

# CENTER SNAPSHOTS

**ONE COMMUNITY. ONE CENTER.**

**WINTER 2021**  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1



## **A MESSAGE FROM RICKY NOVICK**

The Center's new President can't  
hide his excitement!

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## **HONORING STEVEN HIDARY**

Celebrating the work of  
a great President.

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## **SENSORY GYM DEDICATION**

The Center opens its Sensory Gym  
for our community's kids.

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Center Snapshots designed and produced  
by Greta Schwartz and Mary Halabani



# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



**Welcome to Center Snapshots! It is the first of its kind Center publication** that will cover all programs and special events that occurred during each semester. With issues being published for the Fall, Spring, and Summer seasons, Center Snapshots is your go-to guide for all of the exciting things going on in our building and around our community on a daily basis.

To say that the Fall/Winter of 2021 was an exciting time for our Center would be a severe understatement, as it marked the beginning of my first official term as President. I am completely grateful and ecstatic about the opportunity, as well as the ability to continue building on my predecessor's vision & mission to unite our community under one roof.

Our Center runs 950 programs a year for our community! We service all age brackets, ranging from age 2 to 102. Whether it be our sports leagues, group exercise classes, Israel Advocacy events, or cooking classes, there is truly something for everyone at The Center. It is not uncommon that on any given day there can be three or even four generations from one family attending some program under the same roof.

So, how do we pull off these amazing programs, including hosting thousands of community children in our facilities every weekend? Our magic formula is the partnership between our professional staff and lay leadership. We work together in unison with the utmost respect and trust to fulfill our core mission of being the unifying force of our beloved community.

Additionally, we work closely with over 25 affiliate organizations, including our community schools and institutions. Our teams collaborate and work together to create some of the most memorable programs our community has ever experienced. One night that comes to mind in highlighting these special partnerships is December 15th when we had several events occurring at the same time! The Center partnered with AIPAC on hosting Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis, Propel Network on hosting guest speaker, Shifra Hanon, and iLEAD, as they held interviews for their young leadership summer program.

As we look ahead to the Spring Semester, we are very excited to announce that we will be celebrating the Center's 40th Anniversary with our very own original musical show, called Centerpiece. We will come together on May 4th at the Kings Theatre to celebrate our beautiful community, as well as our illustrious history.

And so, as we kick-off 2022, we just want to thank you all for your constant support and involvement across all of our programs. While 2021 brought its challenges, we managed to stick together and make our Center stronger than ever!

We are **ONE COMMUNITY**. We are **ONE CENTER**.

Your President,

Ricky Novick





# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



*Welcome to our Center newsletter! We hope you enjoy reading and seeing all of the amazing things happening here at the Center every day.*

The Center is truly an incredible place. What makes it stand out as a premiere institution, not only in the community or the country, but in the world? It has taken me close to 40 years to figure it out. Today, I know we are where we are due to the people that have been here before us. Yes, our founders are the most spectacular bunch of people I have ever met, however when you talk to them they tell you about the people who mentored them. People that are no longer walking this earth, but what they have left behind is still guiding us today.



In the last year and a half, I have personally witnessed what our community is capable of. Keeping our community safe and secure was the ultimate goal. Discussions from turning the Center into a remote hospital site for Covid victims when space was running low at local hospitals, to becoming a testing site, a vaccination site, an antibody test site, while at the same time remaining open to the community kids for preschool. All those things were brought to the Center by our current leaders.

Another thing that we have going for us is the most dedicated staff imaginable. I have witnessed staff going above what is expected of them to make sure that our Center remains the backbone of this community. Making phone calls to seniors to make sure they are well and accounted for constantly; making sure they had food and people to talk to.

As the medical issues waned, our programs came roaring back to pre-Covid levels and beyond. Again, the staff was there making sure we made room for as many community members as possible. Today our Senior Center programs are at all time high, our exercise programs and leagues are packing the building to capacity, and our Preschool has more kids than ever before!

Moreover, the Center is collaborating with other community institutions, assisting them in having successful programs together with the Center. This solidifies the fact that we are “the center” of this illustrious community.

*When you put together community leaders with a dedicated staff you find success everywhere you turn.*

It's a lesson in unity. My wish is that our community keeps growing and caring for each other unified the way we have always been.

Your CEO,

Joey Tawil





# HONORING STEVEN HIDARY

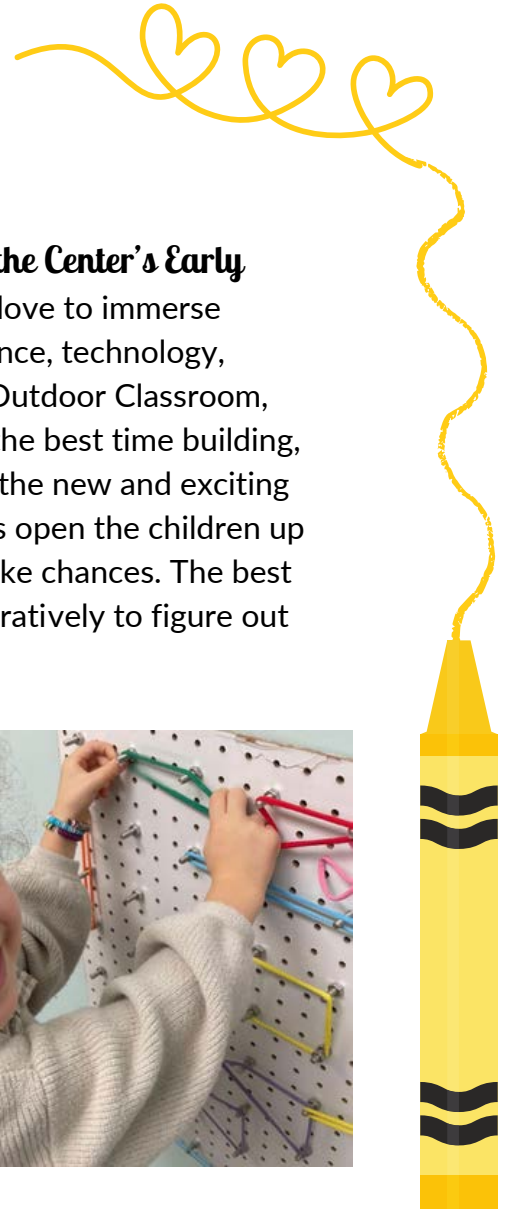
The Center's Board, Staff, and members gathered this month to honor our former Board President, **Steven Hidary**. Steven led the organization through an unprecedented and highly unpredictable global pandemic that forced the Center's doors to shut for the first time in its history. With heartfelt leadership, forward-thinking, and genuine care, the Center has rebounded in the most astonishing way. Steven worked diligently to lead the charge in organizational resilience, and left our Center in an excellent position to continue serving the community for many more years. It was a beautiful evening to honor the work of a great president.





# STANLEY A"H & COOKIE CHERA EARLY CHILDHOOD

Lori Ash, *Head of School*  
Lisette Lalo, *Director of Early Childhood Education*



**Amazing things are happening at the Center's Early Childhood Preschool!** Our students love to immerse themselves in our new STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and music) Room, Outdoor Classroom, and Sensory Gym. They are having the best time building, exploring, and swinging as they use the new and exciting spaces in our program. These spaces open the children up to ask questions, experiment, and take chances. The best part is that they are working collaboratively to figure out the intricacies of it all!



Our Early Childhood mothers got to experience our festive, fun, and fulfilling advances at a special **Mother-Child Workshop** during Hanukah. Each grade participated in activities in their classrooms, which included making edible dreidels, picture frames, magic resist art, candles, and more!







Our **Father-Child Breakfast** was a huge success! It was amazing to be together. The theme of The Little Engine That Could was inspiring, since in the Early Childhood we not only think we can, but we *know* we can!

Thank you to the amazing PTA and all of the volunteers for their hard work and the beautiful event. Thank you to the sponsors, **Gabe and Nancy Khezrie**, for their generous donation to make this event so special.





BAILEY, JEROME, HOROVITS FAMILIES

# YOUTH & FAMILY

Lillian Ebani, *Managing Director of Youth & Family Services*

Harry Chazanoff, *Director of Youth Services*

Ariel Mann, *Youth Program Coordinator*

Chedva Vojdany, *Youth Program Supervisor*



*What a great fall!*

**Fall at the Center's Youth Department returned with our first full-fledged youth program since the Covid lockdown began in March 2020!** Registration broke all records and our Friday, Saturday, and Sunday programs have been hustling and bustling. Our Sunday programs include Trip Club, Purposeful Play, Nova Gymnastics, All in One, Triple Threat Sports, Football, and Ballers; Friday programs are centered around Fridays in Action, and Saturday Nights have been comprised of basketball, dodgeball, and ping pong tournaments, along with Ballers.







In addition to the Sunday and Friday programs, we have been running half day and full day programs for students in the Center's Early Childhood, Barkai, Magen David Yeshivah, and Yeshiva of Flatbush. Participants ranged from students in Nursery to 8th grade, and they all enjoy activities, bouncies, crafts, sports, baking, and games! We love filling our building with so much joy and laughter.



We have also hosted and organized numerous birthday parties at the Center, ranging from all different sizes and themes. We love creating the perfect birthday party and we have been having a blast so far! We are excited to be back and are looking forward to another semester full of safe, happy kids and successful programs.





JEFF & RACHEL SUTTON

# SPORTS & LEAGUES

David Jolovitz, *Director of Health & Wellness*

Harry Chazanoff, *Director of Youth Leagues*

Richie Simon, *Director of Men's Leagues*



**There is a tradition of winning that has earned its place on** the Center's third floor for a sport that inspires confidence in players of all ages – and has for nearly 40 years. Crowded trophy cases and packed bleachers surround freshly-polished wooden basketball courts, setting the scene for childhood memories, post-game jersey swaps, and lifelong bragging rights.

It is evident to all that the Center holds basketball in the highest esteem. Wrapped in leather, our hearts beat to the dribble of a basketball – and we love to get everyone involved. We lower the rims for eager young children and raise up championship banners for our fiercely talented teens and adults. There is something for everyone.



We are home to members-only Free Play on a nightly basis, a safe haven for basketball lovers to shoot around and engage in playful pick-up games. Plus, more than 275 players compete in our men's and women's leagues. Our evening basketball leagues generate intense interest and are run at max capacity by **Richie Simon**. The leagues provide organized basketball games at all skill levels – and for men and women of all ages.





The Center Travel basketball teams have instilled fear in the minds of opponents for over 20 years. Over those years, from 3rd grade all the way up through high school, our teams introduce the young players of our community to like-minded players in other areas, and introduces opposing fans to quiet bus rides home. We win here at the Center. Often.

Led by coach **Harry Chazanoff**, our 4th grade Wildcats team went undefeated this season and beat teams by an average of 15 points per game, taking the championship game for the first-ever 4th grade undefeated season!



Our **David Pardo Ballers** and **Albert Missry Football** leagues had a spectacular Fall season! With record numbers in both, the level of play was off the charts, and the Playoff and Championship games were thrilling! We had many overtimes and upsets and in the end, we had 10 new championship teams raise the Championship trophy – the team photos will go up on our Wall of Champions.





# HEALTH & WELLNESS

David Jolovitz, Director of Health & Wellness

Gaby Shimonov, Asst Director of Health & Wellness

Nicole Poloso, Director of Group Fitness

**The Health & Wellness department is an important pillar of the Center's daily programming. To** ensure that our department is firing on all cylinders, we recently onboarded some very talented staff who are determined to leave a positive and powerful mark on our department. The Center has promoted **Gaby Shimonov** from within the organization to his new role as Assistant Director of Health & Wellness, where he will be overseeing the daily operations of the Fitness Center and its trainers. Our Fitness Center roster has been upgraded with some fresh-faced and talented personal trainers who will be helping us reinforce our fun, lively, and hard-working atmosphere.

The Health & Wellness department also provides ongoing services such as the health spa and pool. Located in a serene and quiet setting, the health spa offers relaxing amenities such as a jacuzzi, sauna, a steam room, and tension-releasing massages. If you're looking to take a relaxing dip, soak up some liquid laps, or work on your back stroke, our Junior Olympic-sized swimming pool provides the perfect stage. We're also in the midst of preparing nutritional workshops, pop-up fitness classes, and our annual **Bench Press Contest**. And finally, this week, we announced the date for our annual swim-bike-run **Indoor Mini Triathlon**. Mark your calendars. It's set to take place on the evening of February 23, 2022.





Our Group X program is in full swing — kettlebell swings, that is. We've hired our new group fitness director **Nicole Poloso**, a highly skilled professional who has stepped up to the challenge of overseeing our popular group exercise program. The feedback from all of our exercise classes is overwhelmingly positive, and we're seeing numbers that are unmatched in our history. Our program is filling the halls of the entire building with the sounds of loud music, instructor's cues, and feet pounding away. Offering roughly 45 classes a week, lead by more than 2 dozen industry leading instructors, as well as, rolling out evening classes 3 nights a week starting the week of December 27 with plans to expand to every night of the week, its safe to say that our Group X schedule is stacked.



Plus, our SCC Dance Team for pre-teens is back and ready for competition. Next semester, we'll be partnering with **Joyce Franco** to bring DancelT's popular program to the Center. And finally, the Group Fitness Committee will soon be meeting to discuss its mid-year fundraiser. More on that shortly.





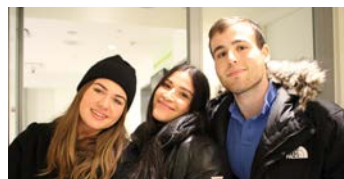
# YOUNG ADULTS

Sarah Harary, Director of Young Adults

**The Center's Young Adults have been living it up! We announced the launch of our new "Let's Get Cookin'" cooking class with Kardio and Kale. Shabbat, Asian Cuisine-themed, and Mexican cuisine cooking were just a few of the many exclusive classes in our series with *Eileen Missry*. Girls are signing up to learn, cook, and eat! We are having such a blast and cannot wait for even more classes in the future!**



Our Young Adult committee also worked on an exclusive party at Chelsea Music Hall in October, which everyone enjoyed. Plus, we hosted **How to Properly Deal with Anti-Semitism**, which included a conversation led by Jewish-Israel rights activist **Rudy Rochman**. Rochman captivated the crowd with words of wisdom and courage. The night was very informative and enjoyed by all. Special thank you to the **Sephardic Community Alliance** and **Enough is Enough** for collaborating with us on an incredible event.







**Our annual Young Adult Thanksgiving trip brought us to** bright and lively Nashville, Tennessee! On our first day arriving in Nashville, we enjoyed a beautiful and enlightening tour inside the famous Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum! The night followed suit with a hockey game at the Bridgestone Arena, where we watched the Nashville Predators compete in an intense game. Our young adults ended the night on the Broadway strip listening to live music and Nashville classics!



The next day brought us to the Ole' Smokey Brewery for a moonshine tasting on Thanksgiving Day! Later on, we had a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner and spent the rest of the night dancing. On Friday, our young adults had a blast riding tractor party wagons through downtown Nashville. Shabbat was relaxing and fun: we played games, forged connections, and made friends to last a lifetime. It was great seeing so many people bond and go through this experience together. Our Nashville adventures ended with a huge private party on Saturday night where everyone got to reconnect! We had such a blast and can't wait for next year!



# ARTS & CULTURE

Kathy Shabot, Director of Arts & Culture

Sam Torjman, Director of Encore Music School

Linda Eber, Director of Social Services

We were proud to be part of a community-wide event that aired *The Syrian Jewish Community: Episode 6* in collaboration with the Jewish Heritage Museum. The movie relayed the life and escape of the Jews of Syria from 1930-1967. We began the night with a three-piece live Middle Eastern musical concert and introductory words from **Alberto Sutton**, who reflected on his experience coming to America from Lebanon. The event was graciously sponsored by the family of **Toby Cohen A'H**, who passed away tragically at the age of 42 helping many Jews escape from Syria.

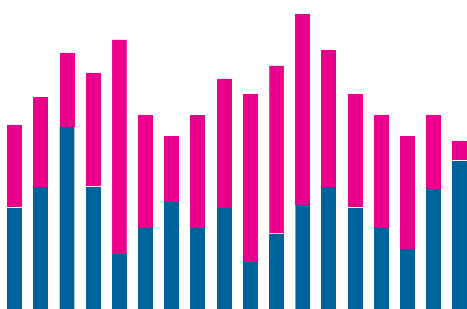


We have also been receiving tremendous support from **Art for a Cause**, a collaboration of art work by community artists. The various artists that participated each donated a piece of artwork. Proceeds go to the Center and any other charity of the artists' choice upon the sale of each piece.

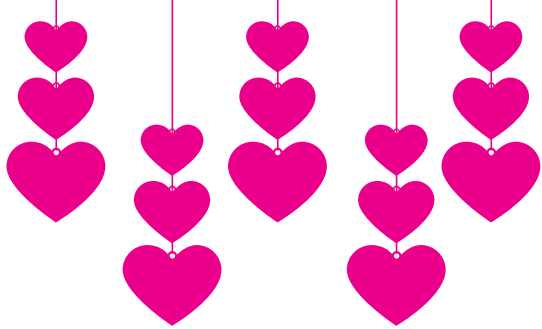


**Encore Music School** is growing once again at the Center and in the community through Encore Outreach! Over the Fall, we saw more students studying in private lessons at the Center with our all-star music faculty, and participating in more group classes in our Center programs: senior program (exercise drumming, vocal workout), Sunday youth program, and in musical theater where our stars took the stage for an amazing production of *Annie*.

In Encore Outreach, our network of community partners is growing with our Encore music faculty now teaching at Magen David Yeshivah, Yeshivah of Flatbush, and special programs at other area schools. We are putting music in the hands of more students than ever!







The **Social Services Department** continued to hold both in-person and Zoom programs throughout the fall and winter. Despite a number of losses over the past two years, many people recently called seeking out services for people in the community with memory and cognitive challenges. We were happy to be able to offer **Brain Works** (for people with early to mid-stage dementia) weekly in-person sessions after more than a year of meeting on Zoom. Our participants stay active by stretching their minds and their bodies, and leave each session dancing and smiling from ear to ear!



Our **New Beginnings Social Club for Widows** were so grateful to be back at the Center and see each other in person for the first time in a year and a half, we've been partying ever since! **The Men's Club** is also up and running, enjoying time with friends while being entertained with music performances and presenters.

Through our Parkinson's Foundation grant, **Rock Steady Boxing** is held several times a week. Whether on Zoom or in-person, these various exercises help maintain focus, endurance, strength, and coordination. Following RSB, we have monthly luncheons for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers, giving them the opportunity to meet and talk about the challenges of living with PD.



friends

# WOMEN'S CULTURE CLUB



**We had a really busy, exciting fall! We discussed *Eternal*, *Beautiful Country*, and *The Personal Librarian* at our **Book Clubs**, which were moderated by **Alice Chera** and **Raquel Franco**. We also held our **Psychology in Film** series, where we talked about HBO Max's *The White Lotus*, Netflix's hit series *Maid*, and Hulu's *9 Perfect Strangers*. The discussions have been riveting with lots of interesting topics being explored.**

We have also had some fun trips in the city. Earlier in the season, we had a very informative and entertaining tour of the Jewish Upper East Side, ending with a tour of the Safra Community Center. We learned all about the influence of the Jewish people when they first arrived, and saw some unforgettable architecture. Some weeks later, we enjoyed a Tribeca gallery tour, where we visited nine galleries and learned all about old and new artists and their styles.







In December, we went on a guided tour of the The Morgan Library, JP Morgan's personal library with rare materials as well as important manuscripts, early children's books, Americana, and materials from the 20th century. This library stars in the the book *The Personal Librarian*, which we had discussed in the **Book Club** the day before! Both the discussion at the **Book Club** and the visit to the library were fascinating, giving us a glimpse of the Gilded Age and the history of the titans who built New York! It was an amazing experience seeing everything come to life.

In January, we went to Broadway to see MJ, The Musical. We were all dancing in our seats!



Lastly, our own **Betty Sitt** gave a beginners' knitting class and taught the women how to cast on, knit, and perl. They walked out with the beginnings of a scarf, confident they could finish it!





# SENIOR CENTER

Ashley Rosen, Director of Senior Center  
Aimee Mishaan, Senior Center Supervisor

**How exciting it was to have the seniors fully back in the building this past Fall!** All our daily exercise classes resumed in-person with over 450 participants monthly! Additionally, the Senior Adult Lounge opened up for card playing, mahjong, and socializing. **Master Artisans**, our artistic skills class, resumed on Mondays and Wednesdays and the women of the program are learning many new skills.



Our fall trips were filled up and enjoyed by all. We went to Philadelphia to see the oldest Spanish and Portuguese synagogue from 1740, the Museum of Jewish Art, and the Liberty Bell. Then, we went to the New York Botanical Gardens to see Kusama's Cosmic Nature exhibit. We also enjoyed lunch and a show at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey and played some machines at Empire Casino. In December we went to the Museum at Eldridge Street, which dates back to 1887. The synagogue is the first great house of worship built in America by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

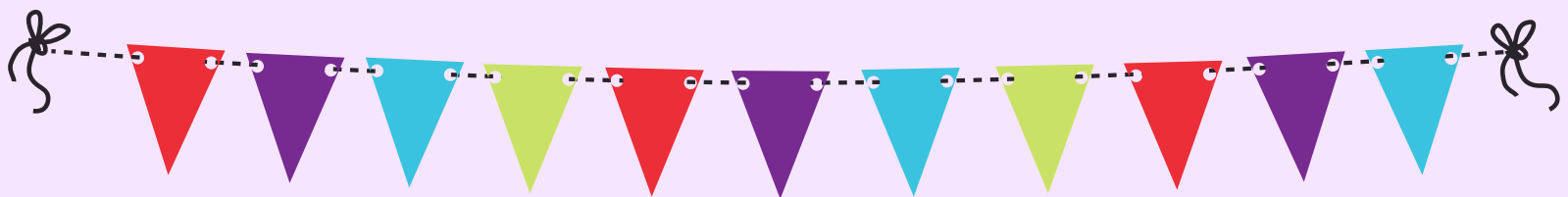




We also had a lot of fun at our many in-house programs and events. Our seniors enjoyed **Cooking for a Cause**, where they made food to donate to SBH's food pantry.

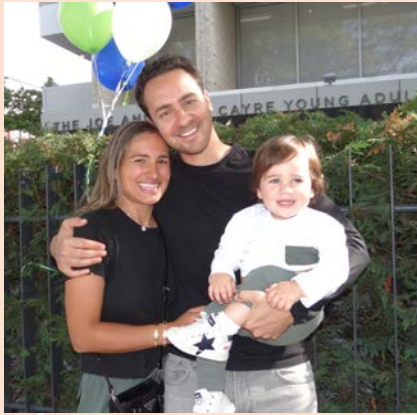


Then we partied at our annual **Hanukkah Party**. We had lunch, dessert, and played Bingo where the winners got prizes, and we ended the party with singing and dancing with Shlomo!





# SPECIAL EVENTS



## INSIDE OUT

*After a long year of limited programs and opportunities to gather together, the Center decided to kick off the Fall Semester and reopen its doors by hosting a street party! The Center's **Inside Out** event included a multitude of activities, both in and out of the building, for all ages. Some of the free-of-charge delights that over 3,000 participants enjoyed included confectioneries like cotton candy and popcorn, as well as candy bags. Members and non-members also had fun bouncing around in our bouncy houses, tie-dyeing their own shirts, decorating planters, competing in fitness competitions, and dancing to live music from our DJ and Encore music instructors.*

In addition, our newly renovated sensory gym was a hit among the youngsters; kids were quick to explore the many swings, slides, foam pits, and other features.

Simultaneously, The Center was packed with teens participating in basketball tournaments, men and women attending exercise classes, children attending birthday parties, and others wandering between all the excitement. It was truly an incredible day!







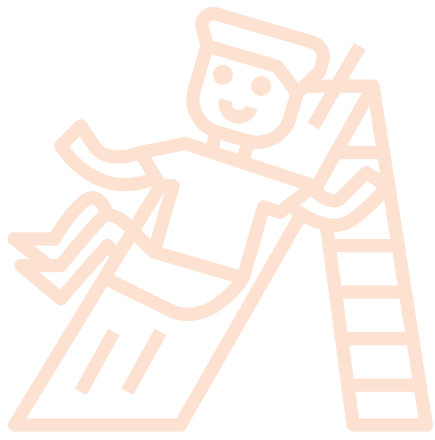
## ISRAEL ADVOCACY

We were happy to bring to the community our *Standing Up Against Antisemitism* event with **Meghan McCain** and **Senator Joe Lieberman**, which completely sold out! Our community members were quick to welcome our celebrity guests and hear them speak out against antisemitism.

We also hosted a powerful night with **Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis** and **AIPAC**, where we had a compelling conversation on the US-Israel Relationship. The conversation was moderated by **Jackie Ashkenazie** and introduced by **Joey Shamie**. The audience was eager to hear about her travels to Israel and her views on being an advocate for Israel.







## SENSORY GYM DEDICATION

November 8th marked a truly monumental moment at the the Center: the unveiling of our new Jewish Communal Fund Sensory Gym. This extraordinary facility could not have happened without the guidance of the **UJA**, who secured a grant from the **JCF**'s endowment, the JCF Special Gifts Fund. The **JCF** enabled us to build an extravagant state-of-the-art 1,500-square foot therapy center, equipped with therapy swings, rock-climbing walls, monkey bars, therapy balls, and other sensory equipment. At the Center, we know that sensory gyms are vital in supporting fine motor skills, body awareness, increased social skills and enhanced independence, and so much more. The Sensory Gym has become the talk of the town, and as word continues to spread, we can only imagine the impact this gym will have on our community.





## CENTERED ON HEALTH

Also in November, we welcomed the community to **Centered on Health**, a robust program encompassing a diverse array of health-related presentations. From parenting to mental and physical health and everything in between, these presentations covered it all.

Nutrition was also on the menu! Our cooking demos covered a variety of topics, including re-energizing after exercising, eating well without depriving ourselves, healthier versions of Shabbat and holiday meals, and more. Throughout the day, there were also health screenings for participants to utilize. We were able to include mammogram screenings (with the help of **Morris I Franco Cancer Center**) as well as hearing screenings.

While the main goal of **Centered on Health** was to empower people with important information and health related knowledge, unifying the community stands at “the center” of what we wanted to achieve. Every employee of the Center, as well as every presenter and organization involved, was responsible for the success of our event. **We are proud to have collaborated with and owe a debt of gratitude to The Morris I Franco Cancer Center and Medstar, PROPEL Network, The Alzheimer's Foundation of America, Dr. Stuart Ditchek, Dr Ezra Dori, Dr Jennifer Srouf, Ray Sofer, Evelyn Salama, Laura Kurtz, Renee Zarif, Heather Deutsch, Nazira Chabbott, Sandy Zohni, Stefanie Zakay, Jacklyn Lahav, Frances Palacci, Judith Betesh, Sarah Hanan, Nina Dahan, Mozelle Goldstein, Roz Ben David, and Allison Esses.**





# UPCOMING EVENTS

*all dates subject to change*



**PRESCHOOL PAJAMA PARTY: THURSDAY, FEB. 3**

**YOUTH PROGRAMS START: FRIDAY, FEB. 4 & SUNDAY, FEB. 6**

**INDOOR MINI-TRIATHLON: WEDNESDAY, FEB. 23**

**PURIM CARNIVAL: SUNDAY, MARCH 13**

**POP-UP BOUTIQUE: MONDAY, APRIL 4**

**PASSOVER PROGRAMS: MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18-20**

**MOTHER'S DAY BOUTIQUE SHOW: MONDAY, MAY 2**

# CENTERPIECE

40 YEARS OF COMMUNITY.  
ONE NIGHT OF CELEBRATION.

**MAY 4**

**A BRAND NEW ORIGINAL COMMUNITY MUSICAL  
LIVE AND ONSTAGE AT THE KINGS THEATRE**



# MEMBERSHIP

## Your Center Membership includes:

**Priority Registration to our most popular programs**

**Access to our members-only Preschool**

**Better Prices for all Center programs and classes**

**Members-Only Special Programs for kids throughout the year**

**Senior Exercise & Programs**

**Top-notch, Competitive Leagues open to members only**

Plus:

### **Newly Renovated State-of-the-art Fitness Center**

- Featuring the latest cardio and conditioning equipment
- Complimentary fitness evaluation with a personal trainer
- Free, pop-up fitness workshops and demonstrations

### **Three Full-Court Basketball Courts**

### **25-Meter Heated Pool**

- Free swim, lap swim, and private and semi-private instructional swim
- Separate men's and women's hours with adjacent locker rooms
- Aqua Aerobics, a special exercise class for members only

### **Racquetball Courts**

### **Access to Rooftop Early Childhood Playground**

**All in a clean, safe, and convenient location**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 718-627-4300**

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