

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2020-2021



Brandeis  
**Hillel**

# A WORD FROM OUR BOARD CO-CHAIRS



Stephen R. Reiner '61



Meyer G. Koplow '72 P'02 P'05

One of the unique features of Brandeis University is the quantity and quality of Jewish life. Throughout the pandemic, Brandeis Hillel kept students connected to each other and to their Jewish identities. We couldn't be prouder to serve as Co-Chairs.

We hope the stories in this Impact Report inspire you as they do us. Last year, whether on Zoom or in-person, the majority of Jewish students participated in Hillel – whether at our Shabbat and holiday celebrations, one of our 19 groups, in a learning cohort, or at an off-campus retreat.

Our talented, dedicated student leaders and professionals provide multiple ways for students to connect to the Jewish calendar and our traditions, regardless of their background or observance. All are welcome. More than that, Brandeis Hillel's leaders always strive for excellence – to ask better and deeper questions, to act in ways that enhance feelings of belonging and of solidarity, and to inspire our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for being part of this special communal venture.

Stephen R. Reiner '61 and Meyer G. Koplow '72 P'02 P'05



Dear Brandeis Hillel Community,

I hope everyone has been able to get used to seeing faces again without masks and outside of a Zoom box.

To say that Brandeis Hillel is a home to me and many students is an understatement. I know I speak for hundreds of students when I say that Hillel has been one of the only places - if not the only place - where I've felt a part of a community. This has been especially true during the pandemic.

Being a leader of Hillel has also given me a purpose. It's a community where I can walk in and always find a friendly face.

I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish these past few years. During the pandemic we've had to pivot many times - from outdoor Shabbat Markets to in-person Shabbat dinners at full capacity, to Zoom calls to welcome new students and ice cream socials outside - and we've been constantly evolving.

I'm honored that I got to work alongside our incredible and dedicated student board, professionals, and other student leaders. Their consistent support and creativity are how students continue to stay connected to each other.

Thank you all for helping to make this community what it is. Hillel is much more than the wonderful events and group programs; it is about connections and the people who have become our friends and family.

Sarah Bernstein '23  
Hillel President 2021



# Brandeis **Hillel** BY THE NUMBERS

900+

**UNIQUE  
PARTICIPANTS**

65



**OUTDOOR HIGH  
HOLIDAY SERVICES**

200

**STUDENTS AT  
SHABBAT DINNERS  
AND MARKETS  
EACH WEEK**

500

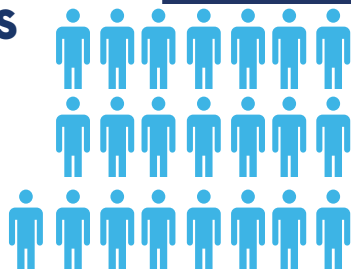


**PARTICIPANTS IN MITZVOTE &  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES**

26



**PARTICIPANTS  
IN OUR  
JEWISH  
LEARNING  
FELLOWSHIP**



**HUNDREDS**

**OF HOURS OF 1-1 RABBINIC  
AND PASTORAL SUPPORT**



ONE



**BRAND NEW SUKKAH  
ENJOYED BY HUNDREDS  
OF STUDENTS**



“One thing that we did that was really more important than I think we realized was the Shabbat Market. It gave students an opportunity on Fridays to come by our tent set up by the Berlin Chapel. They picked up candles, schnitzel, things to read, games to play and wished each other Shabbat Shalom. Instead of coming to a big room and receiving a Shabbat experience they were crafting it themselves.”

**Rabbi Stephanie Sanger-Miller**  
Associate Director



# SHABBAT MARKET



“Having an active Hillel on a campus like Brandeis is critical and important for student life outside the classroom. Hillel offers vital social, cultural, and educational opportunities for students that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

**President Ronald D. Liebowitz**

”





“

Passover was really one of the highlights of my year. While it might have seemed like a less than ideal situation at first, I led a Seder for the first time in my life. It was fun and empowering!

**RACHEL ARATEN '24**

“

Brandeis took lemons and made lemonade...

The university has never made Passover on campus — doing so properly entails thorough cleaning, different foods, different dishes, and so on. To pull it off is truly historic.

**PROFESSOR JONATHAN D. SARNA '74**

“

For the first night, I ordered a Seder To Go meal, and, for the second night, I attended one of the Seders led by Baruch, the Reform Hillel group. I assumed the Seder To Go kit was going to be a little takeout box or two, similar to what was in the dining hall.... I think everyone else was also stunned by the amount of food.

**EMMA LICHTENSTEIN '22**

## BRANDEIS' FIRST PASSOVER ON-CAMPUS





# ISRAEL WEEK

Students proudly celebrated Yom Haatzmaut (Israel's Independence Day) for a full week.

Israel Week was full of culture, fun, and education for students.



On Yom Ha'atzmaut, we celebrated 'Israel from North to South' by making candles 'in' Tzfat and playing matkot like on the beach in Tel Aviv. From falafel to trivia to tie dye, there was something for everyone!

**Samantha Brody '24**



## BRANDEIS HILLEL ENABLES JEWISH STUDENTS TO CREATE, EXPERIENCE, AND SHARE JEWISH LIFE AND CELEBRATION EVERYWHERE ON CAMPUS



Hillel is an amazing place to meet new people and experience new growth opportunities. I have learned great leadership skills and what it means to be part of a community that cares. Hillel has helped me connect with fellow Jewish students on campus to create something bigger than ourselves. I know I always have a home at Hillel.

Ethan Gelman '24

"Shabbat really is a highlight of my time at Brandeis. After busy weeks, Shabbat really is the perfect time to unwind with all my friends and really get to take a step back and savor the moment."

Evan Gandler '24





# STUDENT AFFILIATE GROUPS



We supported 19 student-led affiliate groups and projects, so that students can create the community they want to have on campus for themselves and their peers.



Hillel gave me the resources and leadership skills I needed to start a group of my own. The establishment of the Hillel Organization of Gamers has created a new space for students of all religious backgrounds to have fun and interact in a low-pressure environment.

**Eitan Marks '24**



# VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS SERIES

Thousands enjoyed our Virtual Conversations series featuring:

**The New Pew Report on American Jews**

**Jewish Values and Activism: Then and Now**

**Navigating Jewish and Zionist Identities in  
Liberal Communities**

**Political Protest from Hanukkah to the War in  
Vietnam: A Personal Odyssey**

**Chocolate Chunk Hamentaschen Cooking  
Demo**

**From Brooklyn to Brandeis - And After - With  
Rabbi Al Axelrad**



Michelle Shain '04  
MA'13 PhD'16



Emily Sigalow PhD'15



Rabbi Al Axelrad



Paula Shoyer '86



Barry Shrage



Nancy K. Kaufman '72



Michael Koplow '02



Rabbi Yitz Greenberg



Rachel Fish PhD'13



Rabbi Dan Judson PhD '16



Prof. Reuven Kimelman

# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS



“What Hillel really provides is the active intentional involvement of students. There’s something about the Hillel experience that can remind us both of home and of a future. It becomes not just a safe place but a welcoming place as well; a place where leadership blossoms and leadership thrives. Instead of a place where older people are designing and telling you what to do, there is the opportunity to really curate one’s own Jewish experience.”

**Rabbi Elaine Zecher '83**  
**Senior Rabbi, Temple Israel of Boston**

“Hillel for me was a place where I built my community and my Jewish identity. I met a lot of my friends through Hillel and I’ve participated in events relating to Jewish holidays or learning, and that was a really meaningful part of my college experience.”

**Hadassah Stanhill '22**



# DONORS

**WE SINCERELY THANK ALL OF OUR DONORS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED US THIS PAST YEAR.**



Thank you to the nearly 500 donors who made a gift to Brandeis Hillel.

View our 2020-2021 Donor Honor Roll at [brandeishonorroll.org/Hillel](https://brandeishonorroll.org/Hillel)

**Renew your support at [giving.brandeis.edu/hillel](https://giving.brandeis.edu/hillel)**

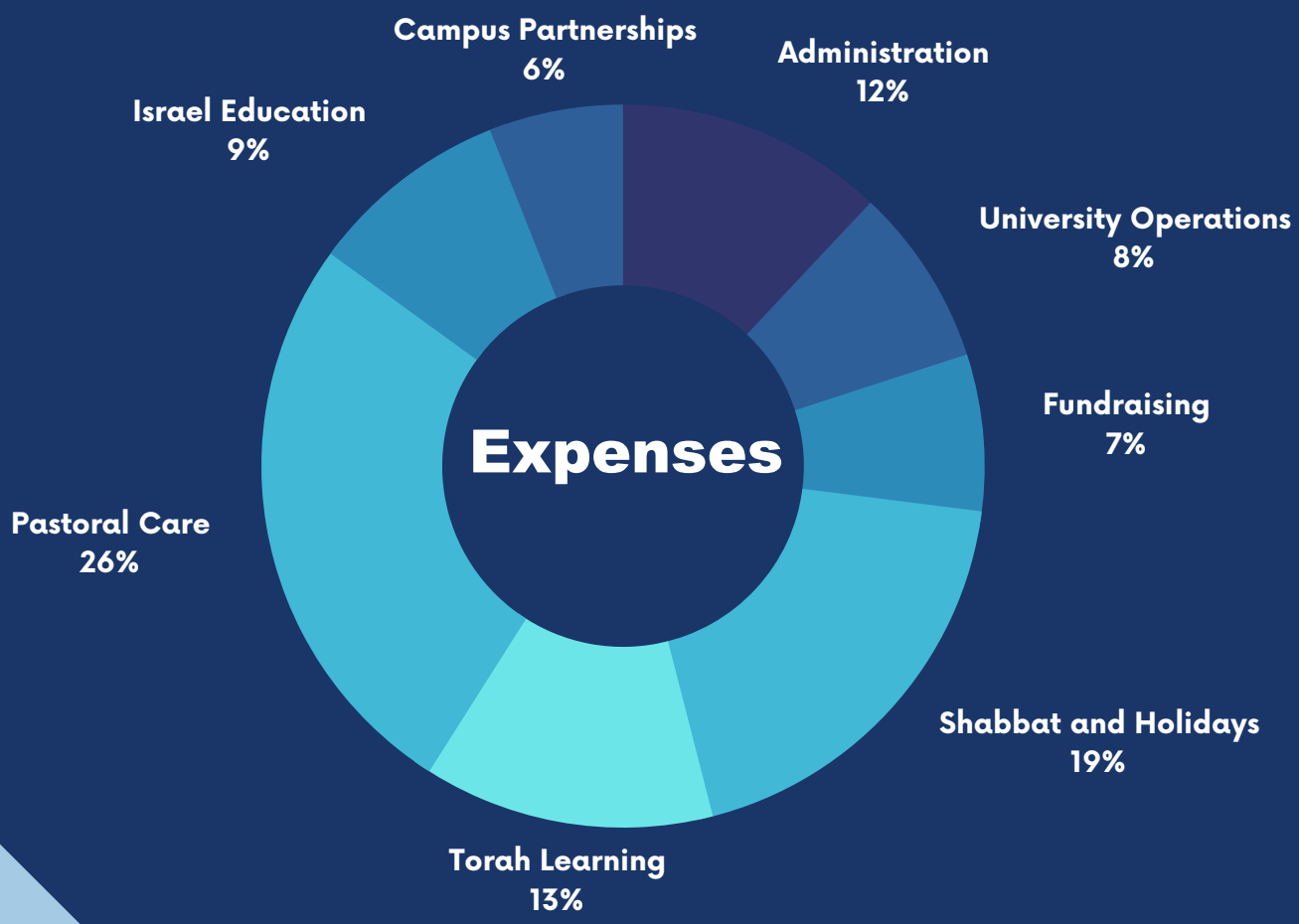
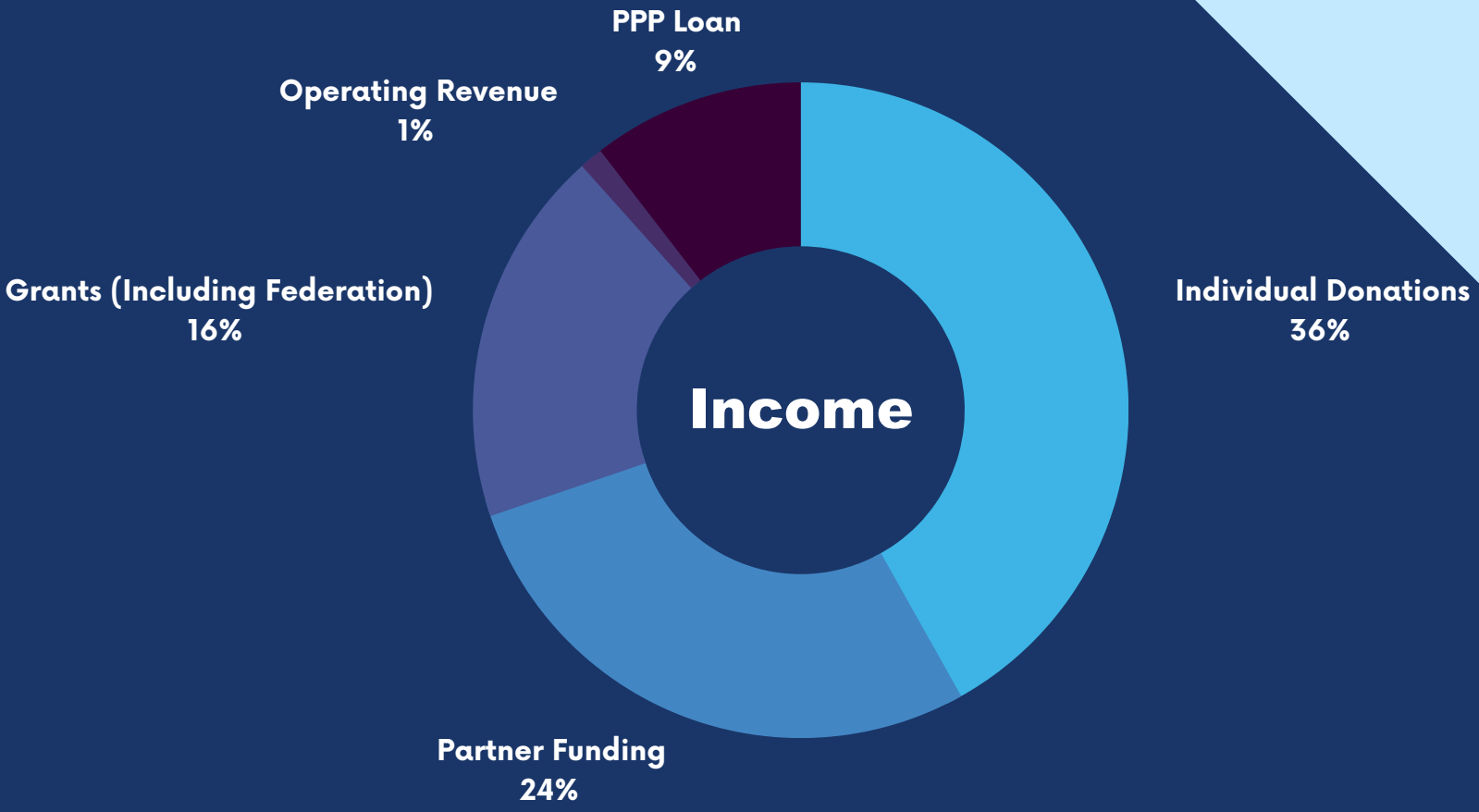
I had no way of knowing at the beginning of college how much Brandeis Hillel would impact my Brandeis experience. Throughout my college career, Brandeis Hillel nurtured my personal, religious, social, and professional growth. More than that the Brandeis Hillel community became a home for me.

**Lindsay Biebelberg '21**

Thank you for your support of Brandeis Hillel!

Each contribution to Brandeis Hillel enables us to inspire every Jewish student to make an enduring commitment to Jewish life.











### Professional Staff

Rabbi Seth Winberg, Executive Director  
Rabbi Stephanie Sanger-Miller, Assistant Director  
Remy Fields, Springboard Social Justice Fellow  
Allyson Tazbin, IACT Coordinator for Israel Engagement  
Celine Ginsburg, Associate Director of Development  
Avia Greenberg, JLIC Co-Educator  
Rabbi Arye Greenberg, JLIC Co-Educator  
Rabbi Evan Sheinhait, Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein Reform  
Senior Jewish Educator  
Ilana Sandberg, Slifka-Nadich Rabbinic Intern

### Student Board 2020

Alec Gelman, President  
Bradley Kaplan, Vice President  
Andie Watson, Communications  
Tova Sidlow, Education  
Yael Pinta, Finance  
Sarah Bernstein, Israel  
Feigle Letchiner, Religious Life  
Rina Cohen, Social & Cultural  
Rachel Ordan, Tikkun Olam

### Board of Directors

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David Abelman '82 P'11  
Sarah Bernstein '23  
Lindsay Biebelberg '21  
Saul Cohen '18  
Rachel Fish PhD'13  
Alec Gelman '22  
Ari Jaffe '83 P'20 P'15  
Isaac Judd '04  
Marcel Kahan '84  
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Alice Shooman Lebowitz P'18  
Susan Stolov P'18 P'21

### Student Board 2021

Sarah Bernstein, President  
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Aaron Gordon, Education  
Elye Robinovitz, Finance  
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Rachel Araten, Religious Life  
Aviva Weinstein, Social & Cultural  
Tali Meisel, Tikkun Olam

# Brandeis Hillel

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