

**JCRC of Greater Washington
Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 28, 7:30 PM
Commission Reports**

Intergroup Commission

- **Tours of LDS Temple for JCRC Board members and STS teens – April and May 2022**
Greater Washington enjoyed an historic opportunity to tour the recently renovated Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) Temple, a landmark house of worship that is typically closed to the public. Through our strong relationship with LDS community leaders, JCRC Board Members participated in a VIP guided tour, learning about this important space for the LDS community in our region. A select group of Student to Student teens specially trained in interfaith dialogue also participated in a tour and discussion about the LDS Temple.
- **Interfaith Zikaron Ba'Salon – May 2022**
JCRC hosted its first interfaith *Zikaron Ba'salon*, building on the Israeli model of welcoming Holocaust survivors and their family members to share their stories in small, personal settings. Leaders from community organizations, faith communities, and Montgomery County Public Schools gathered at the home of JCRC board member Marla Schulman, to hear Tobi Bassin, a participant in JCRC's *Maggid* program for children of Holocaust survivors, share her father's Shoah experience. This event spurred conversations about intergroup engagement focusing on intergenerational trauma.
- **Participation in Prayer Vigils with Sikh Community – August 2022**
The Sikh communities of Montgomery County and Northern Virginia held prayer vigils on Thursday August 4 and Friday August 5, marking the 10th anniversary of the Oak Creek Sikh Gurdwara mass shooting, which resulted in six fatalities. Rabbi Neil Tow, JCRC board member, represented the Jewish community at the vigil in Northern Virginia and Ron Halber, JCRC Executive Director, spoke on behalf the Jewish community at the vigil in Montgomery County. Each spoke about the importance of solidarity with other faith communities and the need for all people to feel safe in their houses of worship.
- **Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) Unity Walk and Interfaith Calendar – September 2022**
JCRC was once again a proud sponsor of the IFC Unity Walk and the 2022-2023 Interfaith Calendar. The Unity Walk is the premier event of the IFC and draws hundreds of people from the DMV to tour DC houses of worship and learn about area faith communities. JCRC's Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky and Student to Student teens staffed a table at the Unity Walk Resource Fair, sharing information about JCRC's programs and advocacy efforts. The interfaith calendar was available for distribution and remains available on both the JCRC and IFC websites.

Maryland Commission

- **MD Primary Jewish Voter's Guide – Spring 2022**

This past spring, the JCRC, along with the WJW (Washington Jewish Week), published an extensive 2022 Maryland Primary Jewish Voter's Guide. 70 out of more than 90 candidates in contested state and county races completed our survey about issues that are critical to the Jewish community. Candidates shared why they were running, what they hoped to accomplish if elected, and what their positions were on affordable housing, reproductive freedom, climate change, and security funding for Jewish schools and synagogues.

- **State Government Affairs --- Spring 2022**

In Annapolis, the JCRC had an incredibly productive legislative session, securing \$7 million for security at synagogues, schools, and childcare centers -, and \$1 million for our social service agencies - \$1 million. In addition, the JCRC also secured capital dollars for two priority projects - the Bender JCC's special needs camp (\$600,000), and the Hebrew Home's Revitz House infrastructure upgrade (\$600,000)., \$10 million was approved for the BOOST program, which subsidizes tuition at private religious day schools. Finally, we advocated successfully on many public policy issues of critical importance, including banning ghost guns, expanding abortion access, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Montgomery County Government Affairs –Spring 2022**

In Montgomery County, the JCRC secured \$950,000 for Jewish non-sectarian social service providers to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents, including the elderly and developmentally disabled, as well as those facing mental health issues and domestic violence. Additionally, the JCRC successfully lobbied the Council to increase funding for the County's unique security grant program for faith-based institutions at risk for hate crimes, from \$600,000 to \$800,000.

District of Columbia Commission

- **Migrants bused to DC from Texas and Arizona – ongoing**

The JCRC is serving as a coordinator/clearinghouse for Jewish engagement in efforts to assist migrants arriving at Union Station on buses organized by the governors of Texas and Arizona. During the summer, the JCRC convened representatives from over two dozen local synagogues to hear from agencies and houses of worship on the front lines of relief, to better understand the scope of the crisis, and our agency has now begun to connecting synagogues to the direct service providers leading this effort. The JCRC also lobbied Mayor Bowser's office and the DC Council to increase local government assistance to arriving migrants. At the JCRC's request, the Welcome Fund, which underwrites staff expenses associated with our work in Afghan resettlement, has agreed to allow 25% of that staff time to be allocated to the DC Migrant issue.

- **Housing/Environmental Justice -- ongoing**

The JCRC has joined a coalition including Yachad, Sierra Club-DC, Children's Law Center, the DC Asthma Coalition, Caracen, Washington Interfaith Network and the NAACP-DC Climate and Environmental Justice Committee to address issues of lead exposure and asthma-inducing agents in DC Public Housing.

Virginia Commission

- Combatting Hate Crimes Security Grant --- Fall 2022**
 The JCRC has begun connecting Northern Virginia Jewish institutions with local police departments, equity offices and other government entities to apply for the FY23 combatting hate crimes security grant. Each jurisdiction may apply for up to \$150,000 for a total of \$1.5 million throughout the Commonwealth. Jewish agencies in Loudoun, Fairfax and Arlington Counties and Alexandria City are preparing proposals.
- Representing Jewish community in AG Miyares' meetings on antisemitism and hate crimes**
 The JCRC's Director of Virginia Government Affairs and Community Relations, Vicki Fishman, joined Commonwealth Attorney General Miyares and other community members for conversations about antisemitism and hate crimes.
- Virginia Coalition on Solitary Confinement**
 The JCRC has been an active member of the Virginia Coalition on Solitary Confinement for several years. Currently our agency participates in a working group of Coalition members, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice, several psychologists and several previously incarcerated persons, focused on a legislatively-mandated study that will provide recommendations about strategies for limiting the use of solitary confinement in Virginia

Afghan Refugees – funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, the Welcome US Fund, and the Shapiro Foundation

- Community Needs Assessment – Winter/Spring 2022**
 The JCRC surveyed synagogues throughout the region to determine their involvement and/or interest in becoming involved in Afghan resettlement. As a result of this survey, we engaged 8 additional congregations in this work and initiated partnerships with 2 new mosques.
- Grants to synagogues for resettlement efforts -- Spring 2022**
 The JCRC established a grant allocation process To distribute grants to 23 synagogues in the District, Maryland and Virginia. Grants amounts ranged between \$1000 and \$2500; 7 of the synagogues were brand new to this work.
- Coordinating and serving as clearinghouse/hub for Jewish engagement in local Afghan resettlement**
 The JCRC continues to serve as a liaison between synagogues and the various municipal and interfaith groups focused on Afghan resettlement in our region.
 In addition, the JCRC has co-sponsored and/or is planning community-wide programming in support of the synagogue teams engaged in Afghan resettlement, beginning with a family activity day for Afghan families at the Bender JCC.

Dr. Stuart Lessans Israel Action Center

- Yom HaShoah – April 2022**

In commemoration of Yom HaShoah, the Israel Action Center organized several *Zikaron Ba'Salon* events in our community. This included partnering with the Israeli Scouts, the Israeli American Council, community *shlichim* (emissaries), JCCs, and synagogues. Hundreds of community members joined us as we listened to Holocaust survivors and children and grandchildren of survivors share their/their families' Shoah experiences.

- **Webinars -- ongoing**

The Israel Action Center hosted webinars to analyze an array of Israel-related issues, including the war in Ukraine, President Biden's visit to Israel and the Middle East, the implications of a possible new Iran nuclear deal, and Israeli political and security crises. Over 1000 community members joined these discussions, as we heard from key speakers including Washington Institute fellows Ambassador Dennis Ross, David Makovsky and Anna Borshchevskaya, Israeli security analysts Helit Barel and Orna Mizrahi and journalists Amir Tibon and Sam Sokol. All webinars can be seen on the Israel Action Center webpage at www.jcouncil.org/get-involved/israel-action-center.

- **Project Shema – Fall 2022 --- Spring 2023**

The JCRC launched its new partnership initiative with Project Shema, which will train and empower four cohorts of community members to have productive conversations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in progressive spaces. The first workshop, which was oversubscribed, was an enormous success, deepening participants' knowledge and understanding of the progressive movement and Israel, exploring, and addressing anti-Jewish ideas in progressive spaces, and empowering participants to engage confidently on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and antisemitism with their progressive peers. Stay tuned for information about a public event that the JCRC and Project Shema are also sponsoring, later this fall, to educate our broader community on this critical issue.

Education Commission

- **Fairfax County Public Schools -- Ongoing**

JCRC staff met with the new Superintendent of Fairfax County Public School (FCPS), Dr. Michelle Reid. We briefed her the progress FCPS has made in meeting the needs and concerns of Jewish students and employees, and on the work that still needs to be done. The JCRC will be meeting with her quarterly.

- **Student to Student -- September 2022**

Student to Student kicked off the program year with an interactive orientation at which 70 Jewishly diverse high school students prepared for upcoming presentations. A second orientation, for an additional 25 students, will take place at the Pozez JCC of NoVA on October 2nd. Presentations will begin the following week.

- **Responding to school-based antisemitic incidents**

With the increase in school-based antisemitism, we are working closely with ADL to avoid duplicating efforts as we respond to local incidents. We collaborate with school systems on response protocols, and we offer education opportunities for schools in response to antisemitic incidents. One of the more high-profile incidents recently was antisemitic and homophobic

graffiti found on the wall outside Pyle Middle School in Montgomery County. In addition, we are still working with several teachers struggling to understand their rights to take off Jewish holidays because Loudoun and Fairfax still have a teacher workday on Rosh Hashanah.