

ON THE MOVE ►



MJDS
MILWAUKEE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

2020-2021 ⁵⁷⁸¹תשפ"א
ANNUAL REPORT

MJDS:
Where
**academic
excellence
and Jewish
values prepare
children for
a lifetime
of success,
leadership and
engagement
with the world.**

Milwaukee Jewish Day School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, any gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national/ethnic origin or ancestry in the administration of the school's educational policies, admission policies, employment policies, financial aid programs or other school administered programs.

Milwaukee Jewish Day School
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Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-964-1499
hello@mjds.org



*A partner agency of Milwaukee
Jewish Federation*



**MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION**



PRIZMAH
Center for Jewish Day Schools



MOVING FORWARD ►

MJDS Friends and Family,

This year, we overcame many challenges to ensure a safe and healthy environment for every student and staff member. Because of our strong and trusting relationships with families and our incredibly committed and dynamic staff, MJDS provided uninterrupted academic excellence and consistent social emotional support and love, every day. Thank you for helping our school continue to move forward and thrive amidst the COVID pandemic.

At MJDS we are driven to improve, through research, innovation and risk-taking, which leads to deep and powerful learning experiences, moving all of us from me to we. This is possible because our staff members choose to be lifelong learners, thirsty to grow personally and professionally. Further, we develop authentic relationships with each student and see each child as an individual with unique gifts who is respected and valued. Some examples of our approach include:

- Regular personalized communication between MJDS staff and our families, sharing successes and opportunities throughout the year
- Empowering students to own their learning through elective offerings in our Upper School *Omanut* (Arts) classes
- Daily conferring with students to provide real-time feedback and inform planning and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of each student
- Continuing our innovative Affordable Customized Tuition program, ensuring an affordable experience for every MJDS family

Our future is brighter than ever. We continue to grow as a school, welcoming new families in every grade and graduating leaders who live our core values of wonder, empathy and *tikkun olam*, which reflect our flourishing school and the strength of our Jewish community.

I invite you to celebrate our 40th year together, in service to our wonderful community and as always, focused on the needs and aspirations of our students and families. Judaism is a religion of hope that the world can and will eventually be a better place. At MJDS, students begin their journey and that hope is evident in every interaction, classroom and moment of learning. I have faith in the future as our students and graduates are making the world a better place through their success, leadership and engagement with the world.

Bivrachah,

Aaron Lippman
Head of School





Friendship is a big part of MJDS, the family you make with your classmates is lifelong.

Ari, fourth grade



MOVING ALONG▶

Dear MJDS Staff, Families and Friends,

While much of the world slowed down or even came to a stop during the past year, Milwaukee Jewish Day School remained on the move. Our staff took on added responsibilities to keep students healthy, while remaining focused on academic excellence and Jewish values. Our families supported students and each other as we all navigated the emotional challenges of a pandemic. And our donor community stepped forward with incredible generosity during a time of need. I am deeply grateful to the greater MJDS community for all the ways you have fueled MJDS's momentum in a year full of headwinds.

As for headwinds, one of the most daunting was the financial strain of operating in-person during a pandemic. In addition to increased student financial aid costs, MJDS absorbed significant additional expenses related to modifying our building and operations to create a safe and healthy school environment. Most significantly, we grew our staff to keep learning cohorts small, and we had to defer our in-person Bright Futures Gala for a second year, depriving the school of anticipated revenue. Despite these challenges, MJDS closed the year with a balanced budget. Congratulations to the MJDS administration for navigating this complex, ever-changing financial situation with skill and grace.

I am very grateful to the MJDS Board of Directors for its active leadership this year. The Board provided valuable guidance as the school navigated COVID-related challenges, and it adopted a "Statement of the J" articulating core principles of Jewish identity at MJDS. The Board also continued its learning and skill-building with respect to our role as fiduciaries to the school, ever mindful of our duty to be vigilant stewards of the school.

There is no easy way to sum up the 2020-21 school year. Mostly, though, I am filled with gratitude for the collective hard work of the MJDS community...and excitement about our momentum for the future.

Sarah Schott
President, MJDS Board of Directors



MJDS Board of Directors

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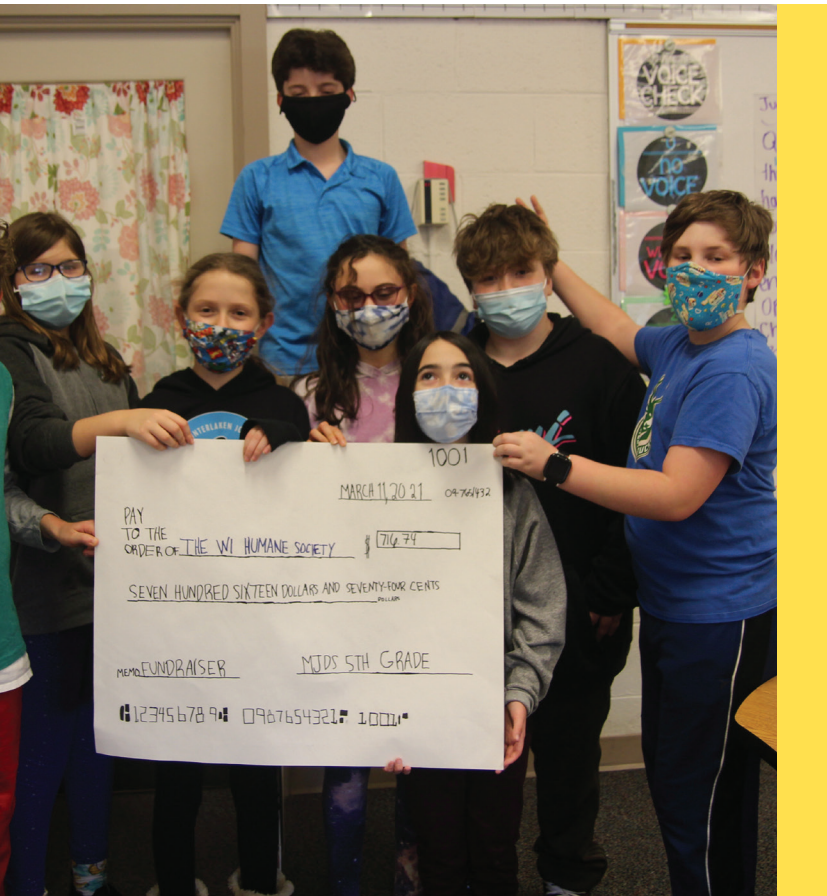
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Alyson Lippman

MOVING FROM ME TO WE ▶

At MJDS, the core values of empathy, wonder and *tikkun olam* are integrated into the educational journey. Staff and students want to make the world a better place. When our school community was notified about changes that would take place in order to allow for in-person learning, students did not hesitate. They took their temperature, put on their masks and got to work. Their resilience and persistence throughout the year was an inspiration. Rather than focus on how things used to be, they identified ways to make the best of an unusual year and move forward.

The lunchroom is where students traditionally managed a compost container, collecting organic waste to be repurposed to boost future harvests. This year there was no shared cafeteria, as cohorts ate lunch in their classrooms to maintain strict close contact protocols. Seventh grade students took action. They delivered orange, plastic buckets to each classroom and educated students about the benefits of composting uneaten lunch remains. At the end of EACH day, these students collected the buckets, emptied the contents into an outdoor bin, cleaned the buckets and returned them to the classrooms. “It’s worth the effort because I know I’m helping the earth,” commented one student.



Students in fifth grade were very interested in learning about the presidential campaign and designed a student-owned election of their own, featuring the film “Aladdin” competing against “Ratatouille.” The campaign included videos, posters, speeches and a town hall debate, and the winning film was shown to all classes. This presented an opportunity for teachers to offer age-appropriate explanations to each class on the importance of performing one’s civic duty and how to vote.

Fifth grade students researched charities and selected two they were passionate about to benefit from their Jewish Studies *mitzvah* project: Wisconsin Humane Society and Moms Demand Action. They took the lead and developed virtual events, including a Minecraft Building Competition, a Family Trivia Contest and an Among Us Tournament. When students and families registered, they were asked to donate an amount of their choice and were sent an online invitation to their event. More than \$1,400

was raised and evenly split between the two organizations.

Purim is a time of celebration, when MJDS traditionally holds a school-wide carnival featuring games, prizes, face painting, music and more. This year, upper school students, led by the sixth grade class, offered a “Carnival in a Box” instead. Children delivered unique, decorated boxes filled with student-designed games including **Musical Thrones, Fill the Hamantaschen, King Ahaseverus Freeze Dance Party and more** to each class. Sixth grade also incorporated a *mitzvah* project, collecting donations for St. Ben’s community meal site and the Jewish Food Pantry. They offered donation incentives, collected donations from families after school in the carline and exceeded their goal of \$250!

Eighth grade students did a *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, which is about giving to those in need because one believes it is their moral obligation. This year an MJDS student, Mackenzie Clyde z”l, lost her battle with medulloblastoma. The donation, and a letter signed by the entire class, was given with the hope that, “one day no parent will have to grieve the loss of their child due to cancer, and that one day every child could have a normal childhood without pain and suffering.”



MOVING BEYOND THE PANDEMIC▶



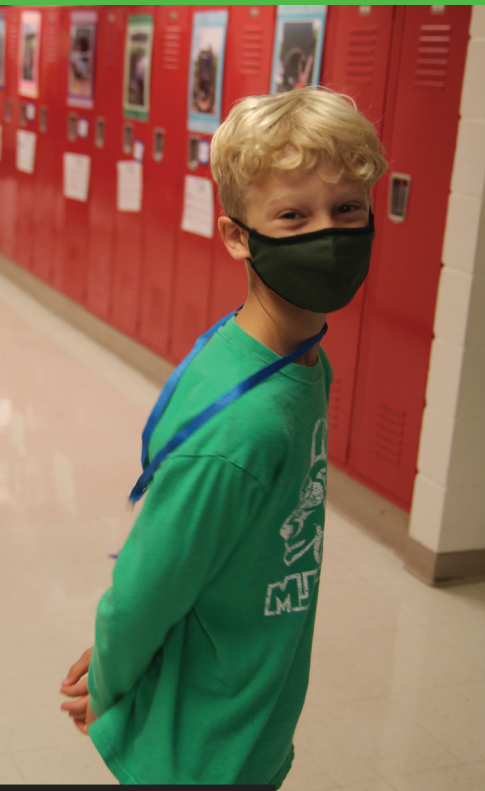
Jewish tradition teaches, “whoever saves a life, saves the world” (San. 4:5). As Wisconsin moved into new phases of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, the MJDS health and safety team stepped up to organize clinics for newly eligible individuals. In January, MJDS assembled health officials and staff to run a Pfizer clinic available to parents, guardians, grandparents and staff emeriti aged 65 and older. In addition to the thrill of being vaccinated and the pride in doing their part to bring the pandemic to an end, participants enjoyed seeing familiar faces! Many adult volunteers working at the clinic were MJDS alums who warmly greeted former teachers as they arrived for their shots.

Additional clinics were offered in April and May as soon as the guidelines were changed and, in total, over 400 individuals were vaccinated.

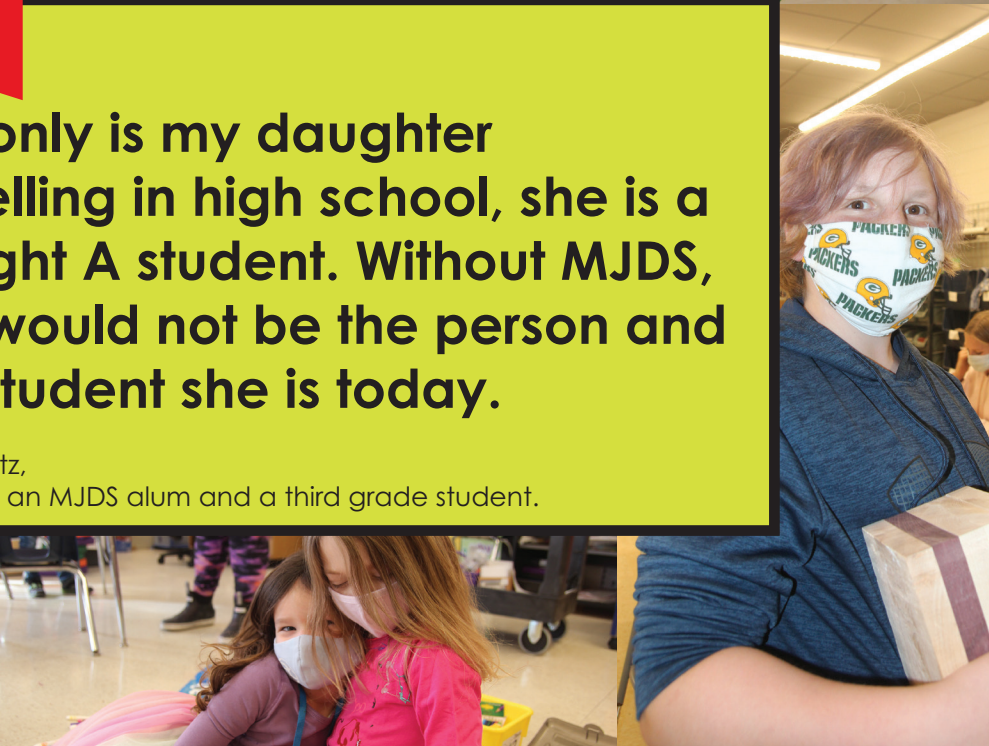
This school year new students enrolled in every grade, resulting in a 20% increase in MJDS enrollment. Some new families made the move to ensure their students experienced in-person learning for the year. The switch may have initially been considered temporary, but for the Domnitz family, the decision to stay was clear.

Rebecca, mother of Hersch (first grade) and Levi (junior kindergarten) appreciates the “personalized nature of the education. The teachers and administration do a really good job of meeting every student where they are. The learning is organic, student directed and self-motivated.”

The MJDS rally cry is **moving from me to we** and Rebecca noticed the approach made a difference in her boys. “The learning philosophy concerns the entire child, not just math and reading. There is no question my kids are doing better.”



“
**Not only is my daughter
excelling in high school, she is a
straight A student. Without MJDS,
she would not be the person and
the student she is today.**
Ben Kranitz,
parent of an MJDS alum and a third grade student.



MOVING ON ▶



MJDS students live our core values and, as alums, put that good back out into the world.

Empathy

Hannah Sattler (1993) built a business that focuses on the importance of the Jewish community. She began her cooking journey as a volunteer, and it evolved into her local Milwaukee catering business, Hannah's Kitchen. Empathy is ingrained in how and what they do as a company, which reflects Hannah's love of food and Judaism. Over the past year her business has pivoted to providing more meal-to-go offerings to support the needs of local residents during the pandemic.

Wonder

Jaxon Katch (2017) credits MJDS with developing his sense of wonder and appreciation about the world. He recently enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, "in order to protect and defend the embassies of the United States around the globe and to aide the United States in strengthening relations with other countries." He cites his eighth grade trip to Israel and meeting Israeli civilians and soldiers as inspiring him to get to where he is today.

Tikkun Olam

Loren (Szper) Shufton (1993) is living the MJDS core value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), making regular donations to the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Coastside Land Trust. She and her children also support numerous organizations that work to heal and protect our lands, national parks, oceans and wildlife, as well as organizations that feed the hungry. Loren is "building a strong relationship to nature through frequent visits to the beaches and hiking trails near my home" in California. She is instilling *tikkun olam* in the next generation, participating in beach clean-ups and environmental education with her daughters.



KEEP MOVING ▶

29

Number of hand sanitizing stations throughout the school



5,760

Number of N-95 protective masks given to staff and students courtesy of an anonymous donor



6,600

Number of library books delivered directly to classrooms because the library was not open to MJDS students



38,930

Number of daily health screeners filled out by staff and students



400

Number of people served through three MJDS COVID vaccination clinics



400+

Number of participants in virtual programming options (including Ed Talk, alumni Shabbat Sing, Chanukah Pajamakah, challah braiding)



Days closed due to outbreak 0

20%

Increase in enrollment



167

Number of new donors



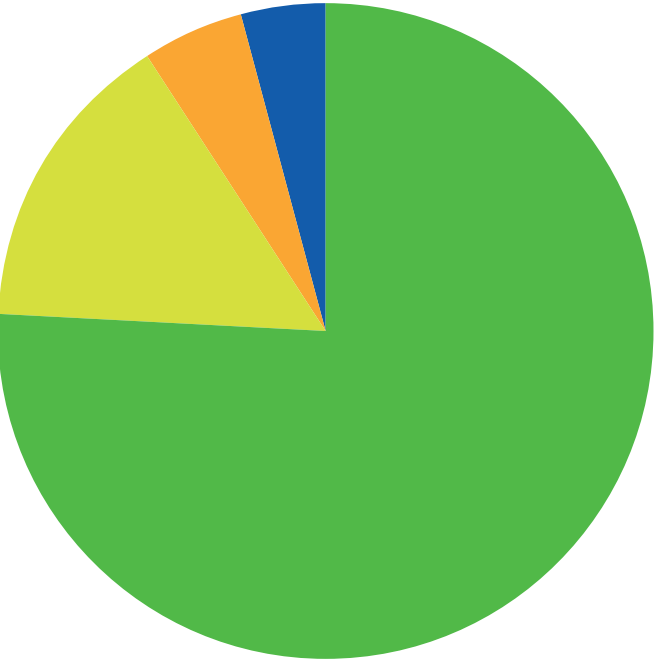
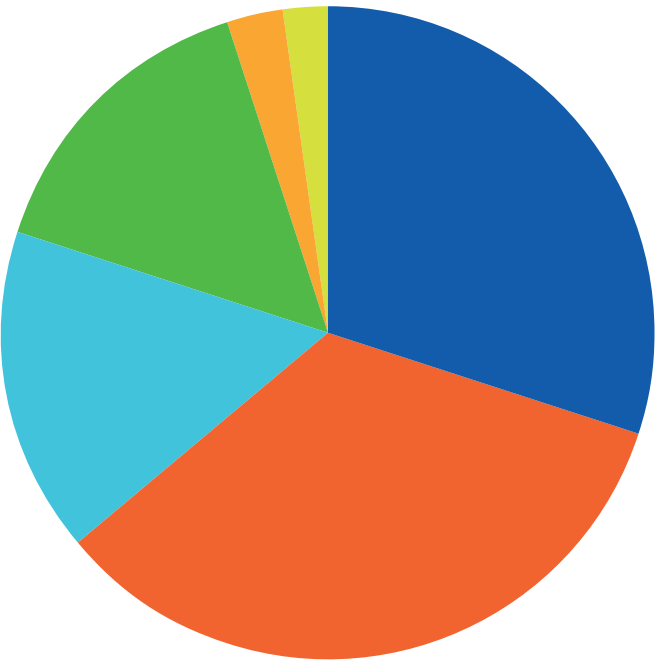
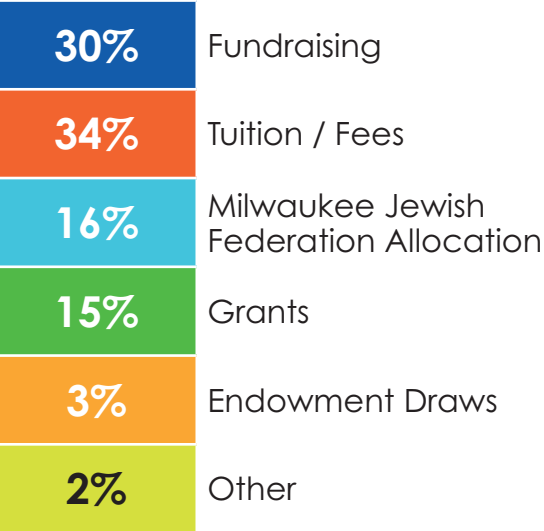
100%

Board members participating in the Annual Fund Campaign

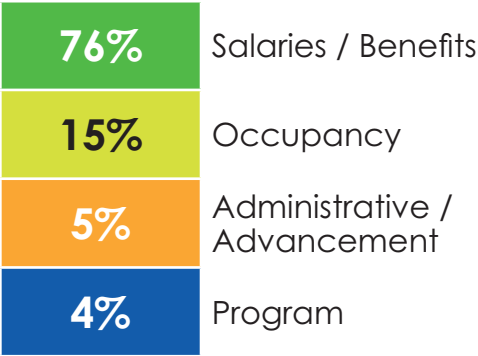


MOVING FORCE ▶

Revenue



Expenses



Affordable Customized Tuition Program

Need-based tuition support is offered through the Affordable Customized Tuition (ACT) Program and ensures that each family's unique financial circumstances are considered so they can benefit from the advantages of an MJDS education.

MJDS is committed to providing a personalized and progressive education that delivers academic excellence and Jewish values to each student and family in our community. The school delivers the same level of commitment to the affordability of an MJDS education, to ensure that any family who chooses MJDS is able to attend.

Supporting the Advancement of Jewish Education Program

Non-need based tuition support is available through the Supporting the Advancement of Jewish Education (SAJE) Program, which significantly reduces tuition for Jewish communal professionals. The program has been in effect for ten years and has provided over \$1.3 million in support to 63 students. Families participating in the program work full time for local organizations such as the Jewish Community Center, Milwaukee Jewish Federation, local synagogues, Jewish Home and Care and Bader Hillel Academy.

Funding

The tuition programs detailed above are funded through grants, restricted donations, endowment draws, the Annual Fund Campaign, the Fruit and Nut (FAN) sale and special events.



Donor Spotlights Moved to Give▶

Bunny and Joel Honigman have a long history with MJDS - from parents, a staff member, to current grandparents and proud alumni parents of a staff member, which is why they generously support the school.

Recalls Bunny, "We first became interested in enrolling at MJDS when we attended a Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration at the old JCC. I still remember all these kids were singing - the school was only about 30 kids at the time - and it just blew me away. Then I took a tour, which my dad made me do, and when we saw what [MJDS] was doing I thought, 'my kids have to do this!'"



Supporting MJDS is a part of their family legacy, and Bunny's father was one of the first donors to establish a fund at the school. As Bunny remarks, "If there wasn't seed money to make this school what it is, we and MJDS wouldn't be here." Joel adds, "It's hard not to have an appreciation for any institution that has a profound effect on us personally and as a family. The relationships we formed at MJDS are

Dear MJDS Staff,

We want to express our gratitude to you for the incredible opportunity you offered so many to receive COVID vaccines. There is no doubt that you have helped to prevent illness and suffering, but also have indeed helped to save lives.

After receiving the vaccine, it was such a joy to write the date in my calendar when I could hug my grandchildren again, and it increased my joy to witness the other grandparents at the clinic doing the same!

Please accept this donation to use as you see fit. What you gave to us was priceless.

Thank you.
Lynda Trani and Dean Daniels

lasting. That's the recipe for success - feeling like everyone is interconnected. That connection is electric."

When asked what they would say to those who are considering supporting MJDS?

"What's more important than a child's Jewish education?"

2020/2021 MJDS DONOR RECOGNITION LISTING ▶

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- | | | |
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Endowment Funds

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Adina Altshull Israel Education Endowment Fund | Graduation Endowment Fund | Milwaukee Jewish Day School Restricted Endowment Fund |
| Bar Mitzvah Year Endowment Fund | Lillian P. Heffernan and Eileen A. Perlson Scholarship Endowment Fund | MJDS Unrestricted Endowment Fund |
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| Sol and Eva Dorf Education Endowment Fund | Debra and Moshe Katz Family Fund for MJDS Staff Travel to Israel | Judee Ross Memorial Endowment Fund |
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| Toni Ettenheim Memorial Art Education Endowment Fund | Marge Meyers Scholarship Endowment | Maurice Wolkomir Endowment Fund |
| Howard Frankenthal Family Fund | | |
| Gellman Family Endowment | | |

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Sandy Mitz Technology and Innovation Student Project Fund
Judee Ross Imagination Grant

Judee Ross Memorial Education Fund
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\$50,000 +

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Your support of Milwaukee Jewish Day School ensures that all families, no matter what their financial circumstances, can provide a quality Jewish education for their children. This donor listing is a reflection of the many ways MJDS receives financial support.

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Viviana and Sharone Zlochiver
Aleksandra Zobacheva and Ryan Whipp

MJDS would like to formally recognize the contributions of our many donors who prefer to remain anonymous and who have done so much to support our school during this past year.

■ Staff ● Alumni

Remembering Rick Ross, z”l

Judee Ross, z”l, taught at MJDS from 2001-2005. After her life was cut short far too early, her husband, Rick, wanted to keep her memory strong and present. For years, his support, actions and generosity provided many wonderful opportunities for students and teachers at MJDS.

Rick funded the Judee Ross Imagination Grant, which gives teachers access to items which spark curiosity and creativity in their classrooms. He started the Judee Ross book collection, which now contains over 1,500 titles. For years, students have enjoyed exploring a wide variety of genres, with special appreciation of the fairy tales and “Who Was” books that were favorites of Rick and Judee. He also created the Judee Ross Memorial Education Fund to help teachers enhance their teaching practices by attending conferences.

In addition to being financially generous, Rick was just as giving of his time. He served as a member of the Board of Directors and, while most members served for six years, Rick was given a lifetime membership in recognition of his deep commitment to the school. He remained up-to-date on board activities, helping members achieve their goals and ensuring MJDS was a safe space for students and staff.

Purple was Judee's favorite color and this spring, two lilac bushes were planted near the MJDS playground in memory of Rick and Judee. Their impact on the school spans decades, making them part of the roots at MJDS, helping to grow life-long learners and incredible teachers. Rick Ross was an exceptional supporter and his devotion to Judee, and their love for MJDS, will continue to live strong.



Save the Date

BRIGHT FUTURES GALA

hosted by Milwaukee Jewish Day School

April 28, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.
Saint Kate - The Arts Hotel



MILWAUKEE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

Milwaukee Jewish Day School

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