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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The JCC of Greater Pittsburgh Annual Meeting to Include Special Program: From Afghanistan to Pittsburgh

Join us for the JCC's 131st Annual Meeting as we honor our outstanding volunteers and dedicated staff, install the 2026–2027 Board of Directors, and celebrate the many accomplishments of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh and our community over the past year; this year includes a special program.

Wednesday, September 16 at 5:30 pm

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5738 Forbes Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15217

All are welcome to attend.

A Community Conversation: From Afghanistan to Pittsburgh

When thousands of Afghans were desperate to escape the chaos following the return of the Taliban, journalists and other individuals who had worked with international organizations were among those at significant risk. The New York Times went to great lengths to evacuate its current and former Afghan employees and their families, helping them begin new lives in the United States.

For one family, that journey eventually led to Pittsburgh and the JCC. At the heart of this conversation is a story about more than just resettlement. It is a story about belonging, connection, and the power of community. It is a story that reflects what Pittsburgh and our JCC strive to be every day: a place for everybody. A place where people from different backgrounds, experiences and circumstances are welcome and can build relationships and discover opportunities.

Featuring Pittsburgh Afghan refugees Samira and Waissuddin Rustami, their Pittsburgh “mom,” Laura Kessler, and Rebecca Blumenstein, President-Editorial of NBC News, this conversation will explore the Rustamis’ remarkable journey from Afghanistan to Pittsburgh and the relationships that helped them build a new life here, including the extraordinary support of their Pittsburgh “parents,” Laura and Jon Kessler.

*Rebecca Blumenstein along with Diana Kapp co-authored **The Last Free Women: A Daring Escape from Afghanistan & Coming of Age in America**, tracing the journeys of four Afghan women, including Samira Rustami, from the fall of Kabul in 2021 through their evacuation and resettlement in America.*

CONTACT

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