



Joel Abramovitz, Senior Family Educator, The Kitchen

Joel is the Senior Family Educator at The Kitchen in San Francisco, where he runs three educational communities: Kitchen Playground (for families with kids 0-5), Freedom School (for families with kids 6-13) and Freedom City (for teens 13+). Joel previously served as Judaic Studies Principal and the Middle School Principal at the Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School in Foster City, where he also taught Judaic Studies. Joel loves to teach and study the Bible, analyze Jewish comedy, and think about how his work as a Jewish educator intersects with social change. He is also deeply involved in

the local organizing work of Bend the Arc, focusing on criminal justice reform. Joel is a graduate of the DeLeT (Day School Leadership through Teaching) Program at Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles, and earned his Master's degree in Jewish Education from HUC-LA. Despite receiving much of his education in Southern California, Joel is a proud third-generation Bay Area native and lives in Berkeley. Outside of work, he can be found in his kitchen, baking or studying cookbooks as if they were sacred texts.



Rachel Barton, Director of Israel & Global Engagement, Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

Rachel is a San Diego native who has been living in the Bay Area since 2016. Rachel's Jewish upbringing inspired her to pursue a career as a Jewish professional working at Jewish Federations in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, and now San Francisco. Her current role as Director of Israel & Global Engagement involves shaping strategy for building social cohesion in Israeli society, as well as developing meaningful ways for young people to engage with Israel and Jewish communities around the world. Rachel holds master's degrees in social work and Jewish nonprofit management from USC and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.



Rabbi Mychal Copeland, Congregation Sha’ar Zahav

Rabbi Copeland is passionate about opening the doors of Judaism wider and leading people towards a profound spiritual and religious life that embraces all their disparate identities. She is the rabbi at Congregation Sha’ar Zahav in San Francisco and previously served as Bay Area Director of InterfaithFamily, and rabbi at two Hillels, UCLA, and Stanford. She co-edited *Struggling in Good Faith: LGBTQI Inclusion from 13 American Religious Perspectives* (SkyLight Paths, 2016) and her first children’s book, *I Am the Tree of Life: My Jewish Yoga Book* (Apples & Honey Press, 2020), is forthcoming.



Liat Ellert, Director of Joint Ventures, Israeli Association of Community Centers

Since 2018, Liat has been leading the department for Joint Ventures at IACC which is in charge of the collaborations and partnerships at the strategic and national level. Between 2017-2018, Liat was chief of staff for the General Director of The Ministry of Education. During 2010 – 2017, she directed two community centers at the northern county of IACC – Katsrin Community Center (2010-2015) and Rosh Pinna (2015-2017). Prior to IACC, she was working at the Prime Minister's Office at the Department for Policy Implementation where she directed the fields of local municipality, Aliyah, and welfare. She also worked with the Government on JAFI, Birthright, and MASA. Liat holds an MA in Political Science majoring in policymaking and implementation.



Julie Golde, Culture of Belonging Consultant



Julie is a passionate community builder! After 14 years at the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, Julie serves as a community consultant focusing on research, planning, and the “art and science” of creating a sense of belonging for everyone in the Jewish world.

During her tenure at the Jewish Community Federation, Julie served in a variety of roles, her most recent being Senior Director of Community Impact. Julie was the lead professional guiding the pivotal 2018 community study, A Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities.

Barak Loozon, Israel Office Director, Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund



Barak is the JCF Israel Office Director. Before taking on this position, Barak and his family lived in the Bay area where he served as the Director for Young Adult Engagement with Israel at the SF-based Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund. Prior to this, Barak worked at the Institute for Democratic Education in Israel and led the implementation of the "Bat-Yam Model for Personalized Education," a model which was adopted by the Ministry of Education and became the National Education Reform called “New Horizons.”

Previously, Barak worked as the National Education Director & Deputy Director-General of the Israeli Scouts (Tzofim) and as the movement emissary to the United States. He holds a B.A. from Bar Ilan University in Criminology and Political Science, a Master's in Education Policy and Administration from Tel Aviv University, as well as a Master's in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as a Wexner Israel Fellow. Barak and his wife Keren are the proud parents of five boys, living in Kibbutz Einat, Israel





Lindsey Newman, Director of Community Engagement, Be'chol Lashon

Lindsey is the Director of Community Engagement at Be'chol Lashon. Previously to joining Be'chol Lashon Lindsey worked in the fields of women's rights advocacy and early childhood education. She has dedicated herself to inclusion and diversity in the Jewish community for over a decade. Lindsey received her B.S. in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University. She participated in the 2016 Selah Leadership Cohort and was a 2018 Fellow of the Ruskay Institute for Jewish Professional Leadership. Lindsey currently splits her time between two of the best cities in the world, San Francisco and New York.



Gamal J. Palmer, Senior VP of Leadership Development, Jewish Federation of Greater LA

Gamal is the Senior Vice President of Leadership Development at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. He is also the Founder and CEO of Global Eye Entrepreneurs, a multicultural network for male and non-binary entrepreneurs of color. Gamal leads workshops and gives talks on diversity and leadership within and outside of the Jewish non-profit sector for professionals, executives, and board members.

Palmer designed and lectured international programs at Yale University, in Swaziland, South Africa, and Tanzania. Palmer earned his Post-Graduate Associate from Yale School of Management, M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama, and a B.A. from the University of Miami. In addition, Palmer served as a Los Angeles Global Justice Fellow and delivered a TEDx Talk on the intersection of art and social impact in 2014.

In 2018, Palmer was an International Career Advancement (ICAP Fellow) at the Aspen Institute and was asked to return in 2019 as faculty, lecturer of Diversity and Inclusion. Currently, Gamal is a Schusterman Fellow as well as a Springboard Fellow through the Durfee Foundation. A native of Philadelphia, Palmer is the youngest of nine children and was highly influenced by his activist parents.





Jan Reicher, Executive Director, Byer Square at San Francisco Campus for Jewish Living

Jan was named the Executive Director of Byer Square in 2018. Previously she was Director of Strategic Projects and Transformation at the Jewish Senior Living Group. She acts as a project manager, strategist, and team collaborator, in the transformation of the San Francisco Campus of Jewish Living's (SFCJL) Silver Avenue redevelopment as well as developing Byer Square which will open July 1, 2020 to the public. She has founded four organizations including a marketing communications agency and several successful non-profits including the Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco (JCHS). After her initial work as a co-founder of JCHS, she held the professional positions of Director of Marketing, Interim Director of Development, and Interim Co-Head of School.



Lauren Schlezinger, Planning Team lead for 473K: A Belonging Experience

Lauren is a strategic consultant who works with Boards, leadership teams and groups that want to optimize their performance through high-quality decision making, collaboration, and positive working relationships.

Prior to launching her own consulting practice, Lauren was a community leader, active board member, and served as the president of three non-profit boards including Peninsula Temple Sholom. This experience gives her unique insights and expertise regarding creating effective workflows, designing transformative meetings, and managing transitions that enhance energy and outcomes within organizations.

Lauren started her career as a consultant at Aon Hewitt leading cross-functional teams to develop world-class benefit programs with Fortune 500 clients and then became Benefits Manager at Stanford University. Lauren holds a BA in Economics from Northwestern University and a certificate in Training & Development from UC Berkeley Extension.





Michelle Tandowsky, Board Chair, URJ Camp Newman



Michelle has brought her background in marketing and business to 30 years of community involvement. Her driving passions are her love for her family, dedication to strengthening the Jewish community, and providing compassionate care for others. Her work has been primarily in three main areas: Jewish communal organizations, healing, spirituality and education (both public and Jewish).

Michelle currently chairs the URJ Camp Newman board and serves on the URJ North American and Bay Area Jewish Healing Center boards. She provides end-of-life spiritual care to those on hospice and works on community building with various organizations, studying religion and spirituality. Through the years, Michelle has also served on the Peninsula Temple Sholom board and its Executive and Personnel committees, helped lead (with her husband) a division of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, served on the Wornick Jewish Day School board of directors, and was its first middle school PTO chair. She has held leadership positions on the parent advisory boards of all of her children’s elementary through high schools, and has been involved with AIPAC.

Maia Tchetchik, Organizational Development Consultant



Owner of Maia Tchetchik Consulting, Maia specializes in transforming an organizations vision into reality through leadership development and cultural transformation. Maia primarily works with fast paced, growing tech companies in helping them bring the best out of their people. She is a leading partner in the Federation's effort to build cultures of belonging in Jewish organizations across the Bay Area.

Maia has designed and led workshops (including the 473K), provided organizational consultations and developed practical working tools all focused on creating a culture of belonging. She holds an MBA, is a certified group facilitator, and a graduate of the “Gvanim” program for Israeli leaders living in the Bay Area. Maia is a member of the ICC@Oshman’s JCC’s Steering Committee and a past board member at Wornick Jewish Day School. She is the dreamer and founder of “Kol Banot” a community wide mother - daughter Bat Mitzvah Journey. Maia loves the outdoors, planning new adventures, and just hanging out with her family, puppy, and friends.

(473k)

A BELONGING EXPERIENCE

Kyla Sokoll-Ward, Speaker and Facilitator, Loneliness Expert and Moishe House resident



Kyla Sokoll-Ward is a speaker, facilitator, and professional community builder who speaks about loneliness in the millennial generation and how they can use their emotional experiences as tools for connection. She has shared her message internationally, on multiple TEDx stages, and has facilitated connective experiences for thousands of young adults around the world.

Kyla's work aims to help millennials upgrade their empathy skill set, ask better questions, and get more curious about what it means to be human. She has interviewed dozens of millennials around the world

about their experiences with connection and loneliness and, based on the results, has created a framework that can be used in a multitude of settings. Through keynotes, workshops, and 1:1 mentorship, she aims to disrupt the status quo of how people relate to each other and challenge others to connect more intentionally, vulnerably, and empathically with those around them. She's a firm believer that we're only one good question away from connecting with the entire world.

Rabbi Eric Weiss, CEO and President, Bay Area Jewish Healing Center



Rabbi Eric Weiss is the President and CEO of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center. Alongside New York, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center is the first in the country. Born and raised in Los Angeles, he attended the University of California at Santa Cruz where he received a B.A. in Biology and Judaic Studies with honors. Rabbi Weiss lived in San Francisco and worked in law offices before he entered rabbinic school at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He holds a Masters degree in Hebrew Letters and was ordained in 1989.

In addition to his rabbinic seminary work, he is formally trained in Jewish education, clinical pastoral care, and spiritual direction. He is a spiritual direction supervisor, co-founded Kol Haneshama, a Jewish Hospice and End of Life Care Volunteer Training Program, and Grief & Growing™, A Healing Weekend for Individuals and Families in Mourning. He has served on the national board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and is a part of their national rabbinic mentor program. Rabbi Weiss is the host of Mosaic, a television program dedicated to topics of interfaith interest that airs on the local CBS affiliate and is the editor/author of *Mishkan R'fuah: Where Healing Resides* and *Mishkan Aveilut: Where Grief Resides*. He lives with his husband Dan in San Francisco.



Sara Shadmi-Wortman Ph.D., Founder and Chief Officer for Community Building, Israeli Association of Community Centers (IACC)

Sara is an international expert in the field of Community Building as a means of creating resilient communities, publishing several articles and a book on the topic. During 20 years of fieldwork and academic research, Sara developed a model for Community Building which is based on creating a culture of belonging, constructed on networks within and between different stakeholders in the community, creating social capital.

The principles, concepts, and tools of this model have a universal basis which Sara has implemented in broad processes around the world. Sara is a graduate of the 4th cohort of the Mandel School for Educational Leadership. And the 7th cohort of Maoz. She holds a BA degree in Sociology & Education, a Master's degree in Political Communication from the University of Haifa, and a Ph.D. in Education & Community Building from Tel –Aviv University.



Wendy Verba, Managing Director, Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

Wendy Verba leads the Federation's Engagement Initiative to dramatically increase the number of young people who find belonging and meaning through Jewish life. A centerpiece of her work is to empower leaders to create "Cultures of Belonging" across the Jewish landscape, by teaching new mindsets and tools to ensure that everyone can find meaning and purpose in the Jewish community. Wendy participated in the first M2 Relational Engagement Cohort, is a Wexner Heritage Fellow and served on the boards of UpStart and the Peninsula JCC. She lives in Burlingame, California with her husband and has three kids.