



# A Little Bit of **Israel** in the Heart of the **Blue Ridge Mountains**

2023-2024 IMPACT REPORT

## Mission משימה

Camp Judaea's mission is to provide a safe, fun, nurturing community where children, teens, and young adults grow as individuals, build lifelong friendships, develop leadership skills, and establish enduring connections with Judaism, Israel, and the natural environment.

## Vision חזון

### Camp Judaeans:

- are all valued members of the Camp Judaea family
- are proud to be Jewish, regardless of denomination or affiliation
- share and demonstrate a love of and support for the State of Israel
- become leaders



## From our Director



### DEAR CJ FAMILY,

Reflecting on Summer 2024 fills me with immense pride and gratitude. Thanks to your unwavering support, Camp Judaea welcomed more than 800 campers and 200 staff members—our largest community to date. Together, we created an environment that fostered deep connections, meaningful Jewish experiences, and an enduring love for Israel.

This year was not without its challenges. On October 7, 2023 we faced a turning point that ushered in a new reality for Israel and for us all. At CJ, we responded with determination to further strengthen our commitment to Israel, security, and care for our campers and staff. We were privileged to welcome our largest Israeli *mishlach* (staff delegation) yet—40 remarkable individuals who brought Israel's vibrant spirit to life at camp and enriched every aspect of our program.

In a year when college students faced unprecedented struggles, CJ became a place of choice for young Jewish adults seeking a meaningful, supportive, and joyful Jewish community and environment. Our investments in staff life, the expansion of our Beit Knesset, and the creation of "Bubbe's Dock" strengthened spaces of connection, further fostering a sense of belonging and purpose for our entire camp community.

As fall arrived, the storms from Hurricane Helene brought unexpected challenges for CJ and our neighbors in Western North Carolina. However, with the dedication of our year round professional staff, board of directors, partner organizations and supporters, recovery efforts began swiftly. I look forward to sharing more about those outcomes in the near future. We are proud to rebuild and prepare for Summer 2025—a season we know will be filled with joy, renewal, and the magic of camp.

To our families, alumni, donors, and partners: I am truly grateful for your dedication and generosity. Your support has enhanced our programs, improved our facilities, and established CJ as a shining example of Jewish learning, joy, and perseverance. Thank you again for your love and dedication. I look forward to the year ahead, filled with the promise of growth, community-building, and more transformative summers at CJ.

With deep gratitude,

*Lori Zeligman*

**Lori Zeligman, MJE**

Camp Judaea Director  
(Bogrim '99)





## From our Board Leadership

### DEAR CJ FAMILY,

Since the darkness that began on October 7, 2023, the Camp Judaea community has served as a shining beacon of Jewish pride, Israel connection and kinship to our campers, staff, alumni and their families. CJ's unique value proposition is more clear, and more critical, than ever before: CJ creates an enduring and supportive community connected to Judaism, Israel and each other.

This summer we met the moment by providing a robust, safe, and joyful Jewish experience for our entire camp community. With record enrollment and the largest-ever group of *mishlach* from Israel, the results were truly remarkable.

The CJ experience bolstered the ability of campers and staff alike to build and sustain lifelong friendships, return to their communities recharged by their personal experiences with Judaism and Israelis; and empowered our staff to engage at their college campuses as Jewish leaders and Israel advocates.

We have immense gratitude for our staff who met the call of this specific moment with the answer that Jewish joy and connection is the antidote to chaos and hate. At the same time, we marvel at the refuge our camp and community provided for our Israeli staff as a respite from conflict and army service.

The successes of this year were built on the traditions of the Camp Judaea family, its mission, vision and values, and the continued generosity of our donors. In that same way, we transition the position of board chair so that Camp Judaea can continue on, "Full of Joy and Laughter" for our 65th summer, and many years to come.

Looking forward to being together in Summer 2025.

L'Shalom,



**Mindy Opper**  
Immediate Past Board Chair  
(Bogrim '93)






**Civia Lieb Gerber**  
Board Chair  
(Bogrim '91)




# 2024 Summer by the Numbers

**819**   
CAMPERS

**195**   
FIRST-TIME CAMPERS

**35%**   
CAMPERS WITH AT LEAST ONE PARENT WHO IS AN ALUM OF CJ OR YOUNG JUDAEA

 **230**  
STAFF MEMBERS





**61%**   
OF STAFF WERE FORMER CJ CAMPERS

**40**   
SCHILCHIM (EMISSARIES) FROM ISRAEL

**4,556**   
SHABBAT DINNERS SERVED

**17** STATES / TERRITORIES  **6** COUNTRIES  
CAMPERS & STAFF FROM

## Family & Staff Satisfaction Insights

PARENTS		STAFF
<p>"Camp Judaea created the feeling that <b>my child is connected to the Jewish people</b> and the larger Jewish community."</p> <p><b>81% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+10% above the national average)</p>		<p>"Working at Camp Judaea had an overall <b>positive impact on my Jewish identity.</b>"</p> <p><b>94% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+8% above the national average)</p>
<p>"Camp Judaea created an atmosphere where <b>my child is proud to be Jewish.</b>"</p> <p><b>82% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+5% above the national average)</p>		<p>"Camp Judaea <b>strengthened my connection to Israel.</b>"</p> <p><b>93% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+17% above the national average)</p>
<p>"Camp Judaea excelled at supporting my child's <b>mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.</b>"</p> <p><b>75% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+6% above the national average)</p>		<p>"Camp Judaea has a <b>positive work environment.</b>"</p> <p><b>92% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+14% above the national average)</p>
<p>"Camp Judaea's content and approach to <b>Israel education</b> is excellent."</p> <p><b>74% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+15% above the national average)</p>		<p>"Camp Judaea helped me strengthen my <b>ability to have a nuanced conversation about Israel.</b>"</p> <p><b>89% OF RESPONDENTS</b> (+22% above the national average)</p>

Statistics from the 2024 Camper Satisfaction Insights and Staff Satisfaction Insights surveys, provided by the Foundation for Jewish Camp and the Summation Research Group.

# Our Cherished CJ Staff צוות want you to know...

Camp Judaea's primary program is enriched with Jewish rituals, Israel education, leadership growth and development, and the practice of Tikkun Olam. In the wake of October 7th, the entire Jewish Community experienced a poignant shift. Now more than ever, Camp Judaea is preparing future generations of Jewish leaders to be passionate about Israel. Whether refreshing core **education and culture** at CJ, supporting the **summer tzevet** (staff), or expanding our **Kehilah Care Team**, creating a deeper **connection with Judaism and Israel** is at the core of the Camp Judaea program. Our dedicated staff want to share their impact.

"It was meaningful to return to CJ as a *madrich*, and reunite with campers I knew before joining the IDF in 2021. After October 7th, camp became a space for **reflection, healing, connection and unrestricted access with Israelis**

like me. I fulfilled a lifelong dream as a Bikkurim captain and continue to stay in touch with my campers. I'm excited for next summer!"



**Ilan**

– **Ilan Enteen**  
*Madrich* (Counselor)  
Modiin, Israel

"As a former camper, staff member, and now mental health professional, I was grateful to work with a team **supporting staff and campers' well-being**. Walking the grounds with campers as they processed their days in a calming atmosphere was a privilege. CJ holds a special place in my heart, and I was honored to be part of the Kehilah Care Team this summer."

– **Tali Burger**, PsyD, NCSP  
Camper Care, *Kehilah* Care Team  
(Bogrim '06)  
Denver, CO



**Tali**



**Miriam**

"As a **liaison between counselors and leadership**, I focused on support, offering staff a judgment-free space to share concerns and ideas. I organized treats and events to help them recharge, making them feel appreciated and heard. This boosted their energy and engagement, allowing them to return to their roles refreshed."

– **Miriam Panitch**, University of Maryland, 2nd Year Dental Student  
Staff Life Coordinator  
(Bogrim '14)  
Atlanta, GA

"I'm Dani Lansky from Argentina, and summer 2024 was my first time at CJ. I led *tarbut*, including *shira*, *rikkud*, and drama, **using culture to unite the camp community**. While learning camp traditions, I introduced new songs, dances, and energy to create lasting memories. CJ's focus on culture makes it a place where everyone belongs, and I can't wait to return."

– **Dani Lansky**  
*Rosh Tarbut* (Head of Culture)  
Cordoba, Argentina



**Dani**



**Soly**

"For many, CJ feels like a parallel reality. After October 7th, our Israeli staff sought a supportive and welcoming space. I recognized the importance of my role in supporting the *mishlachat*—helping them navigate group dynamics in a new environment and addressing the emotional challenges of being far from home while loved ones served. Providing **consistent support and building meaningful relationships** were key to their well-being and success."

– **Soly Feinstein**, MA in Art Therapy  
*Mishlachat* Care, *Kehilah* Care Team  
Akron, OH / Tel Aviv, Israel

**Safety is our top priority at Camp Judaea.** Along with the community and memories forged here, campers, families, and staff often describe CJ as a "safe place." Security enhancements already planned for 2024 were further validated by events after October 7th. These include partnerships with law enforcement, advanced technology, expanded fencing, and additional security staff to ensure CJ remains a safe, fun, and nurturing environment for all.

**"Safety at camp extends beyond physical boundaries and infrastructure."**

– **Cody Muse**, Retired Law Enforcement Detective  
Head of Security  
Fletcher, NC



**Cody**

"As an educator and CJ mom, seeing campers immersed in joyful, intentional play and learning was heartwarming and hopeful. After a challenging year, the Education team fostered connections to Jewish identity and Israel through meaningful activities. **Campers led prayers, sang, and engaged with our amazing Israeli leaders**, creating a lasting impact. I can't wait for next summer!"

– **Dana Sender-Mulla**, MA in Public Policy  
*Eda Chinuch* (Education)  
Cooper City, FL / Kadima, Israel



**Dana**

"As the 2024 Keshet Merakez, I focused on creating a **supportive environment for campers and staff**. I worked with my *madrichim* to strengthen our sense of community, helping everyone feel safe, connected, and fully engaged in camp life."

– **Daniel Solomiany**, University of Florida, Junior  
*Merakez* (Unit Head)  
(Bogrim '18)  
Miami, FL



**Daniel**



# THANK YOU תודה רבה

Donor list reflects gifts received by September 30, 2024. Storm relief donors will be featured in next year's report.

## 2023-2024 Donors

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# Thank you to our Deborah's Village Donors

Deborah's Village honors the memory of Deborah Berezdivin, Jay Kleiman, Frankie Kleiman, Nancy Kress Levin, and Ilan Naibryf.

Donor list reflects pledges received by December 1, 2024 at or exceeding \$5,000

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## A Note on Storm Relief

As most of you know, our beloved Camp Judaea campus sustained significant physical damages from the September 2024 storms of Helene. The storm impacted the lower part of camp, affecting our security, administrative, and staff housing facilities. While we could not have foreseen the storm's intensity, our commitment to Camp Judaea's future is steadfast. The board and year-round staff have an exciting sequence of plans to share in the near future. We are working hard on solutions for a fantastic summer 2025 and beyond!

Please note that because the storm, its impacts, and much of the related giving occurred after the period covered in this annual Impact Report, they are not reflected here. For the latest updates on our recovery and fundraising efforts, visit [campjudaea.org/2024-storm-relief](https://campjudaea.org/2024-storm-relief).

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\*Past Board Member

## Property Board of Directors

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## Year-Round Professional Team

**Lori Zeligman, MJE, Director**  
**Jeremy Serkin, MBA, Development Officer**  
**Gayle Kaplan, Camp Administrator**  
**Erik Pauwels, Facilities Manager**  
**Francine Safdeye, OTR/L, Camper Experience Director**  
**Ilana Schlam, Assistant Director**  
**Joseph Zeuner, Director of Program and Strategy**



## Legacy for the Generations Society

Camp Judaea's Legacy for the Generations Society allows supporters of Camp to create a lasting impact on future generations of campers and staff. For more information on creating your Legacy at Camp Judaea, please contact Jeremy Serkin at [jeremy@campjudaea.org](mailto:jeremy@campjudaea.org) or 404-634-7883.

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מחנה יהודה  
**CAMP JUDAEA**  
 HENDERSONVILLE, NC



“As a *madricha*, I realize my impact when past campers run up, excited to see me. Moments like these make all the hard work worthwhile.”

– **Maggie Hessberg**  
 James Madison University, Freshman  
*Madricha* (Counselor)  
 (Bogrim '19)  
 Glenn Alen, VA

“Camp Judaea is so much more than a summer camp—it’s **home away from home**, where Judaism, Zionism, and lifelong friendships flourish.”

– **Ronnie Weissmark**, Parent  
 Miami, FL

“Our goal this year—and always—is to fill camp with **music and joy**.”

– **Mai Segal**  
*Rosh Shira* (Music)  
 Buenos Aires, Argentina

404-634-7883 | [campjudaea.org](http://campjudaea.org)

SUMMER 48 Camp Judaea Lane, Hendersonville, NC 28792 WINTER 1440 Spring Street, NW Atlanta, GA 30309

