

2021



The Jewish Experience

Annual Impact Report



The Jewish Experience

2021 YEAR-END IMPACT REPORT

Raise your hand if you're happy to be looking at 2021 in the rear view mirror. What a year of challenges! Baruch Hashem we survived.

And Baruch Hashem we did so much more than just survive. In 2021, The Jewish Experience actually grew. New staff, broader outreach, more people involved.

We rise to the top, like oil floats on water.

It's not so surprising. The Jewish People are compared to olive oil. How do you produce olive oil from which you burn the beautiful lights of a menorah or Shabbat candles? You crush olives. Under pressure, the best of us emerges. And then we rise to the top, like oil floats on water.

All of you are suppliers of the fuel - of the beautiful olive oil that we used to light up a difficult year. Thank you for being a part of The Jewish Experience family!

And after we take a look at 2021 in the rear view mirror and the pages of this annual report, let's turn our eyes back to the road ahead, and see what great things we can accomplish together in 2022.

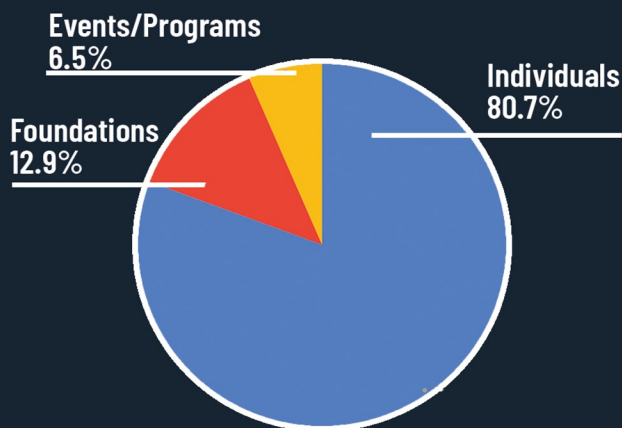
In sincere appreciation,
Ahron Wasserman
Raphael Leban
and The Jewish Experience Team



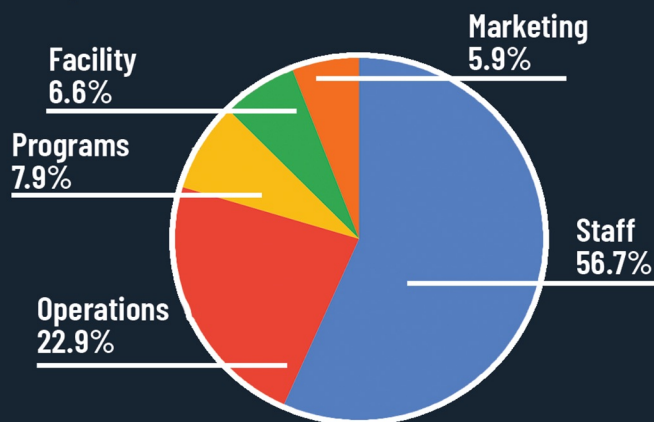
Key Stats

Highlights from 2021

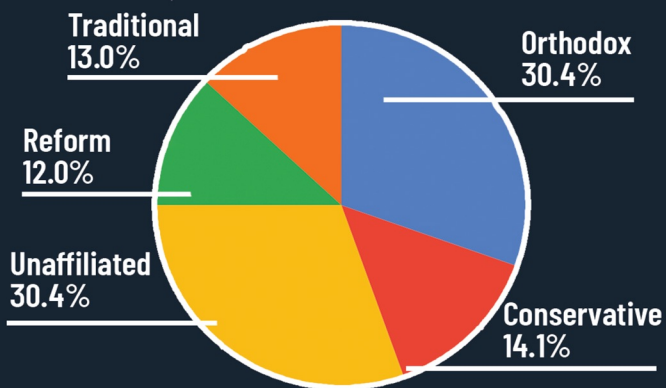
Income



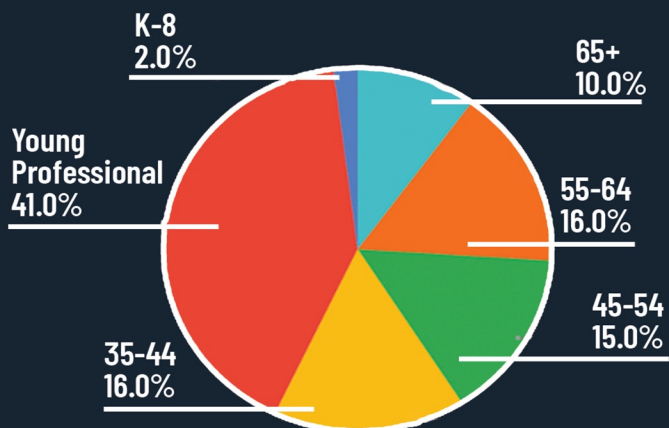
Expenses



Participant Affiliation*



Age*



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* Approximate

EPIC Sinai

Learning Campaign

An unprecedented number of learners from throughout the Jewish community joined together for the first ever Epic Sinai Learning Pass. In advance of the holiday of Shavuos - the campaign invited people from across the community to study Torah, and 335 learners pledged more than 230,000 minutes of Torah education - culminating in a fabulous community-wide concert featuring New York singing sensation, Mordechai Shapiro.

233,572
Minutes

335
Learners

32
Teams



"Not only did you put on an EPIC concert that showed such achdus and community love... But you allowed my 4 year old to meet her 'favorite guy' and give him a hug! That meeting made her little 4 year old life... You truly have no idea what this means to us as parents and to her as a child. In a small way you made her believe Hashem answers prayers."

-The Brofman Family, (especially Mimi Brofman!)



Steve Obrand's Story

"It seems to me that the more one learns Torah, in the broader sense, the more you understand our place in the world as a people," offers Steve Obrand, a long-time participant with Rabbi Leban's regular Lunch and Learn series. "The seemingly random dots appear to have more connection."

Connection, it seems, being the key word.

TJE gives meaningful connections to Jewish people throughout the community — whether you are a young professional, a working adult or a retired one — there is something connecting us all.

I can picture that same spot every time we speak of it on Yom Kippur.

For Steve, it has been an important part of his life for more than a decade. "About a dozen years ago, just after I retired from full time work, I was invited to join a Wednesday Lunch and Learn group with Rabbi Leban.

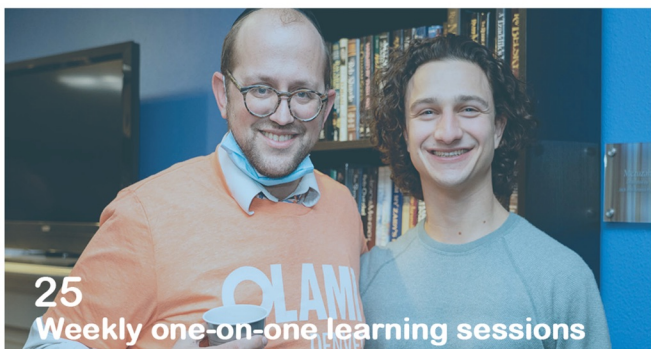
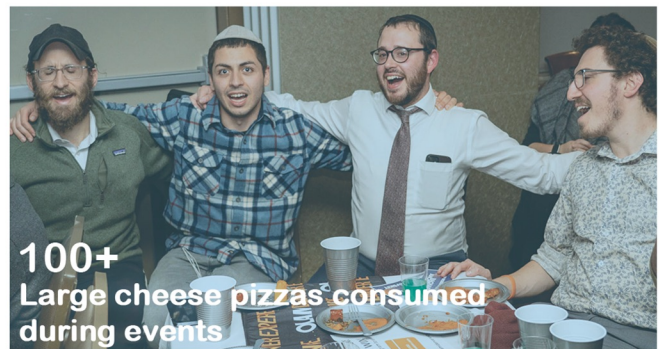
I have missed very few of those sessions since then, and that has become an integral part of my weekly agenda. Indeed, I enjoy both the learning and the camaraderie. I am now involved at least thrice per week in various TJE activities, as well as occasional couples events, such as Friday night dinners."

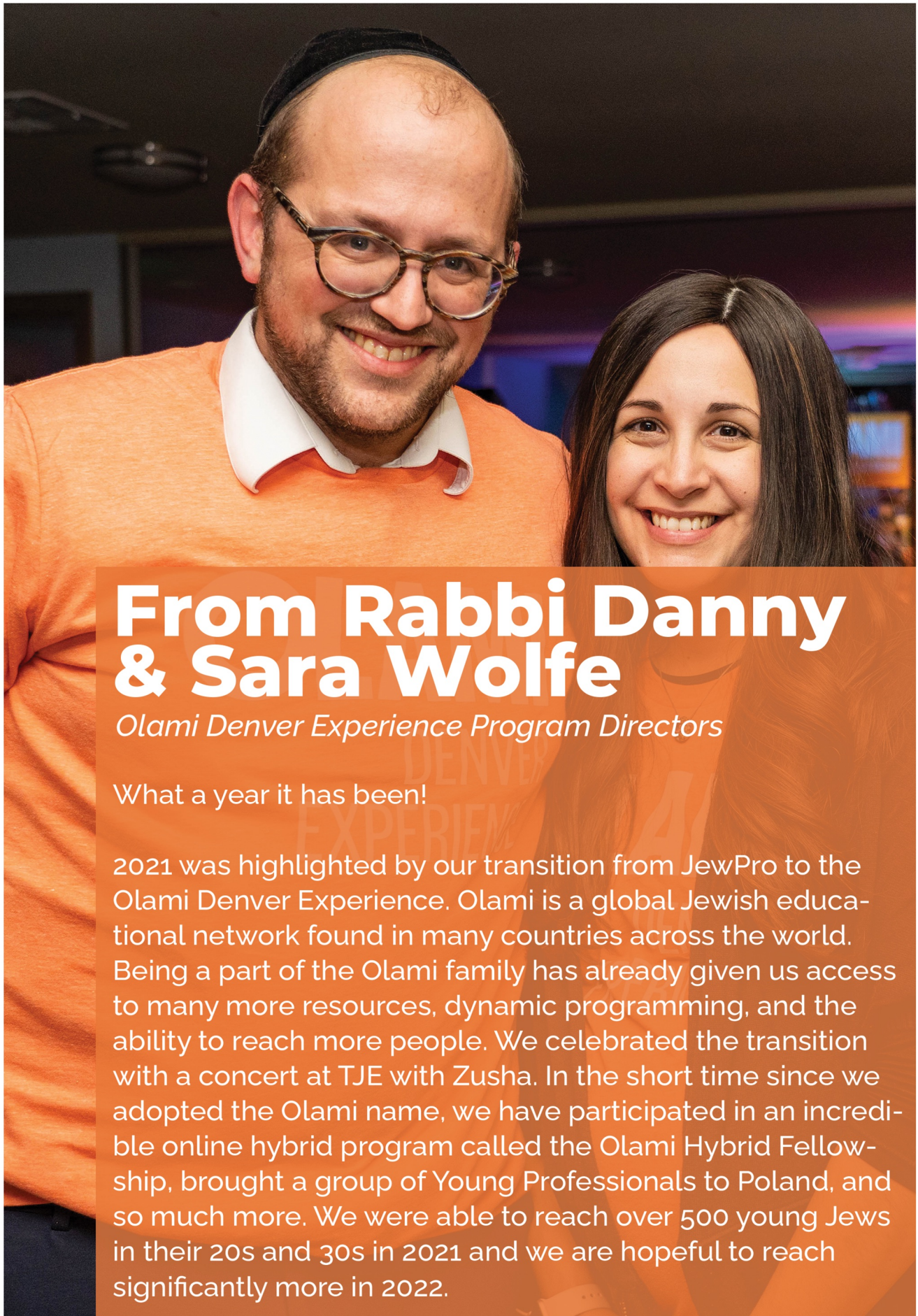
TJE has brought significant meaning to Obrand's life, as he explains, "A few years ago we joined a couples trip to Israel with TJE. One 'outing' was the ATV tour of the Negev. In the afternoon, Rabbi Leban led the Mincha service, we faced West toward Jerusalem, which could be seen in the distance. After the davening, the Rabbi explained that the spot on which we were standing was the same place to which they took the scape goat for the Yom Kippur service. We found ourselves standing right in the middle of the Yom Kippur liturgy. Now I can picture that same spot every time we speak of it on Yom Kippur."



OLAMI

Denver Experience





From Rabbi Danny & Sara Wolfe

Olami Denver Experience Program Directors

What a year it has been!

2021 was highlighted by our transition from JewPro to the Olami Denver Experience. Olami is a global Jewish educational network found in many countries across the world. Being a part of the Olami family has already given us access to many more resources, dynamic programming, and the ability to reach more people. We celebrated the transition with a concert at TJE with Zusha. In the short time since we adopted the Olami name, we have participated in an incredible online hybrid program called the Olami Hybrid Fellowship, brought a group of Young Professionals to Poland, and so much more. We were able to reach over 500 young Jews in their 20s and 30s in 2021 and we are hopeful to reach significantly more in 2022.

OLAMI

Denver Experience

Meet Rabbi Tzvi & PB Alyesh

New Olami Denver Experience Staff

Hi all. Pb and myself (and who can forget baby Gitty) relocated to Denver, Colorado this past September to help Rabbi Danny and Sara Wolfe grow the young Jewish professionals community. Lucky us! Besides new programs, learning opportunities, Shabbat meals, coffee dates, and many other fantastic things, our new center for Olami in denver's historic West Side foot steps away from Sloan's Lake is now open! We're also in close proximity to the Highlands, downtown, and Lakewood. Come on in for comfy lounge chairs, wifi, coffee, tea, snacks! We look forward to meeting you real soon!



New Staff
New Outreach
New Location
Same Mission





Max Cohen's Story

You're in your 20s or 30s and you've decided to move to Denver. It's your first big move, and you've got an exciting job lined up, but other than that – you're pretty much on your own.

The prospect of moving to a new city, establishing roots, and meeting new people is intimidating – but for Young Jewish Professionals in Denver, this process is a little bit easier, thanks to the outreach team at Olami Denver Experience.

"I'm a person who's pretty actively involved in the Jewish community and always has been wherever I've gone," said Max Cohen, a recent Denver transplant and new addition to the Olami Denver Experience family. "I don't remember the first event I went to, maybe it was a Shabbat dinner, but it was really nice. I've met a lot of really great members of the Jewish community here and they put on such great events."

Shabbos Dinner, ice skating, football, travel, and other fun activities have all appeared on the Olami Denver schedule this year – as well as learning opportunities, one-on-one study sessions and other chances to learn Torah with Rabbi Wolfe and the rest of the educational team. "I think it's really good to have something that grounds you to something real. Especially in the world that we live in today," explains Max, "there's just so much information out there and there's so many things popping into your phone and television all day, every day. It's really important to have something to connect to that's bigger than you... there's a lot of wisdom in the Torah and being connected to that wisdom in the community, gives me a lot of strength in uncertain times."

It's really important to have something to connect to that's bigger than you

"I would advise somebody moving here to just show up and see what happens and be open," Max offers. "I think if we just continue on this path of reaching out and being open and accepting – while still staying on the tenants of Judaism and the Torah – I think we're in a good place."

The Women's EXPERIENCE

Whether it was a Tuesday morning Women of Tanach, a Tuesday afternoon Words of Wisdom, a Wednesday morning Coffee & Conversation, or a Thursday afternoon Parsha Class, a diverse group of women gathered by Zoom to learn and be inspired by the wisdom of Torah in 2021.

Women not only from Denver, but Toronto, Houston, Florida, California, Las Vegas, New York, and even Israel made it a priority to tune in to how the insights from the Tanach, the weekly parsha, or the upcoming holiday could enhance their lives. Everyone enjoyed both the learning and the unique camaraderie that the combination of navigating a pandemic and sharing a common experience created. Each class was an island of time and an hour of refuge and reflection that brought spiritual and emotional strength and refreshment (but we didn't get to actually eat any refreshments).

- Ellyn Hutt
Senior Educator



Participants in pre-pandemic Israel trips continue to connect.



Edra's Story

Meet Edra Pollin

"I'm very appreciative of TJE's commitment to provide classes and activities to the Jewish community regardless of each participant's personal level of religious observance."



After six years of weekly study, one might think that the content would become repetitive. However, Ellyn Hutt begins her weekly class with "This week, I'm excited to tell you about something new I learned in the Parsha." It's that enthusiasm that keeps so many women returning to the classes offered by the instructors in The Women's Experience. Instructors like Ellyn Hutt, Chaya Parkoff and Sara Wolfe. "Ellyn's brilliance, wealth of knowledge, warmth and great sense of humor was and continues to be a breath of fresh air to me during these often strange and challenging times," offers Edra Pollin, who has been studying with Ellyn since 2015.

For Edra, the study of Torah has become an important part of her life. "(It) provides a greater understanding of the history of our people combined with lessons which have constant application to our daily lives."

TJE continues to be a breath of fresh air to me during these often strange and challenging times.

In 2016, Edra was part of an unforgettable trip to Israel with Ellyn and several other adult women. "Our time in Israel gave me an enormous sense of pride, allegiance and respect for the Holy Land while bringing great clarity to many of the prayers and traditions which are the hallmark of Jewish life."

And for Edra, the appreciation for such meaningful education runs deep. "I'm very appreciative of TJE's commitment to provide classes and activities to the Jewish community regardless of each participant's personal level of religious observance. Please keep up the great work and know that TJE is a wonderful resource for many of us who have found comfort, knowledge and joy in our weekly classes there."

The Sunday Experience

Covid has been challenging for everyone, especially for children. We were able to give safe in-person instruction for our students

For too many of us, Sunday school brings back unpleasant memories. The Sunday Experience is here to change all that. We give kids a positive Jewish educational experience, designed to imbue them with a strong Jewish identity for life.

2021 was a fantastic year! Covid has been challenging for everyone, especially for children, but we provided safe in-person instruction for our students and their parents the entire year. In fact, many children did not see their friends during the week and were so excited to come to our school and feel like life is what it used to be. Thank G-d we were able to do so in a safe environment. If students were in quarantine, they had the option to join by zoom.

The parent body from our school attended in-person classes with Rabbi Leban while their children were in school.



This year, we celebrated 4 bat mitzvahs and 2 bar mitzvahs! What a tremendous milestone for each one of our students; even more so, because accomplishing these during the pandemic is a real success.

We are looking forward to providing many more opportunities for children and families in the upcoming year.

-Karen Schweitzer
Sunday Experience Director

Miriam's Story

Meet Miriam Lukin

Asking Miriam Lukin to talk about her favorite parts of The Sunday Experience is a little overwhelming. Her eyes light up and she excitedly talks about her many friends, the craft projects she has made and she proudly shows off her special Shabbos box, filled with candles and other Shabbos items – all of which she learned about at The Sunday Experience.

Miriam's mother, Kara, also appreciates the fact that Sunday mornings are not a fight in her house. It's a family event, one in which the parents go to school with their kids. "It's great to have friends that we can talk about Jewish things with, and also how we're supporting our kids," Kara Lukin explains. "That's what The Jewish Experience offers us – a space where people can be really open and trusting and to be able to share with each other."

Miriam has even taken to teaching her family the lessons she's learned from Karen Schweitzer and the rest of The Sunday Experience education team. One particular Chanukah, Kara recalls Miriam explaining the differences between the letters on the dreidel to her father. "She was like, 'Daddy look, this letter has this special shape, but this one has it at the top and this is at the bottom.' It's exactly what Rabbi Leban had taught us parents, but she had learned it years before and was excited to teach her Daddy."



It's been like seven years, and I still like it. It's still really, really fun.

-Miriam Lukin

"You're learning things at Sunday school, then you're taking them home and you're teaching your family."

And Miriam loves going – week after week after week. "I like it cause when I'm going, it's fun. Not only the school stuff, and I like all the learning, but also, I have these really nice friends there. Everyone is friends and it's really cool," she offers. "It's been like seven years, and I still like it. It's still really, really fun."

Clean Speech

Colorado

Volume 3 Impact

Volume 3: Oseh Shalom | Words of Peace

Continuing its unprecedented community wide campaigns, Clean Speech Colorado brought the community a third volume this past November focusing on speech that promotes Shalom and avoids conflict.

This year's campaign added deeper engagement for each user with a web-based application personalizing the experience.

The results were (once again) astounding - with more than 10,000 uses of the app.

To celebrate the completion of this year's campaign, an exclusive in-person event featured Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, who also offered a virtual lesson to all CSC viewers.



61%

REPORTED THEIR WORLD HAS BECOME A MORE PEACEFUL PLACE BECAUSE OF THIS CAMPAIGN

301,498

CSC SOCIAL REACH IN 2021

10,252

TOTAL USES OF THE NEW CLEAN SPEECH APP



"I am so pleased to have been involved in this through the past month. In concept and execution, the "lessons" were valuable, effective, and worth more than the small bit of time that each took."

-CSC Participant

NOVEMBER 2021

Clean Speech

National

Expansion in 2021

2021

MARCH



CLEAN SPEECH
CHAMPAIGN

APRIL



CLEAN SPEECH
MINNESOTA

MAY



CLEAN SPEECH
OTTAWA

NOV



CLEAN SPEECH
ILLINOIS

2022

MARCH



CLEAN SPEECH
ST. LOUIS

APRIL



CLEAN SPEECH
CHAMPAIGN 2022



839,345

The Number of Jewish people who were reached via social media nationally due to Clean Speech campaigns.

Clean Speech Illinois was the most successful program I've ever run in my 23 years in Chicago.

- Rabbi Zev Kahn,

Director, JET Jewish Education Team

In 2021, Clean Speech spread across North America. The Clean Speech team worked with organizations to facilitate their own community wide campaigns with more locations signing on for 2022.

"Clean Speech Champaign and Illinois made a real impact on many people in our community.

Through cooperation with the Jewish Federation's monthly magazine, we sent the 80-page booklet, with 30 daily lessons to 40,000 Jewish families in Illinois. The president of the Federation emailed me that he received a great deal of very positive feedback, including from his mother!

Teachers reported that the students were very involved in the program and connected what they learned from the videos to their daily lives.



Rabbi Zev Kahn with students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Staff:

Rabbi Ahron Wasserman
Executive Director

Rabbi Raphael Leban
Managing Director

Rabbi Danny Wolfe
Olami Denver Experience Director

Sara Wolfe
Olami Denver Experience Director

Rabbi Tzvi Alyesh
Olami Denver Experience Educator

PB Alyesh
Olami Denver Experience Educator

Ellyn Hutt
Senior Educator

Chaya Parkoff
Women's Program Educator

Karen Schweitzer
The Sunday Experience Director

Alex Amchislavskiy
Director of Operations

Deb Flomberg
Marketing Director

Lauri Vigil
Accountant

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Kevin Morton
Moshe Ohana
Lisa Perlmutter
Rebecca Vicksman
David Wolf

Sunday Experience Staff

Rabbi Yeshayahu Greiniman
Chavi Greiniman
Chani Stern
Penina Joseph
Meira Flax

Clean Speech Team

Susan Kramer
Carley Brooks
Wendy Greenwald
Alyson Slatkin
Josh Gold

CONTACT US :

Phone : 303.316.6412

Email : Info@TheJE.com

399 S. Monaco Pkwy

www.ThjeJE.com



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