Jofa.

JEWISH ORTHODOX
FEMINIST ALLIANCE

Board of Directors

Meet the leaders shaping our community

2026

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE · GENERAL BOARD · PAST PRESIDENTS

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Executive Committee

Officers leading the strategic direction of Jofa

Rabba Dr. Carmella Abraham

Co-President

Rabba Dr. Carmella Abraham is a Co-President of Jofa. She is a physician and member of the Orthodox clergy. Carmella currently works at a pharmaceutical company in Medical Affairs, dedicated to improving outcomes in women's cancers, with a focus on ovarian cancer. In 2017, she was ordained by Yeshivat Maharat and has taught Torah in a variety of settings including a weekly learning group with Indian Jews in Canada, Israel, India and the United States. Carmella earned her BA degree from Barnard College and her medical degree from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. At Mount Sinai, Carmella did her residency in Internal Medicine and Fellowship in Women's Health. Afterwards, she practiced at the Mount Sinai Women's Health Program with a dual appointment in Medicine and Ob-Gyn.

Rabbi Marianne Novak

Co-President

Rabbi Marianne Novak is a Co-President of Jofa. She received her ***semikha***, rabbinic ordination, from Yeshivat Maharat in 2019. Rabbi Novak was faculty for the Melton Adult School of Jewish Learning for over 25 years. She is the ***poseket***, Rabbinic advisor for the Skokie Women's Tefillah Group and has prepared numerous young women for their Bat Mitzvah celebrations for the group. Rabbi Novak writes a popular blog on the Times of Israel and her writing has been included in a number of anthologies and the JOFA journal. She has served as Scholar-in-Residence and lecturer at various congregations. She is also on faculty of the Jewish Learning Collab and served as Program Director for Va'tichtov: She Writes, a writing cohort through Yeshivat Maharat and Rabbinic advisor for A Mitzvah to Eat (amitzvahtoeat.org), an online platform empowering Jews needing ritual accommodations. Rabbi Novak received her B.A. ***cum laude*** from Barnard College and her J.D. from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis. Currently, Rabbi Novak is Judaic studies faculty at Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School in Hyde Park. She lives in Skokie, IL. ***Follow Rabbi Novak on Facebook (RabbiMarianne Novak) and Instagram (@the_rabbi_wears_prada).***

Rachel Berke

Treasurer

Rachel Berke is a past President of the Akiba Academy of Dallas Board of Trustees and was a Trustee of Yavneh Academy of Dallas. She currently practices corporate and real estate law. Previously, Rachel was an attorney at the New York and Dallas offices of Fulbright & Jaworski LLP (now Norton Rose Fulbright) and in-house counsel for both Blockbuster Inc. and TXU Energy. Rachel is a graduate of Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women and Cardozo School of Law.

Sarah Blechner

Vice President

Sarah Blechner is a Senior Manager of Marketing and Creative Strategy for Charter Communications. She has worked in marketing and advertising for over 15 years, with experience in branding, creative strategy, digital and social marketing, direct response, and event marketing. In the past, she was the Marketing lead for the Jofa conference, creating a campaign that generated word of mouth buzz and press coverage. Sarah and her husband Josh are from New Rochelle, NY, and they are part of the leadership of the local partnership minyan, Kol Echad. Sarah was part of the founding committee for The Women's Initiative for Jewish Studies, an organization within the Young Israel of New Rochelle. Her children, Leora, Eli, and Aliza, attend SAR Academy. Sarah was a member of the Board of Education from 2014–2017.

Carolyn Hochstadter Dicker

Vice President

Carolyn Hochstadter Dicker runs her own law firm, specializing in business and bankruptcy law. She also enjoys engaging with students as an Adjunct Professor for Thomas Jefferson University's Center for Digital Health, teaching a course on the Legal Aspects for Entrepreneurship. Carolyn sits as an Arbitrator and Mediator for the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. She helps clients navigate U.S. law in Hebrew, French, Arabic, and German. Carolyn's firm is certified as a woman-owned business enterprise, and she sits on the Certification Committee of WBEC-East. Carolyn has served on Jofa's Board of Trustees and Journal Editorial Board for over a decade. She has taken on leadership roles as President of Lechu Neranena, her local partnership minyan, and on the Boards of Kohelet Yeshiva and the Philadelphia Israel Chamber of Commerce. She received her J.D. and M.A. from Columbia University, and her B.A. from Barnard College, where she met her ever-supportive spouse, Adam Dicker.

Atara Margolies

Vice President

Atara Margolies is an architect and urban planner currently planning communities for Montgomery County, MD just outside of Washington, DC. She has over 20 years of experience planning public places and designing cultural and educational buildings. She is an alumna of Midreshet Lindenbaum and earned both a B.A. and a Masters of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. A Baltimore native, Atara has been involved in JOFA since 1998. She has been actively advocating for women's involvement in ritual and prayer in Orthodox Judaism for over 30 years. Atara lives with her husband and three children in Silver Spring, MD where she is the co-chair of Maayan Chadash, a monthly partnership minyan, and provides pro-bono architectural consultation to her local synagogue.

Pam Scheininger

Vice President · Past Jofa Board President

Pam Scheininger, past Jofa Board President, works as a Court Attorney Referee in New York County Family Court, and is an adjunct professor at CUNY's New York College of Technology. She is also past president of Yavneh Academy in Paramus, NJ, and Netivot Shalom in Teaneck, NJ. Pam earned a B.A. in political science from the University of Toronto, and a Juris Doctor from Columbia University School of Law. She has studied at Midreshet Lindenbaum, and is a 2011–2013 Northern NJ Berrie Leadership Program Fellow.

General Board

Advisors, advocates, and community builders

Angel Alvarez-Mapp

General Board · (he/him)

Angel Alvarez-Mapp is a transformational leader who specializes in scaling organizations and building robust operational infrastructures that drive systemic change. He currently serves as COO and Principal, Tiny Windows Consulting. As Chief Operating Officer of Repair the World and Senior Director of Operations for the Jews of Color Initiative, he architected systems that allowed both organizations to significantly expand their reach while advocating for racial equity in the US Jewish community. With over two decades of nonprofit leadership experience, Angel draws on his educational background in Business Administration from St. Mary's College of California and Graphic Design from the Art Institute of California, San Francisco. Angel's board service includes Keshet, JPro, SVARA, Kavod v'Nichum, and Recustom. Based in Los Angeles's Pico-Robertson neighborhood, he shares his life with his wife, Danielle Natelson. ***Follow "angelmapp" across all social platforms, and "Angel Alvarez-Mapp" on Facebook.***

Dr. Shari Bloomberg

General Board

For over 30 years, Dr. Shari Bloomberg, LCSW, has been a leader in the social work field, empowering individuals, couples, families, and children to navigate life's challenges and thrive. Her expertise includes trauma, depression, anxiety, and domestic violence. Throughout her professional journey, she has earned certifications in Play Therapy, Adoption Studies, School Social Work, Clinical Supervision, Sand Tray Therapy, and other clinical modalities.

In May 2022, she earned her Doctorate in Social Work from New York University, with her work and publications focusing on Shared Trauma and COVID-19. After spending much of her career in social service agencies, culminating in a 10-year role as Clinical Director of the Rachel Coalition, a domestic violence program under the umbrella of Jewish Family Service of MetroWest, Dr. Bloomberg opened her private practice in Union, NJ, where she sees individuals, couples, children, families, and groups. She lectures locally, nationally, and internationally on a variety of topics and runs interactive workshops.

Dr. Bloomberg's commitment to the future of social work is evident in her role as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at her alma mater, the NYU Silver School of Social Work, where she proudly educates and mentors the next generation of social workers. She is also a member of the Academic Engagement Network, supporting Jewish identity and academic freedom in higher education.

Paula Eiselt

General Board

Paula Eiselt is a Peabody and duPont-Columbia award-winning, Primetime Emmy-nominated, two-time Sundance Film Festival director and Jury Prize winner, known for her journalistic rigor in telling timely and intelligent cinematic stories. Her films have screened at over 100 film festivals worldwide including Sundance, SXSW, and Hot Docs, and distributed on Hulu, Disney+, HBOMax, PBS's POV, and Arte. Her award-winning features include ***93Queen***, ***Aftershock*** (Special Jury Award: Impact for Change, 2023 Peabody winner, 2024 duPont-Columbia winner, 2023 Emmy nominee), and ***Under G-d*** (Sundance 2023/POV Shorts). She has been a Concordia Studio fellow, Sundance Producers Summit fellow, IFP/Gotham Filmmaker Lab fellow and Wyncote fellow. In 2022, Indiewire named her one of 22 Rising Filmmakers to Watch and DOC NYC named her a 40 Under 40 honoree. Paula is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and lives in New Jersey with her husband and four children.

LS

Dr. Laura Shaw Frank

General Board · Founding Board Member

Dr. Laura Shaw Frank is the Director of the Contemporary Jewish Life Department at the American Jewish Committee, where she works on Israel-Diaspora relations, Israel education, Jewish literacy, and American Jewish communal life. A longtime Jewish educator, Laura held administrative and educational positions at Yeshivat Maharat and SAR High School prior to her work at AJC. Laura has lectured widely at conferences, synagogues, university Hillels, and adult education institutes. Laura holds a PhD in Jewish history from the University of Maryland, College Park, and undergraduate and law degrees from Columbia University. A proud founding board member of Jofa, Laura lives in Riverdale, NY, with her family.

SG

Shai Goldberg-Kellman

General Board

Shai Goldberg-Kellman is a Master's student in Computational Linguistics at Brandeis University (2027), where he also completed his undergraduate degree (2026) after graduating from SAR High School (2022). A lifelong Orthodox feminist, he has advocated for equitable gender roles in every community he has been part of, and he once joined a Jofa panel on how to raise feminist sons. He served on the Presidential Task Force for Free Expression at Brandeis and as Israel Engagement Coordinator on the Hillel student board, and his senior thesis explored how listening influences persuasion in debates. Across it all, he is driven by making room in Jewish life for every voice and by helping communities and individuals work through disagreement. He brings to the board a passion for civil discourse, a drive to serve the community, and a next-generation perspective. He is thrilled to have upgraded from panelist to board member, and looks forward to working with Jofa to make the future a little more inclusive.

BG

Blu Greenberg

Jofa's Founding President

Blu Greenberg, Jofa's Founding President, has been active in Jewish feminism for four decades. She was Conference Chair of both the first and the second International Conferences on Feminism and Orthodoxy. She chaired the NY Federation Task Force on Jewish Women and the AJC National Jewish Family Center, and was president of the Jewish Book Council. Blu serves on the editorial board of ***Hadassah Magazine*** and the advisory board of ***Lilith***. Blu is married to Rabbi Irving Greenberg; they have five children and 23 grandchildren.

RH

Rivka Herzfeld

General Board

Rivka Herzfeld grew up in a home filled with a commitment and love for Torah observance; mitzvot have always been a central part of her life. She earned an M.A. in Tanach from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Judaic Studies. She enjoys teaching Tanach to all ages and backgrounds and is also a respected disability awareness educator. She is personable, easygoing, has a terrific sense of humor, and loves sharing puns. She is passionate about politics, human rights, the arts and “liberty and justice for all.”

Shira Hoffer

General Board

Shira Hoffer is the founding Executive Director of The Viewpoints Project, a nonprofit empowering young people to approach disagreement with curiosity. A graduate of Gann Academy (2020) and Harvard College (2025), she wrote her senior thesis on the differences in how religious and secular students approach controversial speech on campus. She serves as the Hospitality Chair at the Orthodox Minyan at Harvard Hillel, and is a volunteer mediator in Massachusetts courts. In her free time, she enjoys playing ultimate frisbee and planning her upcoming wedding, iy'h!

Dr. Talia Hurwich

General Board

Dr. Talia Hurwich is a social scientist specializing in American Jewry and a lay leader at a Partnership Minyan for over 15 years. At JOFA, she helped prepare the Shemot curriculum for publication, created recordings to train daveners, and wrote the guide ***So What HAPPENS During the Torah Reading?*** At Congregation Darkhei Noam in NYC, Talia has served as davening coordinator, Yamim Noraim coordinator, baalat tefillah, baalat kri'ah, gabbait, and co-chair of the board. Talia holds a PhD in Education and Jewish Studies from NYU and is currently Director of Research and Evaluation at The Jewish Education Project.

Gail Katz

General Board

Gail Katz is Chief Intellectual Property Counsel for the dental platform of Danaher Corporation. Gail has served on the Jofa board for over a decade, and has led the Ta Shma source guide project since its inception. She serves on the Board of B'nai David-Judea Congregation in Los Angeles, where she chaired the committee that recruited Rabbanit Alissa Newborn-Thomas as the shul's first female clergy member. Gail also serves on the Board of Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy in Beverly Hills. She is a past member of the Drisha Institute board and a Wexner Heritage Program alumna.

Robert Lichtman

General Board

Robert Lichtman is an essayist, mentor, and teacher. Bob brings decades of broad and deep professional experience in the Jewish communal world to Jofa's board. He most recently served as Chief Jewish Learning Officer at the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest, and previously spent over a decade as the founding Executive Director of The Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life, building it into a regional and national model for Jewish academic and experiential education. His career also includes senior roles at Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, where he helped shape what became Birthright Israel, and UJA-Federation of New York, where he stewarded the relationship between the world's largest Jewish philanthropic community and the people of Israel.

Tamar Lindenbaum

General Board

Tamar Lindenbaum is an analyst at Warwick Park Partners, where she focuses on investments in medical technology startups. She attended SAR High School, the Bronfman Youth Fellowship, Midreshet Ein Hanatziv, and Barnard College, where she was co-chair of the Beit Midrash program. She graduated from Barnard in 2018 with a BA in History of Science and Medicine. When she's not adventuring, Tamar lives in Brooklyn with her partner, Sabina.

Carol Kaufman Newman

General Board · Past President (2003 – 2010)

Carol Kaufman Newman has served on the Jofa board since its inception in 1997, and served as its president from 2003–2010. Long a standard bearer in championing women's rights and education initiatives in Orthodox Judaism, she was the founding president of the Drisha Institute of New York. She was also a founder of the Women's Tefillah Group of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun. Carol holds an MA in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education and ran the education/docent program at The Yeshiva University Museum of New York.

Past Presidents

Leaders who shaped our journey

BG

Blu Greenberg

Founding President

JH

Judy Heicklen

CK

Carol Kaufman Newman

PS

Pam Scheininger