

A close-up photograph of a wooden ceiling. The ceiling is composed of horizontal wooden slats. On the right side, there is a curved wooden structure, possibly a part of a staircase or a decorative element, also made of horizontal slats. A small black object, possibly a light fixture or a sensor, is mounted on the curved structure. The lighting is warm and even.





To the CJM Community,

We are pleased to share our 2025 Year in Review with you.

The year was forever shaped by the antisemitic murders of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky outside our museum. As we reflect on the past year, we pause first to remember Sarah and Yaron—their commitment to building bridges across communities, their belief in dialogue and understanding, and the many lives they touched. Their memory continues to inspire our work every day.

Even amid grief, the museum remained a place where people came together to explore Jewish life in Washington.

Inside this report, you will see recaps of our two special exhibitions—*JewCE: The Jewish Comics Experience* and *LGBTJews in the Federal City*—which invited visitors to engage with new dimensions of our shared history. You will learn about the acquisition of treasured artifacts such as Susan Stamberg's recording kit, as well as the launch of our oral history program, ensuring that today's stories become tomorrow's history.

Please read on for how we used Washington's Jewish story to encourage connection across generations and communities, including through our first Grandparents Day and the many musical programs that filled our space throughout the year. Finally, we've highlighted how we've engaged audiences beyond the Jewish community—supporting educators as they incorporated Jewish stories into their curricula and convening leaders from a wide range of local organizations at our second annual Nights at the Seder Table.

Through it all, we've recognized how you've supported our work in so many valuable ways. Thank you for your partnership, generosity, and belief in this museum's mission.


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Cover credit and image above: Alex Fradkin Photography

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*Of blessed memory

In Memoriam

On May 21, 2025, Sarah Milgrim, ז"ל, and Yaron Lischinsky, ז"ל, were murdered outside the museum in a devastating antisemitic attack.

Over the past year, the museum staff has had the privilege of getting to know Sarah and Yaron through the many beautiful tributes of their families and friends. We've learned about their professional accomplishments and the values that guided their work: both were dedicated to peacebuilding and to fostering cross-cultural understanding. They each left behind an impressive legacy that will continue to reverberate for our entire community.

At the museum, we see Sarah and Yaron's commitment to bridge-building as a guiding force in our daily work. When the museum reopened a week after the tragedy, we affirmed that this antisemitic attack would not be its last chapter. We remain committed to building connections, identifying points of commonality, encouraging civic engagement, and educating the public about the richness and diversity of Jewish life.



|| SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Sharing Untold Stories

Special exhibitions are among the Museum's most powerful tools for engaging audiences, expanding understanding, and bringing new stories to light. *JewCE!: A Jewish Comics Experience* and *LGBTJews in the Federal City*, our two 2025 special exhibitions, welcomed nearly 10,000 visitors – those who have walked through our doors before and many more who hadn't yet visited. They created meaningful opportunities for learning and dialogue while providing new entry points into Jewish history to foster understanding across communities.



Ketubah and personal letters on display in *LGBTJews in the Federal City*. Chris Ferenzi Photography.

|| *LGBTJEWS IN THE FEDERAL CITY*

In May, the museum opened *LGBTJews in the Federal City*. This self-curated landmark exhibition follows a national story with an emphasis on DC-based activism, sweeping through more than a century of legal milestones, far-ranging protests, changes in religious spaces, and vibrant cultural life.

The exhibition drew new visitors from across the region: 62% of ticket buyers were first-time visitors.

A public program, presented in partnership with Whitman Walker Health and Bet Mishpachah, invited speakers to share their memories of the AIDS epidemic. Panelists reflected on responses to the epidemic both within and beyond the Jewish community, its impact in the DMV, their personal and professional recollections from the height of the epidemic in the 1980s and 1990s, and the continuing battle against the disease today.



Memories of the Aids Epidemic Panel. L-R: Heather Alt, Deputy Director of Nursing Whitman-Walker Health, Physician Assistant Barbara Lewis, Bet Mishpachah lay leader Larry Neff, and LGBTQ psychiatrist Jeffrey S. Akman, MD.

|| *JEWCE!: THE JEWISH COMICS EXPERIENCE*

JewCE!: The Jewish Comics Experience, on loan from the Center for Jewish History in New York City, explored 100 years of Jewish cartoons, comics, and graphic novels. A visually engaging exhibition, it touched on political cartoons, immigrant stories, female creators, Sunday funnies, some of our favorite superheroes, and much more. Scenes from local DC area comic fandom, a reading room, and an activity space rounded out the exhibition, welcoming new and old comic enthusiasts into the story.



Artifact donor Warren Bernard posing with a case filled with many of the items he loaned to the exhibition. Chris Ferenzi Photography.

"My third time seeing this amazing exhibition and I learn new things and experience new feelings each time. Congratulations/ Mazel Tov!"

–MATT

"WOW! just wow what a feat of scholarship, interpretation and compassion. Brilliant work. Now publish the book!"

–DEBORAH

"What an incredible journey this exhibit took us on—from hiding in fear through moments of transformation to a more hopeful future. Thank you."

–JESSICA

|| COLLECTIONS & ACQUISITIONS

Preserving Our History

The Museum's collections trace local Jewish life from the 18th century to the present day, exploring the intersections of Jewish culture and civic engagement across the region.

In 2025, our collections team acquired thousands of objects, photographs, and boxes of archival materials. Ranging from Kehilat Shalom/Gaithersburg Hebrew Congregation's archives to the Pearlman family collection, these items — and so many more — are now available to future visitors and researchers.

The Museum launched a new program, “We Want Your Stuff,” that invited members of the public to share their objects and stories with museum curators to see if they might be a fit for the Museum's collection.

FEATURED ACQUISITIONS

|| SUSAN STAMBERG'S RECORDING KIT

In September, the museum acquired the recording kit of legendary radio personality Susan Stamberg (1938-2025). Stamberg, one of NPR's “founding mothers,” began her NPR career in 1971 and was the co-host of its flagship program “All Things Considered” for 14 years. She donated the kit upon her retirement in 2025, just one month before her death. Stamberg delivered her recording kit to the museum personally, proudly declaring that it had traveled to all 50 states for her work.



Susan Stamberg with Collections Curator Jonathan Edelman.



|| MURRY'S STEAKS



Items from the Murry's Steaks Collection, Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum Collection. Gift of Ira and Becky Mendelson.

Murry's Steaks T-Bone Times, internal company newsletter, ca. 1960s. | Wall clock branded for Murry's Steaks, ca. 1950s, which used to hang in one of the company's retail stores. | Uniform patch for Murry's Steak featuring Mr. Murry, date unknown.



Museum Oral Historian Kerry Reed (right) conducts an oral history interview with a couple during a Grandparent's Day program, November 2025. Chris Ferenzi Photography.

|| COLLECTING ORAL HISTORIES

The Museum launched a new oral history initiative to record, preserve, and share the stories of Jewish Washingtonians, thanks in part to a matching seed grant from The Dr. Cyrus Katzen Foundation and additional generous support from our community.

The Museum's oral historian, Kerry Reed, wrote, “Conducting oral histories is a bit of an art form. No two oral historians are going to approach an interview the same... for me, oral histories have a way of soliciting empathy more easily than archival sources... Regardless of what may happen to an oral history after the fact, my goal for any oral history is to experience the life story of a narrator with them.”

|| EXPLORING THE STORIES OF FEDERAL WORKERS

As the nation considered the future of government service in the winter of 2025, the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum launched a special initiative to explore and collect the stories of Jewish federal employees who worked in agencies and offices across the government.

In March, the museum displayed its first case dedicated to Jewish federal workers in DC, highlighting stories from the 1890s through the early 2000s. New cases about Jews in federal service followed quarterly. The stories behind the artifacts in each case were detailed on the Museum's blog, *The Whole Spiel*, allowing visitors from beyond the Museum to learn more. Each case created an opportunity to encourage others to contribute artifacts from their federal service to the museum's collection.

The initiative is supported by Sue Ducat in memory of Stanley Cohen, z”l.

“Exploring these stories moves beyond the headlines and allows us to investigate the deep and longstanding connection between the federal workforce and the diversity of cultural life in DC.”

BEA GURWITZ,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Capital Jewish Museum

|| EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Welcoming Visitors of All Ages

We expanded, strengthened, and refined our educational work in 2025, including our family programming and our offerings for area schools. Our partnerships with local schools and school districts continued developing, allowing us to reach students of all backgrounds and provide important professional development and training for educators in the DMV. Over the course of the year, we welcomed 36 student groups, representing 732 students, for school visits and educational tours.

“I didn't have any knowledge about the part that Jewish people had in DC... The timeline was surprising, and it has sparked my curiosity to learn more... It was a wonderful and eye-opening experience.”

EDUCATOR WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MUSEUM'S ARTIFACTS OF ACTION PROGRAM



A survivor and student youth ambassadors painting in the studio. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2024.

The Museum partnered with the Stephen Tyrone Johns Summer Youth Leadership Program at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to host a small gallery of paintings created by Holocaust survivors collaborating with local teens. In addition to displaying the art, we hosted a panel conversation featuring participants of the program where attendees heard the survivor's story, and about how the artistic process helped youth leaders understand those stories so that their legacies of resilience and community will not be forgotten from our DC community.

A family enjoys art activities at Grandparents' Day. Chris Ferenzi Photography.



AB Corson photography

Families enjoy a monthly Story Time program with a local author.



Panel participants at *Striving to Belong: LGBTQ+ Jews in Orthodox Communities*, a collaboration with Eshel and Moment Magazine, explored shifts in the Orthodox community towards greater inclusion of LGBTQ+ Jews.



The Museum hosted a Grandparents' Day program inspired by the value of *m'dor l'dor* (from generation to generation). Visitors of all ages enjoyed activities focused on sharing family memories—and recording them for posterity. From storytelling to scrapbooking and oral histories, dozens of families had fun while sharing personal histories and exploring the exhibitions.



Participants enjoyed an advanced screening of an episode of Season 14 of *Pati's Mexican Table* with Pati Jinich in discussion with Anna Spiegel, followed by a book signing.

|| EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Connecting Through Music

In 2025, music filled the museum, bringing vibrancy to our spaces. These programs reflected our robust partnerships with performers across the region, inviting audiences of all backgrounds to explore and enjoy the Museum together. A special thanks to the Stieber Family Endowment, which supports musical programing at the Museum.



Talented young performers from the Heifetz Institute ushered us back into the Museum in the aftermath of the May 21 tragedy; bringing music and beauty into the space.



Cantor Ze'evi Tovlev led our communal seder, with many wonderful songs, for more than 125 participants from fourteen local Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.



The Gay Men's Chorus of Washington kicked off Pride Month with a packed concert that took over the entire museum lobby.



Albert H. Small, Jr., Tina Small, Beatrice Gurwitz, David Rubenstein, Esther Safran Foer, Chris Wolf, Meg Flax, and Sam Flax

|| GALA 2025

Preserving History and Building Bridges

On September 14, the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum hosted its second annual gala at La Maison Française at the French Embassy. The 2025 Gala, *Preserving History and Building Bridges*, was a true celebration of community, storytelling, and impact.

From the powerful words of our presenters—CNN anchor Dana Bash, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, and Maryland Governor Wes Moore—to the inspiring legacies of our honorees, David M. Rubenstein and Esther Safran Foer, the evening reminded us of the strength we find in history and in one another.

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A planned gift to the Museum is a legacy—an enduring way to invest in the Museum’s mission. Bequests, endowments, and other legacy gifts are important ways to secure the Museum’s financial future.

Benefits include recognition in Museum publications, invitations to future special programming, and the knowledge that you have helped to ensure our community’s stories will be shared and preserved.

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13,848
visitors



2
special
exhibitions

34
school trips

725
students

54
tours for 786 people



2,400
intern
and
515
volunteer
hours

45
newly
acquired
collections,
which include:

150
artifacts

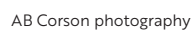
3,500
photographs

47
linear feet of
paper materials

16
oral histories



Alex Fradkin Photography



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