



# MAKING AN IMPACT ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Annual Report 2023

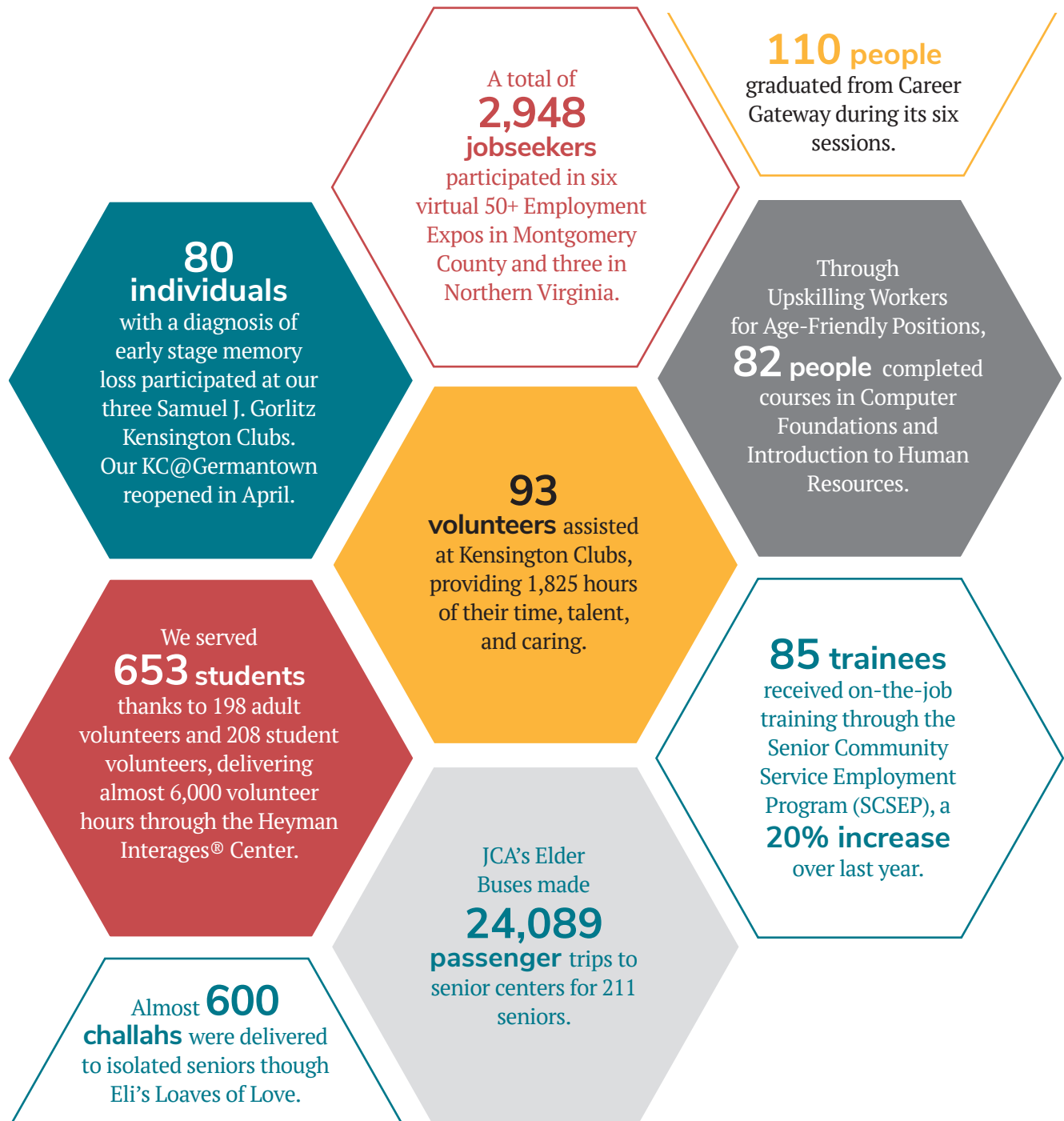


Jewish Council for the Aging®  
*Celebrating a Half Century of  
Helping All Seniors Thrive*

# JCA BY THE NUMBERS IN OUR 50TH YEAR

Thanks to our generous funders, supporters, and partners, JCA enabled more than 7,300 people to find jobs, volunteer opportunities, transportation options, answers to Medicare questions and so much more during the fiscal year that started July 1, 2022 and ended June 30, 2023. We also reached many more indirectly through our website, social media, and *Senior Resources Guides in Washington Jewish Week*.

Here is just a sampling of our success:



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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## 50 YEARS!

For a nonprofit organization to survive and thrive for that long requires a commitment to addressing the needs of those it serves – often exceeding their expectations.

It has been my honor to serve as JCA's Board president as we reach this important milestone. We are proud of our accomplishments since our founding in 1973 and look forward to what we can achieve in the years to come.

With our new strategic plan as our guide, we are redefining ourselves with a focus on financial sustainability, operational efficiency, partnerships, and innovation. In the past 12 months alone, we have laid the foundation for many exciting enhancements to our programs.

These recent accomplishments include:

- ✓ A redesign of our Senior HelpLine to serve as a central intake for all JCA services;
- ✓ The launching of an AmeriCorps Senior Foster Grandparent Program where older adult volunteers work one-on-one with children in elementary schools to provide social and academic support;
- ✓ Significant expansion of skills training through our Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSCEP) in partnership with WorkSource Montgomery and Montgomery College;
- ✓ The expansion of Kensington Clubs to Germantown; and
- ✓ A new JCA Career Gateway technology skills training program. Cyber Savvy offers lessons on cutting-edge technology including artificial intelligence (AI) resume builders and resume reviewing, AI-based interview models, and social media platforms that can support older adults in their job searches.

None of these advancements would have been possible without your generous philanthropic contributions. While we have significantly improved JCA's financial performance in recent years, your continued support is vital and greatly appreciated. In the next 20 years, the number of residents age 65 and older in our region will grow significantly. In Montgomery County alone, this age group is expected to double. The demand for senior services will increase accordingly, and JCA will continue to lead the way.

Best regards,



Ronna Borenstein-Levy  
Board President





# JCA GAVE HER THE PUSH AND CONFIDENCE

**Dubia Bastardo enters Adventist Community Center (ACS) in Silver Spring each morning with a smile on her face. As manager, she oversees a team of five staff members and numerous volunteers who strive to ensure that all those in need can receive food, clothing, and diapers.**

Dubia doesn't think of herself as their boss. To her, everyone there is her second family who mean so much to each other and share each other's ups and downs.

It wasn't always this way for the native Venezuelan, who was a judge in her homeland. She first came to America in 1989, moving here temporarily while her husband studied for his PhD at Cornell University. During that time, the couple had three children who were all born in the United States.

Dubia and her husband returned to Venezuela, while her children enrolled in college and obtained good jobs.

Then in 2018, she flew here to attend her youngest daughter's college graduation. While she and her husband cheered their daughter on, the news out of their homeland became worse and worse.

"Venezuela's situation, as everyone knows, is the worst situation. It's worse than Haiti. My country used to be so rich, and now it is destroyed," she lamented.

When the couple readied to return home, their children pleaded for them to stay. Dubia's first instinct was to leave and go back to her job and the country she knew well. If she stayed here, she worried that she would be a burden to her children in a land where she was still learning the language.

"I like to work. I don't like to be dependent on anyone. In my country, all my life, I have been working."

But the children convinced their parents to stay. In 2019, they moved in with her son's family in Maryland. She went to Worksource Montgomery and was told since she was at least 55 years old, she should check out Jewish Council for the Aging, she recalled.





Then COVID-19 hit. “We were inside the house doing nothing, waiting for COVID to pass,” she said.

Finally, in January of 2021 she connected with JCA’s Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP). Under the program, operated through a grant by the U.S. Department of Labor, JCA SCSEP provides on-the-job training for people with low incomes who are age 55 and older and live in Montgomery or Frederick counties. Trainees receive minimum wage while working at nonprofits and government agencies to build their skills and resumes while delivering valuable community service.

While participating with SCSEP, enrollees receive computer training and assistance in updating their resumes and job searching skills. Besides obtaining employment, participants gain confidence and 10% go on to find work on their own each year.

Currently, 45 jobseekers are enrolled in SCSEP and are working at approximately 30 host agencies. Participants can be in the program for up to four years.

Through this program, Dubia was assigned to Adventist Community Service and began doing office work. Meanwhile, she took every computer class and workshop JCA offered and even graduated from JCA’s Career Gateway program, which assists and mentors older adults who want to get back into the job market.

She strove to become more comfortable in English by listening to the news and reading the paper. She purchased a dictionary and took English classes at Montgomery College. “I knew I had to push myself,” she said.

Learning English was not so easy, she admitted. That’s why she could hardly believe her employer would recognize her skills and promote her so quickly. But all her hard work paid off.

“JCA gave me the education. JCA gave me the push. JCA gave me the confidence,” she said. “I would say because of JCA, I am the person I am now. I got the job. I am so happy. It’s like, oh my God,” she said. “JCA, they believed in me.”

There are three SCSEP participants working at Adventist Community Services now, and many more have worked there for the past several decades.

“We have a long history,” said Joe Gavin, interim director. “It’s a great program. It’s a brilliant idea to utilize older people in the workforce. It helps the organization that needs the staff, and it helps people have meaningful work.”

Added Ken Flemmer, who recently retired as executive director, “It fits our mission, which is the development of people.”

With so many places shut down and more and more people hurting during the global pandemic, ACS had to step up. “We could never have surged through COVID without JCA,” Flemmer said.

JCA participants kept showing up. “They needed work,” he said. “It was the JCA people that filled in that gap.”

Added Gavin, “We’re glad you are here. You are making a difference.”



# DESPITE THEIR AGE DIFFERENCE, THEY ARE AS CLOSE AS CAN BE

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**Kevin Zahn, a 10th grader, was looking for something to free him from the isolation imposed by the global pandemic. Zoom schooling and being with his parents and older brother all day long were getting to him.**

He missed his friends, playing soccer, and attending Maret School in Washington, D.C. And then there was the matter of having to fulfill his school's required service hours.

So, when his mother saw a volunteer listing from the Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington about connecting with a pen pal, he immediately agreed.

Like 70 other intergenerational pairs, the high school student began emailing someone many decades his elder.

"It was really important. I needed something to keep me grounded," Kevin said. "Me and Bill, we would talk about anything that happened," from movies to sports to day to day life.

And the good feelings are mutual. Three years later, Bill Torrey continues to think of Kevin as his good friend.

They quickly discovered they shared a love of science fiction films. They wrote about fishing trips, the anxieties of driver's education classes, the travails of Covid-19 and virtual learning, and the euphoria of winning a soccer championship.

Even more so, Kevin said Bill, who is his senior by some six decades, always seemed to have good advice. "He was always positive. He validated my feelings."

SHARE from a Distance (Students Help and Reach Others) is one of many Heyman Interages Center volunteer opportunities. The goal is to make intergenerational connections to develop meaningful, mutually-beneficial relationships through written correspondence.

The program aims to dispel negative, age-related myths and stereotypes and to increase the self-esteem of both participants.

Kevin's first few emails followed an Interages' prompt, "but it felt forced," he said. Soon, they were corresponding every three or four days and were like old friends even though they never met.

Bill's emails helped Kevin handle the stress of school grades and homework. "I am a big over thinker and tend to worry," he explained.

"I definitely feel kind of close to him. We've been pen pals for like three years. That's pretty long. With the amount of time we have written, I feel like we grew close. He was always easy to talk to," Kevin said.

And then Bill's responses slowed. Kevin fretted, missing the connection. He soon learned that Bill's health had deteriorated due to corticobasal degeneration and ALS, both of which promise an untimely death, Bill explained.

Bill let Kevin know what he was experiencing. "He mentioned it a few times. He talked about the treatments he was going through, losing feeling in his left hand."

His health continues to deteriorate. As Bill described, "I was as helpless as a newborn: I could no longer walk, dress, feed, or bathe myself. Even worse, I could no longer talk. I had sunk to a very low point."

Bill communicates now through IGaze, a program that enables him to type by moving his eyes to individual keys on his computer. It is a slow process, particularly for someone who spent his career as a broadcaster and communicator with WTOP, WRC, CBS MarketWatch, Voice of America and American University.

As devastating as that would be to anyone, Bill is able to put things into perspective. He likens his





future to what Kevin is going through now, leaving his family and friends to begin a new life in a new country. Kevin will start college soon at University of Toronto.

Thanks to Kevin's desire and arrangements by the Interages staff, not only will they continue to correspond, but Bill and his wife, Alice, welcomed Kevin and his mother to their apartment for visits.

Kevin was thrilled to finally meet his pen pal of three years and didn't seem to mind one bit that Bill could only say a word or two and instead would type words like soccer and college to see how Kevin was faring.

Kevin gushed with information and let Bill know how much he means to him. Bill realized that after Kevin sent him a draft of his college essay and asked for assistance.

Bill was more than touched. Through IGaze, he let JCA and Kevin know how much Share From a Distance has meant to him.

"Whatever encouragement I had provided him during our three year exchange of notes, he returned to me tenfold in his remarkable thank you note. His words prided me away from self-pity and preoccupation with my predicament."

JCA is sad to report that Bill Torrey passed away on August 23, 2023.

**The goal is to make intergenerational connections to develop meaningful, mutually-beneficial relationships through written correspondence.**



# AT KENSINGTON CLUBS, “YOU ARE NOT ALONE”



Walk into Jewish Council for the Aging’s Kensington Clubs (KC) at the White Oak Senior Center and you can’t help noticing the buzz. Some of the members of this club for those with an early stage memory loss diagnosis are chatting with their friends about new hairstyles, the news, and what they recently ate. They also talk about that day’s KC activity.

It could be a word scramble about the current holiday or season. Perhaps it’s an art project or a current events discussion.

And right in the midst of all that friendly chatter is Laurel Sharf, who laughs it off if she doesn’t know the right answer or remember what comes next.

“We’re all big jokers,” she said.

She didn’t used to be like this. When Laurel first received her diagnosis, she sunk into a world of fear and sadness. She has struggled with depression much of her married life and takes medication for it, and thoughts of her possible future didn’t help.

Would she recognize her husband and adult children down the road? Would she forget about her days working for the U.S. Department of the Army for 45 years? Would she wither away? These are questions she thinks about at times, but never during her happy KC day.

She and her husband visit doctors regularly, hoping to prolong those days or even avoid them at all. She is under consideration to join a new drug trial and that makes her optimistic.

About one year ago, Laurel and her husband, Brent, looked for ways to fill her days. They checked out a few programs. They heard about JCA’s Kensington Clubs and were heartened at how close the meeting place was. Then they heard it served kosher food at its special programs and holidays, and they agreed to try it out.

According to Brent, “She came here with some stress.” It was the couple’s children who first noticed

she was acting inappropriately, he said. “She has the symptoms of early Alzheimer’s. She knows it. She’s aware.”

It was tough at first, and she cried often. “She didn’t think she was going to fit in. She thought everyone was further along than she was, but she made friends, some really good friends,” he explained.

She has come to realize KC is exactly what she needs. She calls it incredibly comforting to be amongst people who forget things, can’t always come up with the right word and don’t look at her strangely if she seems confused.

“We are all doing that,” Laurel, 81, said of her fellow KC members.







“It’s very casual, and it seems that this is good for us. We have other people we can have fun with and learn with. You are not just alone.”

During the time she spends every Wednesday, “We do lots of things together. The day goes by pretty fast, because everything is all planned. We really get to know each other.”

Without KC, “I would just be sitting at home and not see people who are going through the same thing. Here, we are all in the same boat.”

When the day is over, and her husband comes to pick her up, she reflected, “We’ve done something good together.”

Having dementia is scary, she admitted. “But it does help to know all these other people, they’ve got it too,” she said, adding, “When we come to this class we don’t focus on what’s wrong with us.”

Rather, “We laugh a lot. We really do, and that’s so very helpful to use. We just try to move on.”



The staff has everything to do with how upbeat and well run the program is, the couple believes. The staff and volunteers are positive and empathetic. “The people who are running this are positive, and they get to know us. It’s good to be around people who are positive.”

Each time Laurel enters the club, “I feel so secure, and I know I am going to laugh.” And when she comes home, she is in a better mood, her husband said. He credits the exercise, the socialness and the fact that no one makes fun of her.

Meanwhile, Laurel believes that so many smart people are working on ways to slow or cure dementia, that there is hope.

And if that day never comes, “Laurel and I are going to die with it. We are not going to die from it,” he said of his wife’s condition.



# JCA HAS BEEN HELPING SENIORS THRIVE FOR 50 YEARS

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**The Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington has accomplished so much since its start 50 years ago, on July 23, 1973.**

The Jewish Social Services Agency, the Jewish Community Center and the Hebrew Home, along with the United Jewish Appeal, recognized the aging population and its accompanying needs were expanding and likely would need its own agency to step in. A Committee on Aging, with lay leaders and professionals, did an in-depth survey and interviewed 500 seniors in the community.

As a result of the survey, which showed the needs were great, JCA was established. It received \$67,000 for its first year and was allocated an office in the basement of JSSA. Ruth Breslow-Young was named executive director, a title she held for 17 years. Besides Breslow-Young, an administrative assistant and two bus drivers comprised the initial staff.

In 1977, JCA moved to the Revitz House and grew enough to include six staff members.

JCA moved again in 1985, setting up shop in what was then Randolph Junior High. The good news was that JCA had enough room, but the bad news was there were no windows and the rent was four times as much. It moved to its current home on Parklawn Drive in Rockville in 1995.

One of the first tasks tackled by JCA was transportation. Two mini-vans were leased in 1995. JCA now has 10 buses.

In the beginning, JCA also assisted corporate clients like IBM and Aetna through its Eldercare Referral Services. That alliance allowed JCA to computerize its database and train its staff.

Nutrition was pinpointed as an important need. In 1974, JCA set up a kosher congregate meals program at Congregation Adas Israel in Washington, D.C.

It was the first kosher dining facility in the region. Eventually, the D.C. JCC and Iona House Senior Services took over this.

About a year after opening, JCA received a grant from the National Council of Senior Citizens as well funds from Montgomery County to begin a senior aide employment program.

Next, JCA set up a Senior Job Co-op in 1983. Its focus was to locate jobs for older workers. In 1986, JCA added Job Support for Seniors, a training and counselling program.

In the beginning, JCA operated a Family Thrift shop on Bonifant Street in Silver Spring. The shop was a major source of revenue for many years. It no longer exists.

A Shared Living Program, begun in 1974, helped seniors who needed some support but chose not to move into assisted living or nursing care facilities. JCA leased and furnished two-and-three bedroom apartments and provided part-time homemakers and other services, all overseen by social workers. At its peak, there were 15 apartments with more than 40 residents.

Day care services, in cooperation with the Hebrew Home, started in 1977. It was a five-day-a-week center called Albert & Helen Misler Adult Day Center. It closed in 2020.

JCA may have changed some of its programs but its mission to help All Seniors Thrive remains constant.



# FY23 AWARD WINNERS

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JCA could never accomplish all we do without help. At our FY23 annual meeting in September 2022, we were excited to honor these three individuals.

## **Jacqueline Unger Community Service Award**

Marianne Miller has volunteered for more than 10 years with our State Health Insurance Assistance Program. She is a certified Medicare counselor who is always ready to help Montgomery County callers understand their Medicare benefits.

She leads the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan comparison training as well as other volunteer trainings and always demonstrates leadership and initiative in her work.



## **Ruth Breslow-Young Staff Award of Excellence**

David “DVD” Doroheng always has a smile for those riding the JCA buses he drives. No job or trip is too big or too small for DVD, and he often is requested by clients for special trips.

He regularly can be found in our parking lot changing bulbs in bus headlights and sanitizing the buses, especially during the height of the pandemic.

He’s always willing to help out, often saying, “Don’t worry. I’ll do anything to help out: it’s my job.”



## **David Gamse Humanitarian Award**

Former Montgomery County Executive Isaiah “Ike” Leggett is a constant advocate for older adults. He helped JCA obtain the building it owns on Parklawn Drive in Rockville.

Prior to his three terms as county executive, Leggett was a professor of law and the assistant/associate dean at Howard University Law School. He is an Army captain and served in Viet Nam.

Leggett has been an active member of numerous boards of directors, including the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes and Washington Area Housing Partnership.





# MOBILITY MANAGEMENT, INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES ASSISTS THOUSANDS



Thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers with Mobility Management & Information & Referral Services, JCA is able to help thousands of people understand and better address their Medicare concerns, obtain referrals for transportation to doctor appointments, shopping or wherever they need to go, and receive answers to questions regarding home health care needs, downsizing housing options and more.

Here is what two volunteers with JCA's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) had to say about their experiences.

*"Volunteering at SHIP showed me how many people live at the margins, lacking so much that I take for granted...money, a supportive family, good health, choices. It's shocking to know so many live with so little.*

*Currently, I am working with a man who has ALS and diabetes. He called looking for help in identifying drug and medigap plans he can afford. In addition, I'm giving him information on all the programs he might be eligible for in order to pay for his Medicare and associated costs of care. He's very gracious and appreciative of the help but all I can think is, it shouldn't be so hard for people like him."* — **Donna**

*"When I was working for Montgomery County, I took great satisfaction in helping my clients understand Medicare and assisting them in making sound decisions... After joining SHIP as a volunteer, I think I derive even more satisfaction with counseling our callers, in part because it is a VOLUNTEER job and I feel like I am giving back to our community.*

*I have frequently had callers express profound thanks and gratitude sometimes for my help specifically but often for SHIP's existence and help."* — **Carol**

**Senior Helpline** responded to 287 inquiries and provided 1,155 referrals for information on such topics as housing, caregiving, social programs and medical equipment.

**Connect-A-Ride** mobility specialists assisted 1,611 callers with transportation needs for themselves or a loved one and provided transportation educational presentations to 160 seniors and adults with disabilities.

After a three-and-a-half year hiatus, Travel Training workshops were re-started in the spring helping 58 seniors feel confident riding public transportation.

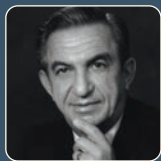
**Escorted Transportation** assisted 112 eligible seniors who needed an escort get to their destination due to physical, emotional, or cognitive limitations, coordinating 561 rides to doctors' appointments and select errands.

**VillageRides** partnered with 16 community organizations and neighborhood villages in Montgomery County and Prince George's County MD, who helped 414 seniors and adults with disabilities receive 4,832 one-way rides from 223 volunteer drivers.

**SHIP** assisted 1,825 seniors, family members, and caregivers which included prescription drug analysis for 194 beneficiaries during Medicare Open Enrollment. Throughout the year we offered 47 Medicare educational and fraud awareness presentations to seniors.



# JCA PRESIDENTS



*George Hurwitz*  
1973 to 1975



*Dr. William Goldwater*  
1986 to 1988



*Sally Herman*  
1996 to 1998



*Linda Kaplan*  
2008 to 2010



*Howard Gleckman*  
2020 to 2022



*Julius Sankin*  
1975 to 1978



*Irvin Lavine*  
1988 to 1990



*Judith Ball*  
1998 to 2000



*Barbara Mintz*  
2010 to 2012



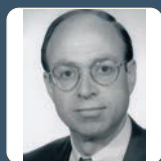
*Ronna  
Borenstein-Levy*  
2022 - now



*Rosalie B. Gerber*  
1978 to 1980



*Lawrence Levin*  
1990



*Michael Goldberg*  
2000 to 2002



*Samuel G. Kaplan*  
2012 to 2014



*Saul I. Stern*  
1980-1982



*Stella M. Bernstein*  
1990 to 1992



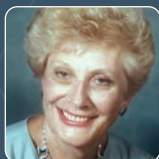
*Elaine Kotell Binder*  
2002 to 2004



*Sheldon Grosberg*  
2014 to 2016



*Sidney Mensh*  
1982-1984



*Sylvia Raphael*  
1992 to 1994



*Richard Dine*  
2004 to 2006



*Natalie Cantor*  
2016 to 2018



*Samuel Gorlitz*  
1984 to 1986



*Win Greenwald*  
1994 to 1996



*Ed Bonder*  
2006 to 2008



*Norman Goldstein*  
2018 to 2020

# FY23 LAY LEADERS

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kaarmin Ford	Jacky Schultz
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Darryl Hill	Vickie Witkin
Vivien Hsueh	

## KEY VOLUNTEER ADVISORS

**Bylaws & Ethics Counsel:** Marion Kristal Goldberg, Goldberg & Goldberg, PLLC, Wash., D.C.

**General Counsel:** Kenneth Jacob, Arent Fox, LLP, Wash., D.C.

**Medical Director:** Susan Miller, M.D., Bethesda, Md.

**Owner's Representative and Construction**

**Manager, Ann L. Bronfman Center:** Terry Korth, The Korth Companies, Inc., Gaithersburg, Md.

**Personnel policies counsel:** Edward R. Levin, Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr, LLP, Wash., D.C.

**Retirement plan counsel:** Linda Rosenzweig, Keightly, & Ashner, LLP, Wash., D.C.

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Kathleen Wiseman

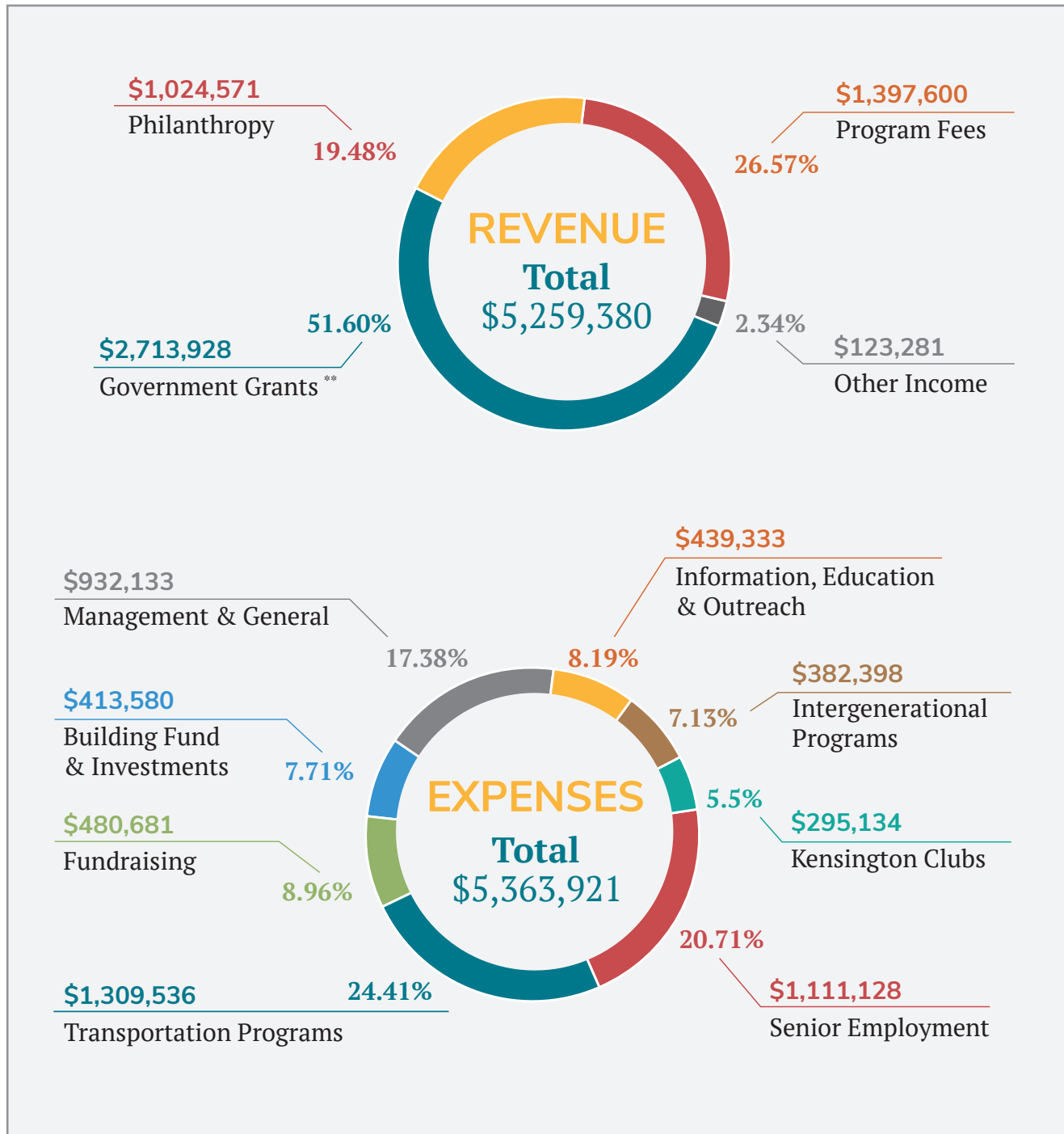
*\*of blessed memory*





# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

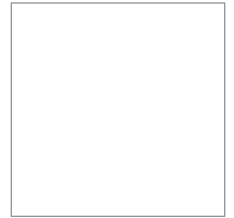
Financial Highlights of Fiscal Year 2023, from July 1, 2022 to June 20, 2023\*



\* These data are preliminary estimates and are unaudited. See our audited statements for a full accounting presented according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Email [info@AccessJCA.org](mailto:info@AccessJCA.org) for a copy.



**Jewish Council for The Aging  
of Greater Washington**  
12320 Parklawn Drive  
Rockville, MD 20852



JCA builds caring  
connections, empowers  
independence, and  
offers solutions to  
help older adults, their  
families, and the wider  
community thrive.

## JEWISH COUNCIL FOR THE AGING OF GREATER WASHINGTON

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