MJCCA News

AWARD WINNERS. The community recently came together at the MJCCA’s 68th Annual Meeting, chaired by Bruce Morris, to honor lay leadership and staff achievements. New agency President Doug Kuniansky was installed, as those in attendance bid a fond farewell to Immediate Past President Steven Cadranel.

Honorees included:
• Scott Ackerstein, who received the Volunteer of the Year Award, for his exceptional devotion as commissioner of the MJCCA’s Shirley Blumenthal Park (SBP) men’s basketball league.
• Teen Department Director Laura Ross, who received the Phillip Bush Award for Leadership. Laura has an enormous responsibility managing one of the largest JCC teen departments in the country.
• Barney’s Registrar/Food Service Director Alan Barney, who received the Team Player Award. He manages a system that provides nearly 4,000 meals a day to campers and staff. He coordinates all of the special dietary needs and virtually always says “yes” to any question, in order to make everyone happy.
• Membership Associate Jannace Harrison, who received the Customer Service Award, which recognizes a staff member who works expertly with both internal staff and members and approaches work with a positive attitude, even under adverse situations.
• FitLine, which received the Best New Program Award. FitLine is a team training functional fitness program designed to help participants feel better, look better, and perform better.
• Michele Rosenberg, who received the Raye Lynn Banks Teacher of the Year Award (at The Weinstein School). Michele’s interactions with her students, as she engages with them through the use of open-ended questioning and higher-level thinking skills, are inspiring to watch.
• Donna Feller, who received the Raye Lynn Banks Teacher of the Year Award (at The Sunshine School). Donna treats her one-year-olds with the utmost respect and has often been noticed for her amazing interactions with children and parents.
• Teen Department Director Laura Ross, who received the Phillip Bush Award for Leadership with Laura Ross.

SAMMY ROSENBERG HONORED. Sammy Rosenberg, assistant director of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta’s Blondery Family Department for Special Needs, received the prestigious Nobis Works Luminary Award for Volunteer Advocacy. The award was presented on April 30, at the Nobis Works’ 16th Annual Galaxy of Stars & Tommy Awards Luncheon.

Sammy Rosenberg and Tommy Nobis

Bobbie Knopf, co-founder of Nobis Works, who nominated Sammy for this award said, “Sammy has first-hand experience with disability (Sammy has Tourette syndrome himself and is the caretaker of his brother-in-law who has Prader-Willi syndrome), and has worked to overcome his disability and to become a community leader.

“Sammy has spearheaded initiatives that helped Atlanta become a model for local-based community involvement,” Bobbi continued. “Sammy provides a forum to interact and participate in communal activities. He allows for those with disabilities to have a platform to own their strengths and skills to benefit the community at large.”

Originally from Newport, Rhode Island, Sammy has been in Atlanta since he was two years old. At age 11, he was diagnosed with a neurological disorder known as Tourette syndrome. Despite the challenges of Tourette syndrome, Sammy attended Curry College, in Milton, Massachusetts, and graduated in 1987 with bachelor’s degrees in social work and psychology.

In 1993, Sammy was hired by The Atlanta Jewish Community Center as assistant director of the Developmental Disabilities Department. He has been instrumental in starting programs for individuals with special needs at the MJCCA’s Camps Isadore Alterman and Camp Barney Medintz. He has taken groups with special needs to Israel and the United Kingdom, as well as on 40+ group vacations throughout the U.S.

In 1999, Sammy married Katie Alterman, whom he met at the MJCCA. They have one son, Max, age 7.

HARRIS JACOBS DREAM RUN. More than 475 people participated as volunteers, runners, or sponsors in the MJCCA’s 2014 Harris Jacobs Dream Run, on May 4, helping raise more than $40,000 for MJCCA programs and services. Enhanced prizes for the various runner categories included vacation packages from the JW Marriott Atlanta Buckhead, Mizuno running shoes, gift certificates from Dick’s Sporting Goods, free massages from Massage Heights, and tickets to the Atlanta Hawks 2014-2015 Season.

In addition to the Kids’ 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk and the 5K Road Race/Walk, the HDRP partnered with the Blondery Department for Special Needs to orchestrate a new Special Needs one-mile walk for youth and adults.

Overall winners Cara Ovadia and George Darden

Committee Chairs Kitty Jacobs and Larry Gordon

The Harris Jacobs Dream Run

MJCCA President Doug Kuniansky and CEO Gail Luxenberg

Gail Luxenberg and Raye Lynn Banks Teacher of the Year Award winner Michele Rosenberg (The Weinstein School)

Gail Luxenberg and Team Player Award winner Alan Barney

Gail Luxenberg and Customer Service Award winner Jannace Harrison

Gail Luxenberg and Phillip Bush Award for Leadership winner Laura Ross

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The Harris Jacobs Dream Run
The Lisa F.

Many of our staff have met their families are consistently met.

where their needs and the needs of their care for family members in our adult day services program. As an organization that caters to families, the JCC staff is just that—the ultimate family."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution published the complete list of “Top Workplaces” on March 23.

MELTON KALLAH. The Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning at the MJCCA, the local affiliate of the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning, recently hosted the International Friends of Melton 9th Annual Learning Conference (Kallah). More than 65 Melton students from across North America attended the conference, which included learning sessions at the Emory Conference Center and visits to The Breman Museum and The Temple.

Highlights of the conference included animated discussions about the significance and importance of Jewish life in the South, as well as an exploration of divergent lifestyles of Jews living in the North and the South. Several local students shared their experiences with the out-of-town guests at roundtable breakout discussions held over a dinner at The Temple.

Professor Mark Bauman, noted expert on the history of Southern Jewry, led sessions. Janice Rothschild Blumberg led a visit to the “Back to Rich’s” exhibition at The Breman Museum; she also shared insights and information on the history of The Temple and her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement with her late husband, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild.

Sheryl Blechner, MJCCA graduate of the Melton School and co-chair of the conference remarked, “The success of this kallah rested on the active participation of our local participants, whose stories and experiences added immeasurably to the experience. Our out-of-town guests were truly impressed with the high level of our instructors and participants.”

Kitty Jacobs & Family

A TOP WORKPLACE. The MJCCA has been named one of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s “Top 100 Workplaces” for the third consecutive year.

“Top Workplaces” are determined solely on employee feedback, via a survey conducted by WorkplaceDynamics, LLP. This year, the MJCCA ranked 19th in the mid-size category.

“To receive this award for the third year signifies that we are doing something right in the eyes of our staff, the lifeblood of our organization,” said Gail Luxenberg, CEO and executive director of the MJCCA. “It means all the more to us because this honor comes from them. We are committed to providing our staff with the home run out of the ball park!”

Our sincerest thanks to all the runners, walkers sponsors, volunteers, MJCCA staff, and members of the community. You all scored A++ and hit a home run out of the ball park!

Janice Rothschild Blumberg and Dr. Lili Baxter at The Breman Museum

Professor Mark Bauman with Atlanta students Bob Wenger, Roy Cobb, Toby Holzer, Dorothy Lishkoff, and Norma Baker

ICONS. A new speaker series, “ICONS: The People Who Change Our World,” kicked off May 20, with Joey Reiman, founder and CEO of BrightHouse, the Atlanta-based global consultancy.

Reiman’s breakthrough purpose methodology and frameworks have been adopted by individuals all over the globe, along with The Coca-Cola Company, McDonald’s, and many other Fortune 500 companies.

FORWARD IN FITNESS. The MJCCA has expanded its FitLine offerings, which are held in the FitLine Functional Fitness Studio, with classes for adults, FitLine Jr. classes for teens, and new FitLine Family classes.

Adult classes, offered multiple times throughout the day, combine small group coaching, team training, and targeted fitness programs.

FitLine Jr., for ages 11-17 and all fitness levels, helps children learn the proper way to push, pull, run, throw, climb, lift, and jump both effectively and safely.

FitLine Family is a new program for parents and their children ages 6-11. Exercises include partner push-ups, partner box jumps, partner ab work, and more.

FitLine Family is designed to encourage the development of self-confidence, strength, coordination, empowerment, and self-awareness through fitness. This class incorporates all aspects of a regular FitLine class, while providing an adult role model for children to look up to when exercising.

“FitLine is a different kind of workout—off the treadmill and away from the machines,” says MJCCA Total Heath Director Rachael Rinehart.

FitLine’s strength and cardio workout promote functional fitness, which fosters the strength, stability, power, mobility, endurance, and flexibility that people need to thrive as they move through life.

The program involves basic functional movement patterns like pushing, pulling, hinging, squating, rotating, carrying, and gait patterns (walking and running).

For full class offerings or registration information, visit atlantajcc.org/fitline, or call 678-812-4060.

Joey Reiman

MOODS: "Our mission is to brighten the smiles on the Pepperidge Farm goldfish cracker.

Reiman’s breakthrough purpose methodology and frameworks have been adopted by individuals all over the globe, along with The Coca-Cola Company, McDonald’s, and many other Fortune 500 companies.

Sunday, May 4, 2014, will go down in history as a day my family will forever remember. The 21st Harris Jacobs Dream Run will always be spotlighted as a huge success. We are so grateful to all the runners and walkers who attended! Also, kudos to our many loyal sponsors who supported us!

A wonderful event like this could not have occurred without the leadership of Larry Gordon, who was one of the originators of the HDDR since its inception in 1994, and the fabulous assistance of the Dream Run Committee, most of whom have continued to serve since the beginning!

Two dynamic staff members of the MJCCA, Kayce Pearce and Bonnie Brodsky, joined our team this year and truly helped us deliver this spectacular event!

Our sincerest thanks to all the runners, walkers sponsors, volunteers, MJCCA staff, and members of the committee. You all scored A++ and hit a home run out of the ball park!

Kitty Jacobs & Family

Mel Geller