

STEPHEN
WISETEMPLE



2020-21

GENEROSITY REPORT

HOW THE
WISE COMMUNITY
ROSE TO THE
CHALLENGES OF COVID



OPEN HEARTS AND HELPING HANDS

This past year has taught us so much. As is often the case in life, the lessons came when we were least expecting them. As is sometimes the case as well, these lessons included moments of pain and sorrow.

At the beginning of the pandemic I remember well a conversation I had with a colleague. He said that one thing we would learn in this crisis is just how important our institutions and communities are to the people we serve. What he meant by that was that this moment would offer us a powerful metric, if you will, of commitment. In the face of profound and unprecedented public health and economic challenges, we would learn how truly committed our members are.

As you will see in the pages that follow, our members have stepped up in extraordinary ways for one another, for our staff, and for the institution itself. I am deeply grateful for the myriad ways that our community demonstrated its *n'divut lev*—its generosity of spirit.

From the very beginning, our congregants were ready to volunteer to make phone calls to members of the community, to check in on staff, and to contribute to our emergency relief fund that provided support for families in need. Other members of the community stepped up with contributions to support the synagogue's operating budget to ensure that we could take care of our staff and our facility. We have been incredibly gratified to see the commitment of our families to Stephen Wise Temple and Schools demonstrated by their continued membership and their generous support of our annual campaign in the various funds of the congregation.

It is especially inspiring to see people contribute from their hearts during moments of uncertainty. One of the best known such moments in our tradition occurs in the wilderness, soon after our ancestors left Egypt. The time has come to construct a tabernacle, a central place of gathering so that the community could offer words of thanks, praise, and petition to the Holy One. Moses asks all those whose hearts might move them to contribute to the project. In some ways the request is about feelings, a measure of one's emotional attachment and commitment to the community and the institutions that it supports. Our Israelite ancestors responded generously, so much so in fact that Moses has to ask them to stop bringing gifts because the campaign goals have been met.

I am grateful at this moment of uncertainty for the support, commitment, and generosity of each and every member of our community.

May our hearts remain open to one another, to our community, and to the values they embody which inspire us day by day.

...כָּל נְדִיב לְבוֹ יְבִיֵאֵה אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה'...

Let all those whose hearts
move them bring gifts for
the ETERNAL...

Exodus 35:4



Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Senior Rabbi



GENEROSITY PROFILE

SUSIE AND JAIME GESUNDHEIT

When asked about longtime Wise members Susie and Jaime Gesundheit, clergy and lay leaders alike point out the couple's dedication to education and to the future of Jewish community—especially calling attention to the couple's commitment to both of those values working hand-in-hand.

It is no surprise then, that if you ask them about their children, Daniela or Avi (of blessed memory), you will see their faces swell with pride. Their love of family exemplifies their great passion to ensure a vibrant Jewish future. Perhaps that is why, for seventeen years, Jaime has been part of Rabbi David Woznica's Thursday Brentwood Torah Study, always taking his "regular" seat with a smile.

"I've rarely had a conversation with Jaime and Susie that does not include the future of the Jewish People and a strong and secure Israel," noted Rabbi David Woznica. Undoubtedly, this is one of the key reasons that the Wise community has benefited from their generosity for decades—including a recent major pledge to Wise's Aaron Milken Center project.

This belief in Jewish education and engagement extends beyond the Wise campus and into higher education. Jaime is a Past President of USC Hillel and previously served as President of the Los Angeles Hillel Council, as well as a member of the Executive Committee of the Moriah Society at the University of Judaism. Susie, an accomplished artist, brings her talents and expertise to the next generation by serving on the Board of Councilors of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts and on the USC Hillel Arts Council Committee.

Susie and Jaime have invested their time and resources to the benefit of many worthy organizations. That they continue to be actively involved in the future of Wise is a blessing for the entire community.

GETTING TO KNOW THE GESUNDHEITS

When did you first become part of the Stephen Wise Temple community?

We joined Stephen Wise Temple in 1982, when our son Avi started kindergarten. We were attracted to the early childhood education program and then the day school program.

What is a message that you want to teach the next generations?

If you believe in the institution then you must give back with your time and resources in order for the institution to continue.

What motivates you to give so generously?

Our children received a wonderful education at Wise's schools and through it we developed a connection with Stephen Wise Temple and other families.

What inspired you to support the Aaron Milken Center project?

An early education facility is the base for a successful Jewish day school education. We desire that the blessed memory of our son Avi will continue in perpetuity through both the music program and the facility.

GENEROSITY PROFILE

CHERYL AND BRAD COHEN

It is especially important to shine a light on the generosity of those who don't seek accolades. As Wise President Janine Kolodny is quick to point out, Cheryl and Brad Cohen are understated leaders of the community who give for giving's sake and not for the spotlight. The Cohens are longtime supporters of Wise's galas, of the Annual Campaign, and they made a significant pledge to the creation of Shalom Garden. This commitment to the Wise community goes back to the family's earliest days with Wise.

Beginning at an early age, the Cohens' children all went through Wise's schools. In fact, Cheryl and Brad point to Wise's schools as the reason they came to the community. Clearly those academic years left an indelible impression as their daughters and sons-in-law, Crissy and Michael Blumenfeld and Scott and Nicole Halle, have enrolled their children in Wise's early childhood program.

That inherited commitment extends to volunteerism as well. Cheryl and Brad, along with Crissy, Michael, Nicole, and Scott, are helping to put together the Wise Gala online event later this year, co-chairing the event as a family. (See back cover to learn more.)

"I remember as if it were yesterday," explains Cheryl Cohen, "the joy I felt as I proudly participated in the gala each year that my children attended the schools—to honor the teachers and educators with appreciation and recognition. How meaningful it is for me this year to join the Gala committee alongside my entire family, as we celebrate the honorees."

"They are a wonderful example of a multigenerational family," adds Kolodny. "I've gotten to know Cheryl and Brad through many years of volunteering in our schools. Their home is so warm and welcoming—and it's delightful to see their commitment to Jewish education is being passed down to the next generation."

GETTING TO KNOW THE COHENS

When did you first become part of the Stephen Wise Temple Community?

We became Wise members almost 35 years ago when we enrolled our daughter in kindergarten at the elementary school. We were looking for a community to become involved in while at the same time seeking an impressive educational environment for our three children.

What is a message that you want to teach the next generations?

We feel it is extremely important for future generations to provide a Jewish education for their children, to maintain a relationship with a synagogue, and to keep Judaism alive in their hearts and in their homes.

What inspired you to support the Aaron Milken Center project?

We strongly believe in the importance of early childhood education and Aaron Milken Center will provide a beautiful state-of-the-art environment as well as enrichment to young children, their families, and to our Wise community.

We know it will help ensure the Jewish future.



The Cohen family at the wedding of Ashley and Maxx Cohen.

TIKKUN OLAM

GENEROSITY OF HEART: TODAH RABBAH TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Generosity takes so many forms—and that has been especially prevalent during this difficult year.

Wise is enormously grateful for all of the many incredible volunteers who give generously of their time and energy to help others during the year. Many participated in safe in-person opportunities to help those in need via blood drive donations or meal deliveries to seniors and first responders. Others spent hours staffing phone banks to communicate with fellow members in the earliest uncertain days of the pandemic. Wise volunteers even assisted with technical support to help seniors stay in contact with family and friends via Zoom or help them watch Wise's online Shabbat and High Holy Days services.

Here are just some of the ways the Wise community changed the world this year.

Get involved by visiting WiseLA.org/TikkunOlam
or by emailing TikkunOlam@WiseLA.org



Hundreds of Jewish teens engage with Wise Readers to Leaders in successful transition to online reading, tutoring, and enrichment curriculum for LAUSD students

Wise Readers to Leaders jumped into the world of online programming with incredible success, largely thanks to the hard work and dedication of hundreds of Jewish teen volunteers from the Stephen Wise Temple community and beyond.



Over the summer, 100 Jewish teens led creative enrichment activities for scholars during the remote program. Nearly every teen created their own workshops—with topics ranging from ballet and American Sign Language to film studies and math. One Jewish volunteer said of the program: "Volunteering at WRTL has allowed me to put into practice the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam*. Judaism has instilled in me a desire to better the world around me and sometimes that can feel like a daunting task. Wise Readers to Leaders has allowed me to make change within my own community and impact the scholars' worlds. Being a Junior Literacy Leader has made me more sure of my Jewish identity and the obligations that come with it."

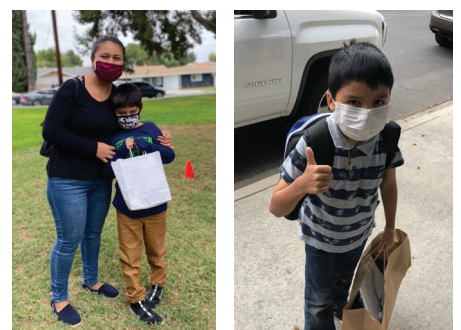


"I am honestly amazed by how the program was delivered," said one scholar's parent. "The program raised the bar of expectations. My kids probably learned more overall in these last few weeks than they did in the last months of public school. The Wise Readers to Leaders staff are just so prepared. This makes all of the difference in the world."

Wise Readers to Leaders has only grown in impact and success, largely due to the efforts of nearly 200 Jewish teens involved in year-round programming. The dedicated Teen Board and staff have paired over 150 scholars with over 150 teens in

the Remote Reading program. In this literacy and mentorship program, K-5th grade scholars are paired with a high schooler to meet weekly on Zoom to read a common book. These teens have had so much success with Remote Reading that they have decided to offer math tutoring to K-8th grade scholars starting in January. They even started a YouTube channel for enrichment so that scholars can access activities anytime even if they can't participate live.

Teens interested in becoming part of the Wise Readers to Leaders team and its incredible mission can learn more at WiseReaderstoLeaders.org.





SOVA drives help collect thousands of pounds of food and goods for those in need

Wise's partnership with SOVA took on an even more important and meaningful role this year as so many more Los Angeles residents found themselves facing economic hardship and food insecurity. The Wise community never missed a beat in answering the challenge. SOVA drives continued throughout the year and even with students in Wise School and Wise Religious School learning from home, families were able to come to Wise for drive-through drop-offs in bins on campus. Drives have continued at key points throughout the year, including the December holidays, Passover, and beyond—members are always encouraged to drop off items at Wise or contact SOVA directly for contactless drop off locations.

Thank you to all members of the Wise community who have kept SOVA donations high on their priority list.

Learn more at [WiseLA.org/TikkunOlam](https://www.wisela.org/tikkunolam) and watch the monthly newsletter for specific lists of items SOVA may need.



Supporting first responders during COVID-19 surges

Thanks to the support of the Wise community and a partnership with Ronen Levy Events (a Wise Events caterer), over 400 meals were supplied to healthcare workers at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center as well as other health care facilities throughout the year. These essential workers put in hours on top of hours to help the community—and the Wise community stepped up to support them by providing catered lunches and dinners, especially during surges in the spring, summer, and winter. Donations from Wise members rolled in to help cover the costs of these meals—a gesture of solidarity and support that was deeply appreciated by heroes on the front lines.

Donations are still being accepted for the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, which has helped first responders as well as others in need due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit [WiseLA.org/Giving](https://www.wisela.org/giving) and click DONATE NOW to make a contribution.



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We are grateful for each and every one of our generous contributors. In these pages you will find acknowledgments for contributions made between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

To learn more about giving opportunities with Wise visit [WiseLA.org/Giving](https://www.wisela.org/giving).

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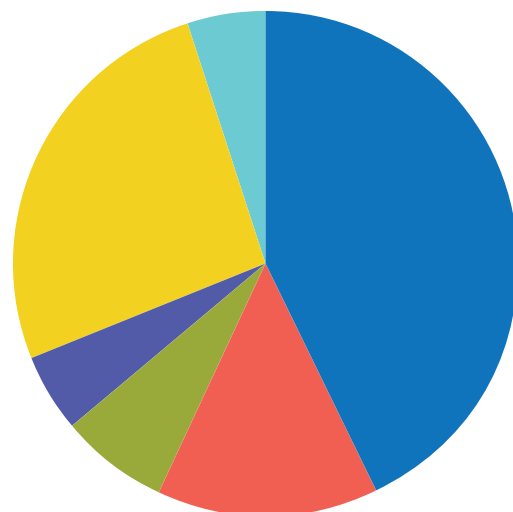
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FINANCIALS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

ACTIVITIES	
Educational tuition and fees	11,793,157
Membership donations	3,867,677
Program activities	1,820,194
Annual Giving	1,363,909
Aaron Milken Center pledges and contributions	7,237,618
Other Pledges & contributions	1,478,407
Other income	71,283
Total Support and Revenue	27,632,245
Total Expenses	22,071,584
Change in Net Assets	5,560,661
Net Assets (Beginning of Year)	18,978,377
Net Assets (End of Year)	24,539,038

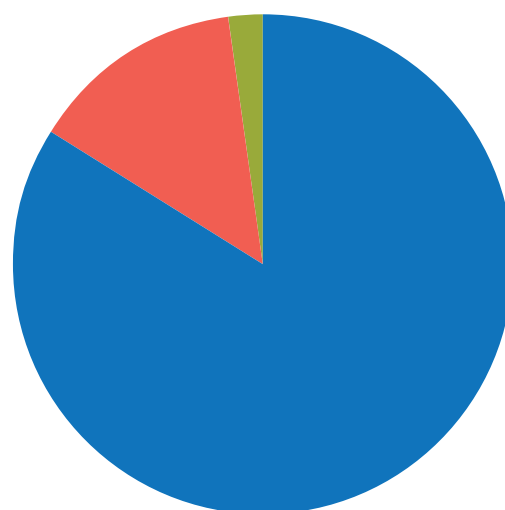
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	
Educational, Program, Membership	18,531,329
Management & General	3,115,462
Fundraising	424,793
Total Functional Expenses	22,071,584

REVENUE AND SUPPORT SOURCES



- Educational tuition & fees (43%)
- Membership donations (14%)
- Program activities (7%)
- Annual Giving (5%)
- Aaron Milken Center Pledges & contributions (26%)
- Other pledges & contributions (5%)

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



- Educational, Program, Membership (84%)
- Management & General (14%)
- Fundraising (2%)

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