

PowerNET 2024 LAY LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

	Award Recipient	Leadership Impact
1	Anita Sarro Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts	Anita is a long-time former Board Member who recently left the board after serving since 1995. Anita is a key leader in the volunteer paralegal team to assist Afghan evacuees in their pursuit for permanent legal status. She can be counted on to help. She serves on multiple boards and shares her talents across the community. Anita is passionate and an advocate for the organizations with which she volunteers.
2	Dr. Barbara Herman Jewish Family Services Indianapolis	Barbara is currently Board Chairperson and has been involved with the agency for 30+ years. During this time, she has remained committed to mental health within the Jewish community. JFS is a department of Federation and she has served on the JFS Committee since 2015 and has been Chairperson since 2017. Barbara brings the passion, commitment and dedication that JFS has needed during times of challenge to the department. From the department's pivoting during COVID to internal changes within the local umbrella organization, she was a constant voice of reason on behalf of JFS, staff and clients.
3	Calla B. Samuels, Esq. Jewish Community Services, Baltimore, MD	Calla has been involved with JCS for 10 years. Prior to joining the Board in 2016, Calla served on one of JCS' advisory councils where she offered input and guidance on issues pertaining to the delivery of agency services. Over the last 10 years, Calla has served in various leadership positions as a Board Officer, including Vice President and Chair of the Governance and Planning/Resource Development committees and the JCS Advisory Council. Calla is authentic, empathetic, and analytical, with the ability to break down complex problems and recommend innovative solutions. She recognizes the significance of fostering relationships to advance the agency's mission within and beyond the Jewish community.
4	David Schechter Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Boston	David has been involved with the agency for 20 years. He was Board Chair from 2015-17, left the Board in June 2023, but continues to be a valuable resource for the agency. David played a key role in the agency's growth from a small agency to \$30 million today serving 14,000+ individuals. He is known among board and staff for his encyclopedic knowledge of the agency's work, his analytical approach, and his enormous commitment to JF&CS. In many ways, he holds the institutional memory of the agency, which he has accumulated not only through his many years of service but also through his curiosity, his intellect, and his ability to nurture relationships across the organization and the community.
5	Deborah Gordon Klehr Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia	Deborah is a Board member who has been involved with the agency for over 15 years. She is always enthusiastic, a team player, and a person who respects the role of the professional in the non-profit organization. She is bright and thoughtful; when she speaks, people listen and yet she is interested in consensus and looks to build coalitions and shared agreement.

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		<p>Deborah is a tremendous leader and supporter, not only financially but also in support of the clients and staff. She advocates on the state and federal levels for educational equity, older adults, Holocaust survivors and persons living with disabilities. She is an inspiring person who believes deeply in better lives for those who are poor, lacking financial resources, in need of better educational systems and so much more.</p>
6	<p>Doug McCollough Jewish Family Services Columbus</p>	<p>Doug has been involved with the agency for 4.5 years and currently serves on the Board, Finance Committee, and combined board DEI/staff Cultural Humility Committee. He helped with development of the Wayfynder intake tool and engagement with the Black community.</p> <p>As a board member, he values the agency’s expertise and supports efforts by contributing his own expertise in ways that advance JFS’ priorities and mission. In addition to being an exceptional leader for JFS, Doug is also an exceptional leader in the Central Ohio community.</p>
7	<p>Eric Feder Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services</p>	<p>Eric has been involved with the agency for 10 years and is a past Board Chair. He stepped up to fill the role of interim president and CEO following the tragic murder of the then president and CEO, Rochelle Tatrai Ray. During Eric’s time with the agency, he supported efforts to hire the new CEO while simultaneously leading the Board through a new strategic plan, and providing calm stability for a workforce that was traumatized with the recent deaths of two CEOs.</p> <p>As Board Chair, he led the Board successfully in its efforts to become more diverse. Because of Eric’s recommendation to eliminate an underperforming program, its financial losses became gains to invest in other promising efforts, and the agency began to grow. In five years, the agency has added more than \$28 million to its operating revenues. Eric is an exceptional leader as he works to educate himself before meetings and works hard during meetings to ensure that he and the Board are fully informed, so that they can make the best decisions and recommendations for governing.</p>
8	<p>Jody Dales Jewish Family Services Vancouver</p>	<p>Jody is currently Board Chair. She has been on the Board for 8 years and has spent over 30 years giving and volunteering. Jody’s has had a profound impact on JFS, particularly in areas such as access to healthy food, mental health support, poverty alleviation, and ensuring that older adults can age with dignity in their homes. Her fundraising efforts brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars from generous donors, directly benefiting individuals, seniors, and families in need.</p> <p>Jody played a pivotal role in establishing a fully furnished JFS Kitchen, which has been operational for the past two years, preparing meals for seniors, providing access to nutritious groceries, and offering counseling sessions to the community during times of crisis. Jody's achievements at JFS can be attributed to her tireless energy, unwavering commitment, extraordinary generosity, deep empathy, and boundless creativity. However, the most critical factor is her leadership, inspiring others to follow her lead as she leads by example. Jody embodies what it means to be a dedicated volunteer committed to improving the lives of those in need.</p>

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9	<p>Joshua Tobias JARC Bloomfield Hills, MI</p>	<p>Joshua is President of the Board of Directors. He became a board member 14 years ago simply because he wanted to be of service to the Jewish community. Joshua took over as president at the height of the pandemic when being involved with a 24/7 organization was very difficult. He has been available to anyone and everyone in the organization to assist with whatever they need. This has included delivering critical PPE supplies and meeting with government, staff and funders. If it needed to be done, he was there to do it.</p> <p>Through the course of Joshau’s term, JARC has cut their overtime by nearly two thirds resulting in financial stability. Joshua is the epitome of kindness and never considers position in how he approaches people. He treats every person with the highest respect and regard. He is as happy to talk to someone prepping meals in the JARC homes as he is to meet with a senator. This has made him equally accessible to the people served, front line staff, donors and board members.</p>
10	<p>Judy Barnett Jewish Family Service of the Cincinnati Area</p>	<p>Judy has been a volunteer with JFS for 9 years. She volunteers almost every week when the Heldman Family Food Pantry is open for shopping. She welcomes clients, offers them their cart, and later assists them with their protein and produce selections.</p> <p>Judy is a welcome and constant presence in clients' lives and the agency. Judy's consistency is part of what makes her exceptional, but also her ability to talk to people from all walks of life. She carries a quiet humility about herself and extends that same dignity to clients.</p>
11	<p>Julie Liberman Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas</p>	<p>Julie is immediate Past Board Chair but has been involved with JFS for over 14 years. During that time, she organized 13 diaper showers, collecting 2 million diapers and wipes, so that no family would have to go without the supplies they need. She served more than a decade on the Board of Directors, including 2 years as Board Chair, volunteered in the food pantry, and gave generously of her time, annual giving, and expertise.</p> <p>Julie served as Board Chair through the COVID-19 pandemic, leading the transition to virtual Board meetings, all the while guiding her colleagues to complete an 18-month journey to explore and finally approve JFS Dallas adding primary care to its list of wraparound services. Her organizational abilities are exceptional. She has a talent for gathering, processing, and communicating complex information without talking down to others. Julie’s love for JFS Dallas and its mission is clear from her commitment to JFS’ expanded suite of services.</p>
12	<p>Kristen Gross Gesher Human Services</p>	<p>Kristen served as the inaugural Chair of the Gesher Board of Directors since its inception in January 2022 (a merger of Kadima Mental Health Services and JVS). Previously, she served on the JVS Board of Trustees since 2013, including four years as Vice-Chair of the Board and a term as Board Secretary. Currently, she also serves as Vice-President on the Jewish Federation of Detroit Board of Directors, enabling her to serve as a liaison for Gesher to Federation, one of Gesher’s most important</p>

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		<p>partners. In addition, Kristen has served as the Chair of Trade Secrets, one of Gesher/JVS’ most successful and prominent fundraising events.</p> <p>Kristen is the embodiment of an exceptional leader. As Gesher’s first-ever Board Chair, her first priority was to create a new Gesher Board culture, distinct from its predecessor agencies. With a Board comprised of previous JVS and Kadima members, it was vital to create a culture of honesty and trust. Kristen thoughtfully engaged each Board member, ensured that Board and Committee leadership was split evenly between former-JVS and former-Kadima members, and that each person had the opportunity to be heard on important decisions. In addition, she has served as a thought partner to professional staff.</p>
13	<p>Loren London Shalom Orlando</p>	<p>Loren has volunteered with Shalom Orlando for 30 years. Inspired by her brother, Barry, who had a disability, in 2009 Loren had a vision to build a program to create access to the workforce for adults with disabilities. For the next 18 months, she and a team of dedicated volunteers curated by Loren worked tirelessly to build (and fundraise) for what is now RAISE (Recognizing Abilities and Inclusion of Special Employees), a work and social skills training program for adults with disabilities. Loren is the sole fundraiser for RAISE.</p> <p>While Shalom Orlando has a full time RAISE director on staff, Loren dedicates endless hours each week fundraising and strategizing with the RAISE director. Loren is at Shalom Orlando so often that many do not know that she is a lay leader. Seeing how impactful RAISE was in Central Florida, Loren does not want to stop there; she envisions bringing RAISE to many other communities nationwide.</p>
14	<p>Marie Raftery Jewish Family Service of San Diego</p>	<p>Marie is a Director on the JFS Board. She has been involved with the agency for 24 years. She joined the Board in 2014 and in 2017 was asked to be Chair. During her tenure as Chair, she oversaw the launch of the Centennial Countdown Campaign, which secured its final pledges last year, \$50 million for critical community services. In addition to her board and committee work, Marie sets a stellar example as an active volunteer, delivering weekly food to seniors and providing dinners to the Safe Parking Program, a safe and welcoming environment for unsheltered families and individuals living in their cars, many of whom have recently found themselves homeless for the first time.</p> <p>Concerned that families faced difficulty paying for higher education, Marie and her husband, Dr. Bob Rubenstein, established the JFS David Rubenstein Memorial Scholarship in 2009 to support Jewish students on their way to college or vocational school. Since its inception, 277 scholarships have been awarded to 143 students, totaling more than \$620,000. Marie has chaired many committees, established scholarships, and encouraged others to give back. Marie has boundless energy, love, and passion for JFS. She is a hands-on JFS Ambassador who inspires joy and gratitude.</p>
15	<p>Mark Milgrom</p>	<p>Mark has been involved with JFS for 20 years. He served as Board Chair from 2010-2012. While no longer on the Board, Mark is still engaged not only as a supporter and volunteer, but also as an audit committee member. He is a great thought partner,</p>

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	Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit	knowing the lanes that JFS drives in, and wanting to push it to drive faster and longer. In addition to generously supporting the agency, hands on volunteering, and his committee work, Mark regularly shares ideas, emails, articles and suggestions to make JFS better.
16	Maura Nemirow Jewish Family Services of Greater Hartford	<p>Maura is a Board member and has been volunteering for JFS for over 37 years. She taught ESL to Russian immigrants for six years, and when her students became citizens, she asked: “Where else do you need me?” That is when Maura began her weekly shifts at JFS in the Anja Rosenberg Kosher Food Pantry. Every Wednesday morning, Maura comes to the pantry and ensures that clients have access to this critical food support, which is the only free kosher food source in the area.</p> <p>Maura addresses each client professionally and with great sensitivity as she listens to their personal stories, often filled with hardship. She has helped many move their lives forward by alerting JFS clinicians who can provide further services to assist clients. Maura lends her decades of experience in clinical matters to JFS’ mental health services. Her perspective on the day-to-day operations of the food pantry is invaluable. She has tremendous satisfaction in giving back to the community and having a part in helping meet the needs of others.</p>
17	Michael Masarek Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County	<p>Michael has been involved with GJFS for 5 years and is currently Board Vice Chair. He is poised to step into the role of incoming board chair, showcasing his continued commitment to steering the organization towards continuing success. He has taken a hands-on approach to advancing mental health services within the agency. His philanthropic endeavors include significant donations to GJFS, including a lead gift to establish the Jeff Masarek Behavioral Health Center, ensuring that more families and individuals seeking assistance can receive the vital mental health and other support they require.</p> <p>The Masarek family’s generosity and dedication reflect a profound commitment to enhancing mental health services and fostering a compassionate community within Broward. Beyond his efforts in mental health advocacy, Michael’s philanthropic spirit extends globally. Personally, subsidizing a mission trip to Israel alongside local community members, he actively supported those on the Israeli frontline. Engaging in hands-on initiatives, he and fellow mission members distributed toys to children, provided essentials to soldiers, cooked meals for the military personnel, and offered direct cash assistance to individuals in need near the Gaza border.</p>
18	Dr. Michele Dritz Jewish Family Services of Greater Dayton	Michele has served on the Advisory Board of Jewish Family Services for 8 years. She originally joined the Advisory Board in 2016. Given her passion for JFS, the community, and her leadership skills, in 2017, she moved into the Vice Chair position. Then two years later, she became Chair, moving into the Past Board Chair position in 2021 and has agreed to remain in the role through 2024 as the agency works to cultivate new leadership. She understood how critical this was for both continuity and stability for the agency and leadership.

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		<p>Michele is a dedicated and passionate member of the Dayton community. She is open to thinking outside the box for programming and is innovative. Michele was part of the team who helped the agency developed protocols during the height of the COVID pandemic to enable vital services to continue for clients. She is truly an exceptional leader. While the agency knows her time on the Jewish Family Services Advisory Board is coming to an end, she will continue to be a community leader and a friend of JFS and one of its best champions and ambassadors.</p>
19	<p>Michelle Friedman Keshet Northbrook, IL</p>	<p>Michelle was first introduced to Keshet decades ago when one of her nephews began attending camp and then high school with Keshet. As a family member of a child with disabilities, Michelle started attending Keshet’s events and fundraisers where she felt a connection to the mission. She has been involved with the agency for over 20 years and in 2018, she joined Keshet’s board. By 2020, she stepped into the role of Board Chair during the pandemic and a time of leadership change in the organization. Since then, she has also been the Chair of Keshet’s Development Committee.</p> <p>Michelle has distinguished herself as a hands-on Board Chair, highly engaged in the day-to-day activities of the organization. She is committed to transitioning Keshet’s Board to become a more effective fundraising entity and inspires others by being a lead fundraiser and donor steward. Michelle’s leadership was instrumental in creating Keshet’s current strategic plan and the launch of Keshet’s capital campaign to build a permanent, centralized home for services and programs.</p>
20	<p>Norman Pernick Jewish Family Services of Delaware</p>	<p>Norman has been a supporter of JFS for decades. He first served on the board over 30 years ago, becoming Board President when he was in his 30’s, one of the youngest to serve. Then he continued to serve as an advisor, donor and ambassador for the organization. In recent years, he came back on the board and served as Board President during the pandemic and after. Norman has been the calm voice of reasoning and a visionary, who understands all the practicalities of nonprofit/social impact organizations.</p> <p>Norman has been able to engage other board members, donors, and leadership to rise to a higher level of contribution, whether it be financial, intellectual, use of talent and beyond. His affable personality and demeanor, combined with his passion for the work, have helped the organization rise to whatever challenges have occurred.</p>
21	<p>Rashelle Berry Jewish Family & Career Services Atlanta</p>	<p>Rashelle has been a volunteer for over 20 years, serving in numerous roles at the agency including 14 years on the Board in various positions such as VP of Board Governance, 1st VP, Annual Campaign Chair, and ultimately Board Chair, leading the agency during significant times of change. She was instrumental in reinvigorating and professionalizing the agency and ensured that the Frances Bunzl Clinical Services and recently expanded Horwitz-Zusman Child & Family Center were poised to be best in class in Atlanta, transforming the lives of children and their families respectively. Rashelle improved processes around master scheduling, central intake, and coding to maximize revenue, thereby ensuring sustainability.</p>

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		<p>Rashelle has a keen ability to understand the need for talent both professionally and communally and has spent much of her energy strategically helping to broaden the expertise of JFCS. She leads with integrity, a true balance of respect toward others, and responsibility for the sustainability of JFCS for years to come. One of Rashelle’s major assets is her ability to connect and truly listen to individual and communal needs. She has recruited and stewarded the next generation of leaders into the agency.</p>
22	<p>Rebecca Izzo Jewish Family Services of Western New York</p>	<p>Rebecca has taken a leadership role on the Board, serving as the Chair of the Governance Committee and a member of the Nominating and the Development & Marketing Committees. Rebecca recently took the lead on the amending the Board’s bylaws. JFS’ wide array of life-changing social services, including providing trauma informed care to refugees helped inform her decision to serve on the Board. She is deeply committed to social justice and civil rights.</p>
23	<p>Rhona Cohen Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Southern New Jersey</p>	<p>In her 15 years (and counting) of meaningful service, Rhona has sat on nearly every committee, including Board Governance, Counseling, Disability Services, Finance, Relationship & Development, and the annual fundraiser, Stepping Out. She joined the Board of Trustees in 2010 and served as Vice President from 2012 through 2016. She preferred to work behind-the-scenes instead of assuming the role of president and has subsequently served as a member at large. Rhona values being a mentor to newer board members, and even hosts an annual summer barbecue for board and key staff to foster connections. She also heads the Advisory Council, comprised of 20 business and community leaders, ensuring that they are well-informed, connected and engaged.</p> <p>Through pioneering initiatives like the creation of an agency’s funds’ development philosophy and stewardship program, Rhona has expanded JFCS’ capacity to advance its mission and extend its reach. Rhona is committed to transforming lives of the community’s most vulnerable members. Through her time on the funds development committee, she has helped the agency raise over \$10 million to support operations, services and initiatives. She has a keen understanding of what it takes to foster longstanding relationships and has deepened commitments to JFCS.</p>
24	<p>Robin Engle Jewish Collaborative Services (JCS) Providence</p>	<p>Robin has been a volunteer for JCS for 34 years and served on the Board since 2020. She is an active volunteer at the Kosher Food Pantry. She not only helps out whenever needed, but she also contributes generously. As an example, Robin saw early on with her volunteering that many families struggled during the holiday time to provide Hanukkah gifts for their children. Through the Keshet program, which provides outreach and social service support to the Jewish community through the synagogues, she began helping families throughout the community by purchasing items on their wish list, based on the ages and sex of the children in each family, wrapping and even delivering them to the families.</p> <p>For nearly 10 years, as the needs within the community grew, especially during COVID, rather than purchasing specific items Robin voluntarily began asking her friends to help her out by contributing so that gift cards could be handed out to the many families who came to JCS in need. She joined the Development Committee and has given her valuable input in enhancing the</p>

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		agency's stewardship efforts, leading of course by example, making phone calls to valued volunteers and donors, whenever asked, as well as for the annual Thank-a-thon. Her actions and sense of community are an example to all who know her. She gives quietly and with a full heart, seeking no acclaim or recognition. She helps because she sees a need and does so unconditionally.
25	Robin Stratton Jewish Family & Career Services Louisville	<p>Robin has been on the Board for almost 10 years. She served a term as a Board member, was Board Chair for two years, and has most recently served as Immediate Past Board Chair. She serves on the Marketing Committee and is the Governance Committee Chair. Robin continuously centers the Jewish values that guide JFCS, both at a governance level and when talking about the details of the organization.</p> <p>Robin has ensured the agency has the proper policies and procedures in place to be a sound agency that is well-governed while also being one of the first people who is sending new funding or fundraising ideas that are actionable. She supports while also respecting the expertise of staff and is the first to celebrate any win JFCS has as an organization. As a respected member of the Jewish Community, Robin also is a voice for JFCS at other Jewish organizations. This has been instrumental in connecting the organization to donors, volunteers, and clients. Robin is key to the overall success of the agency.</p>
26	Ruth Ruskin Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA), Rockville, MD	<p>Ruth has served on the Board of Directors for 12 years, including five years as Vice-President and three years (so far) as President of the Board. In addition to her officer roles, Ruth has participated in every single Board committee and task force at JSSA during her tenure (Governance, Development, Finance, Audit, Investment, Compliance and Quality Management, Executive, Public Relations, Strategic Planning, ESG, and DEI).</p> <p>Ruth has also taken a leadership role and initiated donor and Board events at her home and in the community. Ruth's commitment to JSSA is unparalleled and she leads by example to inspire the service and engagement of other Board and community members. Ruth's steady leadership has allowed JSSA to meet growing community needs despite the challenges and uncertainty of a COVID and post-COVID environment. She represents JSSA as a Board Member with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington among many other avenues in which she advocates for and publicizes the work of JSSA.</p>

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27	<p>Sandi Helfman Wolf Alexander Jewish Family Service Houston</p>	<p>Over the 11 years of her involvement with Alexander JFS, Sandi’s passion and leadership significantly transformed board engagement, fundraising success, marketing messaging and several internal processes. Sandi served as Auction Chair for a Gala, the Event Chair for a Gala, as VP of Development, and President of the Agency. She also led a project to promote the public’s awareness and knowledge about the 988 national hotline for mental health emergencies. Sandi pressed the agency to tell its story through clients’ own words. This practice has become the centerpiece of the annual gala, which grew from raising \$350,000 per event to one which brings in over \$2,000,000 each year.</p> <p>Sandi perfected a process to bring potential donors on tours, developed a corporate sponsorship program, and created a fundraising board. As President, she focused on the processes that would sustain the growth of the agency, from creating job descriptions for the board executive committee positions to creating a centralized email address to allow Board members to better assist the development team to maintain an accurate and up-to-date donor database. She introduced segmented marketing, facilitating addressing different donor groups. She also instituted a new award called the Alexander JFS Community Investment Award, given to companies with a demonstrated track record of involvement and support and who use their circles of influence to encourage their partners to support the agency. Sandi infuses everything she takes on with meaning, energy, and fun. Her confidence and passion for the work of the agency has drawn hundreds of new supporters and volunteers to support the work of Alexander JFS.</p>
28	<p>Stuart Rudoler American Friends of Elwyn</p>	<p>Stuart has been involved with American Friends of Elwyn for 30 years. Stuart has filled many roles at the agency, including Pro Bono (volunteer) Lawyer, Board Member, Chair of Israel Elwyn for 4 years and his current position, Chair of American Friends of Israel Elwyn for many years. Stuart has been a dedicated volunteer (even now sends out thank you letters to donors). He identified and helped recruit much of the lay leadership both in the US and in Israel.</p> <p>Stuart often hosts meetings at his home for dinner and naturally connects people while leading them. In addition, he has been a significant donor for many years and has worked tirelessly to help solicit other donors. Stuart has been a source of leadership, inspiration and a great advisor to senior management for strategic and day-to-day matters within the agency. He is fully identified with Israel Elwyn, the State of Israel, and people with disabilities.</p>
29	<p>Zelda Mason Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service</p>	<p>Zelda has been involved with Alpert JFS for 20 years and is immediate Past Board Chair & President. Her passion for philanthropy is admirable, which she has demonstrated through numerous leadership roles over the 60 years that she has resided in Palm Beach County. She is the founding Chair of the Chai Society. The Chai Society originated from a simple idea of bringing “life” to Alpert JFS through significant charitable contributions. Today the Alpert JFS Chai Society has grown to more than 150 contributors.</p>