Guest Introduction:
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JCCs are at an important crossroads as we move into the 21st Century. Like so many institutions both within the Jewish community and in our larger world, JCCs must constantly renew and refresh our mission. Where once we were the “secular” alternative to synagogues and the accessible alternative to restricted athletic clubs, today we have an unprecedented opportunity to engage Jewish community in ways that both unite those earlier ideas and disrupt them.

The relevant issues around the secular/religious divide become less about belief and more about peoples’ powerful desire to connect with a tradition and culture that can help them live more meaningful lives and raise happy, healthy families. The focus on wellness in so many JCCs provides an extraordinary opportunity to respond to critical needs in our community around health within the context of a caring and compassionate community.

More importantly, because JCCs are where most Jews are, this is a moment to be bold, to do what the best of our institutions have always done, which is to listen deeply to the needs of our communities and create new ways to connect to the values we share.
Quick Glance: JCC Membership

Current Membership in Local JCC
(Jewish Households)

* JCC is not a full service facility.
** Includes households who are members of local and non-local JCCs.
Demographic Characteristics of JCC Members: Comparisons with Affiliated and Unaffiliated Jews in the United States  | Steven M. Cohen. Florence G. Heller-JCC Association (JCCA) Research Center, Apr 2006

| Age distributions among JCC Members, Otherwise Affiliated, Unaffiliated |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                  | Unaffiliated    | Affiliated, not JCC | JCC members    |
| Under 35        | 33.4%           | 25.4%            | 15.4%           | 27.9%           |
| 35-44           | 16.0%           | 14.5%            | 15.8%           | 15.5%           |
| 45-54           | 18.8%           | 22.9%            | 21.6%           | 20.5%           |
| 55-64           | 11.9%           | 13.6%            | 11.6%           | 12.3%           |
| 65-74           | 10.3%           | 11.6%            | 17.4%           | 11.9%           |
| 75+             | 9.6%            | 12.0%            | 18.2%           | 11.8%           |
| Total           | 100.0%          | 100.0%           | 100.0%          | 100.0%          |


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Evolving JCC Missions

21st Century JCCs: Building Community in a Brave Pew World
Allan Finkelstein. eJewish Philanthropy, Mar 2014

“Just a gym?... The next time someone hurls that at your JCC... let them attend an opening ceremony of the JCC Maccabi Games® and ArtsFest®, which last year attracted more than 3,000 Jewish teens... Our day and overnight camps reach an astonishing 100,000 kids each year. These camps are values-based communities that instill a strong sense of identity into each camper and create enduring connections to their particular and the wider Jewish community.

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Reader’s Guide: Jewish Community Centers
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A speech delivered at the laying of the cornerstone of the Jewish Community Center Building, Washington, D.C., May 3, 1925

“The institution for which we are today dedicating this splendid home, is not a charity to minister to the body, but rather to the soul. The 14,000 Jews who live in this capital city have passed, under the favoring auspices of American institutions, beyond the need for any other benevolence. They are planting here a home for community service; fixing a center from which shall go forth the radiations of united effort for advancement in culture, in education, in social opportunity. Here will be the seat of organized influence for the preservation and dissemination of all that is best and most useful, of all that is leading and enlightening, in the culture and philosophy of this ‘peculiar people’ who have so greatly given to the advancement of humanity.”
Learn more...

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