



CAJE

Miami's Leo Martin March of the Living
(Miami MOTL)

Strategic Plan

2020 | 5780



CAJE is a subsidiary agency of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation

A Letter from

Mojdeh Khaghan Danial

Chair of March of the Living Strategic Planning Committee



In 1988, the March of the Living Program was established in Miami as a six-month educational experience for Jewish high school students. The experience begins with educational sessions to teach teens about the Holocaust, the birth of the State of Israel, and the value of pluralism. It culminates in a two-week immersive experience as part of the International March of the Living in Poland and Israel during *Yom Ha'Shoah* and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*. The Miami March, subsequently renamed the Leo Martin March of the Living, concludes with a post-trip gathering to reflect on and integrate the experience. **In each of the last five years, an average of 115 Miami-Dade high school seniors, which is 10-15% of the eligible demographic, and 18-24 volunteer staff, participated in the Miami March, which is managed through the Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), Miami.** To date there are approximately 2,300 alumni.

After three decades, as we serve new generations of teens who will no longer have first-hand connections with Holocaust survivors, **it is incumbent upon CAJE and the Miami Jewish community to make it possible for every Jewish teen in Miami-Dade to have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful and financially accessible March or Jewish heritage experience.**

In the words of Gene Greenzweig z"l, Miami March of the Living founder, *"I believe that a Jew must have three pairs of eyes that represent **memory, action, and vision**. One pair always looking at the past and understanding its lessons (memory). The second pair looking at the present, applying the lessons of the past, and laying the foundation for the future (action). The third, focusing on what kind of future we wish to create, based on the lessons of the past and present (vision). Maybe that is the most important lesson we can teach the world."*

Guided by the wisdom of our founder and informed by the voices of more than 100 of our community stakeholders, I am honored to present **these four strategic priorities** on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee along with its Education and Sustainability Subcommittees:

- 1. Adopt the proposed new Vision, Mission, and Goals statement**
- 2. Optimize our current March of the Living experience**
- 3. Research and pilot an alternative March experience**
- 4. Launch a new alumni engagement strategy**

Tremendous gratitude and *kol hakavod* to the extraordinary team of women leaders who made this study possible—Rabbi Efrat Zarren-Zohar and Carly Orshan of CAJE, Laura Koffsky, Sustainability Chair, Tara Solomiany, Education Chair, and Debbie Joseph of Debbie Joseph Consulting.

It is our expectation that the successful implementation of these four recommendations will secure the Miami March of the Living program and build a stronger foundation for our teens who are ultimately responsible for leading us into a vibrant Jewish tomorrow built on memories of our past, actions in our present, and dreams for a bright future.

Sincerely,



Mojdeh Khaghan Danial

Chair, March of the Living Strategic Planning Committee



MEMORY

ACTION

VISION





"I have found a new sense of pride for my Jewish identity and community. I hope to continue to embrace it and allow it to grow as I move on to college and the future."

- Participant 2019

A Letter from

Morrie Siegel & Rabbi Efrat Zarren-Zohar

CAJE Chair

CAJE Executive Director



The impact of Miami's Leo Martin March of the Living and the International March on its participants and their communities has been exceptional. No other experiential Holocaust education program has affected so many young people in such a profound manner. Since 1988, more than 260,000 participants from 52 countries — students, survivors, educators and world leaders, Jews and non-Jews alike — have marched down the same 3-kilometer path leading from Auschwitz to Birkenau on *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Memorial Day) as a tribute to Jewish victims of the Holocaust. **In these 31 years, the Miami delegation has sent over 2,300 students.**

We like to characterize Miami's Leo Martin March of the Living as an **identity-building program that uses Poland and Israel as a platform to study the history of the Holocaust and experience the beauty as well as the complexity of Israel.**

As in every year, the 2019 Miami cohort of 180 students and staff started their journey on the March of the Living in November 2018 by participating in a variety of educational sessions to prepare them for their immersive experience in Poland and Israel. They explored what **Jewish life was like before the Holocaust, the history and evolution of antisemitism* and the intricacies of being an upstander, bystander, perpetrator, or collaborator.**

These elements continued to be infused into the curriculum when we came together as a community and traveled throughout Poland to bear witness.

Students also learned about the challenges Israel faces, both physically from terrorism and rocket fire, as well as politically from BDS, anti-Zionist, and anti-Israel activists, particularly as it will relate to their college campus experiences. **The March challenges them to consider what it means to be an upstander for the Jewish people today.**

*CAJE adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) suggestion to spell antisemitism as one word. IHRA's concern is that the hyphenated spelling allows for the possibility of something called 'Semitism,' which not only legitimizes a form of pseudo-scientific racial classification that was thoroughly discredited by association with Nazi ideology, but also divides the term, stripping it from its meaning of opposition and hatred toward Jews.

Finally, **Miami's March of the Living is one of the few that is dedicated to a pluralistic experience.** What that means is teens from Orthodox/Traditional backgrounds meet, march and discuss issues and ideas with teens from Progressive/Liberal cultural backgrounds. These conversations are often life-changing, as many teens and adults attest. In this way, **the March strengthens our teens' experience and commitment to the values of *Klal Yisrael* (Jewish unity) and *Ahavat Yisrael* (Love for every Jew).**

We believe the lessons learned by participating on Miami's Leo Martin March of the Living are invaluable and irreplaceable. That is why, encouraged by our milestone 30th anniversary, CAJE and the Leo Martin March of the Living are proud to present this first-ever strategic plan with one goal in mind:

To provide this unique, impactful experience to every Miami Jewish teen.



Morrie Siegel
CAJE Chair



Rabbi Efrat Zarran-Zohar
CAJE Executive Director



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

We launched our strategic planning process in June 2018 by engaging the professional services of Debbie Joseph Consulting to work alongside our Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Mojdeh Khaghan Danial. We selected a Planning Task Force, set a timeline and roadmap, and gathered 40 community stakeholders together for a Strategic Planning Kick-Off meeting where we identified these five key focus areas and guiding strategic questions:

- 1. VISION:** What are the vision, mission, and goals of the Miami March of the Living? What makes the March of the Living a Jewish program? Are there certain values we wish to imbue in our teenagers as a result of their participation in the March of the Living, and if so, what are they?
- 2. TEENS:** Who is our target audience and how and where do we most effectively reach them?
- 3. SURVIVORS:** How will we continue to provide a meaningful and relevant experience for our teenagers in the years ahead without first-hand survivor testimony and personal interaction with Holocaust survivors?
- 4. EDUCATION:** What should our formal and informal educational goals and content be in order to meet the evolving needs of *GenerationZ /iGen* teen students? What are we trying to convey to our participants through the Poland visit, through the Israel visit, and the connection between the two?
- 5. OPERATIONS AND SUCCESS:** What staff and volunteer structure will best serve the goals and mission of the Miami March of the Living? How will we financially sustain the Miami March of the Living in the years to come? How will we measure the success of the program?

To confidently answer these guiding strategic questions and ultimately develop the four strategic priorities set forth in this plan, our consultant, Strategic Planning Committee, Education Working Group, and Sustainability Working Group, engaged in a thorough research process that spanned twelve months and involved more than 100 Jewish leaders and March of the Living alumni. **These leaders included survivors, second generation family members, parents of participants, alumni, rabbis, and congregational lay leaders, day school families, and professionals, former Leo Martin March of the Living professionals, and colleagues of our founder, Gene Greenzweig z"l.** We engaged with them at retreats and meetings, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups.

Our research was four-pronged:

1. We set out to learn as much as we could about our own successful practices so we could make recommendations to optimize our current March of the Living experience.
2. We surveyed the professional leadership of every other March of the Living program and interviewed seven of them to learn best practices in the field to ensure the Miami March continues to be a premier program.
3. We researched alternative teen Poland programs so that again, the Miami March can serve as an example to all.
4. Most importantly, we conducted extensive stakeholder research as described above.

This strategic plan emerges from the diversity of its group of participants and it reflects the depth of their passion for the March. **This strategic plan incorporates national research on impacting the lives of Jewish teens, as well as best practices in the field of immersive teen Holocaust and Jewish identity building experiences.** We thank everyone for sharing their voices to help shape this plan.





“We need to show the world who the Jews are and why we are still here!”

- Participant 2017

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1

Adopt New Miami MOTL Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement

During the course of this strategic plan, we created and adopted this new Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement to guide our program, its content, and organizational decisions moving forward.

Vision

We envision that the Miami MOTL will develop educated leaders, connected to each other and the Jewish community, who will act as upstanders to antisemitism, anti-Zionism, bigotry, and indifference throughout their lives.

Mission

The Miami MOTL educates the next generation of leaders to strengthen their Jewish identity, remember the Holocaust, act as witnesses, and respond to intolerance and antisemitism, ensuring a strong Jewish future in America, Israel, and around the world.

Goals

- To prepare participants to be the next generation of witnesses and serve as the voice of our Holocaust survivors' plaintive message: "Never Forget."
- To provide opportunities for participants to enjoy Israel, learn about it historically and contemporaneously, as well as consider its role in their own Jewish identities.
- To empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and ability to respond to contemporary antisemitism, anti-Zionism, intolerance and hatred on college campuses.
- To create a pluralistic environment where each participant can comfortably express personal Jewish identity, explore spirituality, and examine one's higher purpose.
- To model how immersion in deep Jewish learning and active participation with the March community can enrich teens' lives and prepare them for a lifetime of engagement with the greater Jewish community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2

Optimize the Miami MOTL Current Experience

Following this strategic plan, we will optimize our current program by aligning all aspects with our new Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement. These strategic priorities include three key tactics:

A

To update our educational curriculum to ensure we are educating to today's generation and aligning our education to our new vision, mission, and goals

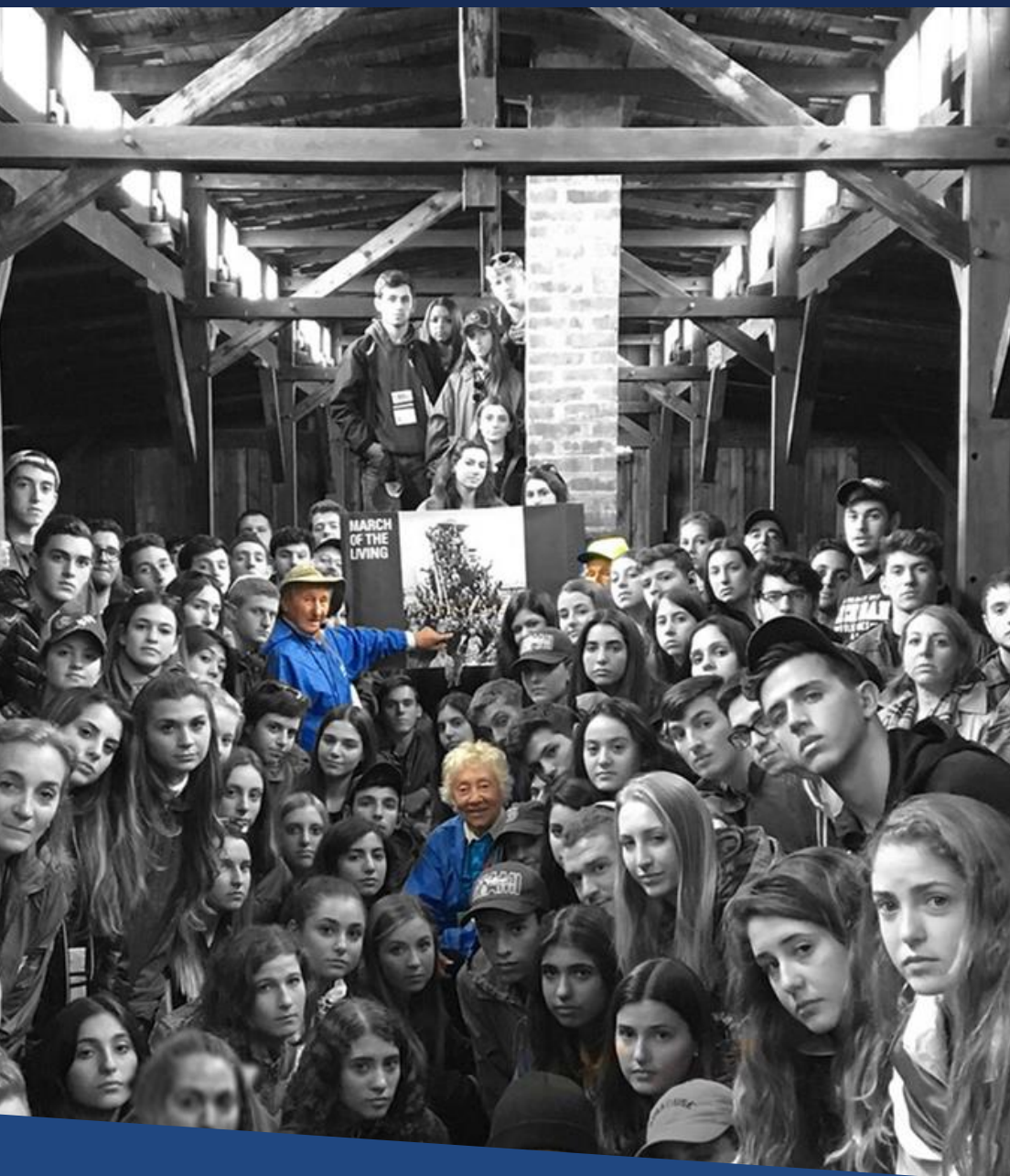
B

To engage with survivors and survivor testimony to plan for the near future when there will no longer be living Holocaust survivors

C

To recruit and retain expert professional and volunteer leaders and staff who will deliver the high-quality educational experience we require






**“The past is mine to keep.
The future is yours.”**

- Survivor to teens, 2018



EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

- A. **Evaluate and modify** educational content to ensure it is aligned with new Vision, Mission, and Goals Statement
- B. **Stay current on teen research** and modify educational content to ensure it remains relevant for teens today
- C. **Rebalance the curricular content** more equally around Jewish identity, building community among the teens, Holocaust education, and Israel education



ENGAGEMENT WITH SURVIVORS AND SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

- A. **Partner closely with local survivors** to chronicle their memories, actions, and vision to prepare for the time when future generations of teens will no longer have first-hand connections with them
- B. **Empower second generations** to deliver their parents' stories and perpetuate their plaintive message of "Never Again"
- C. **Invest in digital technology** to share and disseminate survivor testimony while on the ground in Poland

LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING

- A. **Determine and implement methods** for better recruitment of volunteer staff
- B. **Identify ways to compensate** expert volunteer educators
- C. **Develop a new and improved staff-training program** to better prepare staff to model the values of memory, action, vision, pluralism, inclusion, and community
- D. **Develop tools for the staff** to learn how to work together and work within the program



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3



Research and Pilot an Alternative March Experience

There is a widespread community passion for and commitment to providing a **March of the Living** experience to as many Miami-Dade teens as possible. For many years, we have considered an alternative to the March that is accessible to a greater number of teens, and now is the time to proceed.

As a result of this strategic plan, we will research and pilot an alternative March experience for one bus of teens in the next two years with significant cost reduction, fully supported by a team of expert staff and volunteers.

Additionally, we will continue to offer the current March of the Living experience in conjunction with the International March, reevaluating the outcomes to determine an appropriate strategy thereafter. There are many reasons to undertake action now. **Piloting an alternative to the March will not only provide this transformative experience to more Miami teens, but also offer a compelling fundraising strategy as we intentionally open the doors for more teens to participate.**

The successful realization of this strategic priority is contingent upon full collaboration between lay and professional leaders, as well as the securing of resources for sufficient staff and support to implement a successful pilot.

**“The March empowered me to really believe
in the words Never Again!”**

- Participant, 2018



**“The March was truly the most impactful
experience of my life thus far!”**

- Participant, 2018

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4

Launch a New Alumni Engagement Initiative

As a result of this strategic plan, **we will launch a comprehensive alumni engagement initiative that includes establishing an endowment fund to provide long-term financial sustainability.** The overall goal of this alumni engagement initiative is to connect our 2,300+ alumni with one another, with the March community, and with the greater Miami Jewish community, reinvigorating their commitment to the March and giving them an opportunity to support it financially. The success of this new engagement initiative is contingent upon full professional and lay leader collaboration and the addition of a dedicated staff person to oversee it.

This strategic priority has three distinct tactics:

- A. **To compile complete and consistent records** for the past 30 years by building and organizing a reliable data management system
- B. **To identify how we might serve our alumni community** with educational and personal support and understand how our alumni community might support the community at large
- C. **To create a robust support system for alumni students** to build on their knowledge, skills and ability to respond to contemporary antisemitism, anti-Zionism, intolerance and hatred on college campuses and in their lives.





We are optimistic these four strategic priorities will position and strengthen us over the next decades in engaging Miami's Jewish teens through the Miami MOTL and an alternative Jewish heritage experience.

There will be challenges ahead; however, the transformational experience we will continue to provide to the next generations certainly outweighs all obstacles. As a community committed to developing educated leaders, connected to each other and the Jewish community, who will act as upstanders to antisemitism, anti-Zionism, bigotry, and indifference throughout their lives, **we pledge to make the Miami March an accessible opportunity and reality for all eligible Miami Jewish teens.**





During the course of this Strategic Plan for this important program that tries to combat hate, we have sadly seen a rise in antisemitic hate crimes, with the ADL reporting 1,879 acts of antisemitism in 2018 in the US alone. From neo-Nazi marchers in Charlottesville to leaders of the 2018 Chicago Dyke March saying Zionists could not be feminists, to the brutal murders at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and Poway, and the recent attacks in Monsey, New York, hatred of Jews is once again on the rise.

Tragically, we are all witnesses once again. On Miami's March of the Living, we have always been witnesses to the atrocities of the *Shoah* and have proudly proclaimed, "Never Again." But now, more than ever, **"Never Again" cannot just be a passive phrase of remembrance; it must become a battle cry and commitment to take real action.**

In our educational sessions, students learn about the fragility of democratic societies. **Our teens practice maintaining a community that is built upon tolerance, pluralism, and *K'vod HaBriot* (respect for the dignity of all people).** Students also study how to take action to ensure we remain a strong Jewish community that will not back down to hate of any kind.

The March of the Living program teaches us all that we have an opportunity to be upstanders against the injustices we see in society. The time is NOW to step up, speak out, and push for change.

Here are four suggestions on how to move forward with action and intention:

1. Speak up if you witness injustice – become an upstander;
2. Send a message to your elected officials urging them to take a stand against antisemitism, anti-Zionism, white supremacy, and domestic terrorism;
3. Strengthen your connection to the Jewish community by wearing your Jewish identity with pride and doing *mitzvot*;
4. Donate your time and dollars to Jewish causes.

With these action steps, we intentionally infuse our lives with Jewishness. When we stand together and care for each other, we as a community are much stronger. As the Talmud declares: ***Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Ba'Zeh* – All Jews are responsible for one another** (B.T. Shavuot 39a). Today more than ever, these words must be a guiding principle for our teens and for us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carly Orshan".

Carly Orshan

Director of CAJE's Teen Department and March of the Living



"We will never forget our past; we will grow as one people; we will lead the world across all fronts, and we will continue the Jewish faith honorably, simply because it's in our blood. L'dor V'dor!"

- Participant 2019

"I have never been more proud to be a Jew in my life!"

- Participant, 2018



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The Mission of the Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education is to promote quality Jewish learning and identity-building opportunities throughout Miami; strengthen the capacity of Jewish organizations to deliver engaging and enriching educational programs; and serve as a catalyst for connecting Jews of all ages to their rich heritage.