Mission

As the consensus public affairs voice of the Jewish community, JCRC educates about Judaism, Israel, antisemitism, and the Holocaust; advocates for Jewish values and priorities; and safeguards our community.

JCRC:

- Serves as the central public affairs voice of the Jewish community to elected officials, the media, government agencies, and other religious, ethnic, and cultural groups;
- Represents the Jewish community’s interests on significant legislative, social justice, and public policy issues in a non-partisan manner;
- Promotes and facilitates the security of the Jewish community and Jewish institutions, and assists community members dealing with discrimination;
- Mobilizes the Jewish community for Israel advocacy;
- Encourages and facilitates open dialogue and consensus among the Jewish community’s diverse religious, political, and social perspectives;
- Educates about Judaism, Israel, antisemitism, and the Holocaust;
- Remembers the victims and honors the survivors of the Holocaust;
- Sponsors community and educational forums; and
- Partners with local, national, nonprofit, interfaith, and Jewish coalitions.

JCRC is a beneficiary agency of the Minneapolis and St. Paul Jewish Federations.

Letter from Steve Hunegs

We are publishing our 2023 Impact Report as compounding crises affect our community: Israel is at war with a terrorist army following the October 7 atrocities, hundreds of Israeli hostages remain captive in Gaza. While our community reels from these traumas, Hamas slogans are echoing in our schools, and we are experiencing a 400% increase in antisemitism in the United States.

JCRC addresses these crises by educating, advocating, and safeguarding our community in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Our trusted relationships with families, schools, law enforcement, elected officials, media, and community partners drive our efforts.

Before the 10/7 attacks and their cascading effects, we had many months of highlights, and you’ll still find much of that in this report, including:

- The continued strengthening of our Community Safety and Security program, which now includes marked patrol vehicles for greater visibility, flexibility, and deterrence.
- Many accomplishments during the historic Minnesota 2023 legislative session, including passing a mandate to teach about the Holocaust, genocide of Indigenous peoples, and other genocides.
- Our inaugural Power of Place European Educator Tour, which brought 18 educators from nine states (including all three in our region) to Germany, Poland, and Norway for experiential learning about pre-war Jewish life, the Nazi Genocide of European Jews, and post-war Jewish resilience and rebirth.

The JCRC staff continue to prove themselves invaluable to our community. I thank them for their tireless efforts, as well as our officers — led by board president Jon Parritz — board members, volunteers, contributors, and supporters for enabling us to meet this historic moment on behalf of our extraordinary community.

Steve Hunegs
Executive Director
JCRC supports community partners in meeting their responsibility to protect their people and property. Working together, we strengthen our community’s security.

**JCRC’s Community Safety & Security Services**

1. **Physical Security**
   Consulting with partner agencies in the Jewish community to make their facilities as safe and secure as possible while remaining warm and welcoming to the community.

2. **Training**
   Hosting organization-specific and community-wide trainings, including:
   - Combating Active Threats
   - First Aid / Stop the Bleed
   - Behavioral Detection
   - Cyber Safety

3. **Threat Analysis and Information Sharing**
   Partnering with law enforcement and others to monitor, analyze, and inform our community of potential threats.

4. **Security Presence and Infrastructure**
   Procuring and deploying security infrastructure that serves the entire community, including developing a Jewish community security patrol presence.

5. **Local Relationships**
   Establishing and maintaining close working relationships with dozens of law enforcement agencies and diverse interfaith and community partners.

6. **National Network**
   Working alongside and with support from our national partners at Secure Community Network (SCN), the official safety and security organization for the Jewish community in North America.

7. **Grants**
   Assisting with FEMA’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program applications and providing security grants when urgently needed.

Our security work is expertly guided by the Jewish Community Security Steering Committee who bring us a broad array and many decades of security experience.

**Community Security Patrol Initiative**

Thanks to the generosity of community funders, JCRC’s newest community safety and security initiative will bring patrol vehicles to Jewish community sites as part of our efforts to foster a welcoming and secure environment.

The vehicles are staffed with licensed private security who will conduct patrols, incident response, event security, and other services. These services will initially be provided free-of-charge to Jewish organizations.

**Report an antisemitic, bias, or discriminatory incident**

In partnership with the Secure Community Network (SCN), the official safety and security organization for the Jewish community in North America, JCRC launched a new, standardized online form for the public to report threats, incidents, and suspicious activity related to Jewish organizations, facilities, or community members.

You are the community’s eyes and ears! Scan to report an incident:

**In an emergency, move to a safe area and dial 9-1-1**

JCRC is proud to provide these services free-of-charge to community organizations. We are grateful to our generous donors who make this work possible.
Government Affairs

A Historic 2023 Legislative Session

Initiated in 2001, and generously funded by the Minneapolis and St. Paul Jewish Federations, the Twin Cities Jewish Community Government Affairs Program (JGAP) represents the people, values, and interests of the Twin Cities Jewish community, as well as the vulnerable populations we serve, before the federal, state, and local governments.

2023 was a historically successful legislative session. Highlights include:

1. Passed a mandate to teach about the Holocaust, Genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and Other Genocides’ Education;
2. Secured a fourth round of state funding for nonprofit security;
3. Worked closely with our partners at JFCS to pass a two-year $1.8 million increase for ParentChild+;
4. Joined valued Jewish community partners in passing laws to better combat hate in Minnesota, reduce gun violence, and bar extremists from serving in law enforcement; and
5. Helped ensure that Sholom and other long-term care providers received urgently needed additional funding.

JCRC Annual Event

Our 2023 Annual Event brought over 500 guests together on a beautiful summer evening to the Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, where Senator Amy Klobuchar and Governor Tim Walz shared warm remarks about the vital importance of the work we do together. WCCO-TV’s Jonah Kaplan emceed the gathering.

We also welcomed our keynote speaker, Dr. Dara Horn, a renowned Jewish American author and essayist, who captivated the audience with her expertise, perceptive humor, and passion for living Jewish lives.

Finally, we honored Dora Zaidenweber, z”l, and Rep. Frank Hornstein for their efforts in passing Minnesota’s Holocaust and other genocides mandate.

“I haven’t seen anything like this anywhere else, but I think it should become standard practice across the United States.”

- Dr. Dara Horn, praising JCRC’s education, advocacy, security, and relationship-building work

2023 Impact Report
Minnesota passes mandate to teach students about the Holocaust, genocide of Indigenous peoples, and other genocides

Survivor testimony was essential in our successful effort to pass a Holocaust and genocide education mandate in MN

During the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session, Dora Zaidenweber, z”l, shared her firsthand account of surviving the Radom forced labor camp, Birkenau, and Bergen-Belsen. Her stories served as a sobering reminder of the perils of forgetting history, the importance of living outside one’s comfort zone, and how vital it is to our ever-diversifying society to familiarize ourselves with people whose experiences are different from ours. Dora’s grace, courage, and vulnerability were instrumental to our bill moving forward, and eventually being signed into law.

Dora passed away at age 99 on September 21, 2023. Her life embodied resilience, courage, and an unwavering commitment to educating the world about the Holocaust and its atrocities.

JCRC led the advocacy effort in partnership with Representative Frank Hornstein and Senator Steve Cwodzinski and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota. The bill was signed into law in May 2023, making Minnesota the 23rd state in our country to mandate Holocaust education in schools and the first state to mandate educators to teach students about the genocide of indigenous populations in American history. The bill was also unique because it provides funding for educator training and created a taskforce of experts to consult on the curriculum.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2023 was held at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis in conjunction with an exhibition of Transfer of Memory. The program featured historian Rebecca Erbelding in conversation with Steve Hunegs around The U.S. and the Holocaust, a film by Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, and Sarah Botstein. Additional programming included the JCRC partnering with TPT, Pioneer PBS and St. Cloud State University’s Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education to present the Scott and Lynn Bryce Lecture Series on Holocaust Education.

Governor Tim Walz, Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, and Rev. Dr. DeWayne Davis gave remarks at the program.

National History Day in Minnesota

The JCRC annually sponsors prizes in Minnesota Historical Society’s National History Day competition. Students can choose a topic relating to the Holocaust and the history of Europe between the years of 1939 and 1945. The 2023 theme was “Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas,” encouraging students to think critically about the Holocaust in both a historical and modern-world context.

Transfer of Memory and New Publication

At the Minnesota Army National Guard Red Bull Headquarters in Arden Hills, the Guard hosted a morning reception for their members where Steve Hunegs, David Sherman and Laura Zelle gave remarks and guided tours of the exhibition. The Minnesota National Guard’s Holocaust Special Emphasis Council also hosted a JCRC presentation on antisemitism.

The JCRC and David Sherman Photography published a book version of the Transfer of Memory exhibit. Available in both soft cover and hard cover, the book honors the lives of Holocaust survivors in our community. Both versions are for sale on the JCRC website.

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

A signature JCRC program is our annual one day trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. On March 28, 2023, over 180 people flew via chartered plane to Washington, DC to learn more about the Holocaust, honoring those who survived and those who perished. Our group included high school and college students, teachers and professors, employees from the Hennepin County Sheriff Office, the Minneapolis Police Department, members of the Minnesota National Guard and community members.

Yom HaShoah

Our annual Yom HaShoah commemoration is also an important part of our core programming. On April 18, over 350 in person and over 80 virtual participants commemorated Yom HaShoah in the Twin Cities community. The in-person service was at Beth Jacob Congregation in Mendota Heights, facilitated in partnership with Rabbi Adam Rubin. The program featured speaker Steven Foldes who shared his own family story of the Holocaust, Rabbi Rubin presenting on Yiddish poetry, as well as musical pieces by Shir Harmony.

Leo Weiss Courage to Teach Award

In memory of Leo Weiss, z”l, the Stesin family and the JCRC annually honors a local educator or institution that embodies decency, righteousness, and integrity in their devotion to teaching students about the Shoah. Kari Hall, social studies teacher at Williston High School (North Dakota) received the 2023 Leo Weiss Courage to Teach Award. Hall has been teaching history for 15 years and was also honored as a Gilder-Lehrman History Teacher of the Year, a James Madison Memorial Fellow, a VFW Citizenship Education Teacher of the Year.
The inaugural Power of Place European Educator Tour brought teachers from nine states (Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Nebraska, New York, Virginia, Maine, and Missouri) to Germany, Poland and Norway.

We are building a community of educators committed to teaching about the Holocaust and Jewish life before and after the war. Experiencing where the Holocaust took place deepens our shared commitment to teaching this history accurately and through a human lens.

The tour was emotionally challenging, insightful, provocative, and rewarding. Educators didn’t only learn about Jews who perished in the Shoah, but also learned about the Jewish community in these countries today. In addition to the impact of our trauma, we encourage them to teach our resiliency, and the Jewish traditions that shape our people.

We are honored to design and lead this educational opportunity and are committed to empowering teachers with the most current resources in order to face the challenges in our world today.
JCRC mobilizes education, advocacy, and community solidarity following October 7 terror attacks in Israel

Thousands show community’s solidarity with Israel

In the immediate wake of the October 7 atrocities, thousands of Minnesotans came together on October 10 at Beth El Synagogue and virtually for our Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel. JCRC was grateful to partner with the Minneapolis and St. Paul Jewish Federations, Minnesota Rabbinical Association, Minnesota Cantors Association, and TC Jewfolk.

We were inspired by the leadership and moral clarity of Governor Tim Walz, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Secretary of State Steve Simon (who collectively spoke for the dozens of other elected officials in the sanctuary, both Democrats and Republicans), Rabbi Alexander Davis, and JCRC executive director Steve Hunegs (who read a message from U.S. House Whip Tom Emmer). We were also moved by the testimonies of suffering and resilience shared by Tal Dror Rouache, Shai Avny, and Ben Ribnick.

JCRC and the Ukrainian community have a long history of solidarity and partnership. In 2022, we partnered with the MN Ukrainian American Advocacy Committee to pass one of the first state laws to divest state pension funds from Russia and Belarus.

After the deadliest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust by Hamas terrorists, and while substantial portions of Ukraine are still under Russian occupation twenty months into that war, our communities are united in both grief and resolve.

At our November 2 press conference, representatives from our two communities, including some who hold both Ukrainian and Jewish identities, spoke about the threat our peoples are confronting from cruel enemies seeking to annihilate us. We shared stories of the tremendous suffering and remarkable resilience of Ukrainians and Israelis. Speakers also addressed the exponential rise in antisemitism globally, including here in Minnesota.

Finally, we urged Congress to fulfill President Joe Biden’s request that Ukraine and Israel both receive the funding and weapons they need to defend themselves.

South Dakota Israel Solidarity

South Dakota Sen. John Thune and Gov. Kristi Noem gathered with the Jewish community and others in Sioux Falls on October 15 to show solidarity with Israel. JCRC Board Member Stephen Rosenthal and Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz organized the gathering.

JCRC staff and board members were among the 185 Minnesotans who flew to Washington, DC, on November 14 to participate in the largest gathering of American Jews in U.S. history. The march had three main messages: support Israel, bring home the hostages, and condemn the rapid rise of antisemitism.

COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

• In 12 school districts statewide, we are partnering with Jewish parents and teachers, advocating for Jewish students, and educating school administrators and staff about Jewish identity and antisemitism. Where antisemitism rises to threats of violence and intimidation, our experienced security directors work swiftly to address these issues in our schools, just as they do throughout our community.

• JCRC staff have responded to antisemitic incidents, advocated for Jewish families, and/or facilitated conversations at Jewish Student Union (JSU) club meetings at Blake, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park, St. Paul, Two Rivers, Wayzata, and in other Minnesota schools/districts.

• With our partners at Minnesota Hillel, we are confronting the horrific statements, rhetoric, and one-sided “teach-ins” by university departments, faculty, and student groups, which create a hostile environment for Jewish college students, faculty, and staff. We are also assisting and supporting Jewish students directly targeted by anti-Israel faculty.

Jewish and Ukrainian Minnesotans stand united

South Dakota Israel Solidarity
**Educating on Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism, and the Holocaust**

JCRC speakers educate thousands of people every year. In 2023, we grew our reach here in the North, and are impacting students far beyond our region as well. Do you belong to a community that would benefit from learning with a JCRC speaker? Invite us to your classroom, business, house of worship, or community organization for engaging virtual, in-person, or hybrid presentations on one of these topics.

**JCRC Education By the Numbers**

- **555** Total Presentations
- **55** in North & South Dakota
- **19** in Greater Minnesota
- **48** Outside Our Region
- **21,365** Total Audience

*From Sept. 1, 2022 – Aug 31, 2023*
Before October 7, 2023: The Letters Project: A Tool for Encountering Dual Narratives with Zionist Pride, Empathy, and Awareness

The program continues to expand, gaining new partners nationwide and beyond:

- In November 2022, the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) invited us to provide an introductory Letters training to hundreds of Israeli shlichim (emissaries) at their annual conference. That led to an online class of shlichim over the winter.
- The Letters curriculum was used by The American Jewish Committee’s Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) program. The series concluded with a Zoom conversation led by author Halevi, who continues to be our steadfast partner in this work.
- The Jewish Education Center of Cleveland hired us to teach a five-session Letters class for their education professionals.
- ‘Wine, Words, and Letters’—these Jewish peoplehood conversations using text and concepts from ‘Letters’ took place under the desert stars for Israel Experience 2023 mission participants.
- The Letters Project was awarded the Vivian Mann Excellence in Jewish Education Award in August 2023.

After October 7, 2023: The Letters Project: Deepening Jewish Peoplehood

To meet the needs of our community post-October 7, we pivoted the project to focus on Jewish peoplehood, convening an intergenerational community class that met for four Sundays. Yossi Klein Halevi taught the first session. The remaining classes centered on Halevi’s material from Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor, along with sermons from our local community rabbis.
Donations and Grants

Donations Received in Fiscal Year 2023 (9/1/2022 through 8/31/2023)

Donations and Grants

Donations and Grants Donations and Grants

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2023 IMPACT REPORT

Thank you for supporting the JCRC

Donations and Grants

FY 2023

$100,000+

Minneapolis Jewish Federation
Otto Bremer Trust
St. Paul Jewish Federation

$25,000-$99,999

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$500-$999

Larry and Shirley Zipkin
Laura and Daniel Zelle
Tsippi Wray

Donations Received in Fiscal Year 2023 (9/1/2022 through 8/31/2023)

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Donations Received in Fiscal Year 2023 (9/1/2022 through 8/31/2023)

Thank you for supporting the JCRC.
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- Sami Rahamin, Director of Communications and Community Affairs
- Ethan Roberts, Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Twin Cities Jewish Community Government Affairs Program
- Sheryl M. Sutkin, Executive Assistant
- Laura Zelle, Director of Holocaust Education

Donations Received in Fiscal Year 2023 (9/1/2022 through 8/31/2023)

Thank you for supporting the JCRC

Donations and Grants

We thank our Directors Circle and It’s Your Legacy donors who sustain the work of the JCRC now and into the future.

Directors Circle

The board of directors and staff of the JCRC thank the following Directors Circle supporters:

- Robert and Bobbi Aronson
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- Wendy Khairie
- Elizabeth Lamin
- Sheryl Tramer Lerman
- Elyse Levine Less
- Mayor Stephanie Brod Levine
- Judie Lisat

We’ve Moved!

The JCRC is very excited to move to a newly renovated space on the second floor of the Barry Family Campus. Our staff is grateful to Scott Tankenoff, JCRC board president Jon Parritz, our former Director of Business Operations Ruth Solomon, and Martin Lipshtat from the Minneapolis Jewish Federation for all of their efforts in making this move possible.