PRESS RELEASE

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JCC of Greater Pittsburgh Joins National Initiative to Expand Parkinson's Research Engagement Across the JCC Movement

Supported by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, the initiative builds on the Tampa JCCs and Federation's Parkinson's Program to help more JCCs play a role in advancing efforts to cure Parkinson's disease.

Pittsburgh, PA – November 16, 2026 — The Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh is one of 10 JCCs across the United States selected to join an initiative led by JCC Association of North America and the Tampa JCCs and Federation to connect Parkinson's programs with research opportunities. Supported by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF), the initiative will help more people learn about Parkinson's research and the Parkinson's Precision Medicine Initiative (PPMI), MJFF's global research study focused on understanding Parkinson's biology to drive new treatments.

"We are pleased to be part of this initiative," said Jason Kunzman, JCC of Greater Pittsburgh President and CEO. "Our JCC is well positioned to help reach people who need to connect to Parkinson's research and the PPMI that are focused on advancing the understanding of this difficult, lifelong neurological condition."

The work is particularly relevant to Jewish communities because certain genetic variants associated with Parkinson's disease are more common among people of Ashkenazi Jewish descent. PPMI is offering free genetic testing for Parkinson's-related genetic variants to all people with the disease. People with and without Parkinson's can contribute to the study at **https://myppmi.org/pittsburgh**.

"Currently at the Pittsburgh JCC we offer PWR! Moves workout classes led by a board-certified PT where the focus is to target motor skills that deteriorate due to Parkinsons's disease, to help build functional strength, slow movement declines, and improve daily mobility to make life easier," said Miranda Thompson, Fitness Coordinator at the JCC South Hills. "We are using a full body movement analysis to address any weaknesses through functional movements when you get started here.
"Traveling to Tampa and seeing how the other JCC's have encouraged and built even more of a community for these members was motivating," Thompson said. "We hope to continue to learn, engage and provide even more."

"People are more likely to engage in research when they can learn about it through communities and organizations they already know and trust," said Maggie Kuhl, MJFF vice president of Patient Engagement. "We are grateful to work with more JCC partners — building on our longstanding partnership with the Tampa JCCs and Federation and the strong network enabled through the JCC Association of North America — to help more individuals understand how they can learn more about their own biology and contribute to cures through PPMI."

The initiative builds on the Tampa JCCs and Federation's Parkinson's Program. Participating JCCs will draw on their existing programs and community relationships to build awareness of PPMI, meeting people where they already are — in wellness programs, community events, educational programs, and trusted local communications channels.

"This initiative reflects the innovation and leadership that exist within the JCC Movement and our shared Jewish responsibility to respond to the issues that matter most to supporting people in our communities," said Barak Hermann, president and CEO of JCC Association of North America. "JCCs have a unique opportunity to bring people together across differences, create meaningful connections, and turn Jewish values into action in the communities where we live. This initiative also demonstrates the power of the JCC network: By bringing trusted partners, local knowledge, and national expertise together, JCCs can create impact that enhances people's quality of life. We are grateful to the Tampa JCCs and Federation for bringing this work forward and to MJFF for its support of this important effort."

"We sincerely appreciate this funding from The Michael J. Fox Foundation, and we are honored that the special relationship we have cultivated over the years with MJFF is now translating into broader engagement with the JCC Movement. I can't wait to see the collective impact our JCCs will have when working together to support this landmark research," said Gary Gould, CEO of the Tampa JCCs and Federation and co-founder of its Parkinson's Program.

The 10 JCCs selected to participate in the initiative are:

- Barry and Florence Friedberg JCC in Oceanside, N.Y.
- JCC Greater Boston in Newton, Mass.
- JCC of Greater Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford in West Hartford, Conn.
- Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan in New York City
- Michael-Ann Russell JCC in North Miami Beach, Fla.
- Minnesota JCC in St. Paul, Minn.
- Sandra and Leon Levine JCC in Charlotte, N.C.
- Staenberg-Loup JCC in Denver, Colo.
- Tucson JCC in Tucson, Ariz.

These JCCs join the Shanna and Bryan Glazer JCC in Tampa, Fla. to implement the initiative.

The initiative runs through April 30, 2027. To learn more about PPMI, visit https://myppmi.org/pittsburgh. For more information about the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh's involvement, contact Miranda Thompson at mthompson@jccpgh.org.

About the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh
For more than 131 years, the JCC has enriched our community by creating an environment rooted in Jewish values that strengthens the physical, intellectual and spiritual well-being of individuals and families.
Comprehensive programming includes child care and preschool, after-school and school's-out programs, day and overnight camping, senior adult activities, fitness and wellness programs, special needs services, arts and cultural activities including a nationally-accredited Jewish museum and scores of programs for all ages and interests. The JCC houses state-of-the-art fitness and wellness facilities, heated indoor swimming pools and an Olympic-size outdoor pool for summer use, gymnasiums, outdoor playgrounds, auditoriums, dance studios, classrooms and meeting areas.
Website: JCCPGH.org
Facebook: @JCCPittsburgh
Instagram: @JCCPGH

About JCC Association of North America
JCC Association of North America, through its three Centers of Excellence—Peoplehood, Talent Development, and Innovation and Impact—leads the JCC Movement, the largest and most inclusive platform for Jewish life in the United States and Canada, which includes nearly 150 Jewish Community Centers and JCC Camps and JWB Jewish Chaplains Council®. Collectively, the JCC Movement engages more than 1.5 million people each week— in person and online. With leadership and support of JCC Association, the JCC Movement strengthens Jewish community, advances vibrant Jewish life, and delivers intentional, measurable impact, locally, continent-wide, and wherever Jewish life is lived. Learn more at JCCA.org or on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.