
KEHILLAH

FUND



ANNUAL
REPORT
2024/5784



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear Kehillah,

For more than 20 years, the Kehillah Fund has been a cornerstone of support for our local Orthodox Jewish schools, ensuring their enduring stability and success. This unwavering commitment continues to shine as we delivered dependable financial contributions to help sustain our schools' daily operations. In 2024 alone, Kehillah Fund disbursed a record \$2,186,648 to our schools, underscoring the community's essential role in empowering our educators and enabling them to focus on what matters most—educating the next generation.

A deeply meaningful highlight this year was the inauguration of the Dr. Yosef Walder z"l Legacy Achdus Fund, created in memory of my beloved husband. Following the unfortunate loss of the STC program, many families faced unprecedented challenges in meeting their children's minimum tuition. This initiative raised \$3.6 million to bridge that critical gap, bringing together principals and community leaders with the shared purpose of supporting Jewish education.

Another momentous occasion was the Achdus Concert for Women and Girls, a truly special event spearheaded by Women of Kehillah in partnership with Zisa Zimmerman A"H Aneinu. This sold-out evening of inspiration, song, and heartfelt tefillah brought together nearly 900 participants for a memorable experience that uplifted and united our community. The energy, joy, and togetherness in the room were palpable—and 100% of ticket proceeds directly benefited Kehillah Fund schools.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication and support of our donors, sponsors, and tireless volunteers. Your generosity inspires me, and your partnership is the backbone of the Kehillah Fund's success. On behalf of Kehillah Fund, I want to express my gratitude for your unwavering commitment to our schools, our families, and our shared vision for a thriving Jewish future.

As we look ahead, we are determined to build on this year's successes. We remain steadfast in our mission to safeguard and strengthen our schools, uphold our cherished values, and empower our children and grandchildren to carry forward the beauty of our Torah for generations to come.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Mrs. Elizabeth (Shira Malka) Walder

2024 AT A GLANCE

\$1,585,585

RAISED FROM
THE KEHILLAH

1,676

NUMBER OF DONORS

717

NUMBER OF DONORS
GIVING 10+ YEARS
CONSECUTIVELY

728

NUMBER OF DONORS
WHO GIVE MONTHLY

\$254

AVERAGE ANNUAL GIFT

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

\$2,186,648

was allocated by the Kehillah
Fund to our schools in 2024
through four primary funds:

\$840K

GENERAL FUND

RELIABLE MONTHLY DISTRIBUTIONS
PROVIDE A BASELINE OF SUPPORT FOR
OUR SCHOOLS. FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED
BASED ON THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN K-8.

\$56K

ACHDUS FUND

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BRIDGE THE
GAP IN OUR K-8 SCHOOLS FOR FAMILIES
WHO COULD NOT AFFORD TO MEET
THEIR TUITION COMMITMENTS. FUNDS
ARE ALLOCATED PER REQUEST TO EACH
SCHOOL ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

\$30K

RESOURCE FUND

SUPPLEMENTAL AID TO SUPPORT
STUDENTS WITH SPECIALIZED LEARNING
NEEDS. FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED BASED ON
THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 8TH GRADE.

\$1.26M

DR. YOSEF WALDER Z"l LEGACY ACHDUS FUND

ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF DR. YOSEF
WALDER Z"l, THE LEGACY ACHDUS FUND
IS HELPING MORE THAN 600 FAMILIES
IN OUR K-12 SCHOOLS MEET MINIMUM
TUITION OBLIGATIONS WITHOUT PLACING
ADDITIONAL STRAIN ON THE SCHOOLS.



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Kehillah,

The year 2024 will stand out in our community's history for many reasons. Once again, we witnessed that life can change in an instant. In Chicagoland, the sunset of STC created a critical gap in school funding, leading to uncertainty about the financial future of our Jewish day schools. However, if one thing we know is constant, it's the Torah—and our dedication to its continuity through Jewish education.

Parshat Vayishlach contains the famous struggle between Yaakov Avinu and the *malach* (angel), after which Yaakov became known as Yisroel. As the father of Jewish nationhood, his struggle reflects that of all his future children. The Zohar notes that man's legs symbolize that which sustains people in this world. The *malach*, while hitting Yaakov's hip, struck at his source of livelihood for the Torah world, and supporting Torah study remains a struggle to this day.

In that same parsha, *Rashi* notes that when two people wrestle, they become bound together. This binding removes the threat of being hit. I deeply appreciate the many community members who came together this year to tackle one of our generation's key struggles head-on.

When we are unified, our opportunities are limitless.

Kehillah Fund is a model of community *achdus* and shared responsibility for our school communities. Our founder, Dr. Yosef Walder z"l, would often say, "The bigger the challenge, the bigger the responsibility, and the bigger the opportunity." 2024 proved to be a year with a tremendous amount of both challenge and opportunity. In a time when the kehillah was called to step up, I am grateful and humbled to share that our kehillah took on that responsibility with passion and purpose.

Without further ado, I am pleased to share the Kehillah Fund's 2024 Annual Report, which showcases the tremendous accomplishments of our kehillah this year. May we continue to have the strength, unity, and resources to work together to support Jewish education, for it is our constant and guiding light.

With gratitude,

Max Dayan

OUR SCHOOLS — Building Our Future

Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School



Akiba-Schechter promotes academic excellence and develops students with strong Jewish identities. By focusing on each student's individual gifts and needs, its teachers create a caring

family of learners committed to responsible citizenship and the performance of mitzvot.

JCFS Chicago Knapp Yeshiva



JCFS Knapp Yeshiva integrates the settings of a therapeutic school and a Jewish

day school. This combination allows the school to create unique opportunities for social, emotional, academic, and Jewish success for Jewish children who are serious about continuing their Jewish studies and require additional educational and social/emotional support.

Arie Crown Hebrew Day School



Arie Crown's mission - one of Torah Im Derech Eretz - provides a comprehensive religious and secular education in a setting that enables its students to grow in Torah, Middos, Yiras Shomayim and devotion to Yiddishkeit.

JDBY-YTT



Joan Dachs Bais Yaakov - Yeshivas Tiferes Tzvi is the largest Jewish Elementary Day School in the Midwest, currently

serving more than 1,500 students in nursery through eighth grade. JDBY-YTT is dedicated to transmitting the values and lifestyle of Orthodox Jewish tradition while providing a strong, comprehensive secular education. JDBY-YTT recognizes and respects the dignity of all students and strives to maximize individual strengths and achievements in a positive, supportive learning environment.

Cheder Lubavitch



SEYMOUR J. ABRAMS
**Cheder Lubavitch
Hebrew Day School**

Cheder Lubavitch follows the guiding

philosophy that in the innocence and sincerity of children, there is the immeasurable potential for goodness, leadership, and appreciation of the sanctity of life. Cheder Lubavitch creates a nurturing, child-centered, value-oriented environment dedicated to academic excellence. A uniquely integrated curriculum of General and Jewish studies, combined with hands-on experiences, guides each student toward fulfilling his or her potential.

Keshet



Keshet's three Jewish day schools provide exceptional education and support for students with disabilities, offering individualized instruction, therapeutic services, and a nurturing environment from kindergarten

through high school transition. With a commitment to inclusion and personalized learning, Keshet empowers each student to build confidence, develop skills and live independent lives in the community.

Hillel Torah



Hillel Torah is a dynamic, Modern Orthodox day school preparing the Jewish leaders of tomorrow. Its progressive, child-centered approach promotes academic

excellence in Judaic and general studies. Rooted in Torah learning and values, Hillel Torah encourages children to develop a lifelong commitment to Medinat Yisrael, the Jewish people and the global community.

REACH



Resources for Educational Achievement Collaboration and Health is Chicago's strategic and coordinated effort to address a system-wide need to be more inclusive. With the help of REACH,

Chicagoland Jewish day schools are able to teach and care for students with a wide range of needs.

Shaarei Chinuch Day School



SCDS weaves together Judaic and secular education, providing a comprehensive, hands-on learning approach rooted in the Montessori philosophy. The multi-age classroom setup fosters a rich learning environment where children can learn from one another. By acknowledging and addressing each child's individual learning style, SCDS finds that children develop an unparalleled love for learning.

Torah Academy



Torah Academy — in the tradition of the finest Jewish day schools — combines an outstanding Judaic studies curriculum with an excellent General studies program, preparing children for the high schools, colleges, and universities of their choice. In addition to its rigorous academic curriculum, the program is designed to instill within students core Jewish values, such as kindness, respect for parents, elders and peers; patience, generosity, a love of learning, modesty, and commitment to Jewish life and community, locally and worldwide.

Yeshiva Ohr Boruch



Yeshiva Ohr Boruch, the Veitzener Cheder, follows the traditional structure of Chassidic chadorim from pre-WWII Europe. Limudei Kodesh are taught in Yiddish, while the school offers a state-recognized General Studies program. Additionally, YOB features a comprehensive Resource Department that supports a wide range of learners, from remediation to enrichment.



11

KEHILLAH FUND SCHOOLS



741

TEACHERS
& STAFF

3,343

STUDENTS





DR. YOSEF WALDER LEGACY ACHDUS FUND

The Kehillah Fund celebrates the launch and success of the Legacy Achdus Fund, established in memory of Dr. Yosef Walder z”l.



After the sunset of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit (STC) program at the end of 2023 in Illinois, the Kehillah Fund was well positioned to be a catalyst for a group of committed and generous community leaders who came together to inaugurate a fund in memory of Dr. Yosef Walder to assist families who are struggling financially and cannot afford minimum tuition. The Dr.

Yosef Walder Legacy Achdus Fund honors the memory of Dr. Yosef Walder z”l, the beloved Kehillah Fund co-founder whose vision of communal unity and shared responsibility in Jewish education left an indelible mark on Chicago’s Orthodox schools.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the community and a dollar-for-dollar match initiated by Mrs. Elizabeth (Shira Malka) Walder, the Dr. Yosef Walder Legacy Fund reached its \$3.6 million goal and is poised to expand its impact. This vital initiative provides immediate financial relief to more than 600 families with students in K-12 Orthodox Jewish day schools, enabling them to meet their minimum tuition obligations. The Kehillah Fund has received many heartfelt thank you messages from families who have directly benefited from the Fund. Beyond relieving the tremendous financial burden and stress, the families who received these tuition vouchers have expressed that they feel seen, dignified, and encouraged by this initiative.

Dr. Walder’s enduring legacy of unity and communal responsibility lives on through this initiative, which continues to strengthen Jewish education in Chicagoland. As the Fund grows, so too does its ability to provide reassurance, stability, and opportunity for our community and future generations.

“This has had an immediate and significant impact for so many people in the community. I am so inspired by the culture of philanthropy in Chicago and seeing people really step up to meet the moment. Kehillah Fund is poised to answer this need.”

Max Dayan, Kehillah Fund Executive Director





On September 20, 2024, 25 leaders from our K-12 Orthodox schools, representing 11 high schools and 9 elementary schools, gathered at Walder Education to learn about the initiative and rollout plan of the Dr. Yosef Walder z"l Legacy Achdus Fund.

"The assistance not only relieves the financial burden, but also, with the fortitude afforded through being seen and supported, strengthens our recognition of the utmost importance and the investment in our wonderful children's upbringing and chinuch."

Legacy Achdus Fund Beneficiary



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



\$1,260,408

DISTRIBUTED TO OUR SCHOOLS IN DEC. 2024



35%

OF STUDENTS IN KEHILLAH FUND SCHOOLS RECEIVED STC SCHOLARSHIPS



\$2,250

AMOUNT OF VOUCHER PER ELIGIBLE STUDENT



1,615

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS



Learn more about how you can help by visiting KehillahFund.org/achdusfund

WOMEN OF KEHILLAH

Together with Zisa Zimmerman A"H Aneinu, we hosted a powerful evening of community achdus and inspiration.



SHAINA BENHIYOUN PHOTOGRAPHY



WOMEN*of*
KEHILLAH

Nearly 900 Jewish women and girls sang, davened, and cheered, creating an electric atmosphere of unity and purpose. Singers Tehila Erlich and Tamar Rubin, accompanied by the Ashira Girls Choir, delivered moving performances while women and girls joined together to recite Tehillim. Thanks to 17 generous sponsors, all proceeds from ticket sales—ranging from \$18 to \$54—benefited the Kehillah Fund, which comprises 11 local Jewish Orthodox schools. The event celebrated community, unity, and a shared commitment to ensure Torah-based education continues to thrive for generations to come.

“Such a beautiful night, so meaningful and uplifting! Thank you. As so many people said on the way out, ‘This is so needed!’”

Sarah Wineberg, WOK Steering Committee Member





ABOUT WOMEN OF KEHILLAH

Women of Kehillah, an initiative of Kehillah Fund, was developed to support our schools in myriad ways. Led by a steering committee comprised of women with diverse voices, experiences, and school affiliations, Women of Kehillah identifies meaningful initiatives to benefit the breadth of our Kehillah Fund schools. Through a communal lens, the committee develops projects to celebrate teachers, support students, and inspire our community.

“What an incredible combination of achdus, tefillah, and a variety of performers. Thank you so much for making this happen!”

Shavy Hass, WOK Steering Committee Member



“I’m so grateful for our beautiful singers, the precious choir of kids from our different schools, the amazing ruach of the audience, and the achdus in our community.”

Robin Loeb, Associate Director, Kehillah Fund





WOMEN OF KEHILLAH DONATES GIFTS TO STUDENTS

Women of Kehillah brought joy to hundreds of students at Kehillah Fund Jewish day schools by providing new games and sports equipment to enhance their recess programs. Administrators at these schools had the opportunity to place specific requests, selecting customized toys and sports equipment to meet the specific needs of their students. This effort brought smiles to students and reinforced the importance of community investment in the next generation.

“Thank you so much for the gifts to our students to enjoy during recess! The students were so excited to see all the new games and toys which will definitely enhance our recess program!”

Rabbi Avraham Varnai



WOMEN OF KEHILLAH LAUNCHES GRATITUDE PROJECT



In 2024, Women of Kehillah inaugurated the 8th Grade Hakaras Hatov Project in memory of Dr. Yosef Walder, z”l. This initiative invited eighth grade students from Kehillah Fund schools to reflect on their gratitude for Hashem, their schools, teachers, parents, and others who have supported their education. During one-hour workshops led by Robin Loeb, teachers, and Women of Kehillah volunteers, the students designed lawn signs expressing their gratitude. With generous funding for art supplies—including pre-printed signs, paint, and markers—students showcased appreciation for teachers, parents, and their community. This project not only celebrated the students’ gratitude but also raised awareness of the Kehillah Fund’s mission to unify the community in support of Jewish education.



10 WAYS TO GIVE

Support the Kehillah Fund and ensure a thriving future for Jewish education through these meaningful ways to give.



MAKE A DONATION

Choose a one-time or recurring monthly donation to provide essential resources for our schools. To donate securely online, visit kehillahfund.org/donate.



LEGACY ACHDUS FUND

Contribute to the Dr. Yosef Walder z"l Legacy Achdus Fund to directly help families meet their tuition obligations: kehillahfund.org/achdusfund.



LEGACY GIVING

Include the Kehillah Fund in your estate plans to leave a lasting legacy. Speak with your financial advisor or contact us for guidance on adding the Kehillah Fund to your will or trust.



EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Sponsor an event to support our programs and connect with our community. Explore sponsorship opportunities on our website or contact us to discuss customizable options.



EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFTS

Double your impact by taking advantage of your employer's matching gift program. Check with your employer if they match charitable contributions and let us help with the process.



CAMPAIGN AMBASSADOR

Volunteer your time and talents to amplify our message and inspire others to give. Sign up to be a campaign ambassador and receive tools and training to help spread the word.



HONORARY OR MEMORIAL GIVING

Make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one to celebrate their legacy. Use our online donation form at kehillahfund.org/donate or contact us to personalize your tribute.



STOCK DONATIONS

Maximize your giving potential with a tax-smart donation of appreciated assets. Contact us for simple instructions for transferring stocks or cryptocurrency.



SPONSOR A DAY OF LEARNING

Honor a loved one, commemorate a yartzeit, add meaning to a simcha, or create a zechus for one's refuah. kehillahfund.org/dayoflearning.



GIVE FROM YOUR DAF

Donate to the Kehillah Fund from your donor-advised fund (DAF). You may need to search for us in the DAF database using our full legal name, Kehillah Jewish Education Fund or our EIN 26-3948613.



To learn more, visit kehillahfund.org/donate, call 224.470.2927 or email Max Dayan, Executive Director, at mdayan@kehillahfund.org.

KEHILLAH FUND

KEHILLAH FUND TEAM

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FOUNDERS

"We are so grateful for the consistent and generous support that we receive from the Kehillah Fund. We as a community are all responsible for educating the next generation of the Jewish people, and benefiting from the communal support that the Kehillah Fund facilitates helps strengthen the important work we are doing each day!"

Mrs. Mushky Kulek, Co-director, Shaarei Chinuch



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