



TWENTY YEARS LATER: A COMMUNITY'S RESILIENCE



A Message from JEF's Past and Current Executive Directors and Board Presidents

Dear Friends,

Twenty years ago this week, Hurricane Katrina forever changed our community. The storm scattered families across the country, devastated our neighborhoods, and tested the very survival of Jewish life in Louisiana. Yet from that devastation emerged something remarkable — proof of our community's unbreakable bonds and the vital role JEF plays as your trusted partner in philanthropy.

In the storm's immediate aftermath, while families were still searching for safe ground and wondering if they would ever come home, JEF mobilized as your community's "rainy-day" fund. We distributed **\$1 million from our General Fund to the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans**. Along with millions more raised by the Jewish Federations of North America, JEF granted an additional **\$400,000 specifically for our synagogues**. This comprehensive support helped our Jewish community rebuild, recover, and return.

JEF's ability to respond immediately with substantial resources proves why endowment building matters. We were not just managing charitable funds. We were stewarding the financial foundation that enabled our community's survival.

Today, JEF manages over \$111 million in community assets — more than triple our pre-Katrina resources — and our role remains the same. We are your community's financial foundation, ready to respond to the next crisis should the need arise while investing strategically in the ongoing vitality of Jewish life across Louisiana.

We hope never again to face a challenge like Hurricane Katrina. But we know that communities need more than hope. The endowments you build, the General Fund you support, and the legacy gifts you plan create the financial capacity to act when action matters most.

THANK YOU! To every donor who trusted JEF with their charitable investments before, during, and after Katrina, your philanthropy built the foundation that enabled our community's survival and renewal.

THANK YOU! To the families who chose to return and rebuild here, your commitment created the vibrant Jewish community we celebrate today.

THANK YOU! To the organizations that serve our community through programs, education, and support services, your work transforms our collective philanthropy into meaningful impact.

THANK YOU! To the Baton Rouge, Houston, and Jewish communities nationwide who opened their doors and hearts to our displaced families — your hospitality sustained us when we needed it most.

Twenty years after Katrina, JEF remains honored to serve as your trusted partner in securing Louisiana's Jewish future.

Always here for our community,

Sandy Levy
Executive Director, 1991-2018

Ellen Yellin
Board President, 2004-2006

Bobby Garon
Executive Director, 2019-Present

Bob Brickman
Board President, 2025-2026