ran its popular day camp, adding a high and low ropes course, and sports-specific sessions run by U-M and EMU coaches. After making needed repairs to the bunks and dining hall, this summer the JCC is also offering four two-week sessions of overnight camp.

Building on the excellent reputation it established over the past ten years, the day camp is fully enrolled, and the overnight camp is at 60%, an impressive figure for its inaugural year. Many overnight campers grew up going to the day camp. Nikki, our experienced Camp Director, leads the initiative to recruit and train qualified staff. Like the campers themselves, counselors often come back year after year. Camp Raanana attracts demographically diverse families, the same as the ECC. Parents who sign up their children for overnight camp are eager for them to spend time outdoors and also want them to experience “living together” with those of different backgrounds at an age when their values are taking root. The camp stresses Jewish values, including respect for others, the joy of learning, social justice and ethical behavior, and Tikkun Olam – healing the world. In addition to providing campers with a Jewish education, staff draw on songs, games, and foods from around the world. Each week, a different bunk is responsible for the Friday night Shabbat service and oneg. Plans are already underway for reunions throughout the school year.

Now that the facilities have been updated, camp is also used during the rest of the year, hosting such events as grandparent-grandchild weekends, “senior camp” for those aged 50 and older, and educational and spiritual retreats. While the JCC itself sponsors some of these events, the camp is also available for area congregations and other community groups to rent.



Back at the JCC Ann Arbor campus, the fitness center is half-finished, and the conference and event space is completed. The latter is popular for b'nai mitzvah receptions. A Young Jewish Professionals Leadership conference, funded by Federation, was a big success and is slated to become an annual event. The space also provides Hanukkat HaNefesh, an innovative national program now in its sixth year at the J, a permanent location for its “day of learning.” Each session, led by co-teachers, engages the community in studying a wide range of Jewish and relevant secular practices (for example, meditation as it relates to prayer). Community participation in this exciting program grows every year. Concurrently, the J actively recruits other Washtenaw area organizations and corporations interested in renting the space for meetings and training activities. The building also houses a co-working space for individuals and start-ups, with an endowment to continually upgrade its technology. Entrepreneurs reserve the conference rooms to pitch their ideas.

The latest addition to the main building itself, adjacent to the ECC, is an Indoor Playground, whose funding was spearheaded by parents. It boasts a climbing tower, swings, slides, and modular pieces that children use to create tunnels, balance beams, obstacle courses, stairs, boats and buses, and whatever else their imaginations devise. The playground is also a popular destination for other agencies serving young people. For example, Jewish Family Services schedules times for refugee children to experience the exuberance of playing freely.

With exercise classes transferred to the fitness center, the old gym has been refurbished with a new floor and modern sound system. Teens co-opt the space for social events, including their version of “ballroom dancing.” Plans are also underway for an inter-generational Senior Sock Hop. Not to be outdone, senior citizens are hot to learn the latest craze, the Chango, from high school seniors. Likewise, the young students, into retro fads, are game to master the Mashed Potatoes and Monster Mash. If nothing else, the dances have lived so long.

WHAT IF IN 2028

Since the fitness facility was completed, JCC membership, Jewish and non-Jewish, quadrupled and continues to grow. Together with lease agreements, the J is assured of financial stability and sustainability. The fitness facility is staffed by qualified trainers, under the co-direction of Xavier and Valentina, both certified by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. The building has state-of-the-art equipment and classes for individuals and families of all ages. For example, Max Segal and Peng Yoo (ages 22 and 35 respectively), use the indoor track after school or work each day. Tiana Walker and Taba Hadi, (ages 41 and 58) swim laps in the pool before showering and heading to the office. There are also squash and basketball courts, and an indoor track. With its wide-ranging resources – qualified personnel and excellent equipment – the facility promotes general wellness, as well as specific goals such as healing after illness and surgery.

Supplementing the indoor fitness facility, the spacious campus offers outdoor athletic and sports options. Weather permitting, the perimeter track is populated with runners. Viewing stands let family and friends attend games of the multi-age softball leagues. With the new fitness facility



and fields in place, the J can explore hosting future JCC Maccabi Games once we complete the planned visual arts studio and performance space to accommodate the Arts Festival component.

In other developments, the ECC area in the main building has been expanded to provide day care for seniors, under the expert leadership of Peretz and Julia, Early Childhood and Senior Services Directors, respectively. Twice a week, the two age groups meet for inter-generational activities, such as music hour, story time, and art activities. Hebrew Day School students also enjoy interacting with the seniors. Adults in the “sandwich generation,” simultaneously responsible for children and elderly parents, are delighted to have their dual needs met in one location.

Says Leah Shapiro, whose 75-year-old mother and pre-K son are enrolled in the parallel programs, “My Mom lives with us, but she’s bored at home with nothing to do. Now she not only has the daily company of her peers, but she gets to spend one-on-one time with her grandson.” Meanwhile, as more seniors age in place, the JCC’s endowed outreach programs provide meals and companionship. Sergio Cruz, whose 89-year-old father still lives alone, commented, “I feel better knowing someone checks in on him every day.”

The Student Mitzvah Corps is also adding to its elder outreach. This year they’re recording oral histories, earning course credit. Centenarian Morris Shemesh for one is a fan of the project.

“Who knows how many more decades I’ll live?” he jokes.

Says Sofia Dohan, his 16-year-old interlocuter, “I should live so long.”

On a Sunday afternoon in May, the Stein family piles into their self-driving car to pick up Bubbe Sophie at the JCC Wing of Golden Years Glen, an Ann Arbor independent and assisted living complex. The wing was financed by a brother and sister in honor of their deceased parents who were founding members of the JCC. During the week, Sophie attends movies, concerts, and lectures at the facility, sponsored by the JCC's Senior Outreach Program (which also serves other Assisted Living Facilities and live-at-home seniors), but on Sundays she enjoys being driven to the JCC. When Sophie gets in the car, mother Talia shifts to driver-operated mode to reassure her nervous mother-in-law.

Teenage daughter Kim teases. "Bubbe, modern up. Self-driving vehicles are safe. You could take yourself to the J."

Sophie snorts. "Sweetie, you should live so long."

When they reach the JCC campus, father Aaron takes third-grader Chas to the Visual Arts Studio and Gallery, built with a gift from a local artists collective and profits from the sale of donated artwork. Hosting the JCC Maccabi Games and Arts Festival in 2034 is now a reality.

Chas heads for the ceramics workshop. The studio also has classes in weaving, drawing, jewelry making, and other arts, with sessions for adults and children. At the other end of the room, a middle school puppet-making workshop is preparing to present a play they wrote at next Friday's Tot Shabbat. The theme is Noah's Ark with fanciful animals. Anyone want a pet Gorillephant?

Meanwhile, mother Talia takes the Steins' preschool twins to their music class, led by U-M and EMU music education students. Son Alder and daughter Chestnut (naming children for trees is the latest Ann Arbor trend) sit in a circle with their friends from the ECC and others who visit the JCC only for these special offerings. The teachers lead the children in a variety of songs and play instruments that reflect the class's religious, ethnic, and geographic diversity.

While her younger siblings are being shepherded to their activities, Kim sends her avatar ahead to the Hologram Room in the expanded and state-of-the-art Library and Media Center and syncs with friends in the Juice Bar for Sustainable Smoothies and Eco-Eclairs. Then their real selves are off to the Hologram Room to play games, sit and talk under virtual shade trees, and check out the latest

WHAT IF IN

2030






additions to the comprehensive print and media library, all made possible by a sizable gift from Ann Arbor's newest successful technology start-up.

Once the kids are occupied, the adult Steins meet in the 200-seat Purim Spiel Theater to watch two one-act Sholem Aleichem comedies. The theater, which just opened this winter, was the culmination of an eight-year development drive, and an endowment campaign is underway to ensure its ongoing upkeep and production costs. Since there were several major donors, its name honors the Yiddish theater's dramatic roots, i.e., the Purim plays that originated over 300 years ago. In addition to the stage where plays, concerts, and dance performances are held, the PST boasts classrooms plus rehearsal rooms. The facility is in constant use by the JCC and various performing arts groups in the community who rent it for their own productions.

At four o'clock, the six Steins gather in the kosher JCC Café for coffee, soft drinks, and pastries filled with berries from the JCC garden. The café is busy on Sunday afternoons so they schmooze with friends as they wait for a table. An hour later, tired and satiated, they head home. Chaya bids them goodbye as they pass the reception desk. With the car still in driver-operated mode, the Steins pull out of the spacious parking lot. The words "come again" ring in their ears.



Today and tomorrow, we know
that our strength comes from
being interconnected and engaging
community members across
generations. Thank you for being
a part of the vibrant and caring
Jewish community in the
Ann Arbor area.

**THINK GOOD,
AND IT WILL
BE GOOD.**

RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL
(1789–1866)



Jewish Community Center
of Greater Ann Arbor