

# 2017 Annual Report



# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## JOYCE GORDON

*Director for Jewish Life at Duke*

Hello! I'm writing to you as the **new** Director for Jewish Life at Duke. An Annual Report is necessarily a retrospective – a review and a celebration of all that's been accomplished in the past year. Since I am the newest person to Jewish Life at Duke, this Annual Report has been revelatory for me. *Wow*, I keep thinking, *our students did all that?* I hope that when you look through this 2017-2018 report, you're as awed as I am about the ways that our students engaged with each other, with Israel, in leadership, and with their own personal Jewish journeys. It's a dedicated community of alumni, parents, and friends that make a rich Jewish life on campus possible; thank **you** for all you have done and are doing to enable students to have an incredible **Jewish** Duke experience.



**250** students attended the Fall JFAM (Jewish First-Year Advisory Mentor) BBQ

**180** students celebrated Rosh Hashanah

**300+** joined us for Latkepalooza, donating over 50 lbs of food to the local Jewish Family Services Food Pantry

**80** seders hosted across campus, reaching 740 students

**35** graduates joined our alumni ranks at Jewish Baccalaureate

# A NOTE FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR



## HEATH FREEMAN

*Chair of the Advisory Board*

The 2017-2018 Fiscal Year was another strong year for the Freeman Center and Jewish Life at Duke. Our staff and board's mission to increase visibility, participation and passion for all that we offer to the Duke community is alive and thriving. It was almost 20 years ago when my parents, Brian and Harriet Freeman, helped establish Duke's first permanent home for Jewish students, the Freeman Center for Jewish Life at Duke.

To stay true to their legacy, five years ago, our family established the Freeman Family Program Fund with the hope of creating programs that change the lives of the people who participate in them. One of them, the Freeman Family B'nai Mitzvah Program has done just that. I was moved to know that so many families of last year's B'nai Mitzvah students traveled in to celebrate this important simcha in their daughters' lives. This program is just one of many that are not only transformational for students, but for the wider community.

I want to welcome Joyce Gordon, as our new Director and leader. We are so grateful and honored to have her join and lead our team moving forward. I also want to thank our Advisory Board and the Jewish Life at Duke staff for their dedication and service.

Finally, it continues to be a tremendous honor to serve as Chairman of Jewish Life at Duke and see first-hand the incredible programs that have shaped and transformed students' lives.

# STUDENTS: AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING

## STUDENT GROUPS

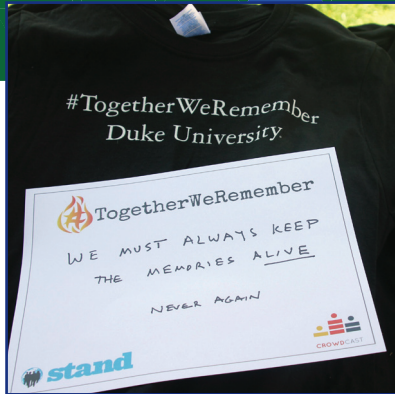
Jewish Life at Duke is here to provide students with Jewish pathways that will imbue their lives with purpose and meaning. Our student groups enable undergraduates to engage, and model our pluralistic approach.

Challah for Hunger holds monthly baking sessions and sells the challah on campus to raise money and awareness to help fight hunger.

Coalition for Preserving Memory is dedicated to memorializing genocide victims from the 20th and 21st centuries. The group focuses on genocide and Holocaust awareness.

Duke Friends of Israel is a non-partisan student organization that offers space to discuss, understand and learn about Israel. This group provides a breadth of programming designed to increase appreciation for all aspects of Israel throughout the Duke community.





Duke Israel Public Affairs Committee works closely with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), America's pro-Israeli lobby, to achieve peace and strengthen the US/Israel relationship.

J Street U at Duke is part of the national, student-led network that promotes US involvement in a peace treaty for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Jewish Student Union, Duke's student-led Jewish undergraduate organization, strives to build an inclusive Jewish community through fun, diverse, and engaging programming.

TAMID is a religious, apolitical, non-profit organization designed to offer experiential, hands-on business learning through the lens of Israeli startups.

# MORE INTIMATE ENGAGEMENT...

While we excel at drawing a crowd, we also specialize in creating space and opportunity for personal Jewish connection. One-on-one engagement is the core of Jewish Life, and provides students the chance to truly be heard, seen, and known on campus. Some of our more intimate programs have the most lasting impact on a student's Jewish journey, such as:

The Jewish Learning Fellowship, where 32 students experienced an in-depth experiential education seminar focused on exploring "Life's Big Questions" through a Jewish lens.

The Roots to Rights tour in partnership with the Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture gave 16 students an up-close look at important sites in the American Civil Rights Movement, which inspired meaningful discussions.

Tea and Ethics, an intensive seminar on Judaism's teachings on today's ethical dilemmas gave students the chance to grapple with their observations of campus life through the lens of Pirkei Avot.

572 one-on-one meetings between our staff and students, where we created connections and got to know students on a deeper level.



Our B'nai Mitzvah program, generously sponsored by the Freeman Family Program Fund, has brought a great deal of learning, laughter, and joy to the lives of our students and families, and is consistently noted as one of the most meaningful experiences that a student can have

at Duke. Hannah Ahrendt '19, Ines Jordan-Zoob '19, and Rachel Eulau '18 were called to the Torah in February to commemorate their b'not mitzvah, followed by a Roaring '20s party. Altogether, 290 students, family members, and guests celebrated their accomplishment!



# SUPPORTING JEWISH LIFE

## PARENT SUPPORT

171 non-alumni parents supported Jewish Life at Duke, making possible incredible outreach efforts such as our Ambassador program. Parent Ambassadors represent Jewish Life at Duke at recruitment events throughout the country, such as Discover Duke, our New York and Los Angeles Jewish Life at Duke Admissions events, as



well as spring college fairs. In addition, through our Mazel Tov email outreach effort, Ambassadors engage with prospective parents of newly admitted students, creating personal connections, support, and information needed to encourage student matriculation. To further solidify connections they have made, Ambassadors attend their local Duke Send-Off parties to celebrate with new Duke families, and to offer support.

## YOUNG ALUMNI SUPPORT

Each spring, young alumni from Duke and from UNC-Chapel Hill vie for victory in the Tobacco Road Tzedakah Cup, an online event to encourage philanthropy to campus Hillels. Usually, we trounce the Tarheels. Though our donors were more generous than UNC's, the winner is determined by the total number of donations. In 2018, while 82 of our young alumni gave an amazing \$15,002 to Jewish Life at Duke, we were edged out by UNC, which had 91 donors. We're looking forward to taking back the cup in 2019!



## ***BRINGING ISRAEL HOME TO DUKE***

JLD strives to connect students to Israel in a variety of ways – intellectually, emotionally, culturally, and spiritually. We're proud to bring Israel-focused programming and conversation to campus – and to bring students to Eretz Yisrael, in order to foster lifelong connections.



Mishael Hershkowitz, our Israel Fellow, hit campus (and the gym) with students, helping students develop a deepening relationship with Israel. Through his 209 one-on-one meetings with 87 students, the many meals and programs he created, and the Birthright trip to Israel he led, Mishael's relationship-based approach strengthened students' ties to Israel.

In honor of Israel's 70th birthday and Israeli Independence Day, we decided to do something innovative. Knowing that basketball is fundamental to Duke student life, we hosted David Blu, a former Maccabi Tel-Aviv basketball player (co-sponsored with Duke Athletics and the Center for Jewish Studies).



In telling the story of his journey from college basketball at USC to playing in Israel alongside Duke's own Coach Jon Scheyer, David Blu connected with our students, helping them to understand that having a relationship with the State of Israel extends far beyond the headlines.

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