



EVELYN RUBENSTEIN JCC
HOUSTON

Position Specification

Chief Executive Officer

Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center

Houston, Texas



EVELYN RUBENSTEIN JCC
HOUSTON



Russell
Reynolds
ASSOCIATES

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The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston, “The J”

The Town Square of Houston’s Jewish Community

The mission of the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston (the J) is ***to develop and strengthen Jewish identity, foster Jewish values and enrich the Jewish and Greater Houston communities.***

The J is a warm and welcoming space filled with remarkable people, dedicated volunteers and a wide array of year-round programs, activities and special events. With options for individuals and families of all ages and interests, there is something for everyone. The J is committed to enriching the lives of its members and the community. Since 1936, the J has been a place where community comes together for friendship, affiliation and socialization in a safe and welcoming environment. Throughout its three campuses, the committed staff work to provide members and guests with quality experiences, excellent service and a sense of belonging.

“Behold how good and pleasant it is when all people live together as one.” – Psalm 133

Guided by the wise words of the Psalmist, the J commits to building, nurturing and elevating a culture of belonging for all ages, interests and religions. The J serves as the Town Square of the Jewish community of Houston, where people come to learn, connect, and create memories to last a lifetime.



2023 – 2024 Impact Report Highlights

FINANCIAL REPORT

OPERATING BUDGET | \$19,855,000

With an operating budget of \$19.9 million, the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center serves the Greater Houston Jewish and secular communities through a multitude of programs and services. The longstanding tradition of providing for every segment of the population in Houston is sustained through grants, membership dues, program fees and donations.



285 Children
ages 6 weeks to 5 years old are enrolled at Bertha Alyce and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood Schools.

430+ Gymnasts
from toddlers to school-aged children are enrolled in our gymnastics classes. We have more than 100 competitive gymnastics team members plus several current and future NCAA recruits, two of whom have committed to NCAA schools in 2024!

4,950 Hours
of sweat this past year with great classes like barre fusion with Meryl, aqua fitness with Betsy, zumba with Renee, peaceful yoga with Gudrun and yagalates with Traci.

798 Tennis Enrollments
in our children's tennis programs encompassing a wide array of classes, lessons, leagues and the competitive Levine Family Tennis Academy. Additionally, our in-house pickleball open play attracts over 1,000 players of every skill level!

12 Productions
were presented by 200 children ages three to 18 on the Kaplan stage in our children and teen theatre department.

1,427 Campers
enjoyed a fun summer at J Camps participating in a wide variety of camps, including art, performing arts, sports, tennis, gymnastics and dance.

200 Swimmers
each week are enrolled in our Learn-to-Swim classes. Our year-round aquatics program offers private, semi-private and group swim lessons for all ages and abilities in a safe and fun environment. Let our swim instructors teach you the skills to navigate through the water with confidence.

294 Adults
have participated in 39 hands-on cooking classes in the Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio learning new cooking techniques and connecting through food since the studio opened in March 2023.

1,000 Individuals
have been impacted by our Israel engagement efforts. Programs like "The Israeli Parsha" offer a variety of educational activities and discussions for all ages, strengthening community ties with Israel. Collaborations with other organizations have enhanced our impact, featuring highlights such as Purim and Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations.

600 Unique Families
attended one or more of our family engagement programs this year. Our family engagement programs offer young families the opportunity to enjoy play dates, community events and holiday celebrations that connect families, build friendships and introduce Jewish values through play-based programs, such as Tot Shabbats, Toddler Tales Story Times, Havdalah programs, family performing arts shows and more!

150 Teens
enjoyed social activities with Houston Connect 68, such as cooking classes, ice skating and the J's signature limo scavenger hunt. J-Teen Philanthropy Initiative participants learned leadership skills and collectively donated to Houston area nonprofits focused on Israel education, antisemitism and combating hate through consensus-building discussions. Maccabi sent 24 athletes to Israel and 77 athletes to Fort Lauderdale for their individual and team sport competitions.

40% of Funding
for the arts and culture budget came from Patrons of the Arts, individuals who prioritize supporting the arts at the J through their philanthropy. Every contribution makes a significant difference.

30 Senior Companion Volunteers
provided one-on-one companionship to 40 clients throughout Harris County. They pair low-income seniors volunteers with homebound individuals, enabling them to maintain independence in their own homes and offer respite to family caregivers.

619 RSVP Volunteers
have dedicated over 56,000 hours across 18 counties in Southeast Texas. RSVP volunteers play crucial roles in their communities, offering companionship, nutritional support, transportation and safeguarding against scams and fraud for seniors, ensuring their safe aging at home. They also provide respite to caregivers, educate on disaster preparation and support harm reduction strategies for the opioid crisis.

\$563,000 in Scholarships
The J strives to make programs accessible to all, regardless of financial need. We help those in need with financial assistance in different areas of the J. Many of the scholarship dollars are made possible by the Irvin Kaplan Children's Scholarship Fund, the Soph and Al Natkin fund and the Richker Grossman Maccabi Fund.

1,876 Lunches
for the senior "lunch bunch" have been provided for seniors to enjoy food and fellowship at the J.

200 Students
were served by our Foster Grandparents at 13 schools throughout Harris County. Our 35 foster grandparents influenced the lives of these children by providing crucial reading, writing and math tutoring, creating lasting bonds and nurturing mentorships throughout the school year.

124,432 Meals
were delivered to 709 homebound seniors from over 300 volunteers in our Meals on Wheels program.



The J's Facilities

Dynamic programming across multiple facilities

The J manages a large range of programming across three campuses:

- Located in Southwest Houston, the recently renovated **Milton-Levit Family Campus** features the beautiful Samuels Family Community Pavilion, a state-of-the-art fitness center, indoor and outdoor tennis center, the Houston Gymnastics Center, aquatics complex, culinary studio and more. The Bertha Alyce Early Childhood School (BAS) is located here.
- The **Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood School (EBS)** is located in the heart of the energy corridor in West Houston.
- The **Merfish Teen Center**, located near the Milton-Levit Family Campus, houses over 3,500 square feet of private ballroom space, eight meeting rooms, a 25-meter pool, covered sports pavilion and outdoor recreation space.

Wellness at the J

The **Laurie and Milton Boniuk Wellness Center**, located on the Milton-Levit Family Campus, is a premier destination for health and fitness, offering newly updated facilities and a wide range of services to enhance overall wellness, including

Fitness Center:

- State-of-the-art exercise equipment: treadmills, stationary bikes, weight machines, and free weights
- Personal training services
- Cycling studio and Reformer Pilates studio
- Adult-only locker rooms, Saunas and steam rooms
- Indoor and outdoor lap pool options

Group Exercise Classes:

- Over 75 weekly group fitness classes focused on cardio, mind/body, senior, strength, and aqua
- Offerings include Cardio Power, Zumba, Bar Fusion, Spin, 10+ practices of Yoga, and 3 varieties of Pilates
- Experienced, certified instructors
- 4 spacious studios

Tennis and Pickleball:

- Indoor and outdoor tennis courts
- Leagues, clinics, and lessons for all skill levels
- Growing pickleball community with three covered courts and three uncovered courts at the Merfish Teen Center and four indoor courts at the Samuels Family Community Pavilion



Early Childhood Education at the J

Bertha Alyce Early Childhood School (BAS) and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood School (EBS) provide nurturing environments for children aged **six weeks to five years**. These schools emphasize a play-based, emergent curriculum that encourages children to explore and learn at their own pace. Both BAS and EBS are proud 4-Star Texas Rising Star Schools, reflecting commitment to high-quality early childhood education.

The schools celebrate Jewish heritage through meaningful programs like Shabbat, Havdalah, and holiday celebrations, fostering a strong cultural identity. Dedicated teachers create a warm, inclusive atmosphere where children engage in discovery, collaboration, and play, promoting both academic and social-emotional growth.

- The **Sherry Merfish Infant Care Program** offers a safe, stimulating environment for infants from six weeks old, focusing on physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. Infants participate in weekly Shabbat, music, and active play through the CATCH program.
- Programs for **young toddlers** (18 months) and **toddlers** (2 years) emphasize self-control, trust, language skills, and social interactions. Engaging activities like music, movement, Shabbat, and CATCH keep children active and help them develop important life skills.
- The **preschool program** for ages 3 to 4 fosters initiative and confidence through problem-solving, critical thinking, and creative play. Children explore art, writing, science, sensory activities, and Judaic programming in a dynamic, hands-on environment. Pre-K focuses on developing handwriting, letters, numbers, and social-emotional skills. Child-initiated topics like gardening, outdoor learning, and travel help build essential skills and confidence.
- The **Karol Musher STARS** Early Childhood Intervention Program at BAS supports preschoolers with disabilities and developmental delays through individualized instruction and family support.



Programming at the J

The J is proud to offer programming for everyone, no matter their age or passions.

Aquatics: Year-round swim classes are focused on teaching children to become water safe and confident swimmers for life. Children develop a strong foundation of skills and water safety awareness in structured yet fun swim classes. Classes range from Parent & Child to the Masters Swim Program partnership with the Coog US Masters Swim Team (18+).

Art: Classes include drawing, painting, ceramics and more. In addition, the J's visual art programs for children are grounded in the elements of art, inspired by art history and driven by personal expression. Exciting after-school courses and fun weekend workshops are opportunities for young artists to learn new skills, make new friends and feel empowered by bringing their visions to life!

Arts & Ideas: The J offers a diverse array of literature, film, performing arts, guest speakers, and author talks. Notable programs include the Annual Houston Jewish Film Festival, now in its 21st year, which highlights Jewish and Israeli culture and history, and the Ann and Stephen Kaufman Jewish Book & Arts Festival, now in its 53rd year, one of the city's leading cultural and literary events that attracts a large and varied audience.

Culinary Studio: The Cramer-Jacobs Family Culinary Studio offers culinary classes and events for the Jewish community and Houstonians of all ages—children, teens, families, and adults. Featuring renowned guest chefs and authors, programs inspire passion, teach new kitchen skills, and incorporate Jewish culture to preserve traditions through food.

Dance: Dance classes range from basic instruction to professional technique and include ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop and more, available for dancers ages 2 years thru adult.

Houston Gymnastics Center: The Rubenstein Gymnastics Training Center boasts one of the best training facilities and coaching staffs in the country. With over 18,000 square feet of training space, the gym features a preschool center, three free foam training pits, multiple competitive trampolines with a 30-foot ceiling, a rod floor, two tumble tracks, and all the men's, women's, and trampoline and tumbling Olympic apparatus. The mission is to create happy and healthy individuals, both physically and mentally, of all ages through the sport of gymnastics.

Programming at the J *cont'd*

J Camps: J Camps is the J's day camp program for children from preschool through grade 9, offering activities in art, culinary, dance, gymnastics, sports, tennis, theatre, and more. The camps support social-emotional growth, helping campers form friendships, gain independence, build confidence, and find joy through a Jewish perspective. During the school year, the J offers unique camp experiences on select days when school is out and hosts a themed "kids' night out" each month, giving parents a well-deserved evening off.

Jewish Learning: The Bobbi & Vic Samuels Center for Jewish Living and Learning (CJLL) offers classes, lectures, programs and other meaningful Jewish experiences for the Houston community, including rich, in-depth Jewish studies courses designed by local Jewish educators.

KidZone Afterschool Care: As children grow, after-school care needs evolve. The J's KidZone program offers transportation from school and an afternoon filled with fun activities. From playground time and culinary experiences to art, Jewish holidays, gymnastics, swimming, and more, children enjoy a diverse range of activities. Additionally, a homework room is available, allowing for more family time at home in the evenings.

Lifelong Learning & Adults 60+: Life gets better with age! Lifelong learning provides ongoing opportunities to acquire new skills, attain and maintain a healthy lifestyle through fitness and wellness, learn more about art, politics, religion, social issues and more. The J's adults 60+ programming also includes BINGO, Canasta, Stay Young Through Fitness, Mah Jongg and monthly bus trips!

Meals on Wheels: Meals on Wheels at the J serves homebound older adults living in Southwest Houston. Volunteers deliver warm meals, connection, care and a sense of community to seniors in need. In 2024, the J's Meals on Wheels program delivered 113,151 meals to 611 homebound seniors from over 300 volunteers.

Theatre: With classes for children as young as 3 and productions for students in grades 3-12, The J offers something for every theatre enthusiast. Middle schoolers can participate in full-scale musicals each fall and spring, learning both performance and backstage skills. High school students in the Mainstage program perform in full-scale productions, honing their character-building and scene-study abilities. Graduates of the Mainstage program are well-prepared for college theatre programs.

The Opportunity

The CEO of the Evelyn Rubenstein JCC is a dynamic leadership opportunity for a visionary leader to build community, grow membership and collaborate with remarkable staff and volunteer leaders, moving from strength to strength.

The J's brand is strong in Houston and across the Jewish Community Centers of America (JCCA) movement, with the following advantages:

- One of the most well regarded JCC's with a legacy of award-winning programs, and a dynamic and integrated staff and volunteer leadership team.
- Recently completed a \$50M renovation and rebuild to include new facilities and innovative programming that have driven membership and engagement to new heights.
- Doubled its membership in recent years, surpassing 10,000 individuals.
- A dedicated staff of 140 committed to enriching the lives of members and the community.
- A collaborative organization across the community, denominations, and faiths
- A key pillar of the 55,000-strong, Jewish community in Greater Houston.
- A welcoming community with generational families and new, diverse members from various cities and countries.
- Serves as a hub for many organizations, programs and experiences across the age spectrum.
- Houston is a dynamic cultural, economic, and culinary landscape that enriches the lives of all who live here.
- A warm and welcoming culture built on the tenet of tikkun olam; making the world a better place.

The Role

The CEO of the J will demonstrate a decisive and collaborative leadership style and will bring a track record of innovative, creative, and strategic leadership experience in a multi-faceted institution with varied internal and external constituencies. In terms of organizational leadership, the CEO will ensure that staff across all of J's locations and programmatic areas feel enriched in their work, and ideally will bring experience attracting, retaining, developing, and motivating a highly passionate and expert team across diverse sets of expertise.

The next CEO should bring significant aptitude and appetite for fundraising to grow and diversify sources of and approaches to funding, while at the same time strengthening the J's relationships with long-standing supporters. Ideally, they will bring a track record of partnering with a Board and senior staff in successful efforts to manage an organization's financial and programmatic resources to increase effectiveness while implementing a clear vision.







Of particular importance is the leader's demonstrated passion for J's mission, as well as a fundamental belief in the value of Jewish culture, values, and community. It is key that the CEO possess the charisma as well as the humility and cultural sensitivity in delivering key messages in a variety of settings, including on the ground and in day-to-day interactions with the diverse people and communities that the J serves.

Specific responsibilities of the CEO include:

- **Inspirational leadership:** Partner with the Board of Directors and staff to achieve the J's mission and the highest levels of success for the organization; provide professional development and growth opportunities to J staff.
- **Board relationships:** Promotes and models productive, strategic staff-lay relationships across the setting of priorities, fiscal management, fundraising, and beyond.
- **Growth and change management:** Leading the J through its next phase of growth.
- **Management of teams:** Lead through and in partnership with a highly-skilled and collaborative senior staff; promote a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, teamwork, and empowerment.
- **Fundraising:** In partnership with the Board of Directors and Development team, serve as a key fundraiser to increase and diversify financial support.
- **Financial management:** Approach the financial oversight of the organization with accountability and transparency, with a balanced and reasoned approach to financial decision-making and management of resources.
- **Community relationships and partnership-building:** The CEO will serve as an ambassador for J, building and maintaining critically important relationships across the Houston Jewish community, the Houston community more broadly, and the JCCA movement nationally.
- **Connective and collaborative leader:** The CEO will be an empathetic, thoughtful and intellectually agile leader; they should be able to listen, challenge ideas, and make decisions.
- **Safety and crisis management:** In managing multiple physical facilities, the CEO will ensure that the J remains a safe and secure institution and that crises are managed in an effective, calm, and timely manner.

Candidate Profile: *Core Competencies*

Personal Attributes and Competencies

	Demonstrated Passion for the Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ideal candidate will bring a demonstrated passion for, or lived experience with, J's mission.• Whether a long-time resident or a new arrival, they will embrace the Houston area community professionally and personally, continuously building a local network for themselves and the J.
	Strategic Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The vision, creativity, and judgment to guide the articulation of the J's mission and its vision, strategy, and identity for the future.• Demonstrated track record as a creative leader, with experience in relevant areas that align with the J's programming.• Ideally, demonstrated knowledge of the key issues affecting the J movement nationally, including the ways in which the Houston area's diverse audiences engage with the J, its early childhood programming, and its vast array of programming.
	Fundraising and Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience building an institution's funding base—in partnership with the Board—to increase and diversify financial support from individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government funders.• Adept relationship builder, able to deepen existing connections and engagement across the Houston area, as well as nationally, and inspire engagement in and support for the organization in the future.
	Leading Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ideal candidate will be able to translate the J's over-arching goals into clear objectives for the staff.• They will foster a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, teamwork, and empowerment (with particular attention to staff morale and retention at every level).• They will have the ability to counsel and coach the senior management team for success; they will respect, encourage, and celebrate the talents of that team while also holding each accountable to mutually agreed-upon goals.• They will approach the oversight of the J with an even-handed, transparent, and reasoned approach to decision-making.• The new CEO will lead with integrity, courage, and enthusiasm.
	Relationships And Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.• An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in their beliefs, and active drive.• Comfort in public speaking and presenting on behalf of an institution.• Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.• The ideal candidate will be an energetic and charismatic leader who genuinely enjoys and excels in both the internal and external aspects of the role.
	Financial and Operational Acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They will bring strong financial acumen and experience in managing budgets and financial resources.• Ability to analyze financial data and make informed decisions.• Relevant or comparable experience managing multiple locations and physical infrastructures, including with security considerations.• Experience in crisis management.

Contact



Russell Reynolds Associates, the global search and leadership advisory firm, has been exclusively engaged to lead this search.

We welcome all nominations and expressions of interest, which will be confidential. Please submit these to erjcc@russellreynolds.com.

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