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MJCCA News

HONORS ABOUND AT MJCCA ANNUAL MEETING. The community recently gathered at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta's (MJCCA) 72nd Annual Meeting, chaired by Jeff Brickman, to install its new leadership and recognize staff achievements. Ken Winkler, shareholder of the law firm of Berman Fink Van Horn P.C., was installed as the new chair of the Board of Directors and will serve a two-year term. The agency also said a heartfelt thank you to outgoing chair Joel Arogeti.

Lay leadership and staff awards were presented by MJCCA CEO Jared Powers. The awards and recipients included:

- Harvey Rubin Scholarship Award: Brandon Rubin

Founded in 2002 by Amy and Philip Rubin, this merit-based scholarship award recognizes the outstanding leadership of a high school senior in the Atlanta Jewish community.

- MJCCA Volunteers of the Year Award: Steve Peltier, Jennifer Checkner, and Brian Mand

- Phillip Bush Award for Leadership: Karl Hydrick

This recognizes a staff member who aspires to lead and who influences, motivates, and enables others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the agency.

- Team Player Award: Frances Raffield

This recognizes a staff member who boosts employee morale, aligns goals, streamlines processes and procedures, promotes interdepartmental cooperation, and is an effective communicator.

- Customer Service Award: Stephanie McCormick

This recognizes a staff member who works expertly with both internal staff and members and approaches work with a positive attitude, even under adverse circumstances.



MJCCA Board of Directors Outgoing Chair Joel Arogeti (from left); MJCCA's Board of Directors Chair Ken Winkler; and MJCCA CEO Jared Powers (Photos: Jennifer Sami)



MJCCA Staff Award recipients Frances Raffield (from left), Sierra Jamison, Lauren Chekanow, Karl Hydrick, Stephanie McCormick, and Rachel Parker



Harvey Rubin Scholarship Award recipient Brandon Rubin (center), with (from left) father Stephen Rubin, Amy Rubin, Philip Rubin, and mother Lori Rubin

- Raye Lynn Banks Teacher of the Year Award (MJCCA's Dunwoody preschool, The Weinstein School): Sierra Jamison

- Raye Lynn Banks Teacher of the Year Award (MJCCA's East Cobb preschool, The Sunshine School): Rachel Parker

- Best New Program Award: Intown Outreach, led by Intown Outreach Associate Lauren Chekanow

This award is for a new MJCCA program that demonstrates creativity and innovation in the dimension of service to the community and advances the agency's mission. The Intown Outreach program, funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta (JFGA), was launched with the goal of increasing engagement opportunities among young Jewish families, by offering free and low-cost, low-barrier programming in public spaces. This program is fostering more connections through the in-town Jewish community.

Also announced were the 2018 graduates of the Erwin Zaban Leadership Development Program (EZLDP). This eight-month program, designed to recruit, train, develop, and engage the MJCCA's future leaders, helps to secure the continued success of the agency. All graduates are given the opportunity to serve in a leadership capacity. The EZLDP was conceived by MJCCA past president Erwin Zaban and launched in 1987.

EZLDP 2018 graduates are Allison Beldick, Mara Berman, Dana Bernath, Lisa Freedman, Staci Libowsky, Andy Lipman, Roger Panitch, Robert Rothberg, Brian Seitz, Lindsey Shoob, Jana Tessler, Arin Tritt, Deena Weintraub, Craig Wolpert, and Bobby Zuckman. Program co-chairs are Brian Mand and Margo Marks.

PARKER NAMED NEW DIRECTOR OF SUNSHINE SCHOOL. The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta recently announced that Raye Lynn Banks, the long-time director of its East Cobb preschool, The Sunshine School, will retire on May 31. On April 30, Nancy Goldstein Parker was named the school's new director.

"Although my last full day at The Sunshine School is Thursday, May 31," said Banks, "I will remain involved in a part-time capacity to ensure a smooth transition."

"Raye Lynn Banks has been an integral part of The Sunshine School for more than four decades," said MJCCA CEO Jared Powers. "She grew the East Cobb preschool to be NAEYC-accredited, a prestigious national accreditation earned by a very small percentage of preschools across the country. Raye Lynn supervised and mentored countless teachers and was instrumental in bringing high-quality early childhood education to the East Cobb community. She will certainly be missed.

"Nancy Parker is the perfect person to take the helm of this very special school," said Powers. "Nancy is a longtime member of The Sunshine School family, and it is my pleasure to welcome her back in this new capacity."

Nancy began her career at The Sunshine School as a lead teacher in the program for three-year-olds. She went on to become director of Camp Billi Marcus, in East Cobb, and also served as a lead teacher and office manager for many years. She was also a Sunshine School parent. Most recently, Nancy was a senior account executive at Canterbury Press.

"While it will be difficult for me to step down as director," said Banks, "it will be easier knowing our school is in such capable and loving hands."



Raye Lynn Banks and Nancy Goldstein Parker

CLUB J. Registration is now open for Club J, the MJCCA's after-school experience. For the 2018-2019 school year (August 6, 2018-May 20, 2019), children ages Pre-K



Club J is a win-win-win for kids, parents, and the community at large.

through 5th grade can enjoy a safe, planned afternoon, Monday-Friday, 2:30-6:00 p.m., filled with supervised homework help, counselor-led activities, and outlets for physical activity.

“Kids from 10 local schools can’t wait to come to Club J and see their after-school friends,” said Club J Director Jodi Sonenshine. “Club J participants enjoy the meaningful community service projects, physical and cultural activities, and working with Club J staff on their homework. It’s a win-win-win for kids, parents, and the community at large.

“We welcome prospective families to come and tour our campus, and experience our recreational programs,” continued Jodi. “Club J is designed to provide a high-quality, enriching after-school environment.”

Club J community service projects include making sandwiches for the homeless; writing letters to soldiers; visiting Berman Commons to sing, play, and spend time with residents; reading to Weinstein School pre-K children once a week, as part of the Snacks and Stories program; making meals for the South Atlanta Youth Group; and more.

Cultural and academic activities include arts and crafts, computers, science discovery, and Homework Hour.

Physical activities include basketball, soccer, flag football, gaga ball, relay races, swimming, ropes course, rock climbing, and yoga.

Club J offers options from 3-5 days per week. Homework support in small groups is guided by Club J staff. Healthy snacks are provided daily. The program is licensed by Bright from the Start.

Club J is located at the MJCCA’s Zaban Park facility, complete with swimming pools, sports and fitness facilities, a gymnastics center, walking trails, and a lake.

Club J provides private buses, supervised by Club J staff, from Atlanta

Jewish Academy, Austin Elementary School, Chesnut Charter School, Davis Academy, Dunwoody Elementary, The Epstein School, Kingsley Elementary School, The Epstein School, Peachtree Middle School, and Vanderlyn Elementary School.

Club J participants have access to other MJCCA programs, including cooking, dance, drama, fitness, gymnastics, and tennis. There is an additional fee for these programs.

For registration and fee information, visit atlantajcc.org/afterschool, or contact Club J at 678-812-3761.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY. On Sunday, April 15, the MJCCA held a special Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) commemoration ceremony, at the MJCCA’s Besser Holocaust Memorial Garden, one of the preeminent Holocaust memorials in the Southeast. The program featured remarks from Holocaust Educator Helen Bissell, readings, memorial prayers, and the lighting of the six torches in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust.

Yom HaShoah is also known as Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day. Shoah, Hebrew for destruction, is another name for the Holocaust. This day commemorates the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust. At the same time, it marks the anniversary of the heroic Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943. On Yom HaShoah in Israel, a morning siren sounds, stopping all activity; people stand in honor of those who died. Jews around the world hold memorials and vigils, often lighting six candles in honor of the six million Holocaust victims.

Helen shared the story of her father, Abe Korn. Nazis invaded his hometown of Lipno, Poland, when he was just 16 years old, on the first day of World War II. Abe survived the entire war as a Jewish prisoner, enduring two Nazi ghettos, eight

concentration camps, and a 45-day Death March from Auschwitz. Astonishingly, Abe kept his sense of human dignity. He always believed he could live one more day. On April 11, 1945, when Buchenwald was liberated, Abe was free to pursue life as he wanted to live it.

After moving to the United States and running a remarkably successful business for many years, Abram Korn died in 1972. In his wake, he left the rough draft of a manuscript of his story. Twenty years after his death, his son Joey began completing his father’s story. In 1995, the first edition of Abe’s Story was published, on the 50th anniversary of Abe’s liberation. Abe left behind an enduring legacy of strength, kindness, and hope in the face of unimaginable tragedy. Helen has been speaking to groups and organizations about Abe’s Story for the past 17 years.

A dedicated philanthropist, Helen served on the board of the American Cancer Society and the fundraising board of the Children’s Cancer Clinic at the Medical College of Georgia. Throughout her life, Helen has volunteered at schools, served on PTO (parent teach organization) boards, and worked in classrooms as a substitute teacher. Helen has received many awards for her community involvement and leadership. In 2006, she was honored by the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust at the Georgia State Capitol Days of Remembrance Ceremony. Helen lives in Augusta, Georgia, and has been married to Rob Bissell for 27 years. They have two children, Ellie, 27, and Ben, 24.

Each year, a special, community-wide Yom HaShoah commemoration is held at the Besser Holocaust Memorial Garden, at the MJCCA. Holocaust survivor Abe Besser and his wife, Marlene Gelertner Besser, built this memorial to commemorate that horrific time and to serve as a valuable teaching mechanism and a reminder of what hatred and indifference can do. The Yom HaShoah commemoration was co-sponsored by

the Atlanta Rabbinical Association, The Consulate General of Israel to the Southeast, and the MJCCA.

A PAGE FROM THE BOOK FESTIVAL On Thursday, June 28 at 7:30 p.m., a Page from the Book Festival of the MJCCA welcomes #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Emily Giffin as she introduces *All We Ever Wanted*, her riveting new novel in which three very different people must choose between their families and their values. The book launch party will be In Conversation with Atlanta media personality Mara Davis and will be held at the MJCCA (5342 Tilly Mill Road, Dunwoody). Tickets are \$30-\$35, include a pre-signed copy of the book and a reception featuring wine, desserts, and light bites. For information, visit atlantajcc.org/bookfestival or call 678.812.4002.



Emily Giffin (photo: Emmanuelle Choussy)



Besser Memorial (photo: Chris Savas)