



The Charleston Jewish Federation's Strategy to Address the Rise of Anti-Semitism

The Charleston Jewish Federation (CJF) is the primary Jewish communal institution responding to anti-Semitism and all forms of hate and bias. With the escalation of global and American anti-Semitism, the likes of which have not been reported or experienced since the Holocaust, CJF is combatting this insidious threat from **every** conceivable angle, including increasing resources and support to all of our Jewish communal partners while also fortifying our partnership with local, state and federal law enforcement. Led by the CJF, our Charleston Jewish community has become a model of both resilience and proactive planning, separating us from our colleagues across the county as leaders in this arena. Our work consists of four strategies:

1. The Charleston Jewish Community Security Task Force
2. The REMEMBER Program for Holocaust Education and Genocide Awareness
3. The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Charleston (JCRC-GC)
4. Responding to Incidents of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Bias Training in the Schools

In 2015, CJF created the **Charleston Jewish Community Security Task Force** immediately after the massacre at the AME Mother Emanuel Church. This added another dimension to our decades long work of building strong partnerships with the tri-county public and private schools, police departments and officials, national entities such as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Meanwhile, **the REMEMBER Program for Holocaust Education and Genocide Awareness** continues to grow to meet current demands, reaching over 5,000 students per year in addition to the larger communal and legislative outreach.

CJF expanded the **Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Charleston (JCRC-GC)** and increased financial resources to create new initiatives that reinforce our Jewish community's long-standing commitment to *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world while also educating our local citizens about the Charleston Jewish community and Israel.

Strategy #1: Jewish Community Security Task Force

The Charleston Jewish Federation created the Jewish Security Task Force in the fall of 2015. Representatives from all the Jewish congregations and organizations were tasked with creating an action plan to mitigate risks and exposures, boost our security infrastructure,

create a culture of security and situational awareness and build a communications system where all Jewish entities could communicate in real time.



Under the leadership of Charleston Jewish Federation’s Security co-chairs Jonathan Zucker and Jimi Horne, risk assessments, active security drills and an array of additional security measures were created – the first time in the history of our Charleston Jewish community that an effort of such magnitude was created. **Because of these efforts, SAFETY AND SECURITY has become an integral part of all our organizational priorities.**

In 2016, CJF provided emergency grants to all local Jewish organizational facilities to boost their security infrastructure. CJF applied for Department of Homeland Security grants on behalf of all our community

congregations, and in 2018 \$50,000 was awarded to all our community congregations. Many consultants, law enforcement and volunteers have played a vital role helping to secure their respective facilities. **A year after the massacre in Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life Congregation served as a reminder that we can always do more, we must do more and that NOW is the time to proactively invest in the security of our children, community members and our Jewish institutions.**

The Secure Community Network (SCN) has commended the CJF on the work it has been doing and identified us a “best practices” Jewish Federation. Marsha Gewirtzman, Synagogue Emanuel President said “Federation’s leadership on Security has been exemplary.”

Jewish Community Security & Emergency Management Director

In a recent assessment with communal professional leadership the strategic priority of hiring a Jewish community Security Director was validated. The Jewish Community Security and Emergency Management Director would greatly minimize our community’s current exposure to risk by working on an on-going basis with each of our congregations, Addlestone Hebrew Academy and communal events in public spaces **\$70,000 in funding will make this position possible.**

Strategy #2: REMEMBER Program for Holocaust Education & Genocide Awareness:



CJF’s REMEMBER Program for Holocaust Education and Genocide Awareness educates about the horrors of the Holocaust, builds community amongst all races, faiths, and ethnicities in Charleston, and inspires citizens to take a stand for what is right.

Examples of our work includes the Annual Holocaust Remembrance Program Yom HaShoah, Seven City and County Council Holocaust Proclamations, Holocaust Teacher Workshops in partnership with the SC Council on the Holocaust, Holocaust Survivor Network & Speakers Bureau, and so much more. Last year, the new partnerships with the Charleston County Library and Patriots Point alone helped CJF reach approximately an additional 1,000 citizens in 2019 alone.



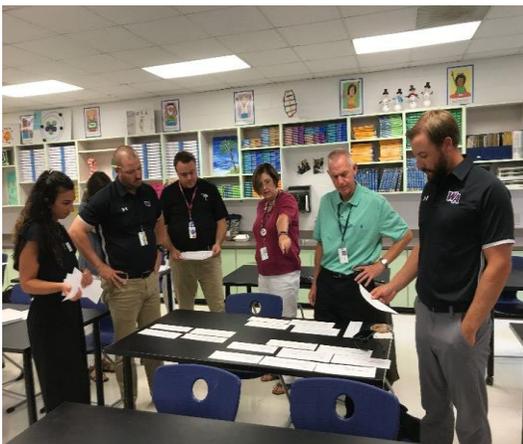
Our REMEMBER Program:

- Cares for our local living survivors
- Provides resources to schools, including workshops and the Creative Arts Competition, and bring survivors to schools and communities to share their stories.
- Engages the greater Charleston community and government in our mission through strategic partnerships for educational programming and Issuance of Proclamations to remember the Holocaust at city and county council meetings across the Lowcountry.

Supporting Our Holocaust Survivors has always been extremely important but CJF and Jewish Family Services working collaboratively have taken that commitment to another level. Prioritizing and ensuring that every one of our community Holocaust survivors is able to live out their lives with dignity, comfort and with the individualized support and services that they need. This includes a wide array of support including providing monthly financial stipends, paying for caretakers and



Holocaust Education in the schools, churches and community centers provides speakers, resources and training to the administration, teachers, and students of hundreds of schools every year – support that they would not otherwise receive.



High School Holocaust Teen Leadership Cohort

In 2019 our inaugural **Teen and Young Adult Empowerment and Leadership Development** was also launched. After meeting with the heads of curriculum for our county school districts, we learned that one of the most effective ways to ensure that the Holocaust is taught in the schools is to motivate the students to want to learn more about this dark time in our history, and the lessons that are relevant for

today. After a day of launching the application, 12 students from a variety of backgrounds and schools enrolled in this inaugural cohort. Schools represented include: Summerville High, Ashley Hall, School of the Arts, Wando, James Island, Porter Gaud and Charleston Collegiate.

Strategy #3: Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Charleston (JCRC-GC)

In the coming year, as a direct response to rising anti-Semitism and hate crime, the Charleston Jewish Federation will oversee the rebuilding of a Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). Consisting of Jewish community voices and directed by a Federation professional, this council will continue to advocate for legislation to combat hate crime and anti-Semitism on a state and local level. Our coalition building efforts with other faiths, ethnicities, and interest groups will be expanded, as will our community's relationships with community and government leaders. The JCRC will serve as a resource to all of Charleston's Jewish community members and organizations, and serve as a central address for our neighbors for outreach to our Jewish community."

CJF works with both JFNA's Washington Office as well as the Columbia Jewish Federation to build coalitions and support lobbying efforts and policy work to pass important legislation, including **Hate Crime Laws and Holocaust Survivor Care Legislation**. In addition, CJF was invited to be a part of an important task force on gun legislation helping to shape a Jewish community policy position.



While our **Kosher Food Pantry** has been a beloved and much needed response to hunger for years, our newly launched **Food Distribution Outreach Program** now encourages community partnerships. Through these partnership with organizations such as the Mosque and Avery Research Center, our volunteers not only work together to distribute produce to those in need, but to take the extra step of providing follow up opportunities

for communities to connect with one another in ways that they may not otherwise build bridges of cooperation and understanding. The Lowcountry Food Bank has adopted the model that we created.

Jewish Education and Israel Advocacy

Our JCRC also partners with our successful PJ Library Program and Community *Shlichah* (Israel Emmissary) to bring Jewish and Israel culture to our local schools, community centers and libraries. Activities include innovative storytimes about Jewish holidays and Israeli cooking classes at the local libraries.

Local Response to Tree of Life Congregation Mass Shooting in Pittsburgh

24 hours after the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Congregation, CJF organized & facilitated the community wide vigil with the support of Mayor Tecklenburg (city of Charleston) our community rabbis and the leaders of other minority communities in the Charleston area.

SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS OF THE TREE OF LIFE MASS SHOOTING-

On Martin Luther King Day Weekend 2019, CJF arranged for the rabbi and congregants of the New Light Congregation, one of the three congregations impacted by the massacre to come to Charleston, march with members of the AME



Mother Emanuel Church in the MLK Day Parade and meet with members of the AME Mother Emanuel Church and Pastor Eric Manning.

The Charleston Jewish Community marched arm and arm with survivors from Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Congregation and Pastor Eric Manning and the congregants from Mother Emanuel AME Church. CJF was so proud of our community and honored to stand in solidarity with our neighbors at Mother Emanuel and our friends from Pittsburgh

PAUSE WITH PITTSBURGH- the Pittsburgh community marked the one-year commemoration of the attack at the Tree of Life building that left 11 people from three congregations dead. CJF joined Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and promoted PAUSE WITH PITTSBURGH. Thousands of people from around the world along with community members from the Charleston area took a moment to Pause with Pittsburgh, virtually joining Pittsburgh's memorial service and had the ability to leave messages of solidarity and support.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) Frank Family Leadership Institute

JCPA is the national hub of the community relations network, representing 125 local Jewish community relations councils and 17 national Jewish agencies, including the four main denominations of American Judaism. This national partner's Fellowship provides transformational experiences for future Jewish community leaders with a special interest in community relations. The coveted Fellowship includes a private pre-mission to Poland, including a visit to Auschwitz/Birkenau, a week in Israel with senior JCPA leadership and a series of educational interactive webinars on JCPA, major priority issues on the Jewish

communal agenda, and other issues related to current events. We are honored that to have sent one young adult and CJF board member in the past few years, and that another young Jewish communal leader and CJF board member will be representing this community in December 2019.

As part of the expectation when they return, they will join CJF's **Jewish Community Relations Council**. This CJF initiative convenes community ambassadors to advocate for our local Jewish community on the legislative stage and engage in Tikkun Olam activities with our neighbors.



For years, CJF and Jewish Family Services have sponsored and convened our entire Jewish community to actively participate in coalition-building efforts such as Charleston PRIDE and the Martin Luther King Jr Day Parade. In September of 2019, CJF and Jewish Family Services created a float in the PRIDE Parade and a table at the PRIDE Festival promoting **LOVE IS A JEWISH VALUE**. Through CJF's outreach work in the greater community, CJF has strengthened our presence and

relationships with numerous communities, including the Muslim, African American and LGBTQ community.

Strategy #4: Responding to Incidents of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Bias Training in the Schools

ADL Partnership, Anti-Bias Training in the Schools & Community

When there is an incident of Anti-Semitism in the schools or in the greater community, the victim's first call is to the Charleston Jewish Federation. The CJF fields and responds to an average of 5 incidents per month in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). As there is not one representative from the ADL in the entire state of South Carolina, CJF works as a liaison with the ADL to meet the growing needs.

With our efforts to respond to the growing threats, many schools have already been recipients of ADL training. These include full day trainings with entire schools from North Charleston to James Island, as well as training with 100+ teachers in both Berkeley and Charleston counties. However, from their Atlanta office, they are unable to meet the growing demands. This is leaving our community vulnerable and without the tools to address incidents in real-time as they happen.

In addition to the schools, the ADL has been an impactful partner for our legislative priorities. While we have already sponsored two community wide-forums to advocate for a Hate Crime Bill in partnership with the ADL, Charleston Police Department and the Alliance For Full Acceptance (AFFA), we are only scratching the surface of the work that would be possible with

Anti-Bias Training and Holocaust Education Coordinator

Bringing an ADL professional to work in South Carolina and specifically the greater Charleston area is a key priority for our Jewish community, and a priority that is supported by our partner Jewish agencies, including the youth group leaders who see first-hand the effect that anti-Semitic incidents and bias are having on their youngest leaders. CJF is working with Southeastern Region of the ADL to create a collaborative position. This position would be housed at the Charleston Jewish Federation office. **Funding of \$75,000 (\$25,000 per year for three years) is required to make this position possible.**

an ADL Professional housed in our state.

A KEY CJF STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR OUR COMMUNITY

No other organization in our Jewish community has the connections, relationships or is as uniquely positioned to strategically address anti-Semitism and HATE as the Charleston Jewish Federation.