

2022–2023
ANNUAL REPORT

ARAVA INSTITUTE

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



Arava
Institute

מכון הערבה מעמד ואדי ערבה

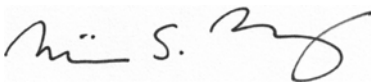


Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present to you the 2022–2023 Annual Report of the Arava Institute and Friends of the Arava Institute. Over the last fiscal year, the Institute's reach expanded beyond academic program and research growth to wider participation in international conferences and UN convenings that affirmed our mission of building regional and global partnerships for climate resilience.

For all of us the world that we were working toward changed on October 7th. The horror of the Hamas attack and the realities of war emphasize the importance of the Arava Institute as a beacon of hope and endurance. Our students and faculty continue to learn together at the Institute. Now we are turning our attention to the day after. How will the unique capacities and relationships of the Arava Institute help build a future of shared society and hope? How can our experience in civil discourse and compassionate listening be a model for people at universities in the US? How do we move forward?

With your generous support, the Arava Institute is working to meet these challenges head-on; never losing sight of our mandate for environmental peacebuilding in the face of political conflict. We hope that you enjoy this report on the highlights of our work over the past year.



Miriam May

*Chief Executive Officer
Friends of the Arava Institute*



Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed

*Executive Director
Arava Institute
for Environmental Studies*



Karen Schapiro

*Chair, Board of Directors
Friends of the Arava Institute*

LAST YEAR AT A GLANCE



▶ **ACADEMIC GROWTH**

Over 90 students from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and countries in Africa, Asia, North and South America learned skills in classes such as *Global Resource Geopolitics and Environmental Policy* while living together and participating in cross-cultural dialogue.



▶ **ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY**

Our bilateral cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Civil Administration resulted in approval for a 30-kilometer trunkline to carry recycled water for agriculture to Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley.



▶ **INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Arava Institute leadership brought the work of regional environmental cooperation to the UN Conference on Climate Change, COP27, and the N7 Initiative.

THE UNITED NATIONS



With the Institute's **accreditation to the United Nations Environment Assembly**, we are increasing our participation in UN-sponsored conferences and projects. In 2022, the Institute presented on climate diplomacy at the **Stockholm+50 Conference**, a UN meeting commemorating the 50 years since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment.

In November at the **UN Conference on Climate Change (COP 27)** in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, our team of Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians amplified the Institute's important transboundary work and expanded our international partnerships to confront the climate crisis regionally. Every panel addressed not only the urgency to act to build climate resiliency—but also the need to act regionally—a strategy that we have been implementing for more than twenty-five years. The conference included panels hosted by the Institute and partners, including the first panel in the Israeli pavilion that included an Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian presenting together.

The Arava Institute presented at the United Nations Headquarters for the **UN Water Conference** in March 2023. Dr. David Lehrer's panel "A New Era in Water Intelligence Driving Collective Action" was one of 200 side events selected from over 1,300 applicants and the only from an Israeli nonprofit.



OUR LEADERSHIP

Addressing a Strategic Priority of the Institute

In April 2023, Dr. Elise Machline began her work as the inaugural director for the Institute's newest center—the **Center for Climate Change Policy and Research**. Addressing a strategic priority of the Institute's, the Center will harness the Institute's deep regional partnerships with academic, policy, and nongovernmental institutions to work on the effects of climate change on Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, and others throughout the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region.

We are launching this center with the generous support of Nancy Reichman, the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation, and the Isidore C. and Penny W. Myers Foundation.



Dr. Elise Machline was raised in the orchards and vineyards of France's Loire Valley and studied geography as an undergraduate. At age 24, she visited the small town of Sde Boker in the Negev for the first time and was immediately smitten and subsequently pursued her PhD in a joint Sorbonne-Ben Gurion University program, focusing on the social and economic impacts of green building.

“Humanity is at a critical juncture,
and navigating it requires significant
multi-systemic and international action,
in order to allow future generations to live
in a sustainable, inclusive and resilient world”

- DR. ELISE MACHLINE



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

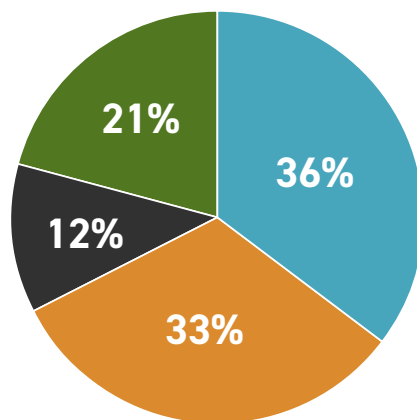
Returning to Pre-pandemic Numbers

Students and interns from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, the US, and more than seven other countries joined us during the 2022–2023 academic year. In addition to taking a full course load, students visited unrecognized Bedouin villages, single-family farms, and the ancient ruins in Avdat. In November, the students went on a Multi-Narratives trip to Jerusalem, where they explored the old city through a geopolitical tour, visited a food rescue NGO led by alumni, and saw both the ruins of the Palestinian village Lifta and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

During the spring 2023 semester students explored research on biological pest control, flower strips, acacia tree research, and more. Central to the Institute's academic program is the **Dialogue Forum**, where students develop leadership skills and participate in facilitated dialogue, expressing their views on race, religion, culture, gender, and the current political situation.

2022–2023 Students and Interns

- Israeli Jewish
- Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, and Jordanians
- International (Not American)
- International (American)



“This was the first time I had ever been face to face with a Palestinian in a social context. I was full of fear and suspicion and did not know what to expect... I could not have predicted the friendships that I would form.”

ADINA, Israeli '22



“The alumni I met were all in connection with each other and each saw themselves as a pin in a network of changemakers. I thought that no matter how little change an individual can make alone, the total change of a network of changemakers is great.”

GHASSAN, Palestinian '23





As the new director of the **Center for Sustainable Agriculture**, **Dr. Oren Hoffman** led the Desert Plan Shelter Garden Symposium that culminated in a planting of the critically endangered *ficus palmata*—there is only one in the wild in Israel!

Tackling Food, Energy, and Water Challenges

At the intersection of the Institute's work to build climate resilience in the Middle East is our work to address food, water, and energy security. In a region where the average temperature is rising more rapidly than elsewhere in the world, we are acutely aware of this interrelationship and work with our partners to develop off-grid solutions.

The Institute's researchers are identifying solutions in each of these areas, confident that these answers will support a sustainable Israel and region. From agrivoltaics to off-grid water recycling systems to environmental diplomacy, we are balancing and supporting human needs and the environment in the sustainable development of water, food, and energy resources.



Applied Environmental Diplomacy

Water remains one of the scarcest resources in the Middle East, a challenge exacerbated by climate-induced desertification. Recycled water treatment technology can provide solutions to communities that are most at-risk.

Al-Bireh Wastewater Treatment System | In August 2022, the Arava Institute and our Palestinian civil society partner, Damour for Community Development, announced success in facilitating a groundbreaking agreement for a pipeline that will bring recycled water from al-Bireh (near Ramallah) to Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley. This project unfolded over four years of quiet applied environmental diplomacy and involved Palestinian engineers who designed plans for the trunkline. The resulting approval from the Israeli Civil Administration allows the Palestinian Water Authority to obtain funding to build a 30-kilometer trunkline that will carry between 2.5–3.5 MCM of much-needed high-quality agricultural water to the farmers. For decades the wastewater treatment plant in al-Bireh has poured 7,000–8,000 CM daily of high-quality treated water into a nearby wadi where it is mixing with raw sewage and polluting the groundwater. *We are grateful to David and Ora Chaiken and Amr Awadallah for their leadership support in advancing this work.*



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5

WATER
GENERATORS

4,500

CLEAN LITERS
OF DRINKING
WATER A DAY

2,690

PEOPLE
SERVED



Making Clean Drinking Water Accessible | 95% of Gaza's drinking water supply is undrinkable. To address this, the Arava Institute partnered with private Israeli company Watergen, the Israeli Civil Administration, the Palestinian NGO Damour for Community Development, as well as local municipalities to introduce atmospheric water generators (AWG) to create clean drinking water by capturing humidity, condensing it, and then filtering it instantly drinkable water. The AWGs can produce 900 liters of drinking water per day, depending on the air's humidity. In early 2023, five systems were introduced into local municipal health care centers in Gaza but some have been impacted by the war. *We are grateful to Rick and Nancy Moskovitz, the Rona and Jeffrey Abramson Foundation and Ethan Grossman as well as other supporters for this exciting project.*

Climate Innovations

The Institute's applied research is developing off-grid technologies to bring environmental solutions to the region's most vulnerable. We provide capacity-building training so that communities understand their value and learn how to use and maintain these technologies.

Agrivoltaics | The Middle East is enduring rising temperatures and severe drought as the climate crisis continues to destabilize an already fragile region. To respond, the Institute is piloting innovative farming methods to support a sustainable future for agricultural communities in the hyper-arid region. In partnership with the JNF-USA's Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Water and Energy Security, the Institute is hosting Agrivoltaic (AgriPV) farms that provide solutions for food crop production and electricity generation while protecting the soil and efficiently using water. These plots are growing crops under solar arrays, generating renewable energy, piloting new groups and conserving water. This technology is useful to water-starved farms throughout the region. *We are grateful for the generous support of the FS Foundation and the Isidore and Bertha Gudelsky Foundation in this work.*

Treating Water for Agricultural Irrigation | Agricultural communities in the Jordan Valley suffer from a lack of water treatment facilities. The Institute has continued to implement off-grid wastewater treatment and reuse solutions for small Bedouin and Palestinian agricultural communities that treat the sewage water using biological processes and off-grid solar photovoltaic solutions for the energy needs of groundwater pumping. These vertical green wall bio-filtration systems take gray and black water from homes and treat the sewage water.





Climate Research

Biodiversity | Integral to work to address climate change are environmentally friendly pesticides to support crop growth. Academic Director Dr. Jessica Schackermann and her colleagues found that 12 of the 16 bat species found in the Southern Arava frequently used date plantations as habitats for foraging, feeding on a variety of important date pests. This points to a “win-win situation,” where bats provide bio-pest control services that benefit farmers, while plantations may serve as a supportive home for bats, whose populations are dwindling worldwide. Dr. Schackermann and her interns presented this research and published their findings in the academic journal *Diversity*.

Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation | Executive Director Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed and researcher József Kádár were part of a task force that compiled a 2022 report on energy systems after reviewing socioeconomic and technological trends in energy systems of the region. The report emphasizes that regional cooperation is essential for managing limited natural resources and provides a policy toolkit for decarbonizing energy systems. *We are grateful for the Steven and Beverly Rubenstein Charitable Foundation’s support of the Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation.*

Under the guidance of Dr. Abu Hamed, the Institute has designed, built and is currently testing an **evacuated tube solar air collector**, a simple technology that can significantly decrease a building’s energy consumption, increase its energy efficiency, and assist regional climate resiliency, especially during winter. Inexpensive to produce and use, the technology is also promising for agricultural use.

A background image showing people sitting outdoors under trees. On the left, a man with glasses and a mustache is visible. On the right, a woman with curly hair is looking at a laptop. The laptop has Hebrew text and a logo on it. The scene is bright and sunny.

SCHOLARLY OUTPUT

Faculty members and research staff presented at 31 conferences and seminars and published 10 articles and book chapters in 2022.

Highlights include:

- **Wind and Wings** | In November 2022, the Arava Institute and the Renewables Grid Initiative co-hosted Wind and Wings, a seminar on the challenge of ensuring bird protection near onshore wind farms, a challenge made particularly difficult given the quantity and diversity of birds that migrate through Israel as part of their annual migration patterns.
- **Rural electrification** | Faculty member and researcher Dr. Miri Lavi-Neeman and Institute alumni partnered with Comet-ME, an organization that provides green energy and clean water services to Palestinian communities, to conduct a study on the impact of rural electrification in off-grid communities in the West Bank. Focusing on a Bedouin community northeast of Ramallah, which recently installed several renewable energy systems, the July 2022 report shares how the introduction of these systems supports economic development, increased literacy, more stable public health, and improved living conditions.

International Partnerships and Conferences

The Arava Institute participates regionally and globally as we continue to expand and develop our international partnerships beyond the United Nations.

Oxford Martin School | The Arava Institute continued its partnership with the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University on the promotion of regional cooperation over resource management. Scientific partners at Oxford include Dr. Suleiman Halasah, an Institute alumnus and co-director of the Institute's Jordan-Israel Center for Community, Environment & Research.

GREENinMED | The Arava Institute's Center for Transboundary Water Management is a partner in GREENinMED, an EU-funded transboundary project with partners from Spain, France, and Israel that aims to increase water and energy efficiency and sustainability in the Mediterranean tourism industry. Eleven hotels in Israel were recently selected to receive free consultations on how to improve their water and energy efficiency.

N7 Initiative | During the N7 Initiative March 2023 conference in Abu Dhabi on Agriculture, Food, and Water Security, Arava Institute executive director Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed spoke on advancing regional food and water security solutions. The N7 Initiative, a partnership between the Atlantic Council and the Jeffrey M. Talpins Foundation, seeks to further the Abraham Accords and support normalization between Israel and Arab and Muslim countries.

REACHING ACROSS AMERICA

Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed and Institute faculty visited communities throughout the United States and spoke both virtually and in person. For those unable to meet in person, Friends of the Arava Institute continued its series of **online mini-classes**, including classes such as “Bringing Recycled Wastewater to Israeli Bedouin and Palestinian Communities” and “Agrivoltaics: Harnessing Land for Farming and Renewable Energy.”

Recent classes can be found [here](#).

The Arava Institute hosts an increasing number of short-term programs, introducing university and other delegations to the Institute's environmental cooperation and peace-building efforts.

Highlights include:

- Former Israeli Minister of Environmental Protection, Tamar Zandberg spoke about Israel's efforts to cut emissions and to adapt to the effects of climate change, as well as the country's increasing environmental cooperation with many Arab states at an August 2022 event co-hosted by the Institute and ROPES.
- The week-long Wadi Arava International Sustainability Hackathon (W.I.S.H.) in December 2022 brought participants from Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Morocco, Kenya, and the UAE together to develop solutions to issues in terrestrial aquaculture, desert agriculture, food security, renewable energy, and off-grid technologies. The program's focus: confronting the climate crisis across borders.

The Arava Institute
BOASTS OVER
1,800
ALUMNI

There are now over 1,800 alumni worldwide. During a February 2022 alumni workday at a long-term village project in the West Bank, 50 alumni participated in a composting workshop and created a community garden, set up a water purification system, pulled weeds, and cleared stones to help create sustainable systems for the local community. In August 2022, the Alumni Conference brought together a constellation of over 100 alumni that included ecologists, entrepreneurs, yogis, engineers, activists, lawyers, and educators.



ALUMNI PROFILES

Meet **ITAI**, *Israeli, 2009–2010*

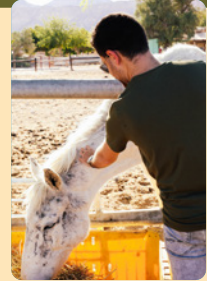
After spending a year at the Arava Institute as part of a graduate degree in Environmental Science from Ben Gurion University, Itai went on to work as an environmental reporter for Israeli news outlet TheMarker.

After several years he began a doctoral program in Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. His dissertation focused on pistachio crops in the Central Valley and he worked with spatial and climate data to understand how changing winter weather affected yields. Currently, he is employed as a data scientist at Google and lives with his family in the San Francisco Bay Area.



Meet **NASRI**, *Jordanian, 2022*

Recently, three of Jordan's largest dams were completely emptied due to crippling drought. The neighborhood where Nasri's family lives is not connected to the central sewage network. For many homes like theirs, sewage is collected in cesspits where it seeps into and contaminates the shrinking groundwater supply. The water crisis that his community faces is life threatening.



“When I arrived at the Arava Institute, I encountered solutions to these severe and destabilizing water shortages. I witnessed innovative wastewater treatment systems that support off-grid villages and reduce waterborne disease. I knew immediately that I wanted my family and neighbors to be able to use this technology in Jordan.”

Nasri left the Institute filled with a hopeful vision for the future and countless project ideas. He describes learning that if we join forces, we can create transformative technology and share it with communities grappling with water crises all over the region.



NEW ALUMNI PROGRAMS

ALUMNI FUND FOR CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We launched the Alumni Fund for Creativity and Entrepreneurship in 2022 to enable Institute alumni to engage in cross-border and cross-cultural business and social initiatives, creating a network of relationships to support sustainability and stability in the region. The program empowers alumni to fulfill the mission of the Arava Institute through seed funding and mentorship.

This program is made possible by support from Ethan Grossman and the United States Institute of Peace.

NEXTGEN CLIMATE CHANGEMAKERS

The Arava Institute's pilot program was a group of 24 NextGen Climate Changemakers is a group of 24 young adults—roughly equal parts Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, and DC-area American Jews—who participated in a six-month program aimed at exploring transboundary cooperation on climate change and climate justice in the Middle East. The program brought them together in both Israel and Washington, DC. In DC, they met with nonprofit climate can peace activists, government leaders and others and learned about models and challenges in environmental cooperation. The group explored the civil rights and environmental justice landscape of the city with a tour from the Anacostia Watershed Society.

The program was made possible by generous support from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL, PALESTINE, AND JORDAN WITH THE INSTITUTE



2022 Israel Ride: The Arava Institute was thrilled to be back on the road again after COVID-19 prevented us from gathering in Israel the past two years. From November 1–8, 2022, almost 200 riders enjoyed five glorious days of biking throughout the country and participating in an immersive experience with our community of students and alumni. We thank the riders for their significant support of the Arava Institute.



THE WORK AHEAD

In Israel and as friends of the Institute we face a difficult time—emotionally, physically, and intellectually. But we remain steadfast to our principles—to embrace the possibility of dialogue and cooperation and to work across borders to address the growing threats of climate change.

When this war ends, we will be at the forefront of rebuilding with our partners: rebuilding trust, rebuilding infrastructure, rebuilding a sense of hope that people can live side-by-side in this land.

We thank all our supporters for being part of this work.

Scholarships



2022 Harriett and Ben N. Teitel Scholars, holding certificates of their scholarships.

The Arava Institute scholarship awards include room and board, two trips—one multi-narratives trip and one ecological trip, along with participation in the dialogue forum and campus activities. In addition, the Schor Endowment and Joseph Rosenberg awarded 9 partial and full scholarships to American students. So many of our donors provide scholarship and academic support; the following donors have made significant gifts to support our scholarship and academic program:

- Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust
- Paul Goodman
- Henry & Jenifer Herrmann
- Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation
- Lee-Parritz Family Charitable Fund
- Howard and Sara Metzenberg
- Joseph Rosenberg
- Sam Berman Charitable Foundation
- Samuel and Helene Soref Foundation
- Schor Family Foundation
- David & Alena Schwaber
- Harvey & Ann Tettlebaum



Sara Jaecks
Metzenberg and
Howard Metzenberg

Why We Support the Institute

Longtime supporters of the Arava Institute, Howard and Sara Metzenberg experienced the impact of the Institute's work firsthand as participants in the Beyond Borders tour, on the Israel Ride, and as hosts of Israeli and Palestinian alumni conversations at their home in Seattle, WA. In the process, they watched the Institute grow to what it is today.

As an adventurous cyclist, Howard bicycled from London to Israel and from the north to the south of Israel in 1983. On his first Israel Ride in 2003, Howard remembers a Jordanian student showing him around Kibbutz Ketura and sharing that she had always wanted to know what was on the other side of the fence. The essential work of the Institute, says Howard, is that it ensures relationships between Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians—and **“this really represents what I believe we should be doing in Israel, strengthening peace processes and developing relationships in the Middle East.”**

Sara describes seeing the critical research projects in a difficult region where the researchers continuously improve on their work. What gives her hope is the students' dialogue program—the principle that everyone must sit and talk through their narratives. She appreciates the openness of listening to other people's perspectives, and of living in a difficult place. **She describes every student who has engaged in the dialogue experience as a drop of water, and the drops create ripples of change.** Her hope for the Institute is that it continues to generate many more ripples.

FINANCIALS

FRIENDS OF THE ARAVA INSTITUTE (7/1/22-6/30/23)

REVENUE \$3,575,000



GRANTS	\$1,753,000	49%
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS	\$1,277,000	36%
INVESTMENTS AND OTHER INCOME	\$177,000	5%
SPECIAL EVENT REVENUE - NET	\$218,000	6%
TUITION REVENUE	\$150,000	4%

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND
AFFILIATE FUNDRAISING

\$1,311,000

ARAVA INSTITUTE (1/1/22-12/31/22)

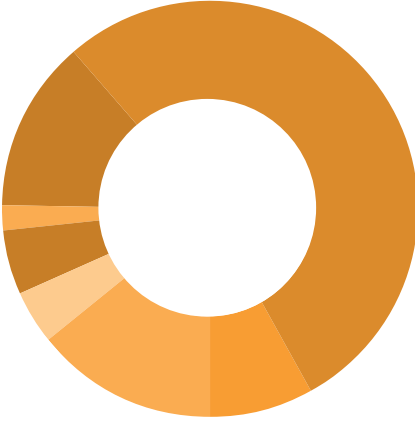
EXPENSES \$3,873,000



RESEARCH AND PROJECTS	\$999,000	26%
ACADEMICS	\$1,118,000	29%
ADMINISTRATION	\$811,000	21%
FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT	\$297,000	8%
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	\$648,000	17%
RESERVE FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$-	0%

ARAVA INSTITUTE (1/1/22-12/31/22)

REVENUE \$3,855,000



US CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,028,000	53%
US GRANTS	\$306,000	8%
INTERNATIONAL GRANTS	\$544,000	14%
INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS/ TUITION	\$168,000	4%
NORTH AMERICAN TUITION	\$208,000	5%
SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$94,000	2%
SHORT PROGRAMS	\$507,000	13%



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

תודה שְׁכָרָא

WHO MADE GIFTS BETWEEN JULY 1, 2022 AND JUNE 30, 2023

ENDOWMENT GIFTS

Jerome E Toffler Private Foundation

Esther & Larry Thal

\$1,000,000+

Rick & Nancy Moskovitz

\$100,000-\$999,999

Ben N. Teitel Charitable Trust
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Sara Jaecks Metzberg

Peter & Deborah Wexler

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\$10,000-\$19,999

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Oreg Foundation

Samuel Yelin

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Nathan and Gertrude Shapira Fund	Idy Goodman	The Albert E. Marks Charitable Trust	Karli Sherwinter
Michael Shapiro	Susan Gordon	Robert Mayo Memorial Fund	Gail Shor
Rita & Chet Stein and family	Harvey & Patti Gould	Musher Family Fund	The Shulman Family Charitable Fund
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	Darrell Haile & Annette Alpert	Bonnie Orlin	Karl & Paula Singer
	Phyllis Hammer	Michael Ostroff & Esther Rosenberg	Sklare Foundation
	Heinrich Foundation Charitable Giving	The Pelch Fund	Hannah Sperber
	Debbie & James Heller	Pines Family Charitable Gift Fund	Michael Switzenbaum & Gail Schulman
	Samuel & Meredith Hendler	Michael & Mary Alice Polifka	Samuel Tabas Family Foundation
	Highland Park Minyan Tzedakah Collective	The Harvey, Barbara, David, and Leslie Ratner Family Fund	Jill Tannenbaum
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	Judy Joseph & Mark Greenberg	Mordechai Rothschild	Daniel Lyons & Jennifer Weiss
	Kann Family Philanthropic Fund	Hillel & Judy Salomon	Weiss Family Charitable Fund
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