



hillel@stanford

ZIFF CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE • KORET PAVILION • TAUBE HILLEL HOUSE

Annual Report 2025-2026



Hillel at Stanford



hillel@stanford

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Building the Jewish Future, Together

For 75 years, Hillel at Stanford has been a joyful home for Jewish students — a place to celebrate, learn, question, connect, and discover what it means to build a Jewish life. This year, that tradition of welcome and belonging continued to flourish. In 2025–26, Hillel reached **80% of Jewish undergraduates and 50% of Jewish graduate students**, reflecting the extraordinary breadth of our community and the trust students place in us. Across Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, learning, music, travel, leadership, and countless informal moments of connection, we worked together to create Jewish life that is joyful, accessible, creative, and deeply relevant to students' lives.

This year also gave us a powerful glimpse of the Jewish future we are building. Students traveled with Hillel to **India, Israel, and Poland**, exploring Jewish life and global Jewish diversity in a new and unexpected contexts. And through our **social-entrepreneurship pitch competition**, **44 student teams** developed ideas for making a difference in the world, with **\$35,000 in seed funding** awarded to help turn their visions into action. These experiences embody a central conviction of our strategic plan: **Jewish life is not delivered to students — it is co-created with them.** Our role is to give students the relationships, knowledge, confidence, and opportunities to shape Jewish life themselves and to become the leaders and builders of the communities they want to see.



Looking ahead, our strategic plan centers on three interconnected priorities: **fostering a thriving Jewish community, inspiring Jewish exploration and identity formation, and building an enduring future through a capital and endowment campaign.** We will deepen the everyday experience of Jewish life at Stanford, create more intentional pathways for students to explore Judaism, Israel, and Jewish peoplehood, and invest in the leadership skills that will carry with them long after graduation. At the same time, we will strengthen the foundations that make this work possible — our physical home, financial sustainability, relationships with Stanford, and connections across the broader campus community. We want every student to find a place at Hillel where they are welcomed as they are and inspired to grow into who they can be.

None of this happens without extraordinary leadership. We are deeply grateful to our **students**, whose creativity, courage, and willingness to build something together are at the heart of everything we do; to our **staff**, whose skill, care, and commitment make this community possible every day; and to our **Board, donors, alumni, families, and partners**, whose vision and generosity sustain Hillel and allow us to dream boldly about the future. Together, we are building more than a campus organization. We are nurturing a generation of Jews who will carry Jewish wisdom, community, compassion, and courage into the world. Our hope is that every student who passes through Hillel at Stanford will leave knowing something profound: **“I need Judaism and the Jewish people, and they need me.”**

With gratitude for abundant blessings —

Rabbi Jessica Kirschner

Rabbi Jessica Kirschner
Executive Director and Senior Rabbi

Kathy Reback

Kathy Reback
Board President



A Message from our Student Leaders

This year at Hillel, we crowded around tables, devouring pints of ice cream as we studied late into the night, and rallied for high-energy holiday celebrations, even fighting tooth and nail to find the afikomen at our Passover Seder. We discussed what it means to be Jewish with Hillel's three Rabbis during weekly Jewish Learning Fellowship classes, and continued those discussions with our friends found around the Shabbat table.

We started and ended each week at Hillel. We made plans over biweekly bagel brunch and debriefed them at our Sunday night Jewish Student Association meetings. Hillel is where we stop by on our way home from class to get a snack, but really it's where we stop to say "Hi!" to whoever else is in the building.

While the trajectory of every Stanford student's year is unique, everybody experiences the highs and lows. Hillel serves as our center for Jewish life - a place to celebrate wins and to find shelter when life feels more difficult. It's a special place that holds us equally in times of comfort and in times of challenge.

We know that the connections formed in line while we waited for a fresh batch of *arayas* to come off the grill at our Community BBQs will be friendships that last long into the future, beyond our time on campus. The friends we met baking Hamantaschen in the Koret Pavilion kitchen will be the ones we invite to our future Purim parties, and those who taught us the words to *Havdalah* will be the ones we think about as every Shabbat comes to a close.

At Stanford, Hillel is more than a building, and the Jewish community is more than a group of people. Our community feels like a family, and Hillel is the center of our gravitational pull.

Sam Solomon, '28 and Yoni Aharon, '28

Jewish Student Association 2025-2026 Co-Presidents

*That's us in Israel
this summer!*





FALL QUARTER



90

first-year students joined
us for New Student
Orientation Shabbat

We welcomed new students and parents to Hillel with excitement as they began their Stanford journey with New Student Orientation. As students made new connections with one another, parents joined the staff for a *l'chaim*, marking the start of community building in this new chapter.

High Holidays



It was a joy to celebrate the start of the new academic and Jewish year with one of our favorite annual traditions - our faculty and staff high holiday gathering. We came together to toast to new beginnings and everything that the year ahead has to offer.

800+

students celebrated Jewish holidays with Hillel at Stanford



HIGHLIGHTS

165+

graduate students came to Hillel to make new friends and explore their Jewish identities



Reunion Weekend

It's an honor to be a part of Stanford's annual reunion weekend - this year, along with the Stanford Jewish Alumni Network (S-JAN), we hosted alumni from the classes of the '0s and '5s for a Shabbat reception featuring current Jewish student leaders sharing what it's like to be Jewish on campus today (including the joys and the oys!).



900+

students came to Hillel six or more times for mentorship, Shabbat, Tzedek programs, and more

“

*I feel like every Stanford student has a thousand things they're doing. What Hillel does best is offer spaces for Jewish students on campus to convene outside of work. **Bagel brunches, Shabbat dinners, these are things I look forward to every week because I know I can just go without a real plan. I can show up and see people whom I know, whom I'm familiar with, eat good food, have a coffee, etc.***

Levi L., '27

”

WINTER QUARTER

Immersive Jewish Experiences

Hillel at Stanford took almost 40 students on transformational trips to India and our annual Perspectives trip to Israel, designed to help campus leaders explore Israel while highlighting diverse and even divergent Israeli and Palestinian narratives.



The Hillel at Stanford trip to India was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my two years at Stanford. I will forever feel connected to the Jewish communities of India, and a deep gratitude...



...to Hillel at Stanford for creating an opportunity for students like me to better understand the diversity, rootedness, and resilience of the Jewish people.

Lauren T., '27



Tikkun Olam Social Justice Competition

Our first-ever Tikkun Olam Social Impact Competition is an example of the best kind of work we get to do here at Hillel. When a student comes to Hillel with an incredible idea that is rooted in Jewish values, it's a testament to how we hope to motivate and inspire students.



Hillel at Stanford provided me with the space and resources to create my own version of Jewish community. Working hand-in-hand with the Hillel staff to bring this vision to life showed me that Hillel is a place where students can mold their own version of Judaism and build the future we want to see.

Jessica K., '27



HIGHLIGHTS



3,620

meals served at Shabbat dinners, monthly kosher BBQs, biweekly bagel brunches, weekly Shabbat *minyan*

Family Weekend

From the warmth of our communal Shabbat dinner to enjoying the sounds of Stanford's brand-new Jewish a cappella group, *Kol Etz*, to the non-stop laughs with Dan Ahdoot, and ending with a *ruach*-filled, student-led *Havdalah*. It's always a highlight to host a comedy show for Stanford's Annual Family Weekend!

“

*We founded Kol Etz to create a space where we could celebrate the full breadth of Jewish music. **Kol Etz has grown into a welcoming home for undergraduate and graduate students across a variety of academic disciplines.***

***Hillel has been an invaluable resource in bringing Kol Etz to life.** The staff generously provided us with rehearsal space, connected us with prospective student members, and opened doors to meaningful performance opportunities.*

Evelyn G., '29 & Gabrielle W., '27

”

210+

students, family members, and friends enjoyed Family Weekend with Hillel



SPRING QUARTER



Hillel at Stanford's annual fellowships, Kol Yisrael, Jewish Learning Fellowship, and Repair the World, occur year-round, starting fall quarter.

80+

students participated in one of Hillel at Stanford's multi-week fellowships



Our Premier Stanford Jewish Leader fellows are developing the skills and relationships necessary to lead Jewish life at Stanford today and in the broader Jewish community tomorrow. This yearlong cohort, designed for current and emerging Jewish student leaders on campus, provides each fellow with leadership training, one-on-one mentorship, and community-building initiatives.



Photo of [emerita] Stanford faculty members Carol and Terry Winograd and current students.

150

students were welcomed into the homes of Stanford faculty and staff at Hillel's quarterly Faculty Shabbat



Faculty Shabbat dinner was a highlight of my quarter! I got to know our hosts through conversations - from their career journeys to the best local hiking trails and the nature of free will. **I'm so grateful to them and to Hillel for making these Shabbat dinners possible - they've made me feel more connected to the Jewish community and reminded me how special it is to gather around a table and connect with people through shared traditions.**

Alice F., '27



HIGHLIGHTS

60

weekly attendees at
Hillel at Stanford's
Shabbat *Minyan*
services and meals



95+

Jewish student leaders
helped build a joyful Jewish
community on campus

Graduate Students

Each quarter this year, Hillel at Stanford has met Stanford Jewish Graduate students' growing interest in Jewish learning by creating courses covering topics including Jewish bioethics, Biblical criticism, and Kabbalah. By learning together, the students created a community with one another that extends beyond the class.



Stanford in Israel

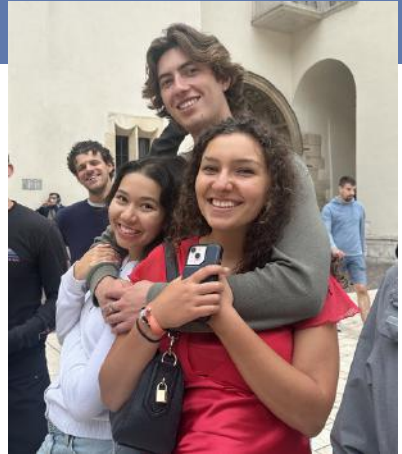
Stanford students are traveling to Israel this summer for two main reasons: To visit family and to intern through Birthright Israel Excel or Onward. One of our students is spending the summer interning at Nvidia, where he will gain professional experience that is directly related to his studies here at Stanford, as well as direct mentorship from a local team leader within the company. These opportunities are highly selective and competitive because of the significant experience and connections that they provide.



Coming soon...

This summer, Hillel at Stanford is excited to continue our partnership with The Taube Center for Jewish Life and Learning to travel to Poland with 12 Jewish student leaders.

During this trip, we'll explore 1,000 years of Polish Jewish history. The trip is a powerful immersive educational experience, and it will also be a lot of fun!



150+

incoming Jewish students and families have already connected with Hillel at Stanford - we're excited to meet the rest of the Class of 2030 this fall!





HILLEL AT STANFORD 2025-2026 HONOR ROLL

The students and staff of Hillel at Stanford wish to thank all those who have pledged their support to our Jewish community. These gifts make our mission's work possible.

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