

# Strengthening

# Our Future







## Supporting Our Schools

Dear Kehillah:

As the leaders, thinkers, and builders of tomorrow, we know that our children are our future. Every day, our community schools are shaping that future by strengthening our children—and for that, they deserve our assistance. By supporting the Kehillah Fund and its commitment to educational excellence, you have empowered our schools. You have enabled them to continue offering high-quality Torah-based and secular education to every child, regardless of his or her circumstances.

In this report, you'll read about the highlights of the past year and discover the impact of your contributions. You'll read about the Kehillah Fund schools and the great work they are doing every day to further Jewish education. You'll learn about our programs and the difference they have made in the community. And throughout, you'll see the power that we have when we come together as a kehillah.

## Building Our Kehillah

As we slowly emerge from the difficulty and isolation that many of us experienced during the pandemic, we have renewed appreciation for the power of community. United, we have been able to survive and thrive. Together, we have pulled through, emerging stronger for it. And hand-in-hand, we will move forward—continuing to learn, grow, and succeed.

With appreciation for your support and blessings for your success,



MAX DAYAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## 2021 Year at a Glance

### Our Impact, By the Numbers

NUMBER  
OF SCHOOLS

11

NUMBER  
OF STUDENTS

3,156

DOLLARS  
RAISED

1/1/21 – 12/31/21

\$885,749



TOTAL  
DONORS

1/1/21 – 12/31/21

1,705



DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED

1/1/21 – 12/31/21

GENERAL FUND

\$600,000

ACHDUS FUND

\$92,500

RESOURCE FUND

\$80,000\*

\*Resource Fund allocated in January 2022.

DONOR  
RETENTION

90%

AVERAGE  
ANNUAL GIVING

\$519

### A Message from Our Founders

Dear Kehillah:

Since its founding in 2004, the Kehillah Fund has worked to unite the Chicago Orthodox community through its primary, interdependent goals: strengthening Torah-based education and securing a more vibrant future for us all.

By uniting us, it has strengthened us. Each of the schools, donors, and families that have supported the Kehillah Fund have ensured that high-quality education is available to every child, regardless of their circumstances. And by promoting excellence in Torah-based and secular education for our children, we are ensuring Jewish continuity for our community.

As our schools navigate the evolving COVID circumstances that have become the norm over the last two years, the Kehillah Fund has been there to guide them throughout. Your passion and commitment to the cause makes all this possible. Baruch Hashem, thanks to each of you, the Kehillah Fund and our community are even stronger today.



*Joseph A. Walder Elizabeth Walder*

JOSEPH AND ELIZABETH WALDER  
FOUNDERS AND BOARD DIRECTORS

### Kehillah Fund Schools Continue to Flourish

Our partner schools have continued to provide students with innovative learning opportunities and a culture that inspires growth. From new artist-in-residence programs, to experiential gardening projects, to programs that support teachers, here's what's been happening at our schools.

At **Shaarei Chinuch Day School**, the community's only Montessori school, students were empowered to make their own class rules through the Class Constitution Project. "The children came up with the rules and consequences and agreed on them. It was amazing," said Daniella Adar, Co-Director.

The exciting new kria program at **Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov (JDBY)** is built on a skills-based curriculum that includes multi-sensory and phonemic awareness. The new program, under the guidance of Kria Coordinator

Esther Mina Katz, aims to help all students, regardless of their abilities, to grasp the material and gain the skills needed for reading Hebrew confidently.

**Torah Academy of Buffalo Grove** is teaching Chumash in a dynamic and skill-based way. The approach creates connections with words in the Siddur, Chumash, Bentcher, and Hagaddah. According to Elisa Zehnwirth, Principal, "The goal is to make the learning meaningful and memorable through context and cross-connections, and it has been a tremendous success."

**Yeshiva Ohr Boruch** is constantly working to ensure optimal teaching practices in the classroom. One focus this year has been on developing the students' independence in learning. "Our ultimate goal is to teach skills so that the child can learn on his own," said Rabbi Heshy Forster, Menahel.



“

By engaging in Jewish education, our children will be able to make greater contributions to society at large. ”

— Mordechai and Olga Kilstein  
Shaarei Chinuch and Akiba Schechter Parents





At **Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School**, environmental and Torah values came to life through the Joseph Kirshner Grow Torah Garden Program. This experiential gardening program gave kindergarten to 4th-grade students the opportunity to learn about Shemittah, the weekly parsha, recycling, and other related topics through immersive, hands-on activities.

**Arie Crown Hebrew Day School's** robust professional development program continues to support their teachers and enhance the school atmosphere. The theme for this year was student relationships. "I am trying to be more cognizant of what I am about to say and how it

impacts children," said Meira Schur. Another teacher, Roni Lichtman, explained, "I really try to see each child as an 'olam bifnei atzma' and to guide and nurture her accordingly."

**Keshet** is back with a renewed focus on their Literacy Program. The school's newly assigned literacy specialist has been working directly with students while also guiding their teachers. Dr. Melinda Remaly, Director of Education, explained, "Supporting literacy provides access not only to the broader picture of language and curriculum, but also to the world of literacy and general knowledge."



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It is so wonderful to see the broad spectrum of services that the Kehillah Fund is able to support.

”

—David and Sara Rut Dulin  
JDBY-YTT Parents





**Akiba Schechter Jewish Day School** has launched an initiative called the Artist-in-Residence Program. The workshops include Percussion, Improv, Design & Construction, and more. “It’s allowed our students and staff to lean into some of the soft skills we want to focus on, like empathy and listening skills,” said Miriam Kass, Principal.

Once the students at **JCFS Knapp Yeshiva** were able to return full-time, they fully benefited from the school’s programs. Rabbi David Rosenberg, Coordinator of Jewish Educational Services, shared, “It has been gratifying to see the success the students have had this

year as they make tremendous progress, with some children feeling a sense of ownership of their learning for the very first time.”

**REACH**, a professional development and resource program under the auspices of the Associated Talmud Torahs, has begun an offering called Collaborative Problem Solving. The program gives parents the tools to be proactive rather than reactive when dealing with parenting challenges and has been a great success.

One of the many exciting programs at **Cheder Lubavitch Hebrew Day School** this year was the Shemittah Fair. After the 8th-grade girls learned about Shemittah in detail, they put together an experiential fair with workshops, skits, posters, audiovisual presentations, and more to educate the rest of the school. “The girls were so proud! It was an empowering opportunity for our 8th graders to use their talents to provide this excitement and learning for our entire school,” said Elkie Wolf, Judaic Principal.



“

I aim to help my students grow in their knowledge and love of Hashem and Torah.

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—Mindy Reiss  
Hillel Torah Teacher





## The Achdus Fund

### Making the Gift of Education Available to All

Day schools make every effort to keep tuition affordable, but the financial obligation is still daunting for many. The Achdus Fund is a special allocation the Kehillah Fund gives day schools to support families in need. The funding is distributed annually based on schools' requests.

While the Fund's financial assistance is vital, equally important is the sense of belonging it offers to those in need. "The Achdus Fund does two very important things for families that are truly struggling—it helps keep tuition as low as possible in a way that maintains their dignity, and it creates a warm feeling that the community cares about them and the chinuch of their family," says Rabbi Avrohom S. Brownstein, Executive Vice President of **Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov-Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi (JDBY-YTT)**.

In October 2021, the Kehillah Fund distributed \$92,500 in Achdus funding for 185 students, making a difference for 87 families.

At **Shaarei Chinuch**, offering aid for eligible families was something the relatively new school had found difficult to provide. The school is grateful to receive Achdus funding to help families with tuition assistance.

"We are so thankful for all the support **Hillel Torah** receives from the Kehillah Fund and the direct benefit it has for our students," said Chaya Gordon Burstyn, Director of Communications. "The Achdus funding allows our families to give their children a vitally important Jewish day school education, regardless of their financial abilities."

## Donor Spotlight



### Taking Action For Our Future

Chuck and Wendy Siegel have been donors to the Kehillah Fund since 2011. Over the past 12 years, they have given a monthly contribution of \$360, totaling almost \$50,000 to date.

Inspired by a conversation with their Partners in Torah learning partner, the Siegels decided to give maaser (10% of their income to charity). Seeking to invest in Jewish education, they recognized Orthodoxy as the only stream of Judaism that is growing and thriving.

"We feel that parents should be aware that a Jewish education and leading a truly Orthodox life is necessary in order to survive what is going on in the public schools, the media, and in secular homes."

They looked for a foundation they could trust, and one where they could be confident their donations would be going directly toward supporting Jewish education. They found both of these factors in the Kehillah Fund.

Mrs. Siegel began volunteering at one of our 11 schools, Torah Academy of Buffalo Grove, this past year, and her appreciation for the Jewish values taught in a day-school setting has only grown.

The Siegels believe in the importance of taking action. Their message to others—we all need to do something for Jewish continuity and the Jewish future.



## Kehillah Shabbos

## Strengthening Our Commitment

### Uniting for Jewish Education

On Parshas Terumah, 40 shuls joined in celebrating the Kehillah Fund and its vital work to advance Jewish education. Community Rabbonim highlighted the Parsha's focus on Klal Yisrael's collective generosity toward the building of the Mishkan and underscored how, in the same way, the Chicago Jewish community has united in support of our day schools.

Rabbi Aaron Leibtag, Associate Rabbi of KINS, conveyed a sentiment shared by many Rabbonim. "The Kehillah Fund plays a crucial role within our community, enabling the gift of Jewish education to all of our children, and uniting our entire Chicago Jewish community in the process."

Inspired by this call to action, more than 20 Kehillah Fund Ambassadors, from multiple schools and shuls, joined the effort to encourage young families and new members of our community to support our day schools.

Tamara and Shaya Avner, Arie Crown Parents and Kehillah Fund Ambassadors, added, "Jewish education is an important part of our community, and we are proud to support the crucial work of the Kehillah Fund."

To view our Kehillah Shabbos video featuring the words of Rabbi Efraim Twerski of Khal Chasidim, visit [kehillahfund.org/kehillah-shabbos](https://kehillahfund.org/kehillah-shabbos).



## A Message from Our Rabbinic Advisor

Dear Chicago Jewish Community,

I hope that this annual report finds you and your family well. Thank you for sharing our belief in the critical importance of supporting Jewish education.

The Chicago Jewish community has earned a world-renowned reputation for its strength and values. A unique feature of our community, one that simply does not exist anywhere else in the world, is our Kehillah Fund and what it represents: A community joining together to support all of its schools and all of its children.

At the center of the Beis Hamikdash, in the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies), was the aron (ark) with the keruvim on top. Our Rabbis teach us that the keruvim were made out of pure gold and were fashioned in the image of two angelic figures with the faces of young children. Two lessons can be learned from this: Firstly, our children are our most holy-of-holy entities and they need to be a central focus of our lives. Secondly, we need to have a pure golden standard for their chinuch.

These two lessons are the core values of the Kehillah Fund. A focused dedication to ensuring that every child has access to the highest quality Jewish education regardless of background or financial means. Together we can make that happen.

With wishes for the continued growth of all our children in happiness and good health.

Sincerely,



RABBI YAAKOV ROBINSON  
RABBINIC ADVISOR

## Staff Promotion



### Robin Loeb Takes on the Role of Associate Director

Robin Loeb was recently promoted to Associate Director of Kehillah Fund. In her new role, she is responsible for project management of strategic initiatives and development of community engagement opportunities.

Robin joined the Kehillah Fund in May 2020 as Community Development Manager with the charge of enhancing partnerships with our day schools and shuls, and exploring additional opportunities for community engagement.

She holds a law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law and a master's degree from Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership. Robin recently graduated from the international Core Mentor Fellows Program along with a cohort of 36 Orthodox women of diverse backgrounds. She lives in West Rogers Park with her husband and three children.

Robin is grateful for the new opportunity and added, "It is a privilege to work for an organization that serves the breadth of our community and to work with our talented and dedicated team."

We are excited for Robin to bring her talents to this new role to help further the mission and impact of the Kehillah Fund.

## Our People

### Kehillah Fund Team

**Max Dayan**, Executive Director  
[mdayan@kehillahfund.org](mailto:mdayan@kehillahfund.org)

**Robin Loeb**, Associate Director  
[rloeb@kehillahfund.org](mailto:rloeb@kehillahfund.org)

**Esther Krystal**, Operations Manager  
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**Naomi Shicly**, Marketing & Administrative Associate  
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**Rabbi Yaakov Robinson**, Rabbinic Advisor

**Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Elizabeth Walder**, Founders and Board Directors



CLICK HERE TO HELP US RAISE \$200,000 IN 36 HOURS!

## Make Some Noise for Our Schools!

### A Great Success

Over 36 hours on August 9 and 10, 2021, the Kehillah Fund ran its first-ever crowdfunding campaign: Make Some Noise for our Schools!

This campaign amplified the message that a Torah-based education is one of the most essential pillars of our community. Through our schools, we educate the minds and hearts of our future leaders and strengthen Klal Yisrael.

We were so grateful that our goal of raising \$200,000 was achieved and exceeded. Nearly 450 community members came together to support the Kehillah Fund and to invest in our children's future. Thanks to generous supporters, we secured matching funding on every donation made in the campaign.

Nearly 50 Kehillah Fund ambassadors from across our schools were a vital part of this success. Simcha and Ruth Wait, Shaarei Chinuch Parents and Crowdfunding Campaign Ambassadors shared, "We were really happy to help support our schools, help get others involved and help Kehillah Fund reach their goal!"

Elizabeth Walder, Kehillah Fund Co-Founder and Board Director, added, "It was gratifying to see the outpouring of support for the Kehillah Fund's worthy mission, both through the donations, and through the comments of the donors and stakeholders."

This shared commitment to Jewish education engenders possibilities for generations to come, and promotes the continued education of our community's future leaders and innovators. Be on the lookout for our upcoming crowdfunding campaign when we will Make Some Noise for Our Schools once again!

### Stay Connected and Informed

For those of you on social media, following the Kehillah Fund Facebook page is a great way to learn about what's happening in our community and day schools. Hear about the schools and personalities that make up our wonderfully diverse community, and stay up-to-date

on our latest news. Our messages convey our shared commitment to Jewish education and our gratitude to all of you for your support. **Be sure to like and follow us on Facebook!**



@KehillahJewishEducationFund



## Three Primary Funds

### Kehillah Fund allocates dollars to our schools through three primary funds:

**GENERAL FUND**—Reliable monthly distributions provide a baseline of support to our schools. Funds are allocated based on the total number of students enrolled in kindergarten through 8th grade.

**ACHDUS FUND**—Financial support to bridge the gap in our schools for families who cannot afford to meet their tuition commitment. Funds are allocated per request to each school on an annual basis.

**RESOURCE FUND**—Supplemental aid to support students with specialized learning needs (i.e. adaptive materials and technology, teacher training, salaries, and more). Funds are allocated annually based on the number of enrolled students in kindergarten through 8th grade.

## Ways to Give

### Help Keep Our Kehillah Strong

#### Become a Monthly Donor

Giving monthly is the best way to support our kehillah. Become a member of the Kehillah Fund family by scheduling your monthly gift at [kehillahfund.org/monthly](https://kehillahfund.org/monthly).

#### Increase Your Monthly Gift

Consider increasing your monthly donation to amplify your impact at [kehillahfund.org/increase](https://kehillahfund.org/increase).

#### Make a One-Time Gift

Make a difference by scheduling your one-time donation at [kehillahfund.org/onetimegift](https://kehillahfund.org/onetimegift).

#### Other Gift Opportunities

Life insurance, real estate, stock gifts, will gifting and other tax strategies are available at [kehillahfund.org/plannedgiving](https://kehillahfund.org/plannedgiving).

#### Sponsor a Day of Learning

Honor a loved one, commemorate a yartzeit, honor a parent, teacher or leader, add significance to a simcha, or create a zechus for a loved one's refuah. Learn more at [kehillahfund.org/dayoflearning](https://kehillahfund.org/dayoflearning).

#### Employer Match Program

Many employers match employees' charitable contributions. Gifts from spouses and retirees may also qualify for a match. Visit [kehillahfund.org/employermatch](https://kehillahfund.org/employermatch).

#### Corporate Giving

Learn how your business can show support for our community through a gift to the Kehillah Fund at [kehillahfund.org/corporategiving](https://kehillahfund.org/corporategiving).

We also welcome gifts by check to Kehillah Fund, 5215 Old Orchard Road, Suite 450, Skokie, IL 60077. All donations are tax-deductible. EIN 26-3948613

To learn more, visit [kehillahfund.org/donate](https://kehillahfund.org/donate), or contact Max Dayan, Executive Director, at [mdayan@kehillahfund.org](mailto:mdayan@kehillahfund.org) or (224) 470-2927.

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Kehillah Fund is an integral part of our community, ensuring that every Jewish child receives a solid Torah education, and as such, plays a vital role in the future and survival of the Jewish people.

—Rabbi Hertzel Hillel Yitzhak, Sephardic Congregation

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## Our Schools

Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School

Arie Crown Hebrew Day School (ACHDS)

Cheder Lubavitch Hebrew Day School

Hillel Torah North Suburban Day School

JCFS Knapp Yeshiva

Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov–  
Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi (JDBY-YTT)

Keshet

REACH

Shaarei Chinuch Day School

Torah Academy of Buffalo Grove

Yeshiva Ohr Boruch

