



Strength. Shelter. Together.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT





Vision

Keshet envisions a world in which all LGBTQ Jews and our families can live with full equality, justice, and dignity.

Mission

Keshet works for the full equality of all LGBTQ Jews and our families in Jewish life. We strengthen Jewish communities. We equip Jewish organizations with the skills and knowledge to build LGBTQ-affirming communities, create spaces in which all queer Jewish youth feel seen and valued, and advance LGBTQ rights nationwide.

Dear Friend,

2020. A year when our sense of time flattened. A year marked by loss, suffering, and continued assaults on human rights.

But our community astounded us. In the midst of a global pandemic, we experienced more energy, commitment, and mobilization than ever before. We learned that quarantine did not need to mean social isolation. Through a suite of new online programs, we were able to reach record numbers of queer Jewish youth—especially vulnerable youth. We learned new strategies for engagement, launched a new video interview series, and laid the groundwork for new programs for LGBTQ Jews of Color.

The title of our 2020 interview series, *Joy and Resilience*, encapsulates much of what we've experienced this past year: sparks of joy in the darkness and the beauty of our resilience as a community. Amid the grief and struggle, we have also recognized our blessings and emerged stronger.

2021 brings us many reasons to feel hope. With you as our partner, we will continue to build on our strengths and create a better future for us all. Thank you for sticking with us on the journey.

L'Shalom,



Idit Klein
PRESIDENT & CEO



Seth M. Marnin
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Empowering Youth

For LGBTQ Jewish youth, pandemic life has been especially challenging. And for young people forced to “shelter” at home with hostile, unsupportive family members, this time has been traumatic. For them, Keshet has been a lifeline.

In 2020, Keshet reached more LGBTQ Jews and allies ages 13-24 than ever before, creating vital online spaces for support and connection. These programs may have happened in a virtual space, but the impact was very real. After participating in a Keshet program, 89% of participants said they felt increased comfort with and confidence in their Jewish LGBTQ identity.

Together with a diverse group of LGBTQ, Jewish, and Jews of Color-led organizations, Keshet also launched a new program specifically for LGBTQ Jewish youth of Color. In the wake of the racial justice protests this summer, we created a space for youth to come together to grieve, exhale, and connect together about Black Lives Matter, police violence, and what all of it means to them as young queer Jews of Color. We also offered an opportunity for the youth to come together to process the November elections. The youth shared how powerful it was to connect with one another and feel seen, especially in these fraught and isolating times.

In Keshet’s online programs, youth also gained leadership skills that help them advocate for LGBTQ visibility, justice, and equality in their own communities.



“ Before Keshet, I was in a very challenging place as a trans person in a world that is systematically transphobic. Also, as a Jew of Color, I’ve had difficulty connecting to traditional Jewish spaces because folks don’t look like me. Keshet helped me see my transness as a holy thing and not an abomination. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for making that happen.

—Is Perlman, age 17, Miami, FL




“ It’s been amazing to talk with others about my sexuality and gender identity without fear of judgment or backlash. For the first time, I found a place where I could be uniquely and genuinely myself. Now I’m the co-leader of Keshet’s bi-weekly online hangout for LGBTQ Jewish teens. I want younger teens to know the kind of loving and caring safe space I’ve found at Keshet. ”

—Rivka Schafer, age 16, Teaneck, NJ



Engaging Families

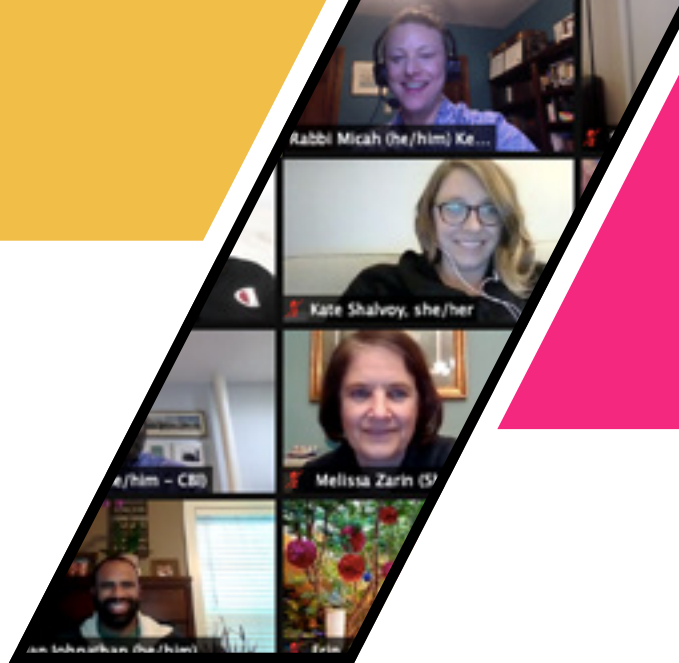
Keshet's Families with Young Children provided parents and kids a multitude of much needed, irresistible opportunities for learning and fun: babka-baking for beginners, a pickle-making workshop, drag story hours, virtual sing-alongs and dance parties, family Havdalah ceremonies, a "menorahs & pakoras" night celebrating Jewish culture in Mumbai, and more.



Our kids are attending school remotely, so it's hard to get them to do other things online. But if it's with Keshet they'll do it. This past year they loved the interactive container gardening workshop for Tu B'Shevat and making rainbow challah for Pride Shabbat. This past year we've had to keep pretty isolated, and Keshet's online programs have been one of the only ways for us to interact with Jewish life. It means a lot to our family. ”

—Cynara Cannatella, with wife Stacy and daughters Lucy, Clio, and Thea





Fostering Equality in Jewish Community Institutions

The pandemic meant that Keshet's education and training programs moved online starting in March of 2020, but that didn't diminish their impact: evaluations showed that 90% of participating institutions made concrete changes to foster inclusion and equality. In a year of so many challenges and demands on all of us, staff and leaders at these institutions showed up for LGBTQ Jews and worked together with Keshet to build communities of belonging.

In 2020, Keshet trained 4,057 staff and leaders at 142 synagogues, day schools, JCCs, Hillels, Jewish Federations, and other Jewish institutions serving more than 1.2 million people across North America. We also launched four cohorts of year-long Leadership Projects serving 29 institutions in 15 communities. These programs ensure that Jewish leaders have the tools, skills, and confidence to put LGBTQ equality into practice.

“If you want people to feel that they belong to the community, they have to feel known and accepted for their authentic selves. Because of Keshet, our community is now more inclusive and affirming. We're grateful to Keshet for helping us create an action plan to expand our library, provide resources that are LGBTQ inclusive, update the language on our website, and actually change our physical space to reflect who we want to be. We want everyone to feel included.”

—Dr. Debra Bakal, President of Beth Tikvah Congregation
in Hoffman Estates, IL



Advocating for LGBTQ rights

In 2020, as in much of the past four years, LGBTQ Jews faced continued attacks on our dignity and rights. But together with our allies, we fought back.

In 2020, Keshet mobilized over 60 national and local Jewish institutions to advocate for LGBTQ rights. One of our partners, Equality Ohio, contacted Keshet about a looming threat: a voter initiative to repeal an existing nondiscrimination ordinance for the village of Golf Manor, near Cincinnati. An outspoken Orthodox rabbi was a key figure in the repeal effort and pro-LGBTQ Jewish voices were missing from the public debate.

“It was the first time I recall dealing with this kind of opposition by people of Jewish faith,” said Jen Scott, the Southwest Ohio Organizer for Equality Ohio.

Together, Keshet and Equality Ohio reached out to local Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Moshe Smolkin, Senior Rabbi of the Adath Israel Congregation. Rabbi Smolkin agreed to issue a public statement in support of the nondiscrimination ordinance:

“

The Bible begins with the fundamental understanding that each of us is created in the divine image. Each of us has inestimable value, and each of us deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. We are taught to love our fellow as ourselves and that our world should be a place where each person should be able to sit under their vine or fig-tree with none to make them afraid. I am honored to support Golf Manor as they work to bring fairness and respect to all. ”

—Rabbi Moshe Smolkin, Senior Rabbi of Adath Israel Congregation



As news of Rabbi Smolkin’s statement began to galvanize increased Jewish community support for the ordinance, the Orthodox rabbi involved with the opposition pressured Rabbi Smolkin to rescind his support. And on November 3, people voted overwhelmingly “YES on 10” to retain the ordinance and uphold equality in Golf Manor.

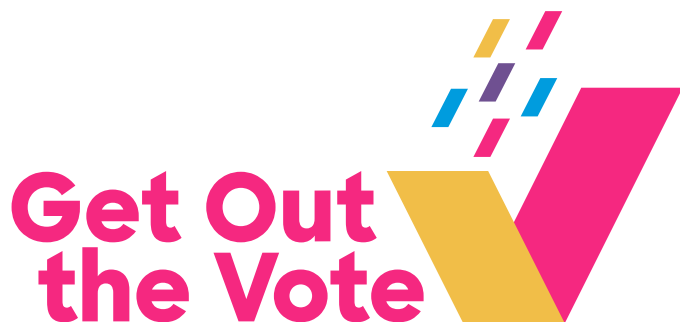


“ What we did in partnership with Keshet was to address confusion and fear by bringing compassionate voices to the conversation and create harmonies of theology.

—James M. Triplett, Faith and Justice Organizer, Equality Ohio



In the months leading up to the 2020 November election, Keshet also engaged LGBTQ and ally Jews of all ages in a national get out the vote campaign, reaching over 450,000 Jewish voters by phone and text messages.



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We are always grateful to our supporters but especially so in this year of many challenges. Thank you so much for your steadfast support.

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Eileen Hagerty
Rabbi Joel Alter
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Anonymous
Rabbi Victor Appell and
Colin Hogan
Rabbi Stephen and
Cecile Arnold
Jenny Ash
Dianne and David Asher
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Dr. Jerome Haller
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Aaron Breslow
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Rachel Bruno and
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Jewish Life
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Melanie Gersten		Jane Matlaw
Howard and Heidi Gilbert		Aliza Mazor

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Moishe House West LA
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Diane Dorf
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James Dalsimer
Rabbi Gil Steinlauf
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Rabbi Joshua and Tali Strom
Mira Sussman

Sarah Swartz and Ellie Kellman
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Temple Israel
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Leigh Tucker
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Rabbi Adam Lavitt
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Laurie Ross
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Jeffrey Abrams
Larry Abramsky
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Stacy Abramson
Melissa Acklen
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Tracey Alter	Rachelle Bernstecker and	Risa Chopp and
Ava Alterman	Bob Abramson	Hersh Taubenfeld
Raeven Alvarez	Marc Bernstein	Murray and Leon Cizon
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Polly Angelakis	Aaron Bisman and	David Cohen
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Rafaela Anshel	Prof. Patrica Bizzell	Menachem Cohen
Rabbi David Around	Beth Bloom	Congregation B'nai Amoona
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Tamar Baer	David Bohn	Doreen Clark
Daniel Bahner	Boog Bookey	Bonnie Cramer
Syd Bakal	Frankie and Jack Bookey	Rabbi Meryl Crean
David Ballo	Susan Bookman	Sen. Cynthia and Harvey Creem
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Avram Baskin and	Beth Denisch	Clifford Lopate
Marjorie White Baskin	Ruth Brenner	Flora and Aryeh Davidson
Rabbi Jordana and Seth Battis	Vicky Brice	Sabrina DeJoannis
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Russell Bell	Rabbi Jonathan and	Justine Dessed
Rabbi Marci Bellows	Maia Brumberg-Kraus	Anita Diamant and Jim Ball
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Rebekah Irwin
Iryssa Jackowitz

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Yossi Abramowitz
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Terry Wasserman-Lom
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Marilyn Glazer-Weisner
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Mollie Witenoff
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Dorit Zmiri
Brenna Zonick-Wooten
Barbara and Rabbi Henry Zoob



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS: 2020 IN NUMBERS

INCOME STATEMENT¹ as of December 31, 2020

INCOME

Grants	\$2,380,299
Grants - Payroll Protection Program (loan forgiveness)	\$344,000
Individual Donations & Fundraising Events	\$1,117,485
Earned Revenue	\$50,081
TOTAL INCOME	\$3,891,864

EXPENSES

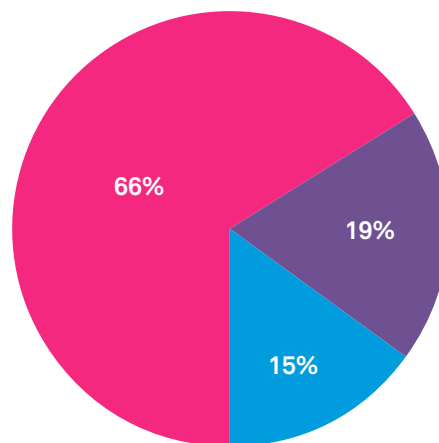
Program Services	\$2,069,534
Fundraising and Communications	\$581,156
General & Administration	\$477,582
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,128,271

Change in net assets from operations **\$763,593**

Net Assets at Beginning of Year \$749,185

NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR \$1,512,778

EXPENSES BY DEPARTMENT



PROGRAMS
\$2,069,534

ADMINISTRATION
\$581,156

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS
\$477,582

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION¹ as of December 31, 2020

ASSETS

Cash	\$2,303,565
Accounts receivable and pledges	\$3,018,123
Equipment, deposits and prepaid expenses	\$82,372
TOTAL ASSETS	\$5,404,059

LIABILITIES

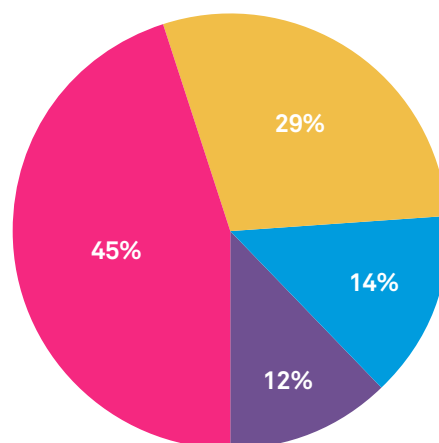
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$171,839
Deferred revenue	\$810
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$172,646

NET ASSETS

Operating fund	\$853,981
Board designated	\$658,797
Temporarily restricted	\$3,718,635
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$5,231,413

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$5,404,059

INVESTMENTS BY PROGRAM



EDUCATION & TRAINING
\$814,327

YOUTH PROGRAMS
\$520,630

PROGRAM EVALUATION & OTHER
\$261,684

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION
\$221,545

¹Unaudited

Keshet Board

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Senior Strategist, Leading Edge

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Founder, Robert Holgate Design

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Rabbi and Founder, Sha'ar

Xiomara Lorenzo

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Marc Maxwell, AIA

Architect/Principal, Maxwell Architects, LLC

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Director of Whole Person Integrated Care, San Francisco Department of Public Health

Jason Rosenberg

Director, Autodesk

Wendy Rosov

Founder and Principal, Rosov Consulting

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Joy Ladin

Shawn Landres

Betty Morningstar

Rabbi Becky Silverstein

Martin Tannenbaum

B. Andrew Zelermyer

In 2020, Keshet...

...empowered more than **1,200** LGBTQ Jewish youth through new online programs

...launched new programs and supportive spaces for LGBTQ Jewish youth of Color together with **25** LGBTQ, LGBTQ Jewish, and Jewish groups, including Jew of Color-led organizations

...trained over **4,000** staff and leaders at more than **140** synagogues, day schools, JCCs, Hillels, Jewish Federations, and other Jewish institutions serving more than **1.2 million** people

...engaged over **60** national and local Jewish institutions in LGBTQ equality organizing and advocacy work

...inspired youth to become leaders and activists for change: **81%** of youth participating in Keshet programs reported that they started advocating for LGBTQ equality in their own communities after taking part in Keshet programming



Cover: Is Pearlman, Rabbi Sandra Lawson, and Rivka Schafer; Page 2: Neil Kelin and Is Pearlman at East Coast LGBTQ and Ally Teen Shabbaton, February 2020; Page 3: Young adults enjoy one of Keshet Youth Teams online programs; Page 4: Clio, Lucy, and Thea Cannatella making rainbow challah; Page 5: Rabbi Micah Buck-Yael leads a training for Jewish educators; Page 7: 2020 rally in support of town of Golf Manor Human Rights Ordinance.



“ I support Keshet so that children today don’t have to go through what I went through as a lonely, confused child back in the day. Keshet’s work makes the world feel like the difference between Stonewall in ‘69 in black and white, at night, when I was there, and being back for the 50th anniversary in 2019, when the whole city was rainbow colors. It’s that significant. ”

—Dr. Dana Beyer

“ Keshet has inspired a huge shift in how our family foundation does its giving. Now we’re asking, what are the pillars that hold up Judaism in a new way? Our family foundation’s work, together with Keshet, is in community building, solidarity, centering Jews of Color, and other marginalized Jews. Everything we’ve learned through Keshet carries out into the larger conversations we have in the world and informs how we discover new thinking within Judaism. ”

—Liana and Michael Krupp with George and Lizbeth Krupp





“ Supporting Keshet reconciles our past narratives of Judaism and queerness, helping them bolster each other. Keshet speaks to every phase of Jewish life. There are a lot of queer organizations out there. There are a lot of Jewish organizations out there. But Keshet caters to and advocates for us in our totalities. ”

—Yarden Fraiman and Sam Mendoza

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