

# Pointing Toward the Future



Jewish Federation  
of Greater Philadelphia

## A Letter to the Jewish Community of Greater Philadelphia

Like many legacy nonprofits, the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia has long rested on the assumption that our deep communal roots were strong enough to last the test of time. However, with changes taking place all around, in philanthropic trends, an explosion of options in personalized philanthropy, technology altering how individuals connect and with the Jewish community, these assumptions no longer hold.

Twenty-first century Jewry requires inspired thinking rather than rote learning. It requires an awareness of the elements that make Jewish living joyful rather than obligatory. The Jewish Federation must be relevant, meaningful to those involved, trustworthy, and transparent. The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia will become a high performing, cutting-edge, twenty-first-century organization. I am honored to have been chosen to lead this charge.

As President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, I am committed to fostering an environment where we celebrate and acknowledge all of our skills and cultivate an environment for growth. All of our colleagues must have clarity on our goals and the role each of us plays in achieving them. Finally, our culture must be one that fosters the utmost of respect, builds trust, ensures a safe workplace and embraces everyone's unique talents, diversity, and perspectives.

To meet these challenges, needs, and opportunities, the Jewish Federation will rededicate itself with a new strategic focus. To do so, we will soon embark on creating Jewish Federation's first strategic plan in over a decade. I am pleased to announce that Ben Kirshner and Mark Fishman will lead this committee that will represent the diverse geographic and demographic characteristics as well as, thoughts and opinions of our stakeholders. We expect to get started in the next few weeks with this vital task.

The strategic plan will realign and restructure how the Jewish Federation conducts its business internally and how it relates to its historic funding partners. This plan will inform the Jewish Federation's operating values, staffing structure, its decision-making processes, volunteer and donor engagement strategies, and choices for how we work to impact the community. We are committed to taking additional steps to be even more inclusive of the rich diversity of our staff and the Jewish community at large in terms of differing backgrounds, experiences, interests, challenges, etc. We will welcome feedback so we can listen, learn, and grow.

The Jewish Federation has stood firmly for more than 120 years. Today we will not waiver. We will stand together and move this organization forward. I am excited for our future and can't wait to see what we will achieve together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Balaban'.

Michael Balaban,  
*President & CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia*