

JFedSTL.org

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**FALL 2019**

# JFED CONNECTS





## FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR Greg Yawitz

During our 118th Annual Meeting, I was elected as the incoming Chair of the Federation board. For my first JFed Connects column, I wanted to share with you some of the thoughts I expressed upon my election:

It is truly a humbling experience to be standing here tonight as our Federation's next community Board Chair. I accept this position with tremendous humility and will put every effort forth to honor those who have come before me.

After spending the last two years as Vice Chair of Community Investment, having served on our Strategic Planning committee, as a prior Vice Chair of Strategic Planning, a member of JFNA's National Young Leadership Cabinet, and a member of the 2015 Wexner Heritage cohort, I believe I am ready to take on this important role for our community.

I am excited to be co-chairing the search for our next CEO and know we will soon fill that position with a dynamic leader who will help us continue along the path we embarked upon over two years ago with the development of our strategic plan.

We would not be where we are today as a community without the leadership of Gerry and all our past board chairs as well as the amazing work and dedication of our tremendously talented and devoted staff. They amaze me every day with what they are able to accomplish.

In a few short months the secular calendar will turn to 2020, and I believe that is a symbolic number for our Federation. As we move into 2020, we need to have a clear vision of our path forward, as our optometrist friends would say, a 20/20 vision.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Saks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth of England, put forth seven principles of Jewish leadership, which I intend to follow during my term as Board Chair.

- a. Principle 1: Leadership begins with taking responsibility – I/we need to own our commitments, lead by example, and serve our community to the extent of our ability.
- b. Principle 2: No one can lead alone – It is not just the other volunteers. It is the outstanding staff that will move us forward.
- c. Principle 3: Leadership is about the future – If we only focus on the here and now and the issues of today, we will not be prepared for what comes next. We must work on addressing the issues at hand. However, we must always be mindful of

events on the horizon that will shape our future work.

- d. Principle 4: Leaders learn – I learned a long time ago you should always be willing to learn from others and adapt. As leaders, we must be willing to accept that we cannot know it all and that others can teach us and help guide our decisions.
- e. Principle 5: Leadership means believing in the people you lead – No one can do it all, giving people responsibility and the room for them to lead is crucial. This principle will help us ensure a strong pipeline of future leaders.
- f. Principle 6: Leadership involves a sense of timing and pace – Rabbi Tarfon in Pirke Avot chapter 2 said, “It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to desist from it either...” We cannot hope to do it all. However, what we do we should do with an eye to success and the best outcomes possible.
- g. Principle 7: Leadership is stressful and emotionally demanding – We must acknowledge this and be mindful to make thoughtful decisions, not simply ones based on emotion or reactions. Processes must be followed and the best decisions made based on the situation. As Albert Einstein said, “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

As we employ these principles of Jewish leadership, I believe we need to maintain a clear focus on Jewish unity. To embrace, honor, and celebrate the incredible diversity within our Jewish community. There are so many amazing ways we as Jews live our lives.

**In a world where it is more common to think about what separates us, we must follow the words of the prophet Isaiah and be a light unto the nations. We must come together for our community and become an example of what is possible.**

Whether you have been involved in the community in the past or if this is your first Federation meeting, I invite you to be a part of our community's future. There is much work to do and, as I noted earlier, no one can do it all. Great things are happening here and at our many community partners, and you can be a part of taking us to more inspiring outcomes.

# ANNUAL MEETING

Federation's 2019 Annual Meeting and Election of Officers took place Sept. 12 at our Kaplan Feldman Complex with more than 300 people in attendance

They heard about the yearlong work of the Federation from Gerry Greiman as outgoing Board Chair, received a State of Federation from Patty Croughan, installed and heard from our new Board Chair Greg Yawitz.

The 118th Annual Meeting also featured the election of officers, directors, and trustees. Find a list of all of our new leaders at [JFedSTL.org/About-Us/Our-Board](http://JFedSTL.org/About-Us/Our-Board).



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

During the 2019 Annual Meeting, Federation honored three volunteers and one corporation who have excelled in the areas of leadership in our community.

## **Fred A. Goldstein Professional Leadership Award Recipient**

The award honors individuals who excel in their field, have a significant track record over time, have introduced important innovations, and are perceived as role models by other professionals and volunteers.



**Ellen Alper**, Executive Director of NCJW St. Louis, is the recipient of the 2019 Fred A. Goldstein Professional Excellence Award. With Ellen's professional leadership, NCJW St. Louis has 1,500 members and is consistently recognized as one of

the exemplary sections of NCJW in the country. Ellen supervises an office and the Resale Shop staff. Ellen's work on behalf of NCJW has her representing a primarily Jewish organization while collaborating and convening with the broader community around issues of importance to women, children, and families. Her leadership and vision in refocusing NCJW's advocacy and social justice work has catapulted the organization into an even stronger community profile including an increased presence in Jefferson City by NCJW staff and volunteers, in working and testifying on legislation concerning human trafficking, domestic violence, daycare safety issues, and improving access by low-income women to reproductive healthcare.

## **David N. & Roselin Grosberg Young Leadership Award Recipients**

The award recognizes volunteer leaders in the Jewish community who are 40 years and younger and demonstrate active Jewish leadership and commitment to Federation's Annual Community Campaign.



**Andy Babitz** was the Chair of Federation's YPD Relaunch Task Force, creating a strategy for the future of young adult engagement in the St. Louis Jewish community. Andy was a Wexner Heritage Foundation Fellow and a Millstone Fellow. He serves on Federation's Development Committee and was a member of the Millstone Institute Advisory Committee. Andy

is currently a Vice President of United Hebrew Congregation, was co-chair of the UH Gala with his family, and previously served as a UH board member and religious school teacher. Andy was co-commissioner of the community-wide inter-congregational softball league. Andy practiced law for nine years and is currently a financial advisor with Northwestern Mutual – The Babitz Financial Group.



**Lauren Cohen** serves on Federation's Professional Society Advisory Council and helped launch and currently co-chairs the Professional Society Women's Initiative. She participated in the pilot program for ACCESS Leadership and will co-chair the

2020 cohort. She is also a member of the Millstone Institute Advisory Committee. Lauren is also on the Board of the ADL Heartland, co-chaired the ADL Glass Leadership Program, and is now Chair of the ADL Staenberg Fellows Program. Lauren is a litigation attorney with Capes Sokol Goodman and Sarachan, P.C. Lauren recently became a certified professional coach and frequently speaks on topics related to empowering professional women, leaders, and teams.

## **The RubinBrown Corporate Leadership Award Recipient**

The award is given to a company that exemplifies philanthropic leadership in our community. The recipient of this award demonstrates a commitment and dedication to philanthropy that enhances our community in a meaningful way.



*fine european inspired footwear. est. 1918.*

**Wolff Shoe Company** is an importer of women's fashion footwear. Beginning as a domestic producer of shoes over 100 years ago, Wolff Shoe Company remains a successful family business currently in its fourth generation of family leadership. The company's continued success is rooted in its commitment to delivering intrinsic value and superior craftsmanship, as well as its ability to cater to small boutiques, independent retailers, and major retail accounts alike.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

## Art Lifts Us

Art as inspiration may provide a path for creative and critical thinking as well as ignite the senses. As beautiful as the renovated Kaplan Feldman Complex is, new works of art have been added to the interior and exterior to enhance the environment and remind us of the vibrant and flourishing Jewish community.

Mark Salsbury of Third Degree Glass in St. Louis recently installed a colorful large-scale glass mobile that magically



plays with the light of the atrium lobby. Salsbury utilizes kiln-formed glass to convey a balance between complex patterns and simple forms.

The abundant natural light and clean aesthetic served as an inspiration for the concept and design, which added an additional layer of visual interest. Salsbury states, "This sculpture is a tribute to Federation's commitment to build on the successes of the past and strive for a better future."

On the exterior of the conference room is LIFT #2 and at the front is the larger recently-sited sculpture LIFT #3. Sculptor Larry Roots believes that in order for the works to be universal

and enduring, they should be appreciated from all angles, up close and afar, throughout varying seasons as well as throughout the day when light and shadow change the very nature of the work itself.



As the title implies and as stated by the artist, he hopes to create "an opportunity for humanity to overcome Earth's gravity and provide a feeling of the freedom of flight, which underlies the inspiration for these works."

For those who aspire to fly above it all, they may in time be swept up both literally and metaphorically as "to be lifted," Roots says, by these majestic sculptures, one with 13-foot wingspans and reaching a height of 14 feet.

In the spirit of Federation, Michael Staenberg hopes to add to the meaning, sense of belonging, and purpose by continually lifting up our Jewish community with the varied programs offered through Federation.

"When we place art into our world, we choose not only to beautify but to inspire," Staenberg says.

## Partner Highlight

On Nov. 14, to put a spotlight on the issues those in poverty encounter every day, two Federation partners, Congregation Temple Israel and National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis will co-host a community action poverty simulation experience. The simulation will help attendees to understand the human cost of poverty and the effect it has on the cycles of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, incarceration, and teen pregnancy.

Participants will role-play the lives of low-income families, including single parents, people with disabilities, and senior citizens on social security. The task of each family will be to provide food, shelter, and other basic necessities for four

15-minute "weeks." The learning session will conclude with a discussion on the potential for change within our local communities and teach guests how we can take action to make a difference in the lives of those who struggle to survive in poverty.

To highlight this important community activity, Karen Sher, Federation's Vice President of Community Engagement, recently talked with Nancy Litz, one of the co-chairs of the simulation event, and Felice Joyce, Vice President of Advocacy for the local section of NCJW, about the simulation on Federation's new podcast, Here for Good. You can find that episode and all Hear for Good episodes at [JFedSTL.org/HearForGood](http://JFedSTL.org/HearForGood).



## 7th Cohort of Millstone Fellows

Jewish Federation of St. Louis has announced the 2019-2020 class of Millstone Fellows, the Millstone Institute's premier program for emerging and established leaders in the St. Louis Jewish community.

This select eight-month leadership program creates conditions that spark the emergence of new ideas and new leaders who will envision and realize a strengthened Jewish community. Facilitated by local and national trainers and educators, Fellows integrates Jewish learning with general leadership skill building so that participants will become more informed, thoughtful, and effective leaders wherever they are leading.

The program kicked off with an opening retreat on Sunday, September 22.

The 7th Cohort of Millstone Fellows consists of:

Stephen Davis  
Rachel Deutsch  
Laurie Furman  
Michelle Gerchen  
Traci Goldstein

Sabrina Gornish  
Julia Kofkoff Gould  
Lisa Hirshberg  
Elliot Kleiman  
Danny Kraus

Elizabeth Lieberman  
Stacey Owens  
Rya Ross-Peterson  
Christine Schulze  
Arza Sheffy-Raviv

Erica Steen  
Rachel Thimangu  
Julie Zuick

# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Women's Philanthropy of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis hosted an evening of celebration, community, and giving featuring Edie Lutnick, Co-Founder and President of The Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund. This year's *L'Chaim!* theme is a quote by Lutnick, "If you find something larger than yourself, you can do great things in the world."

The event took place on Tuesday, Sept. 24, at The Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis. This event was co-chaired by Patty Croughan, Rachel Weiss Kalina, and Julie B. Stern.

