

Learn More About One of the Older Cultural Institutions in Los Angeles, the Jewish Federation

The Jewish Federation of Los Angeles is a charitable organization that coordinates volunteers and donations from eighteen local and international charities.

The Jewish Federation is a confederation made up of social agencies, charities, volunteer organizations, educational bodies and related groups. They tend to set periods where the local branches raise money for the local branches to disburse and periods where the local branches raise money for the Jewish Federation itself, giving the parent organization, the United Jewish Communities, a great deal of power to effect local situations when it feels a need. There are 155 federations and 400 independent Jewish communities within the United Jewish Communities, and the national motto is Live generously.

The Jewish Federation of LA is fairly typical, though being a powerful organization from a wealthy community, it operates in fifty-eight nations as well as the Los Angeles area. Locally, the Federation supports the elderly, provides day care, assists treatment for AIDS sufferers, helps battered women, provides health care and training for immigrants, rescues families from the old USSR, resettles people into Israel and Los Angeles and provides scholarships and other educational support.

They also support cultural events, including plays, musical events and dance, documentaries, pictures, paintings and drawings, writing and other scholarship.

The mission statement says they seek to mobilize and integrate financial, human and organizational resources within the Greater Los Angeles Jewish community to foster a sense of common Jewish purpose, strengthen Jewish constituencies in order to enhance Jewish identity, meet critical human needs in a Jewish context and intensify bonds with people worldwide.

There are three local sites in Los Angeles and a variety of online locations. The organization has a number of branches that focus on specific sectors within their field of concern.

As a charitable organization, there are a number of ways to contribute. This ranges from individual donations of money to corporate donations to volunteer work of a variety of types. With thousands of years of tradition guiding them, the Los Angeles Jewish Federation the organization finds no shortage of tasks with which it is charged. Tradition requires charity, respect for education and scholarship and special ties with Israel.

There are close ties with advocacy organizations that fight anti-Semitism, protect the rights of Jews and others and even connect people with advocacy opportunities. Cultural organizations stress the traditional respect for education and other programs to promote leadership, celebrate Jewish identity, commit to personal growth and deal with ethical challenges. Another tie is to the International Association of Jewish Vocational Service, which provides educational, vocational and rehabilitation services.

The LA branch includes information links to assist parents in finding resources for Jewish education in the greater LA area, including private schools, pre-school and day schools. Information for parents, students and teachers is available as well.

The Los Angeles Jewish Federation encourages a strong sense of community with events scheduled throughout the year. These range from a reading of the Torah to a variety of cultural and educational events targeted at all ages and covering the entire Greater Los Angeles area. There are even mixer events for Jewish singles to meet and socialize.

Naturally, strong ties to Israel are encouraged. Information about conditions and current events are prominently placed in the information feed, and the organization takes active part in attempts to allow Jews from around the world to reach Israel, as well as the United States. The Los Angeles Jewish Federation has a partnership program with Tel Aviv. This stresses cultural exchange programs with artistic displays and performances exchanged from one to the other, economic ties encouraged and strengthened, educational opportunities for teachers from the Los Angeles area to go to Israel and teach there. There are health and human services ties to allow both cities to provide assistance in the case of natural or man-made disaster, illness and the aftermath of trauma.

The Finegood Art Gallery is one of the largest not-for-profit art galleries in the region, with largely, but not entirely, Jewish art and artists. Admission is free with tours and wheelchair access available.

Finally, there is the L.A. Museum of the Holocaust. The mission is to educate, commemorate and celebrate. Tours for up to 80 people are available

and free, though donations are encouraged and prior coordination is required. Parking is not provided, though metered parking is available in the area.

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About the Author

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