WISE TEMPLE
WISESCHOOL

aaron milken center • at WISE



2024-25 / 5785 THE FABRIC OF WISE





Dear Friends,

As the old Yiddish saying goes, "Der mentsh tracht un Gott lacht"—we make plans, and God laughs. (And, if you grew up with Farsi, you might have heard a version that says: you make a plan, and God plans differently.) Across cultures, we are reminded: no matter how carefully we chart our lives, the world may still surprise us in ways good and terrible. We have long known antisemitism persists—but few could have foreseen its resurgence across campuses, cities, and even close-knit communities. We could not have imagined that nearly two years after October 7, 58 hostages would remain in Gaza. Or that wildfires would consume parts of our city and displace so many.

The future is unknowable. But our response is not fear—it is faith. It is community. It is resolve.

That's why, over the past year, our Board of Directors, clergy, and staff created a bold five-year strategic plan for Stephen Wise Temple. More than a vision, it's a roadmap for building a resilient, inclusive, and spiritually vibrant community—ready for what's now, and what's next. We are excited to share it with you over the months to come, and build it together over the next years.

A Shelter and a Sanctuary

A popular Israeli song reminds us: "Am hanetzach l'olam lo mefached עם הנצח לעולם לא מפחד"—The Eternal People is not afraid. To be part of the Jewish people—and of this community—is to anchor yourself in uncertain times. This mountaintop is both a mikdash מקדש—a sacred space—and a miklat מקלט—a refuge.

Inside these pages, you'll hear from students, parents, teens, and adults who found purpose and belonging at Wise. Teenagers moved by Jewish values to respond to the fires. Children who found their voice on the bimah. Adults exploring new ideas and ancient wisdom.

These are more than stories of participation—they are stories of meaning. You may recognize familiar faces. We hope you also see yourself.

Your Place in Our Future

Pirkei Avot teaches: "Know from where you came, where you are going, and before whom you are destined to give an accounting." Stephen Wise Temple has been part of your past. It is part of your present. And with your partnership, it will help shape a strong lewish future.



This is not just a time to reflect—it is a time to act. Recommit. Show up. Whether you join a class, volunteer, enroll your children, or celebrate Shabbat with us—we need you. And we believe you'll find something sacred in return.

Together, we are strong. Together, we are hopeful. Am hanetzach l'olam lo mefached. The Eternal People is not afraid. And together, we will rise.

With gratitude and blessings,

Rabbi Yoshi Senior Rabbi

Jeremy Rosen President

Victor Svilik **Incoming President**



THROUGH EVERY THREAD OF LIFE



At Stephen Wise Temple, each of us brings a unique thread—our diverse stories, traditions, and dreams. Together, we weave these threads into a vibrant communal tapestry, rich with meaning, memory, and purpose. In this sacred fabric of connection, we find strength, belonging, and a shared path forward. Together, we make meaning and change the world.

"Each High Holy Day season, I'm reminded how lucky we are to be part of the Stephen Wise Temple community. This year, watching our daughter Emmie proudly sing 'Am Yisrael Chai' and wave the Israeli flag with her fellow Cantors in Training was especially moving. Witnessing our children embrace their Jewish heritage with such enthusiasm, in a community that supports and celebrates both Israel and Judaism, is an invaluable gift. It's a reminder of the deep connection we share, and the powerful role Stephen Wise Temple plays in nurturing and strengthening that bond for all of us. "

— Erin Naimi



AT THE HEART OF STEPHEN WISE:

A COMMUNITY OF IMPACT

A note from our Executive Director, **Jodi Berman:**

It's hard to believe it's already been a year since I joined the extraordinary team at Wise. While I wasn't new to the synagogue world, nothing could have prepared me for what I've experienced here over the past twelve months. Wise's reputation precedes it, of course—but what I've discovered from the inside is even more powerful than I imagined: a synagogue that beats with heart, spirit, soul, and purpose, that embraces innovation and stands up against anti Semitism. I've proudly taken on another new role this year—captain of the Kvell (pride) Patrol because there is just so much to celebrate.

When Rabbi Yoshi asked me recently what I love most about Wise, I didn't hesitate. This is the most openly, unapologetically, passionately Zionist synagogue I've ever encountered. At Wise, love for Israel isn't a side note—it's in our DNA. It's embedded in our culture, in our liturgy, in our learning, and in our sense of who we are as Jews. And what makes it so beautiful is the diversity of Zionist voices that come together here: thoughtful, proud, and always connected to the deep truth that there is no lewish people without Israel—and no Israel without the Jewish people.

We see that passion carried forward in our next generation. As you flip through this annual report, you'll find it everywhere—in every classroom, every youth program, every service project. Our schools are second to none. The children here aren't just being taught; they're being formed—as proud Jews, future leaders, and torchbearers for our collective story. One of my goals this coming year is to share more of these incredible moments with you. So many times I find myself thinking, "If only every congregant could see this, they'd be bursting with pride."

You, too, can make an impact. If you're ready to share your own unique magic, give us a call. We'll find the perfect way to help you get involved.



We're also blessed with a musical legacy that reaches far beyond our gates. Whether it's Cantor Emma's soaring voice infused with soul, Rabbi Yoshi's original compositions that already feel like classics, or Dr. Tali Tadmor's masterful arrangements—alone and in collaboration, their musical magic is something truly unique to Wise. It elevates us, connects us, and turns everything they lead into something unforgettable.

Our lay leaders and volunteers are the lifeblood of our synagogue. Our Board, WPA, Wise Hearts volunteers, affinity group leaders, and many others invest their time, talent, and generosity to help this sacred community flourish. This is also where we see our greatest opportunity: we want more of you to step in and lead. There are so many ways to contribute—and even more on the horizon. Call us. email us, or just scan the QR code and let us know how you'd like to get involved.

And then there's our incredible staff. Teachers, administrators, accountants, maintenance crews (and more)— so many people who work behind the scenes but give everything they have to help Wise shine. Their unofficial motto seems to be: "There is no limit to better." They stay late, go the extra mile, and carry this community with grace and care.

As for me—I'm just the lucky Executive Director who gets to work alongside them. Here's to year two, and to the promise, purpose, and pride we'll carry into it together.



Members of the Stephen Wise Temple Board of Directors and Staff.

"Having grown up in a small synagogue, it's both humbling and awe-inspiring to now serve on the Board of Stephen Wise Temple, helping carry forward the vision of Rabbi Zeldin and our inspiring leaders, especially Rabbi Yoshi, who continues to shape our unique Los Angeles version of the promised land. Through my role on the Financial Oversight Committee—alongside Executive Director Jodi Berman, Chair Victor Svilik, and an exceptional team—we developed a plan to complete the new Aaron Milken Center, thoughtfully designed to support young families while ensuring long-term sustainability. Witnessing the grand opening and the community coming to life was deeply moving, and never have the words "you get out much more than you put in" felt more true."

—Sandy Sigal, Board Member

When the Los Angeles wildfires broke out in January, the Stephen Wise Temple clergy, staff and community quickly mobilized to deliver support, resources and supplies.

230 FAMILIES

contacted by clergy after evacuation.

196 FAMILIES

in Warning Zones contacted by clergy.

\$8,790

in gift cards collected and distributed to those affected by the fires.

In the wake of the fires, Wise members Jacob Gallagher and Sasha Neman sprang into action, launching a shoe drive in partnership with Cool Kicks to support those who had lost everything. Their initiative, Sole Support, collected hundreds of donated shoes, bringing comfort and relief to those in need. Their big smiles—and even bigger boxes—are a testament to the incredible impact of giving back.

LIFELONG LEARNING

STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE TAKES PRIDE IN OFFERING NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS TO CONTINUE THEIR EWISH EDUCATION AND CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY. THROUGH CLASSES, GROUPS, AND SOCIAL EVENTS, WE BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND ENRICH LIVES.

"It has been a privilege and a joy to learn with the **Melton School of Jewish Education**. Studying both the history and the current issues inherent in Judaism has brought immense knowledge and insight into both the fundamentals and history of our religion, but also a deeper understanding of the more current aspects in relation to Israel and its struggles to maintain its identity and place in the world."

—Carol Sirkin Horowitz



Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback brings Torah to life, sparking meaningful conversations and a love of lifelong learning at Wise.

"The Speaker Series is one of our favorite programs at Wise, and we look forward to the next series!"

— Felice and Doug Williams

"Life is about community, and I'm grateful to Wise Years,

our monthly senior program, where I've found friendship and enriching experiences. Of over 160 presentations in the past decade, one by E. Randol Schoenberg—who helped recover stolen Klimt paintings—was especially powerful. Other memorable speakers include journalist Linda Deutsch, Joey Freeman from the mayor's office (and a Wise alumnus), Professor Stephen Windmueller, and Dr. Tali Tadmor, our Musical Director."

—Isabel Wintroub







"The Young Adult Division (YAD) is a wonderful group to be a part of, ranging from spiritually-focused events like Shabbat Oneg and Sukkot Shabbat to social gatherings like karaoke and a Dodger game, YAD has connected me more deeply to my Jewishness and a community of young professional Jews. Overall, I am very glad that YAD exists at Stephen Wise Temple and that I have had the opportunity to be involved."

—David Wagmeister

"Stephen Wise Temple's Introduction to Judaism course was such an enriching foundation for my education on Judaism, and was a critical step in my path to conversion. Each week's subject is well-taught and interesting with a range of guest speakers from Stephen Wise clergy, and the learning environment is open and collaborative. I felt comfortable asking questions, big or small. This open environment also meant students were comfortable exploring difficult topics and opening up about themselves and their own personal histories, secure in the knowledge that everyone was there for the same reason: to learn, to grow, and to enrich their lives through study and community."

—Andrew Bain

"Being a part of Wise Women helps me connect with all generations of our community and Jewish tradition."

— Laura Breckenridge









CYE IS WHERE JEWISH CHILDREN AND TEENS THRIVE; BECOMING LIFELONG LEARNERS AND LEADERS AS THEY DEEPEN THEIR CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY, HERITAGE, AND TRADITION. FROM THE YOUNGEST LEARNERS TO OUR RISING TEENS, THE CENTER FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS WHERE JEWISH VALUES TAKE ROOT AND FLOURISH. OUR PROGRAMS INSPIRE CURIOSITY, BUILD CONFIDENCE, AND NURTURE LEADERSHIP.

"At Wise Temple Youth (WTY), I have made a lot of great memories. I really enjoyed our 'Iron Chef' night this year, when teams of teens competed to cook incredible dishes. Every teen was focused on their task, from chopping vegetables to frying potatoes, to seasoning. At the same time, I felt like we came together as a community, all participating in a common task, talking to new people, and creating friendships that lasted the entire year."

—Joshua Gabbay, WTY President





"Two years into living on the East Coast, there is still nothing the brings me the feeling of home and security like Wise. Within seconds of attending a CYE Shabbat this year, I felt like the piece of me that had been missing at school had been found.

The Wise CYE community has always been, and continues to be, home to me.

—Lily Turndorf, College Student and CYE Alum





"One of my favorite Camp Wise Sunday moments from this year was when I painted a pot and grew flowers inside for Tu B'Shvat. It felt like I was giving back to nature by planting something, and it was fun to see the pots that other people painted."

Students learn the depth and breadth of

our Torah at CYE.

— Avital Schwartzman, Camp Wise Sundays

aaron milken center at WISE

At Aaron Milken Center (AMC), we wholeheartedly embrace the TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. OUR GOAL IS TO CREATE A NURTURING AND ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT THAT SPARKS EACH CHILD'S innate curiosity, unlocking their limitless creative potential. ${\sf M}$ ore than a PRESCHOOL, WE ARE A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF EDUCATORS, FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS DEDICATED TO FOSTERING BOTH THE EDUCATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH of every child. Each and every day, we are nurturing young minds and FOSTERING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS.



"Both our kids went to AMC Preschool, and we've felt so much love and care from every teacher.

Through play, music, art, and more, they've grown in confidence, curiosity, and kindness.

We're so thankful to AMC for helping our kids grow into joyful, thoughtful little people."

—Shanshan Li



"As grandparents of eight, we've learned so much from being part of Grandparent & Me. In our 40+ years at the temple, this has been a true highlight connecting with others, sharing stories, and finding support and laughter along the way."

—Carole Lazar



"Being an AMC parent means finding deep, meaningful moments

when you least expect them. One ordinary Friday, I walked into the sanctuary to return a kippah and heard students down the hall singing "Hatikvah." It wasn't a holiday or special event—just a regular day but in that moment, I felt the essence of what it means to be lewish."

— Katy Mohr

"Three years ago, we were looking for a pre-school, and we discovered a second home. The staff and faculty have nurtured not only our children's growth, but our whole family's sense of belonging.

center's journey.

Their warmth and dedication both inside and out of the classroom have had a lasting impact.

We are endlessly grateful for the foundation they've helped create and are fortunate to be part of this community."

— Natalie Gabay



of the Torah close.

aaron milken center

A JOYFUL NEW **BEGINNING**

FOR OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS at WISF

This spring, we celebrated a major milestone with the ribbon-cutting of the Aaron Milken Center for Early Childhood Education at Wise.

More than 500 guests—including donors, community leaders, and Wise families gathered on March 23 to mark this joyous occasion.

Opening soon, the Aaron Milken Center will provide a warm, innovative environment where young children and their families can learn, connect, and grow together. Inspired by the vision of our founder, Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, and dedicated in loving memory of Aaron Milken, the Center reflects our enduring commitment to lifelong Jewish learning—for every generation.

"Early childhood education is the foundation of a child's lifelong journey of learning and discovery. The Aaron Milken Center embodies our commitment to providing

a world-class experience that nurtures curiosity, creativity, and community."

—Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback



"The new campus of the Aaron Milken Center builds on parenting and early childhood education, physically, conceptually and professionally. It expands, enhances and enriches efforts to embrace children with the kind of attention and care, with the kind of love, that has everything to do with who they become."

- Lowell Milken



Our AMC students are all smiles as they explore their beautiful new home.





AMC alumni and donor families join Head of School, Tami Weiser, at the AMC Grand Opening.



RELEASE OF A NEW ALBUM

WOW! **SCHECHEYANU**

We are delighted to share our new album, Wow! Shehecheyanu, created in celebration of the opening of the new Aaron Milken Center at Wise. These special recordings feature the voice of Cantor Emma Lutz, with music by Dr. Tali Tadmor and Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback, accompanied by the vibrant Stephen Wise Temple Band and our talented



Cantors-in-Training. Produced by Pam Autori and recorded at the renowned UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, this album is a heartfelt tribute to new beginnings, community, and the joy of Jewish learning. Listen to it now on Spotify or Apple Music.

WISESCHOOL AT WISE SCHOOL, WE INSPIRE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO LEARN DEEPLY, THINK CREATIVELY,

and experience wholeness as they positively impact our community and world. With MISSION TO MAKE MEANING AND CHANGE THE WORLD.

"As the mother of a graduating sixth grader who has participated in the spring musical for three years, I can wholeheartedly say that the musical theater program at Wise School has been transformative for our daughter and so meaningful to our family. Under the dynamic genius of the amazing and caring Mary Itri, the program exposed Olivia to an entirely new world, which allowed her to grow in confidence and provided her with a great sense of belonging, where cast and crew bonded over long hours of rehearsal for several months. Watching her evolution into a self-assured and collaborative performer who can act, sing a solo and dance on stage is among my proudest moments as a parent.



We thank **Stephen Wise** Temple and Wise School for investing in this vital program, and creating top-notch productions.

— Dorit Warner

"I feel incredibly fortunate that Wise has always been a part of my life, from my days as a student and bar mitzvah to finding new ways to stay involved. Recently, I had the honor of helping lead a Shabbat service in song, guided by Cantor Emma and Dr. Tali. Singing Rabbi Yoshi's arrangement of Ahavat Olam and The Beatles' Great Love, and hearing the congregation join in, was a powerful and moving reminder of music's ability to unite us in spiritual connection."

— Shai West, Class of 2021





"Being a part of the Student Council at Wise has been an amazing experience for me. It has taught me to be a good role model and try my best to impact the Wise community positively. The entire Student Council and teachers have been so supportive and have made the journey so much fun. Being a part of the Student Council has also taught me that there are so many things we can do to help the community. This year the Student Council visited Fire Station 109 to thank them for their service during the Palisades Fire. More than ever, being Student Council President has made me feel even more connected to Wise School, as

of our entire community.

I have had the opportunity to engage with my peers, collaborate on meaningful initiatives, and actively contribute to the vibrant school community."

WEAVING A WORLD OF GOOD

THE CENTER FOR TIKKUN OLAM COMBINES JEWISH TRADITION WITH COMPASSIONATE ACTION TO ADDRESS LOCAL AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES. WE WORK COLLECTIVELY FOR JUSTICE, SUPPORT THE VULNERABLE, AND LIVE OUR COMMITMENT TO CREATING A MORE HUMANE, SUSTAINABLE WORLD FOR ALL.

"Giving back transforms lives, strengthens communities, and reflects our Jewish commitment to Tikkun Olam. Each year on **Mitzvah Day**, our children learn the value of mitzvot through hands-on acts of kindness that help others and shape their own character.

Watching them give joyfully reminds me how these experiences volunteering at Our Big Kitchen Los Angeles.



instill empathy, responsibility, and a strong connection to their heritage.

—Amanda Wizenberg



In January, we traveled to Morocco with fellow Stephen Wise Temple members. The trip exceeded our expectations—from insightful guides and smooth planning to discovering Morocco's rich Jewish heritage preserved by Muslims. We explored vibrant markets, enjoyed incredible food, and were touched by the warmth of the people. Experiencing a different side of Islam alongside our congregation made the journey especially meaningful.

-Margie Marcus

"Reaching out to those in need on behalf of **Wise Hearts** is a meaningful way to foster a sense of community and show compassion. Whether through offering a helping hand, sharing resources, or providing a listening ear, small acts of kindness make a significant impact in the lives of Wise Temple members. By extending the support of Wise Hearts, we not only uplift others and remind them they are not alone, but also strengthen the bonds that unite us all, creating a space where empathy and care can truly thrive."

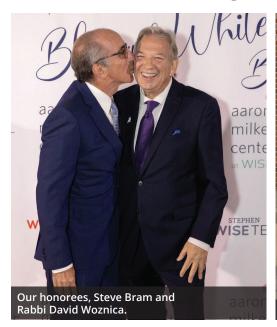
-Melanie Scher



A Night to Remember

On December 12, more than 500 guests gathered on our campus for the Blue and White Ball—our largest gala in Wise history. The evening was a joyful celebration of community and leadership, honoring **Rabbi David Woznica** for 20 years of impactful service and past President Steve Bram for his remarkable three decades of dedication. We also proudly recognized 13 special "Israel Heroes:"

Dina Aspen, Malka Clement, Karen Denvir, Ario Fakheri, Tiffany Gabbay, Chen Goldberg, Nir Hoftman, Gary Lazar, Shawn Matian, Brandon Tavakoli, Ziba Ramin Terrio, Noa Tishby, and Amanda Markowitz Wizenberg who have demonstrated continued commitment to and unwavering support of our homeland. The extraordinary turnout underscored the deep bonds within our community, making it a truly unforgettable night filled with gratitude, connection, and pride.





as of May 20, 2025

HONOR ROLL We sincerely apologize for any inadvertent omissions and are grateful if you bring them to our attention.

2024-25 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Thank you to our donors for your generous support—your contributions help sustain and grow our Wise community, enriching Jewish life for all.

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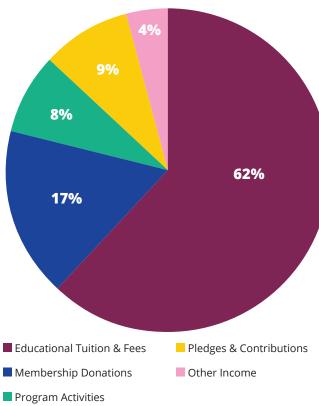
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FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

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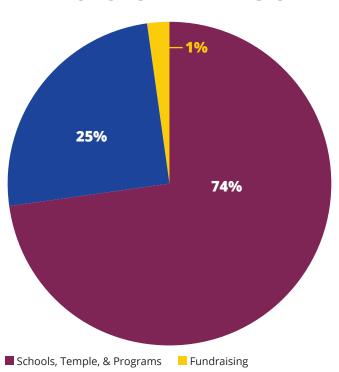
OPERATING REVENUE

Educational Tuition and Fees	\$17,081,000
Membership Donations	\$4,731,000
Program Activities	\$2,224,000
Pledges and Contributions	\$2,489,000
Other Income	\$1,081,000
Total Operating Revenue	\$27,606,000

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Schools, Temple, & Programs	\$20,441,000
General & Administrative	\$6,850,000
Fundraising	\$290,500
Total Functional Expenses	\$27,581,500

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



■ General & Administrative

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Net Assets (Beginning of Year)	\$48,274,000
Operating Revenue	\$27,606,000
Functional Expenses	\$27,581,500
Change in Net Assets from Operations	\$24,500
Non-Operating Income (incl. Aaron Milken Center Capital Contributions)	\$2,510,060
Change in Net Assets	\$2,534,560
Net Assets (End of Year)	\$50,808,560

^{*} FORECAST AS OF MAY 1, 2025







In an increasingly polarized world, Stephen Wise Temple and Schools will embody unity (achdut-אחדות) by weaving diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and stories into a communal tapestry (rikmah-קמה). We will model deep connection—to one another, to Jewish tradition, and to spiritual growth—and be a proud Zionist voice advocating for a Jewish and democratic State of Israel. Through all we do, we will honor our commitment to Talmud Torah, Avodah, G'milut Chasadim, and Tikkun Olam, remaining steadfast in our bond with the people of Israel and our aspiration to be a light to communities around the world.







HIGH HOLY DAYS 5786/2025

Rosh Hashanah: Sep. 22-24, 2025 Yom Kippur: Oct. 1-2, 2025

Join us in welcoming 5786 with inspiring, meaningful, and reflective spiritual experiences. Renew your membership today and look out for more High Holy Day details later this summer!

RENEW YOUR WISE MEMBERSHIP TODAY

Membership renewal information has been sent via email.

If you did not receive it, or if you have any questions, please contact our Membership Department at Membership@WiseLA.org or 310.889.2230.



Renew your membership

Thank you for your continued commitment to the Stephen Wise Temple community.