Stephen Davis

Stephen is passionate about advancing engagement in the Jewish community. Stephen is an attorney with Carmody MacDonald, P.C. focusing primarily on real estate and commercial litigation matters. Stephen received undergraduate degrees from both Columbia University in History and the Jewish Theological Seminary in Jewish History. After college, he worked for two years at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, where he assisted in preparing criminal prosecutions for trial. In 2008, Stephen moved to St. Louis to attend Washington University School of Law. Building community has always been important to him, both within the Jewish community and the community at-large. Growing up in Atlanta, Stephen was actively involved in his school community, local civic community and congregation. Currently, Stephen serves on the Leadership Advisory Council for the Jewish Federation of St. Louis' Professional Society and co-chaired an event entitled “Exonerated: Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue,” where the Professional Society partnered with JCRC to present the Missouri Innocence Project with Wesley Bell. Stephen is actively working on future opportunities including the growth of the Jewish Federation Professional Society. Outside of the Jewish community, Stephen serves on committees for the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, where he works to better engage members and non-members in the legal community to increase the organization's relevance through more effective outreach. He is also a member of the Community Association Institute’s Heartland Chapter, which is the trade association for homeowner and condominium associations and those working within the field. Stephen is married to Julie (Bernstein), a licensed clinical social worker and practicing therapist.
Rachel Deutsch

Rachel is passionate about building and strengthening Jewish community. Rachel grew up in Boston to an Israeli family and moved to St. Louis with her husband almost six years ago after meeting at Yeshiva University. Rachel attended Jewish institutions from pre-school through graduate school. She studied at Midreshet Harova in Jerusalem for her gap year and then after college, received a Masters in Education at Brandeis University and taught Hebrew and Judaics full time at Mirowitz until becoming a mother of two boys. She now works part-time at Mirowitz, supporting students in the beautiful language of Hebrew. Rachel is active on committees through Young Israel Congregation where she established their first ever nursing room. She has organized many programs for young women and families with young children in the community including a women’s study group, a large Shabbat dinner, and the renovation of the Mikvah on the Millstone campus. Rachel also worked closely with the Bnot Sherut from Israel, including a shlichot program for 2-4 year olds in the community, for observant and non-observant families. Rachel enjoys planning events, zumba, tennis, cooking Indian food, and painting with acrylics. Rachel is married to Zack who works at the Gatesworth Communities in Real Estate Development and Senior Living.
Laurie is passionate about inclusive spaces and access to mental health services. Laurie grew up in New Jersey and has a MS degree from Vanderbilt University in Psychology and a Master of Social Work degree from The Brown School at Washington University. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Laurie has been serving children, adolescents and their families since 1989. She has worked in a range of settings including community mental health centers, long-term inpatient mental health psychiatric facilities, family service agencies, and private practice. She currently serves on the board of Cultural Leadership and Walter’s Walk, a non-profit mental health agency. Laurie cares about promoting relationships between the Jewish and African American communities and she and her husband, Daniel Rosenthal, have passed these values on to their two young adult children. They are members of Kol Rinah synagogue and The J. Her leadership is based on collaboration and she brings her social work lens to take a non-judgmental approach to interpersonal relationship building. Laurie enjoys brainstorming and strategic planning to advance an organization’s goals.
Michelle Gerchen

_Michelle is passionate about education, community building, and leadership commitments._ Michelle grew up in St. Louis and has been teaching for six years, currently an 8th grade Social Studies Teacher at LaSalle Springs Middle School. She has a bachelor’s degree in Social Studies Education with a Minor in History, a master’s degree in Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum, and in 2020 will graduate with a second master’s degree in History. Michelle was nominated by her colleagues to win the Gold Cup Award for her outstanding effort and meeting the school's PRIDE Expectations. Michelle has recently become more active in the Jewish Community through joining NCJW and being a member of the leadership class of 2019 and by joining the L'Chaim Women's Philanthropy Committee. She wants to continue to engage the Jewish Community in new ways and enjoys meeting new people. Michelle has a strong work ethic, highly motivated, and enjoys taking on leadership roles. When given difficult tasks, Michelle finds solutions and always tries to have fun with whatever she does. Michelle believes that it is important for leaders to show what they expect, to be constantly learning, and to always communicate with others.
Traci is passionate about Israel and raising a socially conscious child. Traci is most proud of being a single parent and being actively involved in the St. Louis Jewish community. She has an MSW from Washington University and JD from St. Louis University and has been in pharmaceutical sales for 20 years and finds it fulfilling to be a resource to physicians and patients. Traci is a voracious reader and one day hopes to obtain a PhD in bioethics. She takes great pride in philanthropy. She is the co-founder and co-president of St. Louis Friends of Israel, and has served on many Jewish community committees, including Women’s Philanthropy’s L’chaim, Education committee at B’nai Amoona, the National Kidney Foundation Gift of Life and Jewish National Fund. Traci enjoys always learning, out of the box thinking, ability to work with diverse groups of people, and striving to always have a positive attitude. Her hobbies are traveling, attending concerts, dancing and being with my family. She prides herself on being persistent, passionate, tenacious, and caring.
Sabrina Gornish

Sabrina is passionate about Jewish education, community building, and serving children with special needs in Jewish schools. Sabrina works in Telehealth as an Occupational Therapist with CTS Virtual and, is a talented baker with her own business, Sweet Tooth Confections. She has a Bachelor’s in History and Political Science from Binghamton University and a Masters in OT from Washington University School of Medicine. She is currently her company’s team lead in California, conducting evaluations for all incoming students and working as part of a larger team to help each student be successful in the ‘virtual classroom.’ Sabrina is active in Young Israel Congregation and has a deep connection to the Modern Orthodox movement within Jewish life. Sabrina recently completed a 3 year term on the board of The Epstein Hebrew Academy and continues to help with fundraising events. She has also served on committees for Young Israel Congregation, Women’s Philanthropy’s L’Chaim, and is the local volunteer baker for Sharsheret’s annual Pies for Prevention, which raises money to support education and services for women with ovarian cancer. She personally bakes 80-100 pies each Thanksgiving, with 100% of the funds raised going to Sharsheret. Sabrina believes in hard work, creativity and dedication as well as building relationships across the spectrum of the Jewish community. Sabrina is married to Max, president of the board of The Epstein Hebrew Academy, and they are the parents of two young children.
Julia Kofkoff Gould

Julia is passionate about the St. Louis Jewish community, dental care, and underserved communities. Julia grew up in St. Louis, attended MICDS and then Washington University where she majored in English, was active in sorority life, student government and was Co-President of the Pre-Dental Society. After college, Julia attend New York University College of Dentistry, where she received her DDS degree. She moved back to St. Louis and completed a general dentistry residency during which time she treated underserved communities in the St. Louis area. Julia is currently an associate at Clayton Dental and is enjoying the career she knew she wanted since middle school. Currently a committee member on the Membership Committee of the Greater St. Louis Dental Society as well as the Mary Institute St. Louis Country Day Alumni Board, Julia also became a board member of the Silk Foundation in the spring and looks forward to increasing her involvement in the Jewish community representing the mission of the foundation. Julia’s parents are active in the community and they are all members of Temple Israel. Julia met her husband, Aaron Gould, on JDate and they enjoy traveling, enjoying the outdoors, cooking and trying new restaurants. Julia prides herself in being a good listener, having a positive attitude, and encouraging others to be their best. Julie believes it is important to always offer constructive criticism and that many times it is not what you say but the manner and delivery in which you say it that makes the biggest difference.
Lisa Hirshberg

Lisa is passionate about the Jewish community, Jewish values, leadership and congregational life. Lisa Hirshberg joined Temple Israel three and a half years ago as Development & Database Coordinator and was recently promoted to Membership Manager, building on her background in development and marketing. Prior to TI, Lisa served as Communications Director for The Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research, which she and her family started after her father passed away from the disease in 1997. Lisa played a crucial role in developing the foundation from the ground up, as she structured and implemented an integrated database management system to ensure sustainability for future growth, as well as creating and designing marketing materials for the organization. To date, the foundation has raised more than $19 million for pancreatic research and education. Last year Lisa participated on the Jewish Federation’s Rubin Israel Trip, which was a life changing experience. She has held many volunteer positions in the Ladue School District, including the Parent District Council and PTO. Lisa prides herself on being highly collaborative and inclusive with a passion for working with others to develop creative ideas to serve individuals of all ages. Lisa graduated from Webster University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. She has two daughters and lives in Olivette.
Elliot is passionate about history, Jewish community life, and mentoring youth. Elliot was born and raised in St. Louis and graduated from Metro High School, a magnet school in the city of St. Louis. Growing up, the outdoors had a large impact on Elliot and this led him to become involved in the Boy Scouts and attain the rank of Eagle Scout. After graduating from the University of Southern California, Elliot moved back to St. Louis to be closer to family. After working in the recruiting and IT fields, he started a company, Mero Properties, which invests in rental properties in the St. Louis area and serves as property manager. Elliot currently serves as Philanthropy Chair on the YPD Board of the Jewish Federation. He is an avid sports fan, a history buff, and enjoys traveling and exploring the world.
Danny Kraus

Danny is passionate about increasing Jewish leadership in the St. Louis business community, and strengthening the St. Louis region as a whole. Danny attended the Farmer School of Business at Miami University, where he earned a B.S. in Finance, and then went on to earn his Juris Doctorate and Certificate in Business Law at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law. Since graduating he has been an attorney at Thompson Coburn, LLP in the firm’s Corporate – Real Estate Transactions practice. Prior to starting at Thompson Coburn, LLP Danny spent time working in the legal departments of two of the largest companies in St. Louis, Edward Jones and Reinsurance Group of America, and some of the smallest companies, while working with startups at Cortex and T-Rex. Since beginning his career Danny has participated in FOCUS St. Louis and the Association of Corporate Counsel Street Law program. While at Miami University Danny gained leadership experience as the president of his fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau, and as a co-founder of the Miami University Finance Association. During law school he broadened his knowledge base further by being named an Editor of the Washington University Journal of Law and Policy, a member of the CeLect Consulting Team, and a student attorney in the law school’s Entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property Clinic. When he is not working Danny enjoys traveling, Mizzou Football, and spending time with friends and family, including his wife Mara, a social worker.
Elizabeth Lieberman

Elizabeth is passionate about Israel and connecting Jewish values to everyday lives. Elizabeth grew up in St. Louis and attended Solomon Schechter Day School and Ladue High School. She attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where she earned a Bachelor’s in Philosophy with a focus in cross cultural patterns and personal wellness. She returned to St. Louis to complete her Master of Health Administration degree at Saint Louis University. While at Miami University, Elizabeth was a founding sister and chapter President of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority and served as a Hillel Board member. Elizabeth was a Jewish summer camp counselor, Religious School teacher and more recently served on the JF&CS Young Leaders Board. She appreciates reconnecting with the Saul Mirowitz Day School as a member of their annual gala planning committee. Elizabeth currently leads Strategic Planning and Mergers and Acquisitions for a large health care organization headquartered in St. Louis. Elizabeth enjoys exercise, being outside, traveling, cooking, and spending time with her husband, David, and daughter, Molly.
Stacey Owens

Stacey is passionate about building relationships and helping make a difference in the Jewish community. Stacey recently moved to St. Louis from Maryland where she worked in Washington D.C. She is originally from Cleveland, Ohio and grew up active in her synagogue and Jewish youth groups. Stacey received a business degree in Marketing from Miami University and was active in Hillel. She has been working in the association industry with exhibitions and events for over 10 years. Stacey transitioned into a Sales Operations role and is currently an Operations Manager with the International Legal Technology Association. Stacey moved to St. Louis in March 2019 with her husband and resides in Maryland Heights. She enjoys running and has run many half-marathons as well as her first full marathon in 2018. Stacey is involved in a Women in Technology User Group which focuses on Salesforce and she received her Salesforce Administrator certification. Stacey prides herself as organized, skilled at time management, approachable, and a good communicator who utilizes coaching skills to educate and motivate others.
Ryia Ross-Peterson

Ryia is passionate about helping young people and families, social justice and living Jewish values such as Tikkun Olam. Ryia is a pediatrician with Mercy Ladue Pediatrics. She studied psychology at Grinnell College, received a BS in Occupational Therapy from Wash U, and a MD from SLU Medical School. She completed a residency at Cardinal-Glennon Hospital. Ryia is a member of CRC. She is currently a Vice Chair of Cultural Leadership and anticipates being a future board president. She has been on the Advisory Council for Kids in the Middle for 25 years and received their Champion of Kids award. Ryia is the Clayton School District Doctor and a volunteer at CHIPS (Community Health in Partnership). She is also on the Advisory board for M-SLICE, Metro St. Louis Coalition for Inclusion and Equity and leads support groups for Re-evaluation Counseling. Ryia was born in the inner city of Chicago into a strong large Jewish family and then grew up in St. Louis involved at United Hebrew Congregation. As a teenager, she was part of the Hashomer Hatzair Zionist Youth Movement and lived on Kibbutz Ha'Ogen for a year doing an Ulpan. She has been married to her husband for 37 years and they have one son who is studying to be a teacher and jazz pianist. Ryia enjoys her work as a pediatrician, her volunteer commitments, traveling, and hiking and the outdoors with her husband.
Christine is passionate about Judaism in general and specifically in making sure our children have a strong Jewish foundation. Christine is the Director of Clinical Services at Magellan Health Care where she oversees 150 direct and indirect reports. She received an MBA from University of Missouri and an MSW from Washington University. Christine converted to Judaism as an adult and is an active member of the board of directors at Temple Israel. Christine met her husband when they were both working at a social service organization for homeless youth. They have a son, Isaac who is a student at Saul Mirowitz Jewish community school.
Arza is passionate about supporting children and their families, Jewish day school education, and having St. Louis be a welcoming community for Israelis. Arza is a Customer Success Partner with MDClone. MDClone has built the first of its kind platform which democratizes data to the entire healthcare ecosystem, enabling on-demand and self-service access to healthcare data without IT mediators and, using synthetic data, without risk to patient privacy. She studied law in Israel and later transitioned to be a software trainer which led her to different roles in IT companies. She came to St. Louis to work for Amdocs as a Program Manager. She currently works for an Israeli start-up. She is active with Saul Mirowitz Jewish community school. Arza has a supportive leadership style, able to work through programs with a high degree of attention and coaching when needed. Arza is compassionate and respectful and enjoys helping others feel valued and empowered.
Erica Steen

*Erica is passionate about the Jewish community, social justice, and volunteerism.* Erica is the executive director of Give Kids A Smile, providing free dental care for underserved children in the St. Louis region. Prior to Give Kids A Smile, the majority of her career was spent as a Jewish Communal Professional in organizations including BBYO, The Jewish Federation of St. Louis and JCC’s in St. Louis, Dayton, Cincinnati, Washington DC and Miami. Erica grew up in St. Louis where she was involved in high school Jewish youth leadership programs, BBYO and USY and working at local Jewish day camps at the JCC and Ramot Amoona. Erica attended the University of Kansas where she received a degree in Human Development and Family Life. She has staffed four Birthright trips, was a board member for JProDC, volunteered with the Leukemia Lymphoma Society/Team in Training and helped to coordinate close to a dozen bone marrow registries in the hope to find a cure for blood cancers. Erica returned to St. Louis in 2017 and participated in the 2019 NCJW leadership class. Erica’s leadership is focused on creating a team approach, empowering others, and being a role model.
Rachel Thimangu

Rachel is passionate about social justice, seeking truth and ensuring the safety of our children. Rachel works in Corporate Communications at Express Scripts, a Cigna company. She worked for 16 years as a professional print journalist, most recently at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, followed by 12 years in corporate communication at Monsanto and in her current role. She has a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from SUNY-Brockport. Rachel participated in the Jewish Federation’s Rubin Israel Experience in 2018, is a member of Central Reform Congregation, and a past committee member for Nishmah’s Women’s Retreat. She also is a proud wife and the mother of Benjie (age 14) and Eva (age 9), alumni and current student at Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School, where she is an active parent. Her husband of 19 years, Patrick, also is a former journalist who now owns and operates Arch Taekwondo in St. Louis; and leads the after-school taekwondo program at Mirowitz School. He grew up in Kenya, and the entire family has been fortunate to visit that beautiful country. They live in University City. Most weekdays, Rachel can be found developing presentations for executives at Express Scripts, squeezing in a yoga class, and schlepping her kids or her 83-year-old mother, who was widowed and moved to St. Louis in 2018. Her weekends typically are spent with family and friends – enjoying warm weather, taking in a movie, eating out, or sometimes catching a live theater or dance performance. She loves travel, learning and new experiences.
Julie Zuick

*Julie is passionate about creating a positive community and building strong relationships.* She joined Grant Cooper as a Senior Consultant following a successful career in brand and general management for Fortune 500 companies. Julie’s search practice at Grant Cooper focuses on executive and senior level positions across a variety of disciplines nationwide. She has led successful searches for C-suite executives at organizations ranging from VC-backed entrepreneurial enterprises to well-established institutions. Previously, Julie led major brands, managed profitability, and drove innovation at PepsiCo, Campbell Soup Company, and ConAgra Foods and oversaw strategic planning and partnership marketing at Build-A-Bear Workshop. She began her career managing advertising and marketing for Ralph Lauren’s wholesale, retail, and licensed businesses. Julie earned her MBA from Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis where she received the Milford Bohm Prize in Marketing, awarded by the faculty to the student who exhibits the strongest academic achievement and the most potential in the field of marketing. Julie also has a BS in Advertising from the University of Texas at Austin and spent two summers studying international business and art history at the American University of Paris, France. Julie is an active member of the Board of Directors of MERS/Goodwill and Temple Israel’s Marketing Committee. In addition, she serves as a Business Mentor to students at Washington University. Outside of work, Julie enjoys spending time with her husband (Scott) and their two boys (Benjamin and Jeffrey).
Karen Sher is passionate about building and empowering leadership to strengthen the St Louis Jewish community. Karen serves as Vice President of Community Engagement for Jewish Federation. Her work includes managing the Community Engagement department made up of YPD, PJ Library, the Israel Center and the Millstone Institute. In addition, Karen serves on the Senior Management team of the Jewish Federation and is involved in community and government relations. Prior to her work with Jewish Federation, Karen served on several boards within the Jewish community including the JCC, St. Louis Hillel at Washington University, Jewish Federation of St. Louis and was the founding President of Nishmah, the St. Louis Jewish Women’s Project. Karen was a member of Jewish Federation of North America National Young Leadership Cabinet and received Jewish Federation’s Grossberg Young Leadership Award in 2003. She is a graduate of the Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service where she received her MA in Jewish Studies at Baltimore Hebrew University and MSW at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work. Karen attended Indiana University where she earned her BA in Sociology. She is married to fellow Hoosier Howie Sher and they have three children (one of whom is a current Hoosier).