

*35<sup>th</sup> Annual*

# JEWISH EDUCATOR AWARDS

*Luncheon*



December 11, 2025

Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel | Los Angeles



*35<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
**JEWISH EDUCATOR**  
**AWARDS** *Luncheon*

December 11, 2025  
**Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel**

*Sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation in cooperation with  
Builders of Jewish Education (BJE), a program partner of Jewish Federation Los Angeles (JFEDLA)*

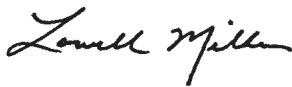
# Message from the MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

There is no greater responsibility than preparing young people to move successfully to the next stage of learning and life. And those extraordinary educators who give the gift of Jewish education imbue students' journeys with the wonder of academic discovery, the enthusiasm to reach high expectations of excellence, and the knowledge of our people's history, destiny, identity, and compassion for others—rooted in Torah.

This year marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jewish Educator Awards, celebrating talented educators who inspire these values in their students so they can one day take their place as leaders of our community. Outstanding Jewish educators provide a powerful source of continuity for the formation of Jewish identity. They do so by drawing from resources spanning the imperatives and sustenance of religious tradition to the richness and rigor of curriculum. They also harness their own character and God-given gifts: their intelligence, scholarship, and commitment, and the importance of *l'dor v'dor*—passing down these values to the next generation.

As we come upon the celebration of Chanukkah, the recognition of this year's recipients holds special meaning. Nili Isenberg, Jared Stein, Hadassah Weiner and Rabbi Reuven Youkhehpaz are beacons of light. Their guidance and impact are enduring sources of strength for students as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of a complex world; for colleagues as they build safe, nurturing places for young people to thrive; and for community members as they work to make life better for themselves and those around them.

Each is a living example we should know and make known, so that together these educators become the standard for all educators and the criteria by which educational excellence can be measured. With each new Jewish Educator Award recipient, Jewish education and the bar for excellence become that much stronger—as does the crucial role of Jewish day school educators in lighting the way for generations to come.



Lowell Milken  
Founder, Jewish Educator Awards  
Chairman and Co-Founder,  
Milken Family Foundation



Richard Sandler  
Executive Vice President,  
Milken Family Foundation

# Message from BJE: BUILDERS OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Jewish educators nurture the collective *Neshama*, the Jewish spirit, of the Jewish people. BJE is deeply appreciative of the leadership of the Milken Family Foundation, through its Jewish Educator Awards, in recognizing both the value of high-quality Jewish education and the indispensable contributions of those who teach successive generations of students at our community's 35 BJE-accredited Jewish day schools. This year's award recipients, Nili Isenberg, Jared Stein, Rabbi Reuven Youkhehpaz and Hadassah Weiner, reflect the excellence that characterizes Jewish education today.

As we anticipate the lights, miracles, and lessons of Chanukkah in the coming days, an insight taught by Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, comes to mind, published on this day, December 11, 2004. He explained that 150 years after the Maccabees won their historic and miraculous victory against the Seleucid-Greeks to restore Jerusalem, the Roman Empire rose to power and destroyed the Beit Hamikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Struggling to recover from the tragic losses, they debated if they could even celebrate Chanukkah. The Jewish community set upon ensuring our civilization could endure under foreign rule and dispersion—through the strengthening of yeshivot, of Jewish education. There was a lesson in healing and rebuilding, reflected in the Menorah:

"The Menorah symbolised something quite different from military victory. It represented faith, hope, loyalty, courage. Jews began to understand that the real clash between Ancient Israel and Ancient Greece was not political but cultural. To defend a country, you need an army. But to defend a civilisation, you need schools."

We honor four teachers today, gifting them back the honor they devote to our children every day. Collectively, they teach various elements of Jewish civilization, immersing our children in the bounty of music, prayer, middot/Jewish habits of behavior, ancient structures of Jewish logic and argument, Jewish customs and laws. They equip them to live in a complicated present, with the skills to create a sustainable future.

"The message of Chanukkah is simple," Sacks taught us. "What lasts is not victory on the battlefield, but the candle of hope we light in the mind of a child."

BJE proudly joins the Milken Family Foundation in celebrating Nili Isenberg, Jared Stein, Rabbi Reuven Youkhehpaz and Hadassah Weiner, shining examples among the many dedicated, talented teachers of Los Angeles who steward the souls of the next generation and create the world of goodness we all aspire to see. These teachers are truly builders of Jewish education.

With appreciation,

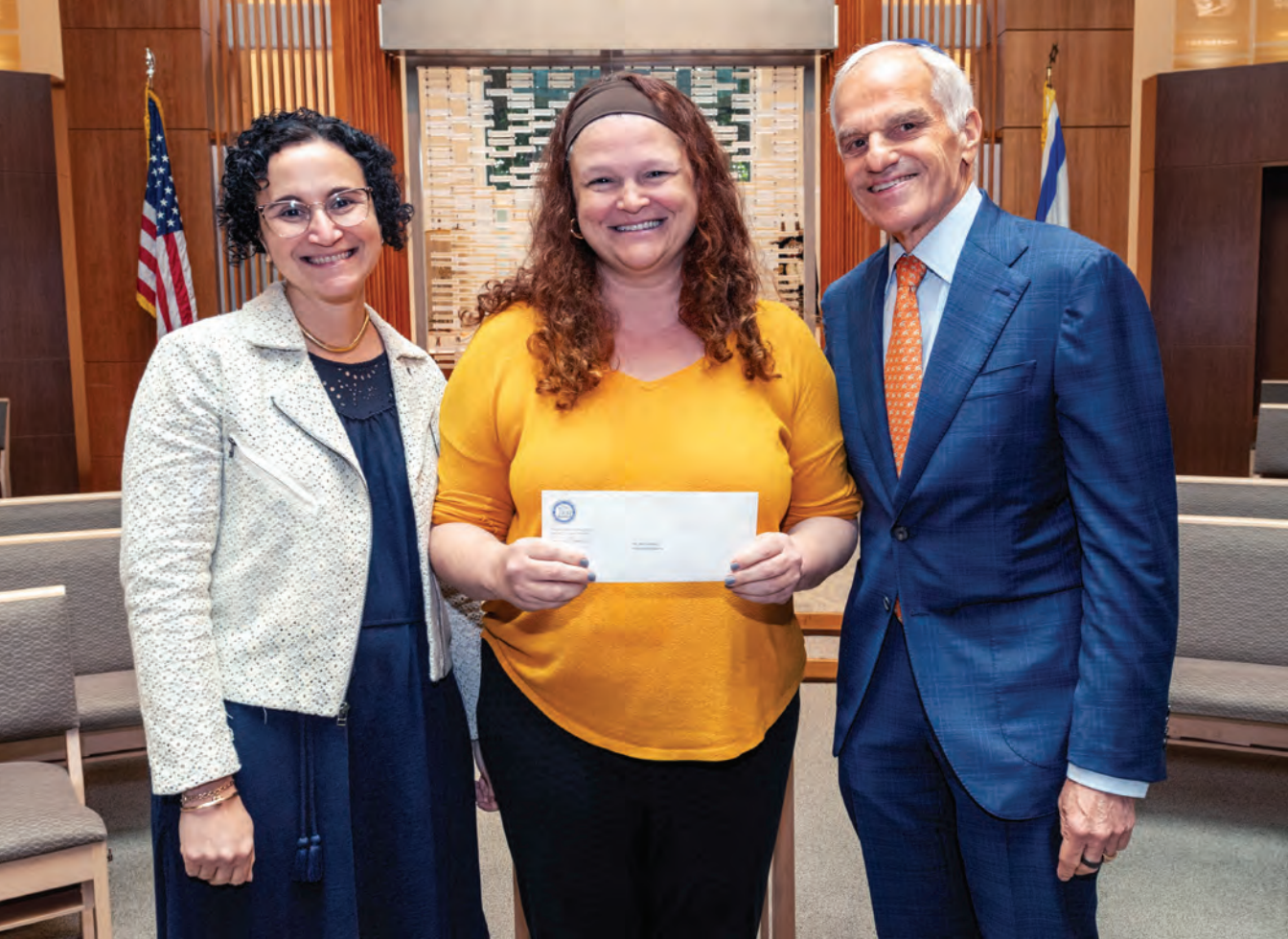


Craig Rutenberg  
President  
BJE: Builders of Jewish Education



Miriam Heller Stern, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
BJE: Builders of Jewish Education





# JEWISH EDUCATOR AWARDS

The Jewish Educator Awards was created by Lowell Milken and established as a partnership between the Milken Family Foundation and Builders of Jewish Education (BJE) in 1990. Each fall, four unsuspecting educators in BJE-affiliated schools are surprised before their entire school communities with individual, unrestricted Jewish Educator Awards of \$18,000.

Honorees reflect the highest ideals of Jewish and secular education, fostering the lifelong pursuit of knowledge and nurturing a value system that helps guide students through adulthood. Recipients also demonstrate an outstanding ability to develop Jewish students' understanding of the connections among their religion, classroom activities and lives outside of school.

# GOALS

Outstanding educators who continue to learn are essential to fostering student growth, improving schools and enhancing the education profession. Hence, the goals of the Jewish Educator Awards are:

- ★ To honor and reward outstanding Jewish day school educators for the quality of their teaching, their professional leadership, their engagement with families and the community, and their potential for even greater contributions to the healthy development of children
- ★ To increase public support and recognition for Jewish day school educators who make outstanding contributions to the development of their students
- ★ To increase public awareness of the important role of Jewish day school educators in the community and in society
- ★ To encourage able, caring and creative people to choose the challenge, service and adventure of education as a career

# SELECTION

Award recipients are selected by a committee of educators—both professional and lay leaders from the Jewish community—who have a long-standing concern for and involvement with education in Jewish schools.

To be eligible for consideration, educators must work a minimum of 15 hours per week at the K-12 level. They must have been working for a minimum of five years in a BJE-accredited school (need not be at the same BJE-accredited school for all the years).

Criteria considered for the selection of Jewish Educator Award recipients include:

- ★ Exceptional educational talent and promise, as demonstrated by outstanding practices in the classroom, school and community
- ★ Evidence of originality, dedication and the capacity for leadership and self-direction
- ★ Commitment to influencing policies that affect children, their families and schools
- ★ Strong, long-range potential for even greater contributions to children, the profession and society
- ★ Distinguished achievement in developing innovative educational curricula, programs and/or teaching methods
- ★ An outstanding ability to instill character and self-confidence in students
- ★ An outstanding ability to develop Jewish children's understanding of the connections among their religion, their classroom activities and their activities beyond the classroom
- ★ Commitment to professional development and excellence, and the continuing Judaic and/or secular study necessary
- ★ Personal involvement in responding to the needs of Jewish and secular communities

Criteria for administrators also include an outstanding ability to attract, support and motivate committed education professionals.

# NILI ISENBERG

## Pressman Academy



Judaic studies teacher Mrs. Nili Isenberg brings her deep knowledge of history, culture and heritage to Pressman Academy scholars every day. Also serving as the kindergarten through

eighth grade Judaic studies curriculum coordinator, she leads department meetings; contributes to building T'fillah, Parasha, Torah, and holiday curriculum; helps lead programs like FestiNaKH, Moot Beit Din, and Zman Kodesh; observes classes; and mentors new teachers.

In addition to teaching seventh grade Rabbinics and eighth grade TaNaKH, Mrs. Isenberg's seventh grade Mishna class learns about Jewish law (halachot) relating to major life cycle events like sitting shiva, the laws of marriage, and the rules of a bris. She brings in guest speakers of diverse backgrounds, personal experiences and traditions to show students the many facets

of Jewish observance. Mrs. Isenberg's unit on the Shoah immerses eighth graders in field trips, Holocaust survivor stories, and a Yom HaShoah Tekes (ceremony) they produce for third through fifth graders. She also leads students in planting daffodils to honor children lost during the Holocaust through The Daffodil Project. Mrs. Isenberg holds a bachelor's in religion and art history from Boston University, a master's in art history from Johns Hopkins University, and a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) from American Jewish University.

Before becoming a classroom teacher at Pressman, Mrs. Isenberg spent years educating others about the Holocaust at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, and spent her formative childhood years living in Israel. Now, these experiences shape what she seeks to instill in her students: "I hope that students understand that Judaism brings meaning to life in so many ways, and that being a part of the Jewish community is a precious gift to appreciate and embrace."





# JARED STEIN

## de Toledo High School



de Toledo High School is blessed with a welcoming Jewish music program shaped by Mr. Jared Stein, who celebrates his 18<sup>th</sup> year as director of instrumental music.

Working tirelessly to grow the program over the course of his career, Mr. Stein has sparked joy for music in scores of students.

At de Toledo, he inspires others to embrace performance opportunities through ensembles he created, such as the Sephardic and Mizrahi Ensemble, and Shirei Yedidot—open to students and faculty. He has conducted the school's musical pit band, composed liturgy for the Havdalah ceremony, and wrote the school's alma mater. Mr. Stein infuses spirit and energy into preparing the next generation of Jewish leaders, whether by taking Jazz Band students on a biennial trip to New Orleans, teaching creativity and craft in a music production class, or helping the Music

Appreciation Club plan a schoolwide rock concert at a Shabbaton ("Jagfest").

Mr. Stein composes and performs Jewish music, has recorded an album with his wife Jamie, leads the Nashuva Band, and works as a cantorial soloist and song leader throughout Los Angeles. He served as music director at Camp Alonim for eight years before becoming involved at the Brandeis Camp Institute at American Jewish University, where he teaches Jews from around the world. Mr. Stein holds a bachelor's in music with an emphasis in ethnomusicology from UC Santa Barbara.

"It is a fundamental part of my teaching philosophy that by treating music as a language, we give our students a great gift to use in their life and career," Mr. Stein says. "The best way to put this gift in their hands is to allow students to 'jam' with masters of the language."





# HADASSAH WEINER

## Yeshiva Rav Isacsohn Toras Emes Academy



Mrs. Hadassah Weiner serves as the elementary girls principal at Yeshiva Rav Isacsohn Toras Emes Academy, where she has contributed her talent, experience, and innovation for

nearly a decade. She leads her department with pride, taking the time to channel her energy and simcha (joy) into the academic, social and spiritual growth of each student. She collaborates with families and staff to ensure each student receives individualized support, while ensuring the school's overall educational mission promotes a love for Torah and Yiddishkeit. Teaching staff members also know her boundless support, receiving reliable guidance, mentorship and professional development.

With a mission to create a positive, inclusive school culture, Mrs. Weiner created what is now a nationally growing character development program called "RAISE the Bar,"

which includes guided lessons, actionable steps, and curricular materials that can be embedded in the school day. RAISE stands for: Respect And Include Students Everywhere. She shares her experiences as a Torah Umesorah (National Society for Hebrew Day Schools) presenter and has delivered in-service workshops around the country. Additionally, Mrs. Weiner participates in many chesed (kindness) projects in her North Hollywood community. She obtained her teaching certification in Jerusalem from Machon Bnos Yehuda Seminary.

Between being the daughter of a rabbi and the wife to a rabbi, it's easy to understand Mrs. Weiner's inspiration to join the education profession: "From a young age, my parents instilled in me a deep sense of dedication to the klal and a love for chinuch that truly runs in my blood. They taught me that there is no greater privilege than teaching Torah to the next generation and inspiring others to strengthen their connection to Hashem."



# RABBI REUVEN YOKHEHPAZ

## Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu



Rabbi Reuven Youkhehpaz, fifth grade boys rebbe at Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu for the past 16 years, possesses an energy and a positivity that know no limits.

So much so, that he recently assumed additional roles beyond the classroom: supervising second grade, third grade, and the schoolwide Keriah program for both boys and girls. Rabbi Youkhehpaz infuses hands-on projects into his Gemara, Chumash, Mishnah, and Halacha lessons, works with parents to support students' academic and personal growth, and meets with administrators to advance pedagogy and his own journey as a lifelong learner.

Rabbi Youkhehpaz's students engage in group discussions about Jewish texts, participate in a Sukkah project, and host a class play utilizing Gemara vocabulary. Originally inspired to teach because of his grandmother's work in education and commitment to teaching him

to read Hebrew, Rabbi Youkhehpaz now enjoys teaching his own students the same valuable skill using his cumulative Gemara vocabulary program and multilevel, schoolwide oral testing system. Beyond the classroom, he is a role model to students and colleagues alike. Highly visible in weekly staff meetings, Rabbi Youkhehpaz offers insights into effective instructional practices that improve the craft of others and enrich the educational environment of the school at large. Rabbi Youkhehpaz holds a bachelor's in Talmudic law from the Rabbinical Seminary of America Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim.

Rabbi Youkhehpaz's compassion serves as a guiding force for students, colleagues and the community: "I hope my students will live by the principle of 'Ve'ahavta L'Reacha Kamocha'—loving their fellow as themselves—and carry these values into every aspect of their lives, becoming individuals who inspire others through their character, actions, and commitment to Torah."



# PREVIOUS JEA RECIPIENTS

## 2024

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**Rabbi Yossi Elefant**

Yeshiva Ketana of Los Angeles

**Rebecca Moray**

Brawerman West Elementary  
School of Wilshire Boulevard  
Temple

**Rabbi Ari Schwarzberg**

Shalhevet High School

**Einav Telem**

Valley Beth Shalom Day School

## 2023

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**Anna August**

Sinai Akiba Academy

**Rabbi Avraham Berman**

Yavneh Hebrew Academy

**Rabbi Moshe Tropper**

Emek Hebrew Academy

**Sarah Shpall**

Wise School

## 2022

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**Rabbi Daniel Grama**

Valley Torah High School

**Shoshana Braude**

Bais Chaya Mushka

**Larry Kligman**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Monica Daranyi**

Milken Community School

## 2021

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**Yoav Ben Horin**

de Toledo High School

**Cherie Friedman**

Kadima Day School

**Natalie Williams**

YULA Girls High School

**Chana Zauderer**

Yeshiva Rav Isaacohn-Toras Emes  
Academy

## 2019

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**Michelle Andron**

Emek Hebrew Academy

**Eric Hartung**

Rabbi Jacob Pressman Academy  
of Temple Beth Am

**Rabbi Abraham Lieberman**

Shalhevet High School

**Nelly Wisner**

Beth Hillel Day School

## 2018

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**Rabbi Shimon Abramczik**

YULA Boys High School

**Florette Benhamou**

Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

**Fanny Koyman**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Patty Tanner**

Wise School

## 2017

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**Yehudis Blauner**

Cheder Menachem

**Adrienne Coffield**

Brawerman Elementary School

**Melody Mansfield** ✦

Milken Community Schools

**Jenny Zacuto**

Yavneh Hebrew Academy

## 2016

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**Ilana Ribak**

Sinai Akiba Academy

**Fruma Ita Schapiro**

Ohel Chana High School

**Tammy Shpall**

de Toledo High School

**Rabbi Chaim Trainer**

Yeshiva Rav Isaacohn

## 2015

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**Jamie Gomer**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Hanna Keynan**

The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Kelly Shepard**

Milken Community Schools

**Rabbi Levi Solomon**

Emek Hebrew Academy

## 2014

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**Rabbi Menachem Mendel  
Greenbaum**

Cheder Menachem

**Katya Malikov**

Shalhevet High School

**Ariela Nehemne**

Valley Beth Shalom Day School

**Barry Schapira**

Brawerman Elementary School  
West of Wilshire Blvd. Temple

## 2013

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**Osnat Bernstein**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Benny Ferdman**

New Community Jewish High  
School

**Mickey Rabinov**

Beth Hillel Day School

**Deborah Raskin**

Or HaChaim Academy

## 2012

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**Mary Itri**

Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Rabbi Usher Klein**

Mesivta Birkas Yitzchok

**Rabbi Baruch Kupfer**

Maimonides Academy

**Lidia Turner**

Saperstein Middle School of  
Milken Community High School

## 2011

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**Lisa Feldman**

Weizmann Day School

**Marnie Greenwald**

Temple Emanuel Academy Day  
School

**Hava Mirovski**

Sinai Akiba Academy

**Juli Shanblatt**

Bais Yaakov School for Girls

## 2010

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**Deborah Cohen**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Dalia Golan**

Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

**Louis Schwerdtfeger**

Valley Beth Shalom Day School

**Debra Sokolow**

Milken Community High School

## 2009

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**Shelley Lawrence**

Sinai-Akiba Academy

**Melanie Berkey**

Shalhevet School

**Rabbi Mitchel Malkus**

The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Rabbi Dov Goldman**

Cheder Menachem

## 2008

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**Malka Clement**

Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Suri Nowosiolski**

Yavneh Hebrew Academy

**Debra Schaffer**

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Dena Wolmark**

Bais Yaakov School for Girls

## 2007

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**Mona Riss**

Emek Hebrew Academy

**Alan Rosen**

Maimonides Academy

**Bilha Schechter**

Valley Beth Shalom Day School

**Lee Spiro**

Brawerman Elementary School of  
Wilshire Blvd. Temple

## 2006

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**Bluma Drebin**

YULA Girls High School

**Rabbi Simcha Frankel**

Cheder Menachem

**Tamar Rosenfeld**

The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Dr. Rennie Wrubel**

Milken Community High School

**Beverly Yachzel**

Beth Hillel Day School



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## 2005

**Rabbi Berish Goldenberg**  
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn-Torath  
Emeth Academy

**Vivian Levy**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

**Chaya Moldaver**  
Yavneh Hebrew Academy

**Dr. Bruce Powell**  
New Community Jewish High  
School

**Robin Solomon**  
Adat Ari El Day School

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## 2004

**Eileen Horowitz**  
Temple Israel of Hollywood Day  
School

**Rick Hepworth**  
Yeshiva Gedolah of Los Angeles

**Rabbi Mordechai Dubin**  
Maimonides Academy

**Pamela Kleinman**  
Heschel West Day School

**Inez Tiger**  
The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

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## 2003

**Aliza Dallalzadeh**  
Temple Emanuel Academy Day  
School

**Rabbi Shlomo Goldberg**  
Yeshiva Ohr Eliyahu

**Shulamith Y. May**  
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

**Jan Navah**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple Elementary  
School

**Tamar Raff**  
Valley Beth Shalom Day School

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## 2002

**Rabbi Gordon Bernat-Kunin**  
Milken Community High School

**Rabbi Avrohom Klyne**  
Yavneh Hebrew Academy

**Marty Uslaner**  
Kadima Hebrew Academy

**Barbara Wirtschafter**  
Bais Yaakov High School for Girls

**Sara Yoseph**  
Atid Hebrew Academy

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## 2001

**Frida Eytan**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

**Carol Goldman**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Vered Hopenstand**  
Shalhevet High School

**Rabbi Shmuel Jacobs**  
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn-Torath  
Emeth Academy

**Janet Saltsman**  
Heschel West Day School

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## 2000

**Kathy Reynolds**  
Milken Community High School

**Andi Schochet**  
Maimonides Academy

**Rabbi Pesach Wachsman**  
Emek Hebrew Academy

**Elaine Wasserman**  
Temple Israel of Hollywood Day  
School

**Ginny Zemtseff**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

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## 1999

**Irit Eliyahu**  
Temple Emanuel Academy Day  
School

**Malca Schwarzmer**  
Yeshiva Ohr Eliyahu

**Bonita Selk**  
The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Rabbi Aron Tendler**  
YULA Boys High School

**Shawn Watanabe**  
Milken Community High School

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## 1998

**Joan Cohen**  
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

**Susan Dubin**  
Valley Beth Shalom Day School

**Deborah Norwood**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Rabbi Laurence Scheindlin**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

**Shira Smiles**  
YULA Girls High School

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## 1997

**Tova Baichman-Kass**  
The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Joseph Hakimi, Ph.D.**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

**Lynn Karz**  
Yeshiva Ohr Eliyahu

**Chaya Shamie**  
Bais Yaakov of Los Angeles

**Mari Siegel**  
Kadima Hebrew Academy

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## 1996

**Rabbi Asher Z. Biron**  
Valley Torah High School

**Ofra Dor**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Lana Kideckel Marcus**  
Adat Ari El Day School

**Esther Markel**  
Emek Hebrew Academy

**Lee Shaw**  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

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## 1995

**Elyse Flier**  
Milken Community High School

**Haim Linder**  
Adat Ari El Day School

**Andrea Silagi** ✧  
The Rabbi Jacob Pressman  
Academy of Temple Beth Am

**Rabbi Avrohom Stulberger**  
Valley Torah High School

**Debbie Wachsman** ✧  
Emek Hebrew Academy

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## 1994

**Esther Bar-Shai**  
Adat Ari El Day School

**Rabbi Avrohom Czapnik**  
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn

**Valerie Lev**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple  
Elementary School

**Adele Rubin**  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Rabbi Dovid Thaler**  
Ohr Elchonon Chabad

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## 1993

**Adina Bender**  
Valley Beth Shalom Day School

**Rochelle Majer Krich** ✧  
YULA Girls High School

**Luisa Latham**  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Rabbi Joseph Schreiber**  
Emek Hebrew Academy

**Suzanne Linden Stein**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

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## 1992

**Janine V. Jacoby** ✧  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Manuel R. Katz**  
YULA Boys High School

**Rabbi Yochanan Stepen** ✧  
Emek Hebrew Academy

**Avishag Wyte** ✧  
Temple Emanuel Academy Day  
School

**Nili Ziv**  
Valley Beth Shalom Day School

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## 1991

**Dr. Vardina Berdugo**  
YULA Girls High School

**Rabbi Yakov Krause**  
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn

**Shirley Levine** ✧  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Lily Mattes**  
Kadima Hebrew Academy

**Barrie Richter**  
Adat Ari El Day School

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## 1990

**Metuka Benjamin**  
Stephen S. Wise Temple Schools

**Roxie Esterle**  
Abraham Joshua Heschel Day  
School

**Rabbi Menachem Gottesman** ✧  
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

**Rabbi Nachman Mandel** ✧  
Yeshiva Rav Isaacsohn

**Rivka Shaked**  
Sinai Akiba Academy

✧ of blessed memory



MILKEN FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

## CELEBRATING OVER 40 YEARS ADVANCING A MISSION IN EDUCATION



**“Education is at the heart of nearly everything we value as individuals, as citizens and as productive human beings.”**

**– Lowell Milken**  
*Chairman and Co-Founder  
Milken Family Foundation*

Founded by Lowell and Michael Milken in 1982, the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) strives to discover and advance inventive, effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. The means most conducive to achieving these goals is through education.

Whether founding the nation’s preeminent teacher recognition program, promoting excellence through academic achievement, preserving and expanding a cultural legacy, or pioneering the nation’s most successful comprehensive education reform system, MFF continues to champion strategies that elevate education in America and around the world.

### **Our initiatives:**

- ★ Strengthen the teaching profession by recognizing and rewarding outstanding educators, and by expanding their professional leadership and policy influence
- ★ Attract, develop, motivate and retain the best talent for the teaching profession
- ★ Stimulate creativity and productivity among people of all ages through programs that encourage learning as a lifelong process



MilkenArchive.org

## **Milken Archive of Jewish Music: The American Experience**

Lowell Milken founded the Milken Archive of Jewish Music in 1990 to discover, preserve, and disseminate the vast body of music reflecting the American Jewish experience over more than 350 years. Through new recordings by world-class artists and ensembles, an ambitious oral history project, and comprehensive written materials elucidating the music's historical and cultural context, the Archive now encompasses 600+ recorded works, including 500+ world premieres, supported by 800+ interviews and extensive liner notes. The Archive has charted a groundbreaking approach to cultural preservation, and in the process, has created a unique resource with special significance for Jewish communities and resonance with people of all faiths and cultures.

*"In sharing the Milken Archive's diverse repertoire, scholarship, and multimedia resources, we seek to broaden public awareness of the various forms of Jewish musical expression that have contributed significantly to American Jewish cultural identity and to the music world in general. In the process, we also encourage present and future composers and performers to express Jewish themes in their music."*

*– Lowell Milken  
Founder*



# ADVANCING A MISSION



MilkenEducatorAwards.org

## Milken Educator Awards

Created by Lowell Milken in 1985, the Milken Educator Awards provide public recognition and financial rewards of \$25,000 to K-12 teachers, principals, and specialists for furthering excellence in education. Hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching,” the Awards’ recipients are recognized, celebrated and honored in early to mid-career for exceptional classroom impact, leadership beyond the classroom, inspiration within their communities, and their potential for continued growth. Each honoree joins the Milken Educator Network of over 3,000 distinguished professionals whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards, and others shaping the future of education.

*“The Milken Family Foundation seeks you out to let you know that every day, your choices are affecting the human capital in the world. It restores the nobility of teaching.”*

*– Nader Twal  
California Milken Educator*



MilkenSchool.org

## Milken Community School

An independent Jewish community school serving 700+ middle and high school students, Milken fosters learning that is intentional, integrated, and everywhere—on campus, on trips, online and offline, at home, and through co-curricular programs. Grounded in Jewish ideas, values, traditions, and practices, Milken nurtures the social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth of every student. Our core values—Striving for Academic Excellence; Building Joyful, Welcoming Community; Treating Others with Dignity and Kindness; Taking Responsibility for Self and Others; Connecting to Israel and the Jewish People; Reflecting and Repairing with Integrity; and Pausing to Nurture the Soul—anchor daily practice and guide decision-making across the school.

*“Founded on Jewish Values, Milken is about who our children can become and how they can help others become who they might be. Because the world our children will create tomorrow is born in the school we build today, our mission is to educate our children so they can surpass us.”*

*– Sarah Shulkind, Ed.D.  
Head of School*



## Milken Scholars

Founded by Mike and Lori Milken in 1989, Milken Scholars honors exceptional high school seniors who have demonstrated the potential to make a profound difference in the world. Scholars are selected for academic excellence, leadership, service to school and community, and resilience in the face of personal or social obstacles. Milken Scholars receive undergraduate financial support and, more distinctively, access to a lifelong community—mentoring, career guidance, internships and networking, leadership development, and year-round staff support. To be a Milken Scholar is to join an extended family committed to helping one another thrive—and to making a meaningful difference in the world.

*“Whether they become doctors, research scientists, educators, entrepreneurs, or diplomats, the common denominator of Milken Scholars is a genuine sense of service.”*

**– Mike Milken**

*Co-Founder, Milken Scholars  
President and Co-Founder,  
Milken Family Foundation*



## Mike's Math Club

Learning that sparks discovery captures children's imagination. Created by Michael (Mike) Milken, Mike's Math Club is a curriculum-enrichment program that shows elementary students—especially in inner-city schools—that math is not only useful, but also fun. Through the use of “secret codes,” “handy hints,” and math games that build skills and self-worth, Mike's Math Club has sparked the interest of students and educators for more than three decades and reinforced a simple truth: learning can be its own reward—and confidence follows.

*“My mother said it was going to take a miracle to make me interested in math, but now she likes how I come home confident about my math homework.”*

**– Student**

*Birdielee V. Bright Elementary School*

# LOWELL MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

## Shaping Futures through Education, Art and Culture, Innovation and Social Capital

The Lowell Milken Family Foundation (LMFF) strengthens communities by unleashing human potential—investing in people and ideas across Education, Arts and Culture, Innovation, and Social Capital. We design and scale initiatives that elevate educators and student learning, preserve and advance cultural heritage, develop principled leaders and entrepreneurs, and foster civic values—so individuals of all ages can gain the skills, knowledge, and meaningful experiences to lead productive, satisfying lives.

“One individual has the power to make a powerful and profound difference in the lives of others.”

– Lowell Milken  
Founder







CHAMPS

Math

RULES



LOWELL MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION | LOWELLMILKEN.COM

# LOWELL MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION



NIET.org

## **National Institute for Excellence in Teaching** *Educator excellence ... Student achievement ... Opportunities for all*

Founded by Lowell Milken to make teacher quality the cornerstone of school improvement, NIET was established in 2005 and builds educator excellence so all students can succeed. Building on the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement (launched in 1999), NIET partners with schools, districts, states, and universities to attract, develop, support, and retain effective teachers and leaders. NIET's approach integrates four proven levers: multiple career paths (teacher leadership roles), ongoing, job-embedded professional learning, clear instructional standards and coaching, and performance-aligned compensation—together strengthening classroom practice and schoolwide capacity. NIET has impacted more than 350,000 educators and 3.5 million students nationwide, and NIET's Aspiring Teacher Standards Rubric is used by 100+ universities to prepare a pipeline for the next generation of effective educators.

**"The single most important in-school factor that determines student learning is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. Thus, the most direct way to improve student achievement is to invest in teachers by providing them with the requisite skills, knowledge, and useful experiences to improve their effectiveness."**

– Lowell Milken  
Founder



MilkenJewishMusicCenter.SchoolofMusic.UCLA.edu

## **Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience (UCLA)**

Established by Lowell Milken in 2020 at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, this Center is North America's first permanent academic home dedicated to the music of the American Jewish experience. Building on the Milken Archive of Jewish Music (founded in 1990) and the Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music (launched in 2017), the Center advances research and scholarship, undergraduate and graduate programs, and faculty initiatives. The Center fosters artistic creativity, scholarship, performance, and community engagement to advance the field and connect this music with contemporary audiences.

**"The Lowell Milken Center's breadth of research and curriculum, preservation of treasured oral histories, performance of diverse repertoire, and partnerships around the world are creating new avenues for music of American Jewish experience."**

– Mark Kligman, Ph.D.  
Director





[AaronMilkenCenter.org](https://AaronMilkenCenter.org)



**“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**

*Senior Rabbi  
Stephen Wise Temple  
and Schools*

### **Aaron Milken Center for Early Childhood Education (AMC) at Stephen Wise Temple and Schools**

Conceived by Lowell Milken in 2018 and opened in 2025, the Aaron Milken Center at Wise embodies a transformative vision for early childhood education—uniting Jewish values, a strong sense of community, and a nurturing, world-class environment where a lifelong love of learning takes root. The Center provides an outstanding foundation for children to thrive. Designed by Abramson Architects, the new state-of-the-art facility embraces Wise’s hilltop campus with nature-integrated classrooms and gardens that spark discovery and growth. Rooted in the Wise tradition, the Center advances Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin’s vision of lifelong Jewish education for all who seek it. The Center stands as a living tribute to Lowell Milken and Sandy Salka Milken’s beloved son Aaron Milken—welcoming, nurturing, and elevating every child and family it serves.



# LOWELL MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION



LowellMilkenCenter.org



*"The discovery of Unsung Heroes reveals that history is not a done deal. Past, present, and future are available for shaping; and through learning about these individuals, we can join together in a shared purpose."*

– Lowell Milken  
Founder

## Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes

Founded by Lowell Milken in 2007, LMC empowers students and educators to discover, research, and share the stories of Unsung Heroes—ordinary people whose courageous actions changed lives and history. Through project-based learning, students analyze primary sources, conduct interviews, and produce documentaries, exhibits, and performances that rescue the stories of these individuals from history. Programs include the Discovery Award research competition and ARTEFFECT visual-arts competition. At LMC's headquarters in Fort Scott, Kansas, the Lowell Milken Hall of Unsung Heroes showcases projects and resources, and Educator Fellowships provide training and materials. To date, LMC initiatives have reached 3,000,000+ students—advancing the motto: Discover · Create · Change.



ARTEFFECTLMC.org

## ARTEFFECT

### *Inspiring Change Through Art*

Founded by Lowell Milken in 2016, ARTEFFECT extends the Unsung Heroes mission through original visual art and reflection. Offerings include an annual international competition, exhibitions, and the ARTEFFECT Ambassadors Visual Arts Fellowship—online professional learning for educators. This nationwide fellowship equips educators to guide students’ visual-art-focused, project-based learning. “Visualizing Impact,” a new, permanent exhibition of award-winning ARTEFFECT student works, is now on display at the Milken Center for Advancing the American Dream in Washington, D.C.

**“ARTEFFECT ensures that stories of Unsung Heroes live on as guiding lights for future generations. By offering young people and educators the opportunity to express these stories through art, we inspire them to embrace the power of history and creativity, lead with purpose, and make a lasting difference in the world.”**

– Lowell Milken  
Founder



HMCTartcenter.org

## Hoffmitz Milken Center for Typography (HMCT)

Founded in 2014 at ArtCenter College of Design as a living tribute to Lowell’s beloved late wife, renowned typographer and educator Leah Hoffmitz Milken, HMCT advances the art and science of typography—uniting research, teaching, and practice for today’s rapidly evolving communication landscape. Leah’s legacy—precision in letterform design, iconic brand work, and a generation of “thinking designers”—anchors HMCT’s mission to develop creative leaders with technical mastery and intellectual depth. HMCT serves as an educational forum, design laboratory, research center, and archive—hosting fellowships, residencies, symposia, and public programs while maintaining a comprehensive typographic collection and the working Archetype Press letterpress studio.

**“HMCT reinforces the significance of typography and its widespread influence on our everyday lives. More than just a tool for conveying written language, typography acts as an art form that shapes emotions, enhances communication, and showcases creativity and expression.”**

– Susan Malmstrom  
Chief Operating Officer

# LOWELL MILKEN FAMILY FOUNDATION



[LowellMilkenInstitute.Law.UCLA.edu](http://LowellMilkenInstitute.Law.UCLA.edu)

## **Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy (LMI) at UCLA School of Law**

LMI prepares students to lead at the intersection of law, business, and public policy—setting new standards in business law education and experiential learning. Established in 2011 through Lowell’s vision and landmark gift, the Institute is a dynamic hub that bridges legal scholarship and real-world practice, convening practitioners, policymakers, and academics across disciplines. Through conferences, workshops, and colloquia, LMI advances solutions to pressing issues in corporate governance, finance, entrepreneurship, and regulation. Recognizing law as integral to an entrepreneurial economy, LMI integrates innovative curricula, clinics, simulations, and skills training that connect legal theory to business decision-making. The Lowell Milken Institute–Sandler Prize for New Entrepreneurs, UCLA’s largest monetary entrepreneurship competition, provides law students the opportunity to team with peers in business, engineering, and medicine to build new business ventures, present to judges, and hone strategy, counseling, and advocacy skills.

**“The decisions that businesses make shape our work lives, our consumption patterns, and even our health and longevity in profound ways. The Lowell Milken Institute for Business Law and Policy is ideally equipped to study and engage in these exciting developments.”**

**– Michael Dorff**  
*Executive Director*



[Nonprofits.Law.UCLA.edu](http://Nonprofits.Law.UCLA.edu)

## **Lowell Milken Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofits (LMPN) at UCLA School of Law**

Established in 2023, LMPN is UCLA Law’s hub for education, thought leadership, and scholarship at a moment when an unprecedented intergenerational wealth transfer is reshaping philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Building on the Program on Philanthropy and Nonprofits founded in 2021 in partnership with UCLA Law, LMPN advances Lowell Milken’s long-standing commitment to developing the human capital that powers effective philanthropy and nonprofit leadership. LMPN convenes scholars, practitioners, nonprofit and philanthropic leaders, and policymakers to tackle issues in governance, tax, and impact—while equipping the next generation of nonprofit leaders and advisors with the legal and strategic skills to lead. Through conferences, symposia, and research, the Center fosters collaboration across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors and shapes the future of giving and social impact.

**“Philanthropy and the nonprofit sector address huge challenges in our society, from alleviating poverty, to promoting the arts, to championing environmental solutions—while contributing over \$1 trillion annually to the U.S. economy. Our mission is to elevate understanding and effectiveness of the sector by providing education and training to current and future nonprofit leaders, funders, and advisors; a place to gather and develop thought leadership on the sector’s challenges; and scholarly research and writing to predict and address critical issues.”**

**– Rose Chan Loui**  
*Founding Executive Director*





# LEADERSHIP

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Co-Founder

**Michael Milken**

President and  
Co-Founder

**Richard Sandler**

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Milken Family Foundation's Communications and Creative Services departments for their service and support.



## Voices of Change 50 Years of Women in the American Cantorate

Explore the stories, achievements, and legacy of women who reshaped the cantorate, paving the way for future generations and advancing a rich tapestry of history and hope.



**MILKEN FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**

Leading Advances in Education  
Since 1982

For inquiries regarding the Jewish Educator Awards, please contact:

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Phone: (310) 570-4800  
Email: [admin@mff.org](mailto:admin@mff.org)  
[JewishEducatorAwards.org](http://JewishEducatorAwards.org) | [MFF.org](http://MFF.org)