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ROSH HASHANAH

## A Look Back, A Look Ahead

The High Holidays are a time of reflection. Many of us will dedicate time to think about what we've accomplished this past year and identify the changes we hope to make in our lives in the coming year. For me, it is impossible to reflect on my life without thinking about the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.

The MJCCA has been an integral part of my life for 37 years. Growing up, my summers were spent joyfully at MJCCA day camps and Camp Barney Medintz. During the school year, I could most always be found playing with friends in a sports league or gaining valuable leadership skills through my involvement with BBYO.

It was the MJCCA that made me feel proud to be Jewish and gave me a sense of belonging.

When an opportunity arose in 2005 for me to become part of the MJCCA's staff, I seized it. Today I am humbled and proud to be leading this dynamic and transformative agency.

Looking back on this past year at the MJCCA, there is much to be proud of. The MJCCA affected the lives of more than 55,000 participants and 12,000 members. We offered more than 10,000 ways for people of all ages to engage and connect.

At Camp Barney Medintz, more than 1,250 campers developed lifelong friendships and a stronger connection to their Jewish identity. Our 2,000 MJCCA day campers splashed and smiled through the summer as they tried new things and made lasting memories.

Our 400 preschoolers were ensconced in a warm, nurturing Jewish environment while learning Shabbat songs and all the skills needed for kindergarten. At the same time, more than 3,500 mature adults were able to engage in programs that allowed them to maintain an active, healthy lifestyle and form crucial social connections.

Our Book Festival brought more than 10,000 book lovers exceptional cultural and educational opportunities. Through our teen programs, almost 3,000 Jewish teens connected with one another, establishing lifelong social networks and stronger Jewish identities.

Our inclusion program enabled children with special needs to learn and play side by side with their typi-

cally developing peers through inclusive preschools, day camps, and sports and recreational programming.

I could share so much more about the life-changing impact the MJCCA had on our community this past year, but I also want to share my excitement for what the new year holds.



**Guest Column**  
By Jared Powers  
Marcus JCC

We will continue to innovate and expand our program offerings while investing in our facilities at Zaban Park and Camp Barney Medintz. As we did with our day camp programs, expanding to Emory, East Cobb and North Fulton locations this past summer, we will be focus on identifying additional avenues for extending our stellar programming throughout metro Atlanta.

We will develop new partnerships, enabling us to have an even greater impact and allowing collaborative solutions. We will invest in our people, recognizing that a dynamic partnership among our staff, lay leaders, members, participants and the greater community is at the core of what we do.

As a father of two wonderful boys, it is so meaningful for me to watch as they, through their participation in multiple MJCCA programs, are now building their own lifelong friendships and proudly speak of their Jewish identity. As the CEO, I recognize how fortunate I am to work for an agency that turns everyday minutes into Jewish moments that are remembered for a lifetime.

During this time of reflection, I want to recognize the impact that our board, donors, volunteers, partners, members, staff and the community make on the MJCCA each and every day. We thank you for your continued involvement and support. If 5776 is any indication of what we will achieve in 5777, the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta is about to embark on a very sweet year.

On behalf of the MJCCA, *l'shana tova.* ■

*Jared Powers is the chief executive officer of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.*