What a year… In most years, the punctuation on that phrase would have been an exclamation point. This past year, though, was like no other. Every organization, around the globe, had to pivot, had to find new ways to deliver, had to re-examine how they would serve their populations. MIT Hillel was no different.

And, yet, in many ways – despite students’ remote learning, despite every offering being continuous Zoom, despite WHH – this year was not so different from others. MIT Hillel staff and students knew our “why.” We knew that our campus role and our mission are to deepen our students’ connections to each other, to our traditions, to the wealth of Jewish learning and knowledge. We help our students become better Jews and human beings, as we teach and model resiliency, we uphold the value of pluralism, and we foster a desire for on-going personal growth. Our means and methods changed, but our purpose never varied or waivered.

Our means and methods value of pluralism, and we foster a desire for on-going personal growth. Students craved community, and week after week, they came together to deep dive into topics such as cultivating a spiritual practice, messy questions of pluralism in Israel, or pursuing justice. As one student reflected at the end of her course, “JLF has been wonderful for me in meeting new people, making friends… I learned a lot from hearing other viewpoints, especially the ones I disagreed with, and seeing how different people have very valid ways of approaching tough situations.”

Our Jew-It-Yourself offerings were also modified for the pandemic. Students needed to celebrate their holidays with their peers, and Hillel ensured that could still happen. We subsidized over a hundred Shabbat dinners this year. We were staying in touch. Mentoring. Counseling. Answering tough questions. Students were touching base with each other, to their traditions, to the wealth of Jewish learning and knowledge. We help our students become better Jews and human beings, as we teach and model resiliency, we uphold the value of pluralism, and we foster a desire for on-going personal growth. Our means and methods value of pluralism, and we foster a desire for on-going personal growth.

In doing so, I change my initial punctuation choice: What a great year!

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Rabbis Michelle H Fisher SM ’97

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The pandemic stretched the entire academic/fiscal year. Students were back on campus in smaller numbers and limited capacity; however, the Hillel office remained closed, with all activities virtual except for a few religious observances that were conducted outdoors within the safety protocols.

Hillel’s operating budget was created a few months into the pandemic. It was pessimistic within the safety protocols. The financial figures illustrated above are net of over $83,000 unactualized budget due to the pandemic in-person programming and travel to Israel would resume in this timeframe, which unfortunately was not realized. The projected deficit turned out to be a budget surplus. Donors who have questions beyond what is depicted in this overview are welcome to contact us.

$500 - $999
Anonymous
Jerald and Devesa Baronchiky
Ron Becker and Dena Hirsheld-Becker
David Berg
Robert Berk and Lee Sin
Carlos and Wendy Bremer
Steven Blumenfeld and Joan Forman
Dennis and Jane Carlson
Sal and Teri Eisenberg
Andrew and Glale Ellis
Rich and Annette Feldman
Burton and Clare Figler
David and Pamela Finkelstein in memory of Al S Finkelstein
Stan Finkelstein
Michael Form and Jane Karp
Herbert and Dorothy Fox
Margolita Gilson
Jack and Faye Gringold
Neil and Laura Goldstein
Robert and Cindy Goodof
Ronald Greenberg
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Mark Hayagawa and Irene Goff
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Andrew and Dalia Volobin
Elisha Yadgaran
Warren and Nikki Zepol
Carol Zing
Ronald Chane and Julie Greenberg
Alan Citron and Michael Loeb
Louis Cohen
Robert Cohen
Evan Crane and Tala Weisberg in honor of Hillel for organizing the High Holidays
Stephen Deutsch and Jane Burnet Deutsch
Steven and Jan Dubowsky
Adam Eagle
David and Susan Etkidii
Frederick Ezekiel
Bob and Devesa Frenya in memory of Michael Ferrara
Marc and Deborah Fogel
Benjamin and Arden Fosman
Robert and Irma Gal
Edward and Bonnie Garon
Lee Gavens
Arthur and Linda Gelb
Leon and Judith Glückman
Barry and Laurie Goldman
Maxim Marthov and Alla Golub
Lawrence and Joan Goodman
Alan Green
Yvorg Garwick and Marina Fohlstein
Jeffrey and Barbara Hoffman
Yehosel and Deborah Hoffman
Jeffrey and Joanna Ingerman
Daniel Jackson and Claudia Maribach
Steven and Eileen Janowsky
Jonathan Jove
Arthur and Abby Kalotkin

Even as the world "went virtual" last year, the GradHillel community adapted and responded. We continued coming together over Zoom for educational and social programming, the staff maintained their personal outreach, and care packages helped us celebrate and find greater meaning in the holidays, even if spent in isolation. The time, talent, and resources dedicated to facilitating our continued engagement and development has been truly remarkable.

Max Oleneder PhD ’21

Buzzing with excitement on Purim. As Groucho said, “Humor is reason gone mad.”
I’ve really started to explore my Judaism since becoming involved in Hillel. I learned more about my history and culture through programs like JLF and the summer chavurah cohort learning. I never expected Hillel to become such an important community to me, but I’m so grateful for it. I really started to explore my Judaism since becoming a member of Hillel.

Sarah Knopf ’22

Recipients of our new baby swag.

$100 - $249
Anonymous (1)
Milton Adinoff and Judith Hauptman
David Agus and Amy Povich-Agus
Steven and Debra Altchuler
David and Barbara Altchuler
Steven and Shelley Goldstein

Who is more exacting, Talmudic rules on using a sukkah during a pandemic, or MIT rules on using a sukkah during a pandemic?

Rosa Perri

Harold and Leslie Perri
Kathleen Fennell and Victoria Rekov
Gary and Elaine Raymond
Johann von Torn Rinde
William Roberts and Paula Barta
David Rosenberg
Harvey and Lilia Rosenblum
Mauri Rosenthal and Nancy Tashbernd
Barry and Louise Rosof
David and Susan Rothenberg
Bradley Rubin and Nancy Hite-Rubin
Maximo and Farla Russo
David Sandberg
Ron Scharf and Aylit Schultz
Howard and Linda Schifman
Michael Schlitz
E. Robert Schiffer
Joel and Diane Schiffer
Joly and Ilene Shapiro
Yaron Shapiro
Andrew Sherman and Tamara Goldfaden
Genc and Susan Sherman
Theodore Shekian
Martin and Sylvia Shooman
Barbara Shockley
MIT Hillel by the numbers 2020–21

387 Students who participated in Hillel (148 undergrad, 239 grad)

43 Students who took on a leadership role for at least one event (28 undergrad, 15 grad)

769 Boxes assembled (across 5 holidays) for care packages sent to students to keep holidays tangible and meaningful

$589.60 donated by students to Yad Chesed for Purim Matanot L’evyonim

8 Students who participated in “Philanthropy 101” to start thinking about their own giving after they graduate

oo Zoom sessions, of which...

350+ Were focused 1-on-1 conversations with students

0 Fantastic photos to choose from for this year’s High Holidays

1,129 Unique registrants in our “Leading Jewish Minds @MIT” Zoom speaker series (10 events, April 2020 – June 2021)

1 Fearless Executive Director who rose to every challenge

“ The creator of the universe works in mysterious ways. Great joy and round numbers.”

Scott Adams, creator of Dilbert comic

Having the constant of Hillel when I’m disengaged from so many other aspects of MIT has helped me make sure I don’t lose this second family I’ve formed. It keeps me thinking about MIT and the value of the communities I’ve found there.”

Sarah Aaronson ’23

SCOTT ADAMS, creator of Dilbert cartoon

Donors up to $599

Anonymous (3)
Paul Ackerman
Ronald and Belle Agronin
Russell Apfel and Nancy Wolf
Arthur Apter and Marina Ginsberg
Allison Ash
Alona Bacht
Harry and Ronna Bax
Stephen Balazs and Arnie Yermish
Leonardo Barchik
Jonathan Barkin
Charles Barr
Steven and Maria Barr
e Garrett and Elke Barber
Jay and Carol Bauparent
Ansham Benat
Masa Bers
In memory of Claude Bremer
Uri and Paula Bernstein
Martin Blikar
Anna and Leonar Diton
Ted Bloomin
Alex Bogdanoff
Howard and Lisa Bole
July Book
David Bruslau
Kenneth and Anka Brecher
Mayer and Sandra Bremer

Maurice has many powerful memories to share, and spoke with MIT students about the lessons of the Holocaust from a first-hand perspective.

To commemorate Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Alana Chandler ’22 interviewed her grandmother, Maurice, a Holocaust survivor. Maurice has many powerful memories to share, and spoke with MIT students about the lessons of the Holocaust from a first-hand perspective.

...When I reflect on all the ways MIT Hillel has welcomed me and provided opportunities for engagement, it is difficult to believe I have not been on campus for ten months, due to the pandemic. I am so grateful for how, even in times of physical distancing, MIT Hillel brings students together.”

Dina Sharon, Graduate Student
The MIT Jewish community is very different from the other Jewish communities I have known. It is fascinating to see how analytical MIT types attempt to reconcile their tendency towards quantitative analysis and the scientific method with the mystery and ambiguity in Judaism.

Joe Schlessinger SM’21
“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt