

# Report from the **Chair & CEO**

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Dear Friends,

The APJCC is always focused on building for the future, and that was especially true this year. At the beginning of the fiscal year, our CEO Nate Stein announced he would be retiring on June 30, 2019 after seven years of service to the community. The APJCC Board of Directors quickly went into action to begin planning for the leadership transition. We're pleased to announce that we completed a very successful search and hired Lael Gray, who previously served as the Executive Director of the JCC in Asheville, North Carolina. Lael became the APJCC's new CEO on July 1, 2019. We thank you for the warm welcome that the community has given Lael! Nate will be honored at our annual fundraising gala on November 9, and we invite you to join us in acknowledging Nate's contributions to our community and supporting the APJCC.



**Jon Sweedler**  
*Chair of the Board*



**Lael Gray**  
*CEO*

One of our focus areas this year was you, our members. We added a Member Experience Director to improve member satisfaction and retention. We began offering monthly Member Appreciation events in the main lobby. We built up the JCC's capacity on the digital side by implementing a new database and online registration system. We followed up last year's fitness center renovation with this year's purchases of new pool deck furniture and a pool shed.

The Community Engagement department organized a six-part speaker series this year on the theme of "Pursuing Justice in Polarized Times," in partnership with area synagogues, Jewish day schools, and other local organizations. Topics included gun control, pluralism in Israel, refugee rights, interfaith efforts to understand and respond to religious extremism, criminal justice reform, and the legacy of Elie Wiesel.

We started a series of well attended new programs for Young Adults (20s-30s), including holiday-themed events and monthly Shabbat hikes. Outreach programs to the Russian-speaking Jewish community continued to be very popular with hundreds of participants. The new Israeli Programs department grew tremendously with hundreds of participants in its sing-alongs, holiday celebrations, Hebrew theater performances, and a partnership with Begeed Kefet Hebrew language school to help children of Israeli families build their Hebrew language skills.

We strengthened our connection to the Town of Los Gatos. In January, the town started a school bus program serving public school students and the APJCC is one of the bus stops. We strengthened our community outreach to veterans by providing more than 20 veterans monthly with fitness services.

For the first time, our annual Jewbilee day of Jewish learning was organized around a theme, "Food for Thought." The day included a cooking competition with local chefs, a keynote address by Nigel Savage of Hazon, and more than 30 learning sessions with local Jewish scholars.

It's you – the APJCC's members, friends, program participants and supporters, who make all this possible. Because of you, we're able to keep the doors open to this unique community center that serves people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs. By being part of the APJCC, you're part of a community built around a set of cherished Jewish values that guide us to make the world a better place. Thank you for all that you do, and for all that you make it possible for the APJCC to do.

Wishing you a happy and healthy New Year.

L'Shalom (in peace),

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Sweedler".

Jon Sweedler, Chair of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lael".

Lael Gray, Chief Executive Officer