

Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



AJC

A Partnership for Community Relations and Jewish Advocacy

Message From the President

The American Jewish community mourns the eleven Jews who were murdered while praying at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Even before the horrific events in Pittsburgh, the rise of anti-Semitism and xenophobia has been palpable. Swastikas sprayed on synagogue walls; anti-Semitic flyers left outside a Ferndale church; the murder of two black people in the parking lot of a Kroger. Hate is rising and we all feel it.



When our community feels under attack, we may try to insulate ourselves by barricading within our figurative *shtetls*. This might provide fleeting relief, but ultimately such reactions are counterproductive.

The Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC exists to connect the Detroit Jewish community with the world and, just as importantly, to connect the world with our Detroit Jewish community. We represent our community and advance its values including promoting civic engagement, support of Israel, and countering extremism.

JCRC/AJC pursues our mission through outreach, volunteer projects, and education. We connect with the Detroit media, legislators and civic leaders. We connect with diplomats and leaders in other faith communities. We connect with those who live within our community and those who may have rarely, if ever, met a Jew.

Our work may be far-ranging but it is united by this single common theme - connection. Our community is stronger because JCRC/AJC is forging bonds with the broader Detroit community.

Join us in this important and meaningful work. Through your generous donations, we are able to continue to bring unique and innovative programming to the Detroit community. Your support also enables our critical behind-the-scenes work that fuels and safeguards these community connections. Thank you for sustaining this agency for more than 80 years and for ensuring its success into the future.

JCRC/AJC is Jewish Detroit's connection to the world. Thank you for joining us in this mission and strengthening our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia B. Chandler". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Alicia Chandler
President

Mission Statement

To represent the metropolitan Detroit Jewish community, Israel and Jews throughout the world to the general community, and to establish collaborative relationships with other ethnic, racial, civic and religious groups. JCRC/AJC educates and advocates on important issues, seeking consensus with a commitment to Jewish values.

Coalition for Black and Jewish Unity Launched

The Coalition for Black and Jewish Unity, a new partnership between the Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit and Vicinity and JCRC/AJC, marked Black History Month by hosting a kickoff and leadership forum at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History in Detroit. The Coalition is chaired by Rev. DeeDee M. Coleman, President of the Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit and Vicinity, and David Kurzmann, Executive Director of JCRC/AJC. The executive committee, which includes leaders from both communities, has been influential in interfaith work, race relations and social justice.

The Coalition has been active since this kickoff event, including Shabbat dinners for young professionals; a Passover Seder with the Downtown Synagogue and Breakers Covenant International; Lunch, Listen and Learn at Sukkah X Detroit; and more.

We would like to thank the Ravitz Foundation for its support in launching this Initiative.



Passover with Diplomats

JCRC/AJC hosted its annual Seder for members of Detroit's Diplomatic Corps and area interfaith leaders. The evening was attended by representatives from Canada, Germany, Japan, Jordan and Mexico, along with guests from various faith communities.

The Seder provided guests with a global experience, incorporating various texts and customs representing Jewish communities around the world.



JCRC/AJC Hosts U.S. Representatives at Annual Breakfast

JCRC/AJC hosted members of Michigan's congressional delegation for a breakfast reception in March. The annual program featured U.S. Representatives Mike Bishop, Debbie Dingell, Brenda Lawrence and Sandy Levin.

Representatives of Jewish community's key social service and advocacy agencies, along with leaders from Kadima, JARC, Hadassah, NCJW, and the Michigan Israel Business Accelerator attended the program.

JCRC/AJC leadership met separately with U.S. Representative Sandy Levin where he shared his insights about issues impacting the future of Michigan.

Furthermore, members of JCRC/AJC's board met with State Senators Marty Knollenberg and Steve Beida to discuss the State Senate's agenda, and share the Jewish community's top priorities and concerns.



Relationship Building and Advocacy

JCRC/AJC board members joined six Midwest AJC regional offices for a day of diplomacy and advocacy in Chicago as part of the Midwest Diplomatic Marathon. For the eighth consecutive year, local participants spent the day meeting with Consuls General. In all, advocates held meetings with 21 representatives of foreign countries.

Meetings continued the following week in Detroit as JCRC/AJC board members met with the Japanese Consul General, the new Italian and Mexican Consuls General, and the Honorary Consuls General of France, Great Britain and Germany.

AJC Global Forum in Israel

For the first time ever, and in honor of the rebirth of the Jewish state 70 years ago, AJC Global Forum 2018 convened in Israel. More than 2,400 participants, including hundreds of young Jews from across the United States and many other countries, made this the largest-ever American Jewish

advocacy event in Israel. The delegation heard from heads of state, Israeli leaders, and policy makers from across the globe. Detroit was well represented at this historic conference with JCRC/AJC board members, young leaders, and community members.



Promoting Israel's Standing in Metro Detroit and Beyond

JCRC/AJC played a pivotal role in bringing Israel's story to the media, beginning with our annual media luncheon. Yonah Bob, Intelligence, Terrorism and Legal Analyst for the *Jerusalem Post* briefed a full room of media professionals representing every major outlet in metro Detroit. Utilizing our strong media relationships, we proceeded to maximize a rare visit to Detroit of the Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. We arranged a meeting for the Honorable Ron Dermer with the *Detroit Free Press* Editorial Board and an interview with WDIV Anchor Devin Scillian.

The day that President Trump announced the U.S. would move its embassy to Jerusalem, we conducted numerous interviews with local newspapers and radio and TV stations to share the perspective of the Jewish community. When violence escalated on the Gaza



border, we shared Israel's perspective through live radio interviews in an effort to counter global news coverage that was terribly slanted against Israel.

The metro Detroit Jewish community demonstrates its support of Israel in countless ways each and every year. The strength of the Detroit-Israel bond was never more evident than at Israel@70, which took place at GM River Days. JCRC/AJC was proud to be a sponsor organization of this remarkable event. Our role included coordinating the media for the event and spearheading outreach to elected officials to encourage their attendance.

A Year of Impact: Strengthening Ties with Our Neighbors

The national Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council (MJAC) visited Detroit for a day of interaction with the city's Jewish and Muslim communities to further the Council's mission.

Council members, together with Detroit Jewish and Muslim community leaders, visited the Arab-American National Museum, dedicated a mosaic project created by a diverse group of students at Detroit's Northwest Activities Center, and participated in a town hall with the Michigan Muslim Community Council (MMCC) and JCRC/AJC. MJAC brings together recognized business, political, and religious leaders in the Jewish and Muslim American communities to jointly advocate on issues of common concern.



A Shared Future - "Our Connection to the Holy Land" was the topic of our third annual lecture series with Wayne State University Professors Howard Lupovitch and Saeed Khan.



JCRC/AJC joined with the MMCC, IFLC and Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom for the Annual Interfaith Iftar at The Muslim Unity Center.

Celebrating Volunteers: Connecting Communities and Enriching Lives

JCRC/AJC actively promotes volunteerism through its various community programs. There are many opportunities to make an impact among time honored programs such as Bookstock, Mitzvah Day and the Detroit Jewish Coalition for Literacy. These initiatives make a positive difference by helping those in need.



Dr. Melvyn Rubenfire and Karen Rubenfire received JCRC/AJC's 2018 Activist Award.

Our honorees have dedicated themselves to promoting the health and well-being of Detroit's children and families in need through Project Healthy Community.



A Partnership for Community Relations and Jewish Advocacy

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