

# SPOTLIGHT ON INCLUSION

February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM).

FEATURING STORIES AND RESOURCES FROM:



MAKOM



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**WINTER PROGRAM GUIDE:**

**FEBRUARY 2-APRIL 5**

**REGISTRATION OPENS:**

MEMBERS | JANUARY 6

PUBLIC | JANUARY 13

# Look Inside the Winter Program Guide

## Special Edition: Spotlight on Inclusion

### Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM)



**Brandon Chiat,**  
*Chief Marketing Officer, Bender JCC*

Observed each February, Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified initiative to raise disability awareness and support efforts to foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

While JDAIM brings the issue of disabilities inclusion to the forefront in February, the Bender JCC focuses on inclusion year-round. Like all the Bender JCC's efforts to create connections throughout the Greater Washington region, our work for those community members with disabilities is not limited to a designated month but is a mission we recommit ourselves to daily.

With that in mind, we're thrilled to publish this special edition of our Winter Program Guide, expanded to include articles from our community partners that highlight the diversity of our Greater Washington Jewish community. You'll hear how timeless and universal Jewish values – like acceptance, empathy, inclusivity, and humility – help guide the disabilities inclusion work of remarkable organizations like The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA), Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS), Sunflower Bakery, and Makom.

Intentionally designed with accessible colors and fonts, our Winter Program Guide also features "resource round-ups" to amplify our support for community members of all abilities, and ensure that every individual can enjoy a meaningful and well-rounded experience.

We invite you to take this journey with us. Building an inclusive community is never complete; there will always be needs to address, and we recognize that the work of inclusion belongs to all of us.

On behalf of the Bender JCC staff and our partner organizations across the Greater Washington Jewish community, we thank you for reading our Winter Program Guide. We hope the stories inspire you and the resources connect you to our community.

With friendship and gratitude,

*Brandon*

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# MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



**Josh Bender**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,**  
**BENDER JCC**

Josh Bender has spent the last 20 years in leadership roles spanning the JCC, Jewish camping, synagogue, and Jewish Day School worlds. He brings an eclectic background in both executive and educational leadership in the Jewish non-profit sector. Josh is a graduate of DSLTI, a leadership program at the Jewish Theological Seminary, holds a Master's Degree in Jewish Education from Baltimore Hebrew Institute of Towson University, and a bachelor's degree from Penn State University in English Writing. Josh is married to Julie and has 4 children, Noah, Jacob, Ethan, and Sophie.



**Lenore Layman,**  
**DIRECTOR, LOWER SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL**  
**SUPPORT SERVICES CHARLES E. SMITH**  
**JEWISH DAY SCHOOL**

Lenore Layman has been working at CESJDS for 16 years and is the Director of Lower School Educational Support Services. Prior to working at CESJDS, Lenore was the Director of the Special Needs and Disability Services Department at the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning. Lenore has also worked as a teacher in the SINAI program in NJ and as an educational therapist for the Institute for Learning and Development in MA. She was a cofounder of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month.



**David Ervin,**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**MAKOM**

David Ervin, BSc, MA, FAAIDD, is Chief Executive Officer of Makom, a Maryland nonprofit serving primarily adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in both Maryland and Virginia. He is the co-founder of the Developmental Disabilities Health Center (DDHC), a specialty primary care delivery system providing culturally competent healthcare to adults with IDD, and consults internationally on healthcare system design and delivery with focus on people with IDD.



**Sara Portman Milner,**  
**CO-FOUNDER OF**  
**SUNFLOWER BAKERY**

Sara is a Clinical Social Worker by training. Her professional career as a champion for inclusion of individuals with disabilities spans 50 years. Her career path was charted with the birth of her youngest brother, who has Down Syndrome, in 1963. Before co-founding Sunflower Bakery, Sara was the Consultant for Special Needs and Disability Services at the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning, now incorporated into The Jewish Federation's services. Prior to that for 34 years, she initiated and spearheaded inclusion at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington (now Bender JCC), having served as the Director of Camp, Youth, and Special Needs.



**Kate Falls**  
**INCLUSION DIRECTOR,**  
**BENDER JCC**

Kate Falls is a proud Bender JCC "lifer." Kate started as an Inclusion Counselor at Lessans Camp JCC and came back summer after summer to be a part of the camp team. Kate joined the Bender JCC full-time in June 2023 as Inclusion Director. Kate loves local coffee, live music and spending time with friends. Kate received her bachelors degree in Special Education from Towson University, where she went on to teach in Baltimore as a special educator.



**Todd Schenk,**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,**  
**JSSA**

Todd has been active in the social service field for 25 years, including the past 20 years at JBFCs in various leadership roles ranging from oversight of program services to fiscal and budget management. Todd has been recognized by the Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies and the New York State Case Management Coalition for his leadership and collaboration with government and provider organizations to advance the state's mental health field. Todd earned a BA from the University of Michigan, a M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology from Cambridge College and an MBA from Columbia University Business School.



**Lisa Handelman,**  
**DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION AND**  
**BELONGING AT THE JEWISH**  
**FEDERATION OF GREATER**  
**WASHINGTON**

Lisa Handelman is a coach, consultant, and workshop facilitator. She has over thirty years' experience in Jewish camping, education and in the area of disability inclusion. She is the former Director of Capital Camps, one of the largest Jewish, pluralistic overnight camps on the East Coast. Lisa has a BA in Psychology, a Masters in Learning Consulting, and a certificate in Jewish Education Leadership.

# An Expanded Vision for Inclusion



**Josh Bender,**  
Chief Executive Officer, Bender JCC

I was on a phone call when I heard the unmistakable sound of children running and giggling as they rushed past my office door. Although it was October, it was reminiscent of the sounds we hear every day during the summer when our building is transformed into a camp extravaganza at Lessans Camp JCC.

I opened my office door to see what the excitement was about, to find a group of children dashing down the hall, having fun, and feeling like they were at home. I recognized them from our summer inclusion program, and I was so delighted to see that they had returned to the Bender JCC to participate in one of our fall programs long after camp had ended.

Over the last two years, the Bender JCC has expanded our vision for inclusion. We are now beginning to see children and young adults with disabilities participating in community life year-round.

Inclusion is the cornerstone on which the Bender JCC has built our community. Inclusion is not only about designing programs for individuals with disabilities; it is about designing programs that are open, accessible, and supportive for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and identities.

*Shavim* (meaning “equal” in Hebrew) is an example of such a program. Now in its second year at the Bender JCC, *Shavim* invites teens with and without disabilities to play soccer together, grow their athletic skills, and develop friendships.

I am extremely proud of our entire Jewish community for having embraced a commitment of inclusion. We are fortunate to have partners across the region who are committed to this incredibly important work. Thank you to our colleagues at Makom, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Jewish Social Services Agency, Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, and Sunflower Bakery for their tireless work and for contributing their important voices to our special JDAIM publication.

If you want to learn more about inclusion at the Bender JCC, or want more information on our programs, please reach out. We would love to hear from you.

*Josh*

Apply to work at

Lessans CAMP JCC  
@ the Bender JCC

Join our team  
Apply today!

Counselor and staff positions available

Scan QR code or visit  
[benderjccgw.org/CampStaff](http://benderjccgw.org/CampStaff)  
to apply

Find Your Place at the Bender JCC of Greater Washington  
6125 Montrose Road | Rockville, MD 20852

ACCREDITED

# Creating a Sense of Belonging



**Lisa Hadelman,**  
*Director, Inclusion and Belonging*  
*Jewish Federation of Greater Washington*

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington's Disability Inclusion Committee is a group of individuals with and without disabilities who are united in the belief that all have a right to be included. Numerous Jewish teachings ground the work of the committee; most notably, an understanding that everyone is created *B'tzelem Elohim* ("in the image of G-d"), that we should teach each child according to their way, and the need for *anavah*, the humility to recognize our own biases and appreciate others' lived experiences.

Over the past 20 years, disabilities inclusion in the Greater Washington Jewish community has progressed, but there is more work to be done. Our community is now a place where individuals with disabilities can grow up attending inclusive Jewish preschools, day schools, congregations, and summer camps. However, the greatest area of need for Jews with disabilities in the DMV is among Jewish young adults. Individuals who experienced inclusive educational and recreational programs as children and teenagers have the same expectation for inclusive Jewish programming as young adults.

Responding to this need, the Federation gathered nine local organizations to participate in the Lieberman Fellowship for Professionals Serving Young Adults. Together, we imagine a future where young adults with disabilities will have a choice of careers, the opportunity to live where they want, and reciprocal and supportive social groups.

The desire to belong is universal; inclusion is the first step in creating an overall sense of belonging. We must create the conditions that "invite" people with disabilities to participate in a community environment in which all members feel recognized, respected, and valued.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and Jewish Community Foundation are committed to building a culture of diversity, equity, and belonging. Inclusion is necessary across every age, life stage, religious affiliation, ethnicity, race, gender and sexual identity, political affiliation, and ability. During JDAIM we focus on disability inclusion because, despite the fact that individuals with disabilities are found within all the other marginalized groups, those with disabilities are at times left out of more general inclusion efforts. Together, we strive to create a community where everyone feels truly seen, valued, cared for, and a sense of belonging.



Find  
Your Place  
at the



Bender JCC  
of Greater Washington

# EXPERIENCE COMMUNITY. CREATE CONNECTIONS.



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## Youth Group Swim Lessons

Skip dates: Monday, February 17

### Level 1: Water Exploration (3 – 5 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 10:00 – 10:30 AM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM  
\$180/members | \$195/public

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

### Level 2: Primary Skills (4 – 6 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 10:30 – 11:00 AM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM  
\$180/members | \$195/public

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3 | 4:00 – 4:30 PM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

### Level 3: Stroke Readiness (4 – 6 years old)

Choose from three convenient class options:

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 11:00 – 11:30 AM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 4:30 – 5:00 PM  
\$180/members | \$195/public

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3 | 4:30 – 5:00 PM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

### Level 4: Stroke Development (6 – 12 years old)

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

## Group Swim Classes

### Waterbabies (6 – 18 months)

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 9:00 – 9:30 AM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

### Watertots (18 months – 3 years old)

Sundays | February 2 – March 30 | 9:30 – 10:00 AM  
\$200/members | \$220/public

## Adult Beginner Swim Classes

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 5:00 – 5:30 PM  
\$180/members | \$195/public

## Private and Semi-Private Swim Lessons

One-on-one (private) or two-on-one (semi-private) swim instruction exclusively for Bender JCC members.

To schedule your lesson, contact Caroline Cardullo at 301.348.3890 or ccardullo@benderjccgw.org.

## Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program

Helping children, teens, and adults with orthopedic-related disabilities to enjoy aquatics, this program matches participants with a coordinator, physical therapist, and adaptive water instructors to teach basic swimming skills.

For details, contact Caroline Cardullo at 301.348.3890 or ccardullo@benderjccgw.org.

## GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

### Emma Hertzberg, Group Exercise Coordinator

301.348.3710 | ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org

### Aqua Suspension

Mondays | March 3 - April 7 | 11:00 - 11:45 AM  
\$50/members | \$150/public

On Saturday mornings for decades, the **Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program** has been helping children, teens, and adults with orthopedic-related disabilities to enjoy aquatics. The program partners volunteers and professional staff members with participants to teach swimming basics and help students feel comfortable and safe in the water.

*"The Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program has been life changing for my daughter. It fosters a community of caring and dedication where people of differing abilities get together weekly in a judgment-free environment to have fun and share in accomplishments. There's no other program like it!"*



# Awareness, Acceptance and Action



**David Ervin,**  
*Chief Executive Officer | Makom*

Makom is a Jewish word with several meanings, but we invite you to contemplate Makom as “place;” not a physical location, but the ideal that every person has their rightful place in the gestalt of humanity. Our communities are enriched by the presence of all people taking their place in them. If people with IDD (intellectual and/or developmental disabilities) don’t take their rightful place in our community, our world is imperfect.

This fundamental construct resides at the heart of Makom, whose mission is to support and empower people with IDD to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire. It is in Makom’s DNA that people with IDD have the right and responsibility to take their place in our community and the opportunity to pursue lives of quality and abundance. Our core values include self-determination, where we recognize the dignity of all people. We support each person’s right to make their own choices and the decisions which shape their lives, including the consequences of those decisions. In the IDD field, we call this “dignity of risk,” something people with IDD seek. “Let us choose. Let us fail, let us succeed; this is how everyone learns, grows, and builds resilience.”

At Makom, we embrace our role in supporting people with IDD. If a person can do anything for themselves, they must be given space and opportunity to do it. If they ask for help or guidance, we offer it. If they

need medical, emotional or psychological care, we either provide it or we offer resources.

We honor the progress we have made even as we recognize how much more we must do. For Makom, this frames a future in which people with IDD are ubiquitous in our society. We embrace a future of action, to achieve this vision of inclusion.

For JDAIM 2024, Makom proposed a radical change in our community’s thinking on Jewish disability awareness, acceptance and inclusion. Awareness is no longer our charge; we are aware of disabilities and we understand the wisdom of including people with disabilities in the tapestry of the Jewish community. But we also offer questions to prompt an examination of the result of our awareness: Are people with disabilities serving on synagogues’ boards of directors and in other positions of lay and professional leadership? Are all people with intellectual disabilities becoming b’nai mitzvah? Are we fully engaging kids with disabilities in our Hebrew and day schools? Are kids with disabilities fully engaged in youth groups like USY, BBYO and NFTY? Are young adults with IDD enjoying Birthright trips? Are synagogues architecturally and attitudinally accessible? What actions are we taking to address barriers?

Our vision for inclusion requires action. We join our partners at the Bender JCC, JSSA, Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, and The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington in committing ourselves to intentional, measurable and substantive action that gets us to a future in which people with disabilities are indeed ubiquitous in the



places in which we gather, the places in which we matter, where we'll be missed if we're not there. The places we belong.

Perhaps JDAIM might be adjusted to Jewish Disability ACTION and Inclusion Month. It is not our responsibility to finish this work, but neither may we desist to undertake it.



# RESOURCE ROUND-UP

## Health and Wellness

### Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program

A program for people with orthopedic related disabilities to enjoy aquatics.

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### Spirit Club

An inclusive fitness center that offers personal training and group exercise classes.

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### Shavim Soccer

An inclusive soccer league for teenagers (middle and high school) to play together on one field.

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### ZamDance

ZamDance empowers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by creating a safe and supportive space where they can explore the art of dance and enhance their physical and emotional well-being.

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### Sports Plus

A non-profit organization that provides instructional swim, fitness, and social programs to children, teens and young adults with disabilities.

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### KEEN

Free, non-competitive, one-on-one active programs for children and young adults with disabilities.

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**Mike Holmes,**  
*Director*

# HEALTH & FITNESS

301.348.3894 | mholmes@benderjccgw.org

## PERSONAL TRAINING & NUTRITION WELLNESS COACHING

### First time clients can "JumpSmart":

- Three, 60-minute sessions\*/\$149
  - Three, 30-minute sessions\*/\$99
- \* Personal training or nutrition wellness coaching

For personal training questions or to register, contact Mike Holmes at mholmes@benderjccgw.org.

For nutrition/wellness coaching questions or to register, contact Emma Hertzberg at ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org.

Visit [benderjccgw.org/training](http://benderjccgw.org/training) to meet our trainers and to book your session.

## PICKLEBALL

### Adult Beginner Pickleball Instruction

Tuesdays | February 4 - April 15 | 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM  
\$250/members | \$300/public

*Skip date:* March 11

### Pickleball Pick-up Games

*Indoors - The Wasserman Gymnasium*

Choose from two convenient drop-in times:  
Wednesdays | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Fridays | 3:30 - 5:30 PM

Outdoor pickleball will resume in the spring season.

## GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

**Emma Hertzberg, Group Exercise Coordinator**  
301.348.3710 | ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org

Choose from 40+ weekly GroupEx classes. Please note that class options, times, and locations are subject to change. Check the GroupEx calendars on our website for the most up-to-date information. To be added to the GroupEx email list and stay up to date, please email Emma at ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org.

### Aqua Aerobics

Fridays | 11:00 AM

### Abs, Back, & Stretch

Thursdays | 10:00 AM

### Aqua Fit

Tuesdays + Thursdays | 11:00 AM

### Balance & Strength

Mondays | 12:00 PM + 1:00 PM  
Wednesdays | 12:00 PM + 1:00 PM

### Butts and Guts *Virtual Only*

Tuesdays | 10:30 AM

### Cardio Challenge

Fridays | 9:30 AM

### Cardio Sculpt *Virtual Only*

Wednesdays | 8:15 AM

### Cardio Strength

Mondays | 11:00 AM

### Cycle

Thursdays | 8:00 AM  
Saturdays | 7:00 AM

### Fit Fusion

Thursdays | 9:00 AM

### Flow Yoga

Mondays | 9:30 AM  
Wednesdays | 6:00 PM  
Fridays | 10:30 AM  
Saturdays | 9:00 AM

### Gentle Yoga

Thursdays | 12:00 PM  
Tuesdays | 12:00 PM

### Hatha Yoga

Wednesdays | 6:00 PM

### Ignite Dance Fit

Mondays | 6:00 PM

### Les Mills CORE

Wednesdays | 6:10 AM

### Les Mills BODY COMBAT/CORE

Sundays | 8:30 AM

### Les Mills BODYPUMP

Mondays, Thursdays | 6:10 AM  
Tuesdays, Thursdays | 6:30 PM  
Saturdays | 8:00 AM

### Pilates

Sundays | 11:00 AM  
Mondays | 7:00 PM  
Saturdays | 8:00 AM

### Spin

Tuesdays | 6:00 PM

### Sunrise Yoga

Saturdays | 9:00 AM

### Tai Chi

Mondays | 12:00 - 1:00 PM  
\$110/members | \$160/public

### Tone Up & Shape Up

Fridays | 12:00 PM

### Total Body Fitness

Tuesdays | 9:30 AM  
Thursdays | 10:00 AM

### Zumba

Sundays | 9:30 AM  
Wednesdays | 9:30 AM + 7:00 PM  
Tuesdays | 8:00 AM  
Thursdays | 7:00 PM  
Saturdays | 10:15 AM

## ADULT CLASSES

### Aqua Suspension

Mondays | March 3 - April 7  
11:00 - 11:45 AM  
\$50/members | \$150/public

### Boot Camp

Thursdays | February 6 - March 13 |  
7:00 - 7:45 PM  
\$180/members | \$210/public

### Karate

Mondays & Wednesdays  
February 3 - June 4 | 6:30 - 7:45 PM  
\$1,025/members | \$1,055/public

### Krav Maga

Sundays | February 2 - March 9  
12:30 - 1:30 PM  
\$180/members | \$210/public

*Skip Dates:* February 17; April 14, 16; May 26.

### Teen Fitness 101

Tuesdays | February 4 - March 11  
6:00 - 7:00 PM  
\$180/members | \$210/public

### Wellness Talks: Spring Reset Your System!

Wednesday, March 5 | 6:00 - 7:00 PM  
Free RSVP

### Women with Weights

Tuesdays | February 4 - March 18  
6:30 - 7:00 PM  
\$180/members | \$210/public

## NUTRITION/WELLNESS COACHING

To be added to the GroupEx email list and stay up to date, please email Emma at ehertzberg@benderjccgw.org.



## YOUTH KARATE

All karate classes run through June.

Participants are welcome to join mid-session for a prorated class fee.

*Skip dates for all karate classes:*

Mondays | February 17, April 14, May 26

Wednesdays | April 16

### Lil' Dragons (ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 3 - June 2 | 3:15 – 4:00 PM  
\$480/members | \$500/public

### Kid Tiger (ages 5 – 8)

Mondays | February 3 - June 2 | 4:15 – 5:00 PM  
\$480/members | \$500/public

### Beginner (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | February 3 - June 4  
5:00 – 5:45 PM | \$1,025/members | \$1,055/public

Mondays only | February 3 - June 3

5:00 – 5:45 PM | \$480/members | \$500/public

Wednesdays only | February 4 - June 4

5:00 – 5:45 PM | \$545/members | \$565/public

### Intermediate (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | February 3 - June 4  
5:45 – 6:30 PM | \$1,025/members | \$1,055/public

### Advanced (ages 9+)

Mondays & Wednesdays | February 3 - June 4  
6:30 - 7:45 PM | \$1,025/members | \$1,055/public

## MULTI-SPORTS & RECREATION

### Preschool Soccer (ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 3:00 – 3:30 PM  
\$220/members | \$230/public

### Superheroes (ages 3 – 5)

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 3:45 – 4:15 PM  
\$155/members | \$165/public

### Strength & Conditioning (ages 12 – 16)

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 4:30 – 5:10 PM  
\$260/members | \$275/public

### Multisports (ages 3 – 5)

Tuesdays | February 4 – April 1 | 3:45 – 4:15 PM  
\$250/members | \$265/public

### Pickleball (ages 5 – 12)

Tuesdays | February 4 – April 1 | 4:30 – 5:05 PM  
\$250/members | \$265/public

### Strength & Conditioning (ages 6 – 16)

Tuesdays | February 4 – April 1 | 5:10 – 5:50 PM  
\$260/members | \$275/public

### Tumble Tots Gymnastics (ages 3 – 4)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2  
3:00 – 3:30 PM | \$260/members | \$275/public

### Super Tots Gymnastics (ages 3 – 5)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2  
3:45 – 4:15 PM | \$260/members | \$275/public

### Gymnastics Level 1 (ages 5 – 8)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2  
4:40 – 5:15 PM | \$260/members | \$275/public

### Gymnastics Level 2 (ages 8 – 12)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2  
5:15 – 5:50 PM | \$260/members | \$275/public

### Superstar Basketball (ages 3 – 5)

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3  
3:45 – 4:15 PM | \$250/members | \$265/public

### Basketball Level 1 & 2 (ages 5 – 12)

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3  
4:30 – 5:05 PM | \$250/members | \$265/public

### Mini Agility Warriors (ages 3 – 5)

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3  
3:00 – 3:30 PM | \$250/members | \$265/public

## SILVERMAN 3V3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Sunday, March 9 | 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

## 2025 JCC Maccabi Games - Pittsburgh

August 3 - 8

For details, contact [maccabi@benderjccgw.org](mailto:maccabi@benderjccgw.org).



**Lauren Dworkin,**  
*Director*

301.348.3837 | ldworkin@benderjccgw.org

# CHILDREN & FAMILIES

## **BENDER-DOSIK PARENTING CENTER**

**Jennifer Radosh, Director of JFamily Programs**  
301.348.3848 | jradosh@benderjccgw.org

### *Fern Weiland Parenting Lecture Series*

**Anxiety and Kids: What it Looks like, How to Help**  
Friday, February 7 | 8:30-9:30 AM | Free

### **Music Together**

Choose from two convenient class times:

Saturdays | January 11 – March 15  
9:00 – 9:45 AM & 10:00 – 10:45 AM  
\$270/members & public (Sliding scale for siblings)

### **Abrakadoodle's Mini Doodlers**

Sundays | February 2 - March 30 | 9:30 - 10:15 AM  
\$235/members | \$245/public

### **Abrakadoodle's Twoosy Doodlers**

Sundays | February 2 - March 30 | 10:30 - 11:15 AM  
\$235/members | \$245/public

### **Baby and Me Yoga**

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 8:45 – 9:30 AM  
*Skip date:* February 17  
\$210/members | \$220/public

### **Books & Bubbles**

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2 | 10:30 – 11:00 AM  
\$75/members | \$85/public

### **Shabbat Shalom Playgroup**

Fridays | February 7 - April 4 | 10:30 – 11:00 AM  
Free RSVP

### **Silly Soccer with Golden Boot**

Saturdays | February 15 – April 5 | 9:30 – 10:00 AM  
\$210/members | \$220/public

### **Rhythm'N'Ruach**

Choose from two convenient class times:

Tuesdays | February 25 – April 8 | 4:00 – 4:45 PM  
Thursdays | February 27 – April 10 | 10:00 – 10:45 AM  
*Skip dates:* March 18, 20  
\$165/members | \$175/public

### **Bim Bom Bags: Purim**

*Purchase deadline:* Wednesday, March 5  
*Bags delivered:* Monday, March 10  
\$18/member | \$20/public

### **FIT4BABY**

Mondays | January 8 - February 24 | 6:00 - 7:00 PM  
Mondays | March 3 - April 7 | 6:00 - 7:00 PM  
*Skip dates:* January 20, February 17  
\$199/members & public

### **Stroller Strides at the J**

Mondays & Fridays | December 2-March 28 | 10:00 AM  
*Skip date:* January 20  
\$25 per class/members & public

### **JEWISH FAMILY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**

[benderjccgw.org/jfa](http://benderjccgw.org/jfa)

The Bender JCC welcomes parents raising Jewish children into our community. Our Jewish Family Ambassadors (JFAs) are here to listen and share with you, and to connect you to other families and opportunities in our Jewish community. If you live in Montgomery County and are raising a Jewish child up to five years old, please register at [benderjccgw.org/jfa](http://benderjccgw.org/jfa).

### **BENDER-DOSIK GRANDPARENTING CENTER**

[benderjccgw.org/grandparenting](http://benderjccgw.org/grandparenting)

The Grandparenting Center is dedicated to strengthening and celebrating the grandparenting experience.

### **NEW SERIES! GRAND MESSENGERS**

#### **Grand Challah Baking**

Monday, February 17 | 2:30 PM  
\$18/members | \$25/public

#### **Grand Messengers: Jewish Knowledge**

March 5 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM | \$25/members | \$35/public

#### **Grand Messengers: Jewish Family History**

March 12 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM | \$25/members | \$35/public

#### **Grand Messengers: Jewish Family Traditions**

March 19 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM | \$25/members | \$35/public

### **DELIVERING GOOD NETWORK**

#### **President's Day of Service**

Monday, February 17 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM  
\$5/members | \$5/public

#### **B. Changemakers**

Sundays (1st Sunday of the month) | January 5 - April 6 | 1:00 - 5:00 PM  
\$250/members & public

#### **Volunteer Opportunities**

The Delivering Good Network is the Bender JCC's centralized and sustained social action effort focusing on five key areas of impact: environment, housing, hunger, immigrants, and inclusion. Visit [benderjccgw.org/dgn](http://benderjccgw.org/dgn) for more information.

#### **PACE**

Rolling admission | Visit [benderjccgw.org](http://benderjccgw.org) for registration.  
\$375/members & public

# DANCE & MUSIC

Talin Tahmasian,  
Director

301.348.3880 | ttahmasian@benderjccgw.org



## Youth Dance

All dance classes run through June 2025.

All classes include age-appropriate instruction in a combination of disciplines, including ballet, jazz, musical theater and tap. Students will learn a piece to showcase at our May spring performance.

*Skip dates:* February 17; April 14, 15; May 26

*Payment can be made in full or in three installments at registration.*

## Preschool Dance

Mondays | February 3 – June 2 | 3:45 – 4:30 PM  
\$635/members | \$655/public

Tuesdays | February 4 – June 3 | 3:45 – 4:30 PM  
\$635/members | \$655/public

## Ballet Level 1

Tuesdays | February 4 – June 3 | 5:45 – 6:45 PM  
\$680/members | \$700/public

## Ballet Level 2

Tuesdays | February 4 – June 3 | 4:45 – 5:45 PM  
\$680/members | \$700/public

## Tap and Jazz Level 1

Mondays | February 3 – June 2 | 5:45 – 6:45 PM  
\$680/members | \$700/public

## Tap and Jazz Level 2

Mondays | February 3 – June 2 | 4:45 – 5:45 PM  
\$680/members | \$700/public

## Middle & High School Dance

Mondays | February 3 – June 2 | 6:45 – 7:45 PM  
\$680/members | \$700/public

## Private Music Lessons

Virtual and in-person private instruction available in a variety of instruments including piano, percussion, strings, and woodwinds. Choose from 30 or 45 minute lessons.

For questions, contact Talin Tahmasian a 301.348.3880 or ttahmasian@benderjccgw.org.

# RESOURCE ROUND-UP

## Support for Young Children

### Speech Development

Information on speech milestones for young children.

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### Brain Builders

A class for young children to develop executive functioning skills, and provides the foundation for self-regulation and social-emotional awareness.

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### Infants and Toddlers

Free services from local government for ages birth to 34.5 months.

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### Child Find Information

Free developmental screenings for children ages 3-6. Offered through Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

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# Educational Support for Students of All Abilities



**Lenore Layman,**  
*Director, Lower School Educational Support Services | Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School*

I am proud to work at Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (CESJDS), a Jewish community school that philosophically and financially prioritizes inclusion and strives to include students with a wide range of diverse learning and social-emotional needs.

Lower School students study *Middot* (Jewish values) that align with our commitment to inclusion. *Kedushah v'Anavah* ("holiness and humility") emphasizes that all people are created *B'tzelem Elohim* ("in the image of G-d") and helps our students acknowledge each person's special, holy spark.

Through Student Led Learning Conferences, students learn to recognize and take pride in their many sparks, acknowledge their areas for growth, and celebrate differences within their classrooms. We ground our classrooms and school in respect and courtesy, and prioritize a welcoming environment, which aligns with our *Middah* of respect and courtesy: *Kavod v'Derekh Eretz*.

CESJDS strives to ensure that each student receives the support and resources they require for success. Our students understand that while most support resources are available to every student, not everyone needs the same support. Everyone gets what they need to fully belong in their classroom community.

Here are some examples:

- Learning specialists and counselors know each student in the grade and are an integral part of each grade-level team.
- Classrooms are equipped with flexible seating, fidgets, and other tools accessible by all students.
- All students can use our guidance lounge for breaks and to reset when needed.
- Students don't blink an eye if a classmate leaves their classroom to work with a private speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, or psychologist.
- Now in its third year, our Sulam@JDS program continues to expand support services so that our school community can include students with a wider range of learning and social-emotional disabilities.

At the same time, we recognize that we are unable to support all students who apply, and there are a small number of students who leave our school because our services are not extensive enough to meet their needs. We recognize that decisions like these sometimes cause families to feel that they are unwelcome in our school community and the Jewish community. These decisions are also painful for us; we provide professional development to our faculty and we increase the tools that we are able to provide so that we can open our doors wider each year.

CESJDS is proud of our educational support and counseling services and we continue to strive to further develop our supports so that more Jewish families will find a home in our school community.

# Transformative Inclusion in the Classroom



**Alex Band,**  
*Director, Bender Early Childhood Center*



**Rachel Assal-Albert,**  
*Developmental Support Coordinator,  
Bender Early Childhood Center*

Inclusive and quality education is the cornerstone of the Sondra and Howard Bender Early Childhood Center (ECC) at the Bender JCC. Our educational philosophy celebrates and embraces each student's unique abilities, interests, and personalities. Empathetically discussing our differences gives students the confidence, grace, and safety to be their authentic selves. It also creates an environment of emotional safety and mutual trust, which empowers our staff to advocate for and proactively support our students with disabilities.

The Bender ECC routinely provides individualized and specialized support for our young friends like Sam\*. Early in the school year, Sam's teachers noticed she played and interacted differently than her peers. The relationship and trust we established with Sam's parents allowed our team to share these observations and initiate the school's child support process. The Bender ECC's Developmental Support Coordinator — our in-house child-development expert available to all students and their families — took action to ensure Sam received the individualized support she needed to thrive, which included introducing basic sign language to aid her communication and providing quiet spaces when she seemed apprehensive.

Initially, when classmates approached Sam with a toy, she often cried and walked away. By early January, Sam had the tools and support to acknowledge and respond appropriately to her friends' gestures, transforming her relationships and bolstering her confidence. The Developmental Support Coordinator built on Sam's progress by introducing her family to additional community resources, including programs through Montgomery County Public Schools and the Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program. The Bender ECC actively accompanied Sam's family on this journey by attending meetings with the Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program, advocating for Sam's needs, and collaborating with her therapists.

Sam's story is a testament to the power of inclusion and demonstrates that every child, regardless of their disabilities, can thrive in an environment that champions their potential. At its core, inclusive education ensures that every child receives support tailored to their specific needs in a learning environment where they feel valued and empowered. Through compassion, collaboration, and commitment, the Bender ECC creates transformative educational experiences—just as they did for Sam and her family. At the Bender JCC and ECC, inclusion isn't just about education; it is a promise to everyone that they belong and matter. Sam's story reminds us of the profound impact we can make when we uphold that promise.

*\*The student's name was changed to protect their privacy.*

# Reflecting on the Value of Inclusion



**Kate Falls,**  
*Inclusion Director, Bender JCC*

Every February, we celebrate Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM), which offers an opportunity to reflect on the value of our inclusive Jewish community. The Bender JCC is a place where connection — spiritual, emotional, and physical — nurtures the wholeness of every individual 365 days a year.

JDAIM reminds us that inclusion is not just an ideal — it's essential to our community. At the Bender JCC, inclusion isn't a choice; it's a responsibility to ensure that everyone — regardless of ability, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other factor — truly belongs.

The Bender JCC is committed to belonging at every age and stage of life, from infancy with our Bender Dosik Parenting Center to retirees with our Selma Sweetbaum Senior Nutrition Program.

I asked some of our families to share why this inclusive community is so important to them:

Ilana Jolson is the mother of five-year-old Jordan, a camper at Lessans Camp JCC and participant in after-school enrichments at the Bender JCC. Ilana shares: "The inclusion program at the Bender JCC offers a comfortable, supportive space where each of us can try new things, make friends, and celebrate every part of who we are. Trying something new can feel daunting, especially

for kids who find routines reassuring. But knowing that camps and classes are held in such a welcoming environment makes it easier for us. The Bender JCC's commitment to inclusion helps create a true sense of belonging, where everyone is encouraged to explore and grow at their own pace through every phase of life."

For young Emme, the after school programs with her peers has been priceless. Her mother comments: "The Bender JCC is committed to a level of inclusion that should be seen as a national model. The level of enthusiasm and joy that Emme expresses each week as she prepares to explore art with her friends makes me so happy and truly proud to be a Bender JCC member. Thank you to the fantastic team for the tremendous work you do every day!"

Creating an accepting environment where every individual feels a sense of belonging means creating opportunities for people of all abilities to gather. A teen volunteer says: "When I was in Israel and joined the *Shavim* ("equal" in Hebrew) Soccer Team, it was the first time I felt the power of an inclusive Jewish community. That experience made me realize how important it is for everyone to feel like they belong. Coming back home, I wanted to recreate that feeling, which led me to start the *Shavim* program at the Bender JCC. It's amazing to be part of a community where everyone is valued and included."

Creating a sense of belonging begins with our youngest friends in our athletic fields, camp, and classrooms and evolves with the individuals we serve as they mature through every age and life stage. For young adults in



our community, inclusion means increased access to professional, vocational, and social opportunities. As a young adult tells us: "Inclusion is important because if you see someone left out, you should always try to include them. The Bender JCC means a lot of things. I fit in; I make friends."

These stories highlight the important role that belonging plays in our lives, and

of the ongoing work needed to ensure our community remains inclusive and welcoming for all.



# RESOURCE ROUND-UP

## Friendship, Fun and Community

### Real World Ready

A program for teenagers and young adults with disabilities to practice critical functional skills in a supportive and flexible environment.

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### Empowering Friendship

A neurodivergent affirming social skills group for teenagers with disabilities.

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### Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle supports individuals with disabilities and their families by providing recreational, social and educational programming. Additionally, Friendship Circle aims to educate volunteers and promote an inclusive community.

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### ArtStream

ArtStream offers accessible and empowering classes and performances in music, dance, and drama for people of all abilities.

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### Matan

Matan strives to empower Jewish communities and leaders towards meaningful action. Matan is a trusted partner providing tailored resources, training, guidance and support to reshape accessibility to Jewish life.

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### Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington works to strengthen the Jewish Community, they partner with organizations and communities to raise awareness, champion the rights, and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

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**Kate Falls,**  
*Director*

301.348.3767 | kfalls@benderjccgw.org

# INCLUSION

### Art Explorers

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 4:30 - 5:30 PM  
*Skip date:* February 17  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Sweet Balance

Mondays | February 3 – March 31 | 5:45 - 6:45 PM  
*Skip date:* February 17  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Real World Ready

Tuesdays | February 4 - April 1 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Brain Builders (Preschool)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2 | 3:45 - 4:30 PM  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Brain Builders (K - 2)

Wednesdays | February 5 – April 2 | 4:45 - 5:30 PM  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Brick Builders Club (Preschool)

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3 | 3:30 - 4:15 PM  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Brick Builders Club (Elementary)

Thursdays | February 6 – April 3 | 4:45 - 5:45 PM  
\$240/members | \$250/public

### Adult Purim Party!

Sunday, March 23 | 3:00- 5:00 PM  
\$10/members | \$15/public

### Shavim - Soccer

Saturdays | 10:00 - 11:00 AM  
Free

## RESOURCE ROUND-UP

### Employment and Independent Living

#### College Living Experience (CLE)

CLE provides academic, career, social and independent living services to help people with disabilities succeed at college, pursue a career, learn executive functioning skills, enjoy living away from home, and build their community.

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#### MAKOM

Makom supports and empowers people with IDD to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire, through residential, vocational and other programming.

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#### Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA)

JSSA is a nonprofit community health and social wellness agency helping neighbors with disabilities with everything from finding a job to strengthening social skills — always leading with compassion and respect.

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#### SEEC

SEEC provides a wide range of community supports to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live lives of their choosing, including work, relationships, recreation, and personal development.

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#### MainStreet

Main Street's mission is to create dynamic opportunities through affordable, inclusive housing and community engagement so people of all abilities can live their best lives.

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#### Sunflower Bakery

Sunflower Bakery enables pathways to employment for young adults and teens with learning differences through pre-employment exposure and workforce development training in pastry arts, hospitality and related industries.

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# Encouraged to Take a Leap



**Todd Schenk,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA)

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) empowers individuals to enhance their well-being regardless of ability, age, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

As a community health and social wellness agency, JSSA's mission is to care for our neighbors across the National Capital Region. Neighbors like Evelyn\*, who felt stuck.

For five years, she had worked at the same low-paying security guard job, far from where she lived with her cousin in Gaithersburg. Evelyn has a learning difference, a history of anxiety and depression, and she grew up in foster care. Would her circumstances ever change?

In April 2024, 26-year-old Evelyn discovered JSSA's Employment Services. Evelyn's employment specialist, Cherline, immediately helped revamp Evelyn's resumé and enroll in training programs. With so much experience, Evelyn was qualified for a supervisor's position — and JSSA encouraged her to go for it.

As Cherline put it: "We have employment specialists who live in the community, who know the community, and have relationships with businesses in the region."

Within a few months, Evelyn landed a new supervisory role. She's commuting less, earning more with health insurance benefits, and no longer lives paycheck to

paycheck. She's in a much better place, financially and emotionally, and hopes to own her first home soon, thanks to JSSA's referral to the County's first-time homebuyer program.

JSSA's work across the community is based on core values like inclusivity, hope, and dignity. Whether helping neighbors like Evelyn find a meaningful job, providing inclusive programming and in-home support so older adults can age-in-place, or supporting the mental health and well-being of individuals and families, JSSA is here to help during life's most vulnerable moments. When individuals feel a sense of belonging and independence, it strengthens our entire community.

*\*Names and photos changed to protect privacy.*





**Frieda Enoch,**  
*Director*

301.348.3809 | fenoeh@benderjccgw.org

# COMING OF AGE

## SPECIAL EVENTS FOR ACTIVE ADULTS (60+)

### Passport J: Zoom Travel from the Comfort of Your Home!

Tuesdays | February 4, 11, 18, 25 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM  
\$15/tour | Register for all tours/\$49.95

### Sip & Share: Women Connect

Women's group is back at the J for bi-monthly gatherings. Join us for a hot beverage and conversation every other Monday at 1:00 PM. Sip & Share Sisterhood is a warm and welcoming get-together designed exclusively for women seeking connection, camaraderie, and stimulating conversations.

Mondays | February 3, 17; March 3, 17 | 1:00 PM

### COA Coffeehouse: Tribute to Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul

Thursday, March 6 | 7:00 - 8:30 PM | \$40

### Overnight Excursion: New York City

Wednesday, March 19 - Thursday, March 20  
\$1,250/person, double room; \$1,450/single room (all inclusive)  
Broadway show (A Beautiful Noise); Dinner Cruise; Docent led tour at Museum of the City of NY; Central Synagogue private tour

## "OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO..."

### In The Heights at Signature Theatre

Sunday, April 6 | 7:00 PM  
\$140 (includes orchestra seating and transportation)

### Private Music Lessons

Virtual and in-person private instruction available in a variety of instruments including piano, percussion, strings, and woodwinds. Choose from 30 or 45 minute lessons.

For questions, contact Talin Tahmasian at 301.348.3880 or ttahmasian@benderjccgw.org.

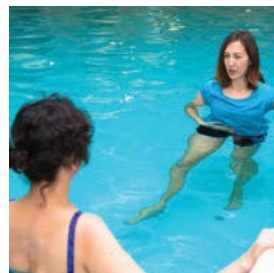
All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at [kfalls@benderjccgw.org](mailto:kfalls@benderjccgw.org) or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.



**PROACTION**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
[www.ProActionPT.com](http://www.ProActionPT.com)

## Your recovery begins with your first visit.

Conveniently located at the Bender JCC of Greater Washington  
Downstairs in the Weinberg Health & Fitness Center



For appointments and Information call 301-881-CARE (301-881-2273)

# HEBREW CLASSES

Rivka Degani,  
Director

301.348.3810 | rdegani@benderjccgw.org



The price for all Hebrew classes is \$585.

## Advanced Hebrew

Choose from four convenient class times:

Mondays | January 27 - June 30  
6:30 – 8:30 PM | *virtual class!*  
*Skip dates:* April 14; May 26; June 25

Wednesdays | February 12 - June 25  
9:00 – 11:00 AM | *hybrid class!*

Wednesdays | February 12 - June 25  
7:00 – 9:00 PM | *virtual class!*

Thursdays | February 13 - June 26  
7:00 – 9:00 PM | *virtual class!*

## Hebrew Aleph Plus

Choose from two convenient class times:

Mondays | January 27 - June 30  
6:30:00 – 8:30 PM | *hybrid class!*  
*Skip dates:* April 14; May 26; June 2

Wednesdays | February 12 - June 25  
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

## Hebrew Aleph Beginner

Tuesdays | January 21 - June 10  
4:00 – 6:00 PM | *hybrid class!*  
*Skip date:* June 3

*Requires a mandatory \$80 Website Curriculum Fee, due at registration.*

## Hebrew Bet

Wednesdays | February 12 - June 25  
4:00 – 6:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

## Hebrew Gimmel Plus

Choose from two convenient class times:

Mondays | January 27 - June 30  
4:00 – 6:00 PM | *virtual class!*  
*Skip date:* April 14; May 26; June 2

Wednesdays | February 12 - June 25  
6:00 – 8:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

## Hebrew Gimmel

Thursdays | February 13 - June 26  
6:00 – 8:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

## Hebrew Hey

Choose from three convenient class times:

Tuesdays | January 21 - June 10  
6:00 – 8:00 PM | *hybrid class!*  
*Skip date:* June 3

Thursdays | February 13 - June 26  
6:00 – 8:00 PM | *hybrid class!*

Fridays | February 7 - June 20  
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | *hybrid class!*



**Marcie Blackman,**  
*Director*

301.348.3808 | mblackman@benderjccgw.org

# ARTS & ADULTS

## CONCERTS

### **Mt. Vernon Virtuosi | Family Concert**

March 16 | 11:00 AM-12:00 PM | Free

### **2024-2025 POLINGER ARTISTS OF EXCELLENCE CONCERT SERIES**

#### **Ying Quartet**

March 16 | 3:00 PM | \$50/ticket

#### **Lysander Piano Trio**

April 6 | 7:00 PM

\$50/ticket

## MAH JONGG

### **Beginner 1**

Monday | February 3 - 24 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

\$110/members | \$120/public

### **Beginner 2**

Monday | March 10 - 31 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

\$110/members | \$120/public

## CANASTA

Tuesday | February 18 - March 25 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

\$150/members | \$160/public

## GALLERY

### **Art Through the Lens | Montgomery Art Association**

January 10 - February 2

## WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

Join us for a great day of programming near you!

Exercise, socialize, hear a lecture, attend a performance and enjoy a delicious kosher meal. Lunch - suggested \$5 donation. For more information, please contact Rachel Elazar at relazar@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3849.

## ADULT MEMOIR WRITING

Mondays | February 3 - March 10 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

\$110/members | \$120/public

## MEN'S CLUB

### **How the Bulgarian Jews Were Saved from the Nazi Killing Machine**

Tuesday, February 4 | 1:15 PM

## PRIVATE MUSIC LESSONS

Virtual and in-person private instruction available in a variety of instruments including piano, percussion, strings, and woodwinds. Choose from 30 or 45 minute lessons.

For questions, contact Talin Tahmasian a 301.348.3880 or ttahmasian@benderjccgw.org.

*All Bender JCC programs are open to everyone. Contact Kate Falls, Director of Inclusion, at kfalls@benderjccgw.org or 301.348.3767, to discuss support and accommodations.*

**RENTALS AT THE JCC**

*A place for every occasion*

**Host your next event  
HERE!**

Contact Maytal Regev at 301.348.3843

# A Recipe for Independence



**Sara Portman Milner, LCSW-C**  
Co-founder and Associate Director,  
Sunflower Bakery

There is a long way to go toward ensuring that every person regardless of abilities, differences, or religious affiliations, can participate in their communities at any level they choose. With this in mind, Sunflower Bakery was founded on universal Jewish values, particularly with regard to inclusion, including:

## **K'vod HaBriyot: Concern for Dignity**

Everyone, regardless of social status or ability, deserves to be treated with honor and dignity. At Sunflower, we provide services to all members of our community regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religious affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

## **B'tzelem Elohim: In the Image of G-d**

All humans are created in the image of G-d and therefore hold inherent value and worth. To ensure dignity and justice for all, we celebrate the unique value of each person and find ways to maximize and recognize their abilities and talents.

## **Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World**

Each person should work to make the world a better place. We provide individuals with disabilities with the skills to contribute to their communities.

## **Arvut: Responsibility**

We are all responsible for one another. We look beyond our individual concerns to ensure that everyone is able to feel like a valued member of our community.

## **Lo Titen Michshol: "No Stumbling Block"**

We find innovative ways to give access to everyone. Sunflower Bakery seeks to remove barriers faced by the underserved disability and other communities, to ensure that students, staff, and others have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop, regardless of their identity.

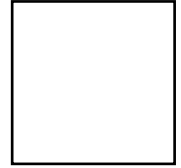
## **Ramat Ha'Zedakah Ha'gavoha B'yoter: Highest Level of Charity**

The highest form of charity is to help someone find a job so they are no longer dependent upon others. Independence preserves their dignity and transforms them from being a recipient into someone with the capacity to give to others and to be included as an involved member of the community.

The value which is considered the highest level of charity is at the very heart of Sunflower Bakery's program and mission. While training in our programs, students with learning differences strive to be the best they can be while preparing for the world of work. We appeal to employers to embrace these shared values, to provide opportunities for our graduates to take their places as productive members of society.

At Sunflower, we know that if you give someone a cake, they'll have dessert for a day; if you teach them to bake, they will have a career (and dessert) for a lifetime!

6125 Montrose Road  
Rockville, MD 20852



# Bender Early Childhood Center Preschool for Students 1-5 Years Old

Applications **open soon** for the 2025-26 school year:

January 29 | Returning students & siblings

February 5 | New students

Be the first to apply.

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Find  
Your Place  
at the



**Bender JCC**  
of Greater Washington

6125 Montrose Road | Rockville, MD, 20852 | [benderjccgw.org/ECC](http://benderjccgw.org/ECC)