



# Collaboration & Connection

## How PJ Library Expands the Reach of JCCs

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JCC GREATER BOSTON has made PJ Library a linchpin in an outreach strategy focused

on young families living on the outskirts of its catchment area. These families are often a little too far away to be thinking about the JCC as a convenient option for an early childhood program, day camp, or any number of other opportunities that wouldn't even make it onto their radar simply due to distance.

The story of Boston's JCC could just as well describe Milwaukee, Brooklyn, Ann Arbor, Pittsburgh, or Tampa. It's a story of how Harold Grinspoon's vision created a gateway for young parents making their first steps in a life of engagement with people who spark Jewish consciousness in their families. This happens through books as well as partnerships with great organizations devoted to strengthening Jewish communities from coast to coast – institutions like JCCs.

With PJ Library as the critical connector, and in partnership with the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) of Greater Boston (the city's remarkable Jewish federation), JCC Greater Boston has deployed family engagement professionals across the region to meet, engage with, and involve PJ Library families in their own neighborhoods. Often, these young families are connecting with the Jewish community for the very first time.

The kinds of programs and events that the JCCs' outreach professionals bring to such outlying communities include holiday celebrations, cultural activities, storytelling, films, Mommy & Me programs, after-school activities, and so much more. JCCs are no longer just the physical spaces and institutions with which they have been so reflexively associated. A JCC is an array of programs and inspired professionals that don't need a building to touch people's lives and engage families in Jewish life. Thanks to PJ Library, they are doing it with remarkable success in growing numbers of communities. Boston is a great example, where PJ Library has made it possible for the JCC to add more than 200 families per month to its roster over the last three years. Through follow-up and continuing engagement, JCC Greater Boston has increased registration for its day camp, and its cultural and recreational programs are growing by leaps and bounds. It is a burgeoning revolution in Jewish engagement.

“*PJ Library is one of the most outstanding outreach and family engagement resources we have at our disposal.*”

That is a repeating refrain at 30 JCCs across the continent that serve as the lead local partner in the JCC Movement's work with PJ Library and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. I've even said it myself. And over the years, as both JCCs and PJ Library continue to adapt to meet the needs of young Jewish families, I am sure I will repeat it again and again.

JCC  
Greater Boston  
hosted their 2019  
Wacky Purim  
celebration at  
the local mall's  
play area.



*JCC Association of North America leads and connects the JCC Movement: JCCs, camps, and JWB Jewish chaplains advance and enrich North American Jewish life.*