



NORTH SHORE
CONGREGATION
ISRAEL

2023 Annual Report





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Dear Friends,

A house becomes a home when it is a place of safety, comfort, and belonging. It's a place where you can be yourself, relax, and make memories with loved ones. A home reflects your personality, style, and values. A home, at its best, is where you can find peace, happiness, and love. It's a place where you can grow, learn, and thrive. These attributes also describe NSCI.

After years of separation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we no longer take for granted the benefits of human interaction. NSCI's welcoming, diverse, robust, and active congregants help create a unique and dynamic environment for learning, celebration, informal gathering, and prayer.

Our welcoming culture fosters a sense of belonging and community among all ages. In turn, congregants feel welcomed and accepted, and are more likely to participate in religious activities, social events, and the work of repairing the world. This creates a vibrant and supportive community that is committed to the well-being of its members and our greater community.

It is this strong community that has held us during a year filled with change. We welcomed Rabbi Jacob Leizman after honoring and saying farewell to Rabbi Ryan Daniels. We came together over the High Holy Days to celebrate the New Year in our beautiful new renovated spaces. We stood strong together in support of Israel after the shocking October 7th attack, offering opportunities for comfort, connection, and learning. It is because we have this home, with its strong foundation we built together, that we can be there for each other in times of transition, celebration, sorrow, and uncertainty. This is what makes a synagogue feel like home.

Many thanks to our dedicated staff, clergy, congregants, and the generations before us that established the foundation for NSCI to grow, adapt, and be in a position to thrive for generations that follow. We look forward to many more years of growing as a community, nurturing our synagogue home together.



Jeff Echt
President



Wendi Geffen
Senior Rabbi



Todd Braman
Executive Director

Come home to be renewed

2023 has been a year of renewal and growth for NSCI. In 2018 we began to imagine the possibilities of revitalizing and renovating our spaces to enhance safety, accessibility, and connection, and this year, that dream became a reality. We celebrated the successful completion of the *Imagine the Possible* campaign and began to enjoy our new and improved spaces together. We entered a season of renewal at Family Tashlich, where we let go of the old year and refreshed ourselves for the year to come. Marking the High Holy Days together felt like coming home again. Through the strength of community, we can look forward to many more years of growth together.

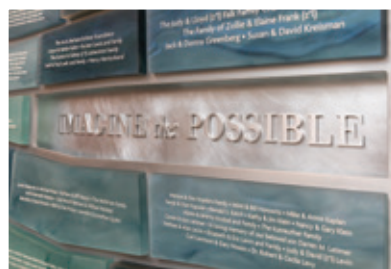


IMAGINE *the* POSSIBLE

“It is incredibly gratifying that the vision of the *Imagine the Possible* campaign has been realized for the benefit of our congregation. Now our community can enjoy stunning new spaces, improved security, a new patio and landscaping that enhances the use of our outdoor space, and the assurance that NSCI is debt-free. We are so grateful to nearly 450 households, our donors who generously invested in the campaign to reach and then go beyond our fundraising goal. We can all be proud of the tenacious commitment of volunteers, lay leaders, clergy, and staff—an inspiring collaboration that was absolutely key to our success.”



Marilyn Perlman



Even the Torah sometimes needs to be renewed! We enlisted Rabbi Moshe Druin, a *sofer* (scribe) who came all the way from Florida to repair our Torahs. He cleaned the parchment, repaired holes, fixed individual letters, and more. We look forward to welcoming Jewish artist and *soferet* Linda B. Coppleson to write NSCI's newest sefer Torah in April 2024.



On Yom Kippur afternoon, we welcomed our friend Pastor Chris Harris as our featured speaker for "Is This the Fast I Desire?" Pastor Harris reflected on the critical importance of partnership between the Jewish and African American faith communities, updated us on the important work of Bright Star Community Outreach, specifically within the Turn Center. The Turn Center, inspired by the work of Natal in Sderot, Israel, offers a cutting-edge model for violence intervention, PTSD support, training, and empowerment for communities disproportionately affected by violence.

Our Growing Mishpachah (Family)

This year, while we watched our physical building transform, we also marked other big changes. We honored and said farewell to our beloved Rabbi Ryan Daniels and thanked him for his incredible eight years of service to our community. In July, we welcomed Rabbi Jacob Leizman and created a sacred covenant together at his installation in October. We are already enjoying the gifts Rabbi Leizman has brought to our community and look forward to continuing to grow and learn together in the years to come. We also welcomed our new director of communications, Hila Ratzabi, as well as pianist Christopher Powell and organist Gregory Shifrin. And to top it all off, our community grew by 63 new congregant households this year! Welcome to our *mishpachah*!

*Pictured right top: Our last Shabbat with Rabbi Ryan Daniels
Right bottom: Installation of Rabbi Jacob Leizman*



Christopher Powell



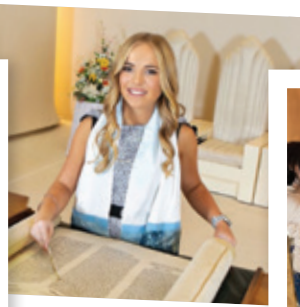
Gregory Shifrin



Hila Ratzabi

Come home to carry on tradition

From generation to generation, we take pride in our heritage, passing on sacred traditions and values to our children and grandchildren. When we gather for Shabbat, holidays, and lifecycle moments, we bring new life into our traditions, finding personal and communal meaning in our ancient texts and practices.



"My family has been going to NSCI for close to 50+ years. When we think and talk about *l'dor va'dor*, the fact that my kids will now be fourth-generation congregants is quite special. With all of the history that my family has had at NSCI—with Rabbi Bronstein z"l marrying my parents, Rabbi Geffen marrying my wife and me, as well as my grandparents being active members—it made the decision to stay connected at NSCI easy as an adult. We look forward to our kids going to Sunday school, Hebrew school, and even following in my brother/my footsteps with joining the temple youth group. NSCI has always been and will be special for my family." —Alex Sloan



"Being able to blow the shofar with my family during the High Holy Days started when Cantor Goldstein began the Shofar Corps many years ago. That first year my late father, Howard Sorkin, took a big interest in learning how to blow the shofar. The next year my dad got more shofars and asked me to join. The following year my son Jack joined, and then the year after that my daughter Molly. My dad was so proud to have three generations of shofar blowers sharing the shofar sound for the congregation during both the tot service and erev Rosh Hashanah service. Since his passing, we have continued this tradition with my husband Jay joining us." —Abby Bruggerman

Legacy Circle

For so many of us, NSCI is our Jewish home, and we want to see it flourish for generations to come. We are well positioned to grow and help our community thrive. Our endowment is the foundation for our present and our future. When you join the NSCI Legacy Circle and commit to an investment in our endowment, you are not only securing a Jewish home for your own children and grandchildren but for the entire NSCI community.

Are you missing from this photo? During the High Holy Days we honored our Legacy Circle members with a special aliyah. Legacy Circle members have informed us that they have made a bequest or planned gift to NSCI. If you've already included NSCI in your estate planning then we want to see you up there next year! Plus, your gift may inspire others to make a similar commitment. Reach out to Todd Braman, todd@nsci.org, to let us know about your gift or to learn how you can make your lasting commitment to NSCI.



We're here for each other. Let's build NSCI's future together.

Thank you to our current Legacy Circle members (as of November 2023).

Iris Anosov
Barbara Appelbaum
Judith Appelbaum
Phyllis & Stuart Applebaum
Phylis & Ken Bagan
Debra Bauer
Barbara & Ron Borden
Merle Branner & David
Rothschild
Jane Colman
Karen & Robert Dillon
Ann & Peter Dubois
Julie & Jeffrey Echt
Pam & Larry Faulkner
Bonnie Felner
Gary Friend
Rabbi Wendi Geffen
Judith Geleerd Kitzes
Joan Goldstein
Lauri & Cantor David
Goldstein
Roberta Goodman
Rabbi Lisa Greene
Glenn Grusin

Martin Grusin
Laurie & Douglas Hart
Jan & Bob Kaufman
Alyssa & Jeremy Knobel
Karen Kohn
Steven LeVine
Laurie Lieberman
Eunice Lieberstein
Judy Louis
Anne & Mitchell Macknin
Miranda & Jed Mandel
Carole Mark Gingiss & Jody
Gingiss
Patty & Rabbi Steven Mason
Barbara & Jeff Mazur
Diane & Jim Moore
Cathy Nachman
Leslie Neilan
Terri & Robert Olian
Carole & Mary Parker
Harriette & Ted Perlman
Marilyn Perlman & Harry
Epstein
Inge Rothschild

Alan Rottman
Onnie & Steven Scheyer
Cathy & Joel Schneider
Susan Sigel
Sheryl Solomon
Kathy & Ron Sonenthal
Andrea & Steven Tick
Beth & Nate Tross

Shirley Tross
April & Tom Victor
Eileen & Donald Weil
Jody & Dean Weinberg
Marcine & Art Weiner
Charles & Ann Weisberg
Carol & Abbott Wolfe
Alison & Joseph Yastrow

“NSCI is my Jewish anchor, providing a spiritual home filled with inspiration, guidance, stability, understanding, friendship, acceptance, and so much more. And as a third-generation member of NSCI, it is imperative for me to do my part in ensuring the future of our synagogue and Jewish community. A Legacy gift affords me the opportunity to have a lasting charitable impact. ... This is my version of *l'dor va'dor*; continuing my parents' legacy for another generation. I am blessed, and to pay it forward is a gift I am very fortunate to be able to give.”



Barbara Appelbaum

Come home to connect with community

At NSCI there's a place for everyone. We're one big *mishpachah* (family) that contains many smaller communities. Whether you're a parent of a young child enjoying a Family Shabbat Experience, a senior sharing lunch and a lecture, a 20/30-something at a holiday meetup, or a member of WNSCI gathering on a retreat, you'll find your people here.



“One of the things that's so wonderful about this congregation is that the size leads people to look at our congregation and question how you get to really know people; I think the opposite. I feel that it allows you to do a lot more because we offer so many options that a smaller congregation just would not be able to offer. If there's a niche that you like—that's how I found my thing—there's space to create it. I feel like we have this little community within a big community.”



Tracey Meyers,
founder of Adult
Mitzvah Corps



In February, the Women of NSCI (WNSCI) gathered for a **Shabbat retreat** of meaning and connection with meaningful prayer and song, tikkun olam, and creativity. The sense of community was strong as ever on this 17th annual retreat!

Our 20s/30s cohort is going strong and having fun!

“Following a clergy-led Zoom with 20s/30s looking to be in community with one another, **NSCI generously hosted a dinner for 25 young adults at the East Bank Club in River North.** In lieu of paying for dinner, participants were encouraged to give tzedakah. This robust and dynamic group enjoyed a tasty, catered menu (complete with an Italian take on a Chanukah dessert). Up next, think pickleball, Shabbat dinner, volunteer opportunities, and more.” —*Miriam Dresner Carlitz*

“**Sips and Sups in the Sukkah brought together members of the NSCI community, ages 25–39.** We gathered at Rabbi Greene’s home and ate dinner and enjoyed drinks inside her sukkah. It was wonderful to reunite with friends who had been made over the years through youth group and religious school at NSCI and to also meet new friends—including Rabbi Leizman. This event offered an opportunity to engage with the community that helped us to develop our Jewish identities.” —*Lizzy Scheinkopf*



Adult Engagement

The Adult Engagement team welcomed 60 adults in their 50s and 60s to a celebratory summer gathering before an August Shabbat service. New connections were made and old ones renewed over great appetizers outside!

“**I woke up this morning with gratitude to you all,** and my fellow Adult Engagement colleagues, for your role in running such a wonderful pre-Shabbat event last night! The set-up was beautiful and the food/drink delicious. All of this, together with beautiful weather and a great turnout, made for a very memorable evening. I believe everyone there had a great time. Thank you!” —*Julie Gordon*

Senior Connections

Our senior congregants love to gather, schmooze, and learn together at Senior Connections! This year, guest speakers led discussions on subjects spanning the history of television talk shows to Jewish assimilation in popular culture today. Participants joined together an hour before each program for lunch and schmoozing. Whether digging deeper into the mind of Mozart or traveling through time to discuss the 10 years that Frank Lloyd Wright spent in Glencoe, Senior Connections has had an exciting year!



Come together to find strength in difficult times

In the weeks following the devastating October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas, we did what we do best: support each other and draw strength from our community. We created initiatives to keep our community safe, educated, and engaged in our response to the war and its reverberations here. We gathered online and in person for discussions about Israel, including learning about the historical context of Israel's wars; a discussion with an American-Israeli basketball star; and multiple gatherings for parents, led by Rabbi Lisa Greene, Rabbi Wendi Geffen, and psychologists, to discuss how to support ourselves and our children. During this difficult time, we proved we are indeed stronger as one.

Pictured right: Rabbi Wendi Geffen joined a JUF mission to Israel in December to bear witness to the devastation of war.



Hundreds gathered together at the JUF Solidarity Gathering for Israel on October 10th. Rabbi Wendi Geffen spoke powerfully at the start of the event and was followed by elected officials from the Chicago-land area. Our community showed up proudly for Israel and for each other.

NSCI tots made challah for Israel, raising over \$2,000 for American Friends of Magen David Adom.

We were proud to be one of the **congregational sponsors of an ambulance** donated to Magen David Adom in Israel.

Community members joined in on a **discussion about the war in Israel with Michael Oren**, American-Israeli diplomat, historian, and former Israeli ambassador to the United States.



Supporting our College Students

In the wake of October 7th, so many of our NSCI college students whose campuses already had tension involving anti-Israel sentiment found themselves confronted by a resultant antisemitism perpetuated by fellow students, faculty, and even university administration and leadership. Our NSCI clergy reached out to our college students to let them know that no matter where they are, they can always reach out to us for support. Rabbis Geffen and Greene held a Zoom gathering creating a safe space for them to connect with each other around their experiences, to ask questions, and garner strength from one another. On the Shabbat immediately after Thanksgiving, three college students, Daniela Ostrov, Louis Scheinfeld, and Julia Kerpel, spoke movingly at services of their personal experiences on campus in the face of antisemitism, their powerful advocacy against it, and, most importantly, of their firm commitments to and pride in their Judaism.

NSCI Marched for Israel and Against Antisemitism

“In 1987 I stood on the Mall in DC in a rally to support Soviet Jews.

In 2023, I stood on the Mall in DC, listening to Natan Sharansky speak on American Jewish solidarity during his journey as a Soviet refusenik and remind Israel that American Jewish solidarity continues.”

—Rabbi Lisa Greene

Pictured right: Rabbi Wendi Geffen and Rabbi Lisa Greene met up with congregants and joined nearly 300,000 people marching in Washington, DC, on November 14th in support of Israel.



NSCI Shopped for Israel

WNSCI ordered thousands of dollars worth of merchandise from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem to provide much-needed economic support to the Israeli artist community. Congregants showed up to shop for Israel on November 19th, and the event was a great success.

I wanted to reach out and express my thanks for your recent donation to the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. We appreciate the generosity of North Shore Congregation Israel, which enables the Museum to continue its meaningful work, especially in these challenging times. Here at the Museum we've been doing what we can, with the understanding that, as an institute of culture, we are in a unique position to offer stability, education, and distraction, especially to the families who have evacuated from the north and the south of Israel. We pivoted to provide virtual programming for children and adults, and we are accepting small amounts of visitors each day, free of charge, for guided tours of exhibitions that are located in safe areas of the Museum. We are most hopeful that we will have the opportunity to greet you in Jerusalem in the future, so you can visit the Museum in person.

With warm regards from Jerusalem,

Shoshana Aharon

Director of External Affairs and Development, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Come home to be inspired

NSCI is where we create and inspire each other as a community. Through culture, music, the arts, and travel we expand our horizons and strengthen our bonds.



Just a few of the exciting activities we experienced as a community this year:

- practicing the ancient Japanese art of Kintsugi connected to our spiritual preparations for the High Holy Days
- reading and writing poetry at the Chicago Botanic Garden
- studying Talmud
- learning mindfulness practices
- sharing our personal stories at Selichot Storytelling
- attending music concerts
- traveling to Israel for spring break

An Unforgettable Trip to Israel

In March, congregants traveled with Rabbi Wendi Geffen for a spring break family trip to Israel. Led by our friend, Israel guide and educator Mike Hollander, we traveled all around the country, taking in the incredible diversity of Israel, geographically, politically, culturally, artistically, ethnically, culinarily, and historically. Most importantly, our group, which ranged significantly in age and demographics, really became a family.

Some highlights include:

- celebrating the b'nei mitzvah of two of our young people at the Egalitarian Plaza of the Kotel
- floating in the Dead Sea
- being welcomed into the home of a Druze family in the Galilee
- swimming in waterfalls
- jeep touring in the Golan Heights
- visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the one day a year when all six Christian denominations participate in a ritual together
- discovering a 2,000-year-old oil lamp used by our Jewish ancestors fully intact on an archeological dig



IsraelNow Trip

In February, 29 NSCI eighth graders joined this Jewish Federation trip to Israel, along with Dr. Roberta Goodman as one of the staff people. They experienced an immersive, educational, emotional, and memorable taste of Israel and their Jewish heritage through a week-long, "hands-on" adventure. We hope to be able to visit a more peaceful Israel again soon!

A Year in Music

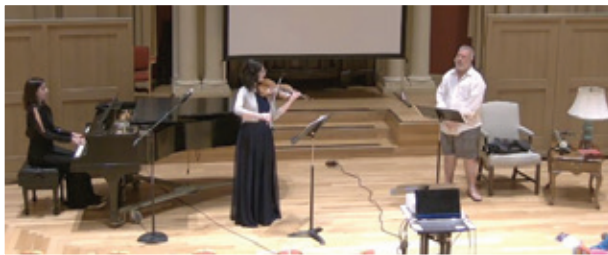
This year, Cantor David Goldstein curated 11 concerts ranging from jazz, classical, a cappella, klezmer, to contemporary, featuring a range of instruments from strings to wind and choral ensembles to operatic voices. Our Post Kabbalat Shabbat concert series was generously sponsored by Jim Stone, Madeleine and Harvey Plonsker, and Bobby Takiff. In addition to stellar concerts, our in-house *sh'lichei tzibbur* (leaders of prayer), Selah, inspired us with music on Shabbat and the High Holy Days. Shabbat services often included musicians from our community and members of our adult choir Shir Chadash. And our Jewish Jammers performed for Rabbi Jacob Leizman's installation. It's been an exciting year!



The June Bild Pinsof Memorial Music Scholarship

The June Bild Pinsof Memorial Music Scholarship reflects a core value of the NSCI community—that music is essential to the full expression of Jewish living. Each year a graduating high school senior who has consistently given their musical talents to this community is selected by the Cantor to receive this scholarship, which is funded by a grant from the June B. Pinsof Fund, directed by Madeleine Plonsker.

This year's June Bild Pinsof Memorial Music Scholarship was awarded to Hannah Dalinka and Alexie Zejer.



Commemoration of Kristallnacht

On November 9th we held a concert in commemoration of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. **Meet Me in a Moment** was a theatrical concert of Jewish classical music written and directed by Aviva Chertok. As each violin and piano piece was performed by musicians Aviva Chertok and Monika Miodragovic, actor Richard Shavzin brought to life the composers in between, allowing audiences to “meet” the people behind the music and learn what role their Jewish identities played in their art. Prior to the concert, congregant Ralph Samuel shared his parents' story of escaping Nazi-occupied Germany in response to Kristallnacht and surviving in Shanghai until the end of the war.

On November 12th, the 5th- and 6th-grade students of the Goodman Center for Jewish Education took part in **a special discussion with congregant Dr. Benjamin Garber**. He shared his story of escaping Nazi-occupied Poland at the end of WWII at only eight years old.

Violins of Hope

The Violins of Hope concert series features a collection of 70 painstakingly restored string instruments played by Jewish musicians before and during the Holocaust. In April, in partnership with JCC Chicago, NSCI was the first stop on the Illinois tour for Violins of Hope. The concert attracted an audience of about 700, sharing a message of hope, resistance, resilience, and unity.



“When I learned that when the JCC toured with Violins of Hope they found that very few audience members knew about the Holocaust, I knew I wanted to get involved. The fact that JCC Chicago was able to introduce the Holocaust to so many unknowing individuals makes me feel so inspired. During the six months that Violins of Hope traveled throughout Illinois they reached close to 200,000 people. JCC Chicago was the first group to have the violins talked about nationally on NBC's Today Show and NBC Nightly News where millions heard about them and the concert at NSCI. I'm proud to have played a part in bringing this important event to NSCI.” —**Laurie Lieberman**

Come home to learn and grow

Lifelong learning is at the heart of how we live our Judaism at NSCI. From tots to teens to adult b'nei mitzvah to seniors, our journey toward deeper understanding of our heritage is endless.



A Thriving Learning Community

The Goodman Center for Jewish Education is one of the largest congregational school programs on the North Shore. Our flexible and innovative approach to Jewish learning centers the growth of each individual student while nurturing a community in which everyone belongs.

Pictured right: Dr. Roberta Goodman with students from the GCJE



514

students



150+

new families in the
past three years



94

teen machoniks



25

preschool children



16

of our teachers and
27 teachers' children
are products of NSCI

Fiedler Fellows

We are thrilled to have so many teens to recognize at NSCI this year! Their dedication and energy have helped to make NSCI the warm and vibrant community it is. The Fiedler Fellow award honors our high school graduates with a \$1,000 scholarship from the Louis P. and Saerree K. Fiedler Fund to apply toward college tuition or any post-secondary program. This award recognizes our teens who have participated at NSCI all four years of high school.

This year's Fiedler Fellows were Adi Berman, Gabriel Cohen, Hannah Dalinka, Katherine McKeag, Spencer Nguyen, Gideon Rigler, Simon Shapiro, and Alexie Stetson Zejer.

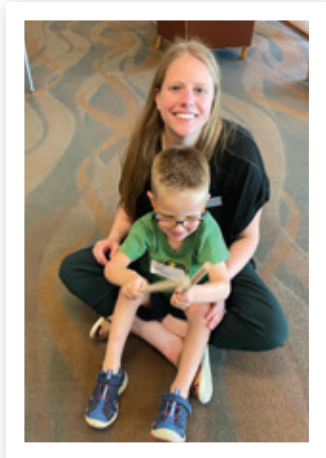
The Ilene H. Herst Youth Leadership Award

The Ilene H. Herst Youth Leadership Award recognizes exemplary leadership and great love for the NSCI community. Ilene Herst, long-time beloved Executive Director at NSCI, was recognized by her colleagues around the country as a consummate professional and caring Jewish leader. We offer this award annually in her name to a current high school junior who demonstrates strong leadership skills.

This year's Ilene H. Herst Youth Leadership Award was presented to Alexis Tack and Julia Fleischer.

"I grew up at NSCI. I remember running around Crown Hall during Purim carnivals, playing all of the games and eating hamantaschen. I think the feeling of community was formed by those early moments. NSCI creates a community that feels warm and welcoming, both emotionally and intellectually—figuring out ways for us to be Jewish in a way that really feels like it means something." —**Ben Reingold, Youth Engagement Coordinator**

"When I was a kid, the youth group program and retreats provided a fun social opportunity. It also allowed me to spend time with the clergy in an informal setting. These relationships made attending various synagogue events and services so much more enjoyable. To have a casual and meaningful relationship with these senior leaders made temple something I looked forward to, and those memories and experiences keep me connected today." —**Jacob Drescher**



Pictured left: Sara Horovitz, M.ed., Early Childhood Coordinator
Right: Rabbi Jacob Leizman



NSCI Tots

NSCI Tots are keeping busy!

- launched Growing Community in partnership with jBaby, to support families with infants and toddlers
- parent advisory committee has grown and is very invested in creating meaningful programming
- Chanukah kits were introduced and raised money to support future programming

"I love working with tots because I get to witness them begin their Jewish journeys with joyous, immersive, and multimodal Shabbat and holiday experiences. It is inspiring to see them explore Judaism on their own terms, without any pressure or expectation, singing, dancing, playing, tasting, feeling, and more. I also appreciate the relationships that tot families build with one another, forming a foundation of support and friendship as they figure out Jewish life in the context of their families and NSCI." —**Rabbi Jacob Leizman**

Youth and Family Community Committee (YFCC)

"This past year, the YFCC has focused on engaging whole families in the Goodman Family Center—not just the children, but parents as well. Our Family Shabbat Experiences for families of K-5th graders had an amazing response. Building on that, we are working on engaging parents at each specific grade level through our 'Coffee with the Clergy' events and engaging a committee of parents to help communicate about special events for their grade. The kids already know each other, and our goal is that the parents get to know each other better as well."



Lisa Erlich

Adult Education

Adult learners are actively involved in the life of the congregation, taking regular class series like Hot Topics: What Does Judaism Have to Say About ..., Mindful or Mindless Life, and Wise Aging. We've hosted expert guest speakers and teachers covering topics such as Winston Churchill and his history relating to the Jewish people, and our Davis Family Forum lecture led by Yair Rosenberg on why people don't understand antisemitism. We've introduced a new adult Hebrew class, and our adult b'nei mitzvah students are progressing through their two-year course smoothly. There is always more to learn!

Adult B'nei Mitzvah

Rabbi Greene has been guiding Adult B'nei Mitzvah since 2000! This year, seventeen adults are learning Hebrew from aleph bet, exploring prayer, theology, and more, finding meaning in their own Jewish journeys and creating community as they meet each Monday night. They are working hard and looking forward to their group service on June 11, 2024, on Shavuot!

Come home to make a difference

Making the world a better place is part of our DNA here at NSCI. Whether donating winter coats or children's school supplies, packing sandwiches, or helping resettle a refugee family, congregants roll up their sleeves and participate in the sacred act of tikkun olam, playing our small part in healing the world.



Spring Mitzvah Fair

Our Spring Mitzvah Fair, in honor of Rabbi Ryan Daniels, featured special guests Rabbi Mary Zamore, Executive Director of the Women's Rabbinic Network, and Momma Chef, cookbook author and founder of Momma Chef's Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry, with exciting discussions and a delicious food demonstration. Sponsoring partners and participating organizations led interactive activities for volunteers and attendees to provide food, blankets, care packages, and more to those in need around the Chicago-land area. We also supported Operation Backpack by providing personalized, individually wrapped packages of school supplies to students from struggling families.



Kehilah Award

This year's Kehilah Award was presented to the 2022-2023 volunteers of the year, Karen Kohn, Cecile Levy, and Nancy Mantynband.



Feed the Homeless

For nearly three decades NSCI's Feed the Homeless program has helped to feed thousands of people around Chicago. We provide 1,000 hot meals and brown bag lunches monthly. Our Feed the Homeless initiative has taken on a new project; in addition to our usual snack packs that go to Ronald McDonald house, they are now putting together 200 snack packs for Fill a Heart 4 Kids, an organization that provides homeless, at risk, and foster children food, critical necessities, life skills, and educational support. With a strong and loyal volunteer base, Feed the Homeless is consistently working to help those in need.

“NSCI is a place where you can make things happen; it's a congregation that wants things to happen. We go to services every Friday night. It's a time to reflect, to really feel my connection to God. Every day is filled with programs that I coordinate and I'm busy with, and Friday night is a time to be still, reflect, and feel. To be part of the beauty of Shabbat. We are regular customers!”

—Lois Davis, founder of Feed the Homeless and Senior Connections

Pictured right: Lois Davis (center) with friends assembling snack packs for Fill a Heart 4 Kids





Beth Emet Soup Kitchen

Three times per year NSCI congregants cook and serve dinner and lunches at the Beth Emet Soup Kitchen.

Thanksgiving Baskets

For over a decade NSCI families have come together the weekend before Thanksgiving to provide Thanksgiving meals to those in need—and this year we broke our own record! In the past, we prepared 200 baskets to share with the families of Whittier Elementary School. This year, Rabbi Leizman and the Thanksgiving Baskets team set out to not only provide for these families, but to provide a Thanksgiving meal for EVERY family at Whittier Elementary. 271 baskets were made and delivered! Now that's tikkun olam in action!



Adult Mitzvah Corps

The Adult Mitzvah Corps has been helping others for 18 years, volunteering with a charitable organization one weekday a month. This year, we helped to organize books at Bernie's Book Bank, sorted and packaged goods at GiveNKind, and matched gifts to their recipients for the JCFS Holiday Gift Drive!



100
volunteers



Between **4** and **12**
volunteers per event



12 Adult Mitzvah Corps
and **2** senior programs
with WNSCI per year

Family Promise

This year we opened our doors and our hearts again for two weeks in June to provide housing, meals, support, and tutoring for families in need through Family Promise. Nearly 85% of families transition out of homelessness after three to four months in this program. We are proud to be part of these efforts alongside other North Shore congregations.

Mitzvah Garden

Each spring through fall, NSCI volunteers and staff lovingly grow hundreds of pounds of fresh produce to donate to the Moraine Township Food Pantry and The Ark Northwest. While there were many bountiful harvests from the Mitzvah Garden this year, on one Sunday in particular Bob Levy and his Mitzvah Garden volunteers packed and delivered 20 bags of lettuce, arugula, spinach, and sweet peppers to the Ark Northwest and the Moraine Township Food Pantry.

Hands of Chesed

In 2023 over 110 acts of kindness were performed by members of our NSCI community for other members of our community at difficult times: check-in calls; visits; delivery of flowers, cookies, or dinner; grocery shopping; company at Shabbat services; lunch with folks who get out less; challah for Rosh Hashanah; and more!

"I received the generous gift you sent for Rosh Hashanah—two round loaves of challah and two candles. What a kind and thoughtful thing to do. Hands of Chesed has been so welcome all throughout my husband's illness and death. This is a wonderful organization and I thank you for all your wonderful and meaningful gifts when least expected." **—Bette Kahn**



Snapshot of Our Congregation

We are proud to have welcomed 63 new member households in 2023, contributing to a total of 1,274 member households!



Communities Represented

Wilmette, Highland Park, Chicago, Glencoe, Deerfield, Wheeling, Northbrook, Glenview, Lake Forest, Winnetka, Lincolnshire, Riverwoods, Libertyville, Evanston, Skokie, Vernon Hills, Bannockburn, Riverwoods, Highwood, Buffalo Grove, Lake Bluff, Arlington Heights, Gurnee, Prospect Heights, Lindenhurst, Barrington, Mundelein, Northfield, Hawthorn Woods, plus many out-of-state congregants

Mazel Tov!

We celebrated:



61
b'nei mitzvah

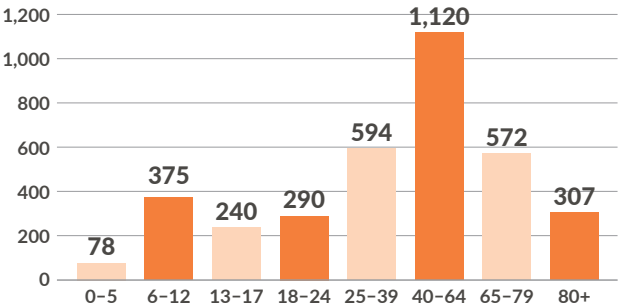


21
weddings



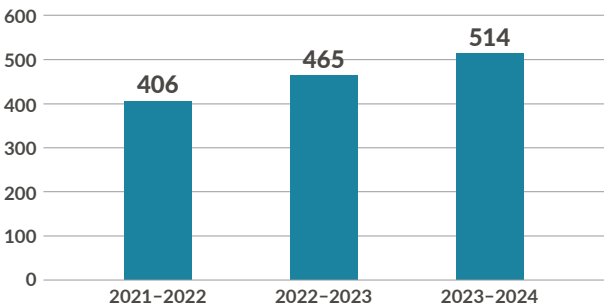
40
baby namings

Number of Congregants By Age



Goodman Center for Jewish Education

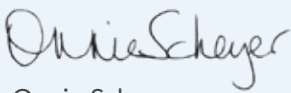
Total Students



Investing in Our Home, Our Community, and Our Future

This year, we came together to ensure that NSCI continues to be the bedrock of our Jewish community. With inspired generosity, we brought the *Imagine the Possible* campaign to a successful conclusion and celebrated together as the project revealed itself. Beyond the campaign, your support of the Annual Appeal, the General Fund, the Spring Event, at which we celebrated Rabbi Daniels's service to our congregational family, and the Legacy Circle continue to ensure that NSCI will thrive, now and into the future. NSCI provides the connection, support, and comfort we look for as we celebrate joy and navigate through darkness. Indeed, this year, your generosity and graciousness have proven yet again that "together" is the most powerful way we stay strong as a community.

With gratitude,



Onnie Scheyer

First Vice President & Chair of Development

Imagine the Possible Campaign and Construction Leadership

We are deeply grateful to the many leaders in our congregation who have given their time, talents, and enthusiasm to realize the campaign from its inception to today.

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Our deepest thanks to the following who made an investment in our community by contributing to the 2022-23 Annual Appeal and/or the NSCI General Fund. In addition to supporting our operations, your gifts helped ensure all who wished to participate at NSCI could do so, regardless of their financial circumstances. We are also grateful to those who've already contributed to this year's 2023-24 Annual Appeal or General Fund (listed next year).

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Thank you to our donors to the Spring Mitzvah Fair in honor of Rabbi Daniels's service to North Shore Congregation Israel.

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Treasurer's Report

BY MICAH SINGERMAN,
NSCI TREASURER

UNDERLYING THE FINANCIAL

HEALTH of NSCI is the strength of our community, our Jewish values, the character of our congregants, our dedicated clergy and professional staff, and lay leadership.

Thanks to their stewardship, NSCI supported its goals and missions in a fiscally prudent manner and ended the 2022–2023 year with a balanced budget. The independent financial review of our 2022–2023 budget has been successfully completed and accepted. NSCI is a debt-free congregation.

During the last fiscal year, NSCI successfully completed the *Imagine the Possible* campaign and saw the realization of the planned improvements to our shared spaces. The renovated

Frank Memorial Hall, Rebecca K. Crown Social Hall, offices, conference rooms, enhanced security vestibules, and gift shop will allow NSCI to continue growing in its service and program offerings to our community. In the spring, the final landscaping work will be completed, further expanding our capacity to host mitzvah celebrations of all sizes. In addition to the physical improvements made as part of the campaign, last year we completed maintenance and repairs to both the roofs of the main sanctuary and of Crown Hall. Through the hard work and dedication of our building committee, all this work will be completed on time and on budget.

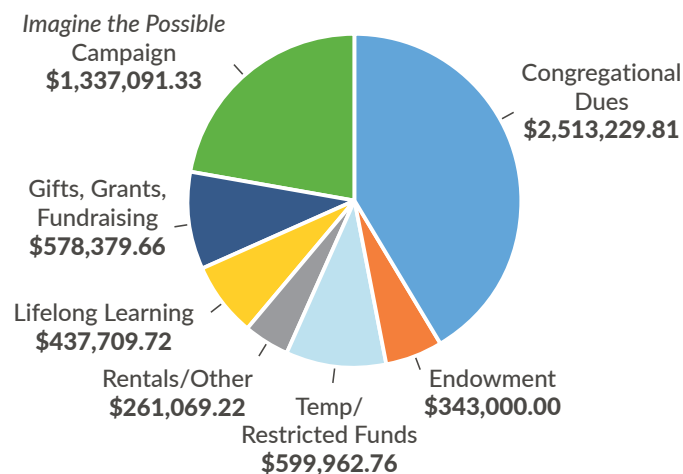
As we look to the current fiscal year, and on into the future, NSCI continues to support and grow our offerings in religious service, community programming, early

childhood engagement, religious school, adult engagement, tikkun olam initiatives, and so much more. From a financial standpoint, each program and offering is carefully planned for and is undertaken with an understanding of its budgetary impact.

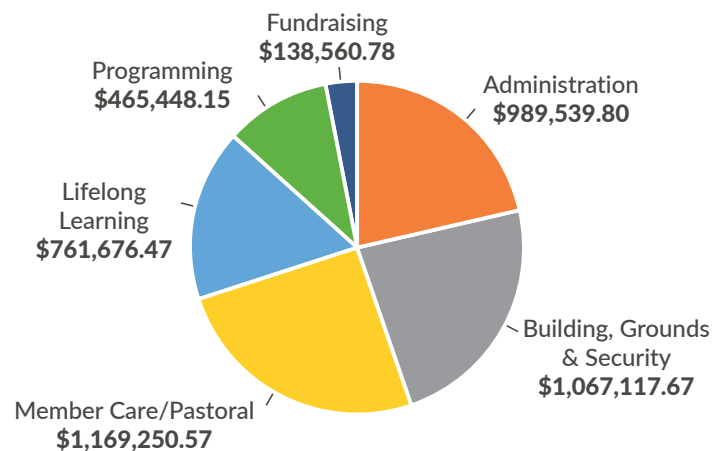
To continue the good work that NSCI does for our families and community, we rely on each member of our amazing congregation for their generosity and participation. It is through direct support via our dues, participation in the Annual Appeal, and contributions to other funds, that will allow NSCI to continue delivering all that we do in a financially prudent manner.

Thank you for belonging to and supporting the growing NSCI community yesterday, today, and tomorrow. ■

Revenue: \$6,070,442.50



Expense: \$4,591,593.44*



*An additional \$1,435,961 was spent on construction or the purchase of equipment (fixed assets).

Building and Grounds Projects

- **Rebecca K. Crown Social Hall Roof:** Complete removal and replacement of the existing roof
- **Rebecca K. Crown Social Hall Skylight:** Complete removal and replacement of existing skylight
- **Tree Removal:** Removed numerous trees that reached the end of their useful life
- **Tree Planting:** Planted over a dozen new trees along the main entrance
- **Parking Lot Drainage:** Replaced drainage basin in the north parking lot
- **Parking Lot Signage:** Added traffic control signs to improve traffic flow
- **Building Automation System:** Integrated new HVAC equipment with the existing building automation system
- **Security Cameras:** Began preliminary planning for upgrading existing analog cameras with new digital equipment, and adding a number of new cameras for improved surveillance in and outside the building
- **Upgraded Lighting to LED:** Replaced hundreds of fluorescent light bulbs and fixtures throughout the building with energy-saving LEDs



**NORTH SHORE
CONGREGATION
ISRAEL**

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In Memorium

Rabbi Herbert Bronstein (z"l),
who served as senior rabbi
of North Shore Congregation
Israel for a quarter of a century.
May his memory be a blessing
and inspiration to us all.

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