

Hillel

HILLELS OF GEORGIA



IMPACT REPORT
***MEET THE STUDENTS
WHO LEAD JEWISHLY***

2025 - 2026

LEADERSHIP FOREWORD



As I reflect on the 2025–2026 year at Hillels of Georgia, I am filled with gratitude. This year, we witnessed extraordinary growth in both the breadth and depth of student engagement, from packed Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations to leadership development through the Leven–Silberman Leadership Institute and meaningful statewide connections between students. At a time when Jewish students need community and support more than ever, Hillels of Georgia remained a place where students could walk in and instantly feel a sense of belonging. I am continually inspired by the passion and resilience of our student leaders and by the generosity of those who invest in their future. Together, we are not only supporting Jewish students today, but shaping the next generation of Jewish leaders for Georgia and beyond.

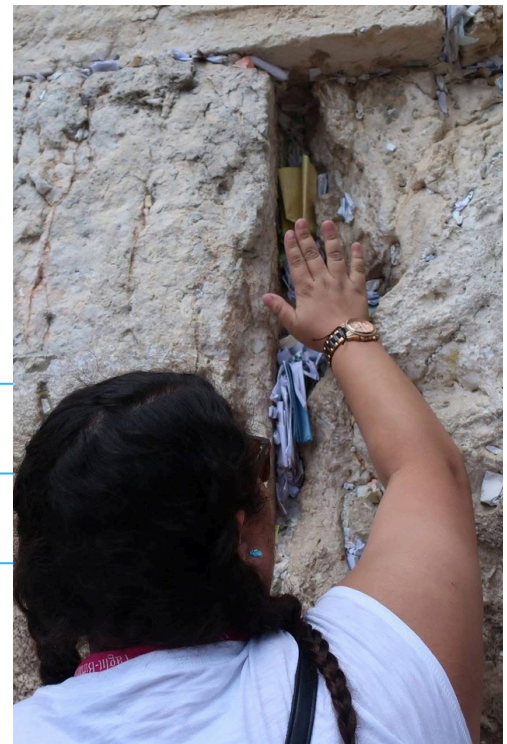
A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rabbi Larry Sernovitz".

Rabbi Larry Sernovitz, CEO

OUR MISSION

**IS TO CREATE SPACES WHERE
JEWISH STUDENTS CAN**

- 01 Explore their Jewish identity
- 02 Develop leadership and career skills
- 03 Deepen their connection with Israel
- 04 Create lifelong cross-campus relationships

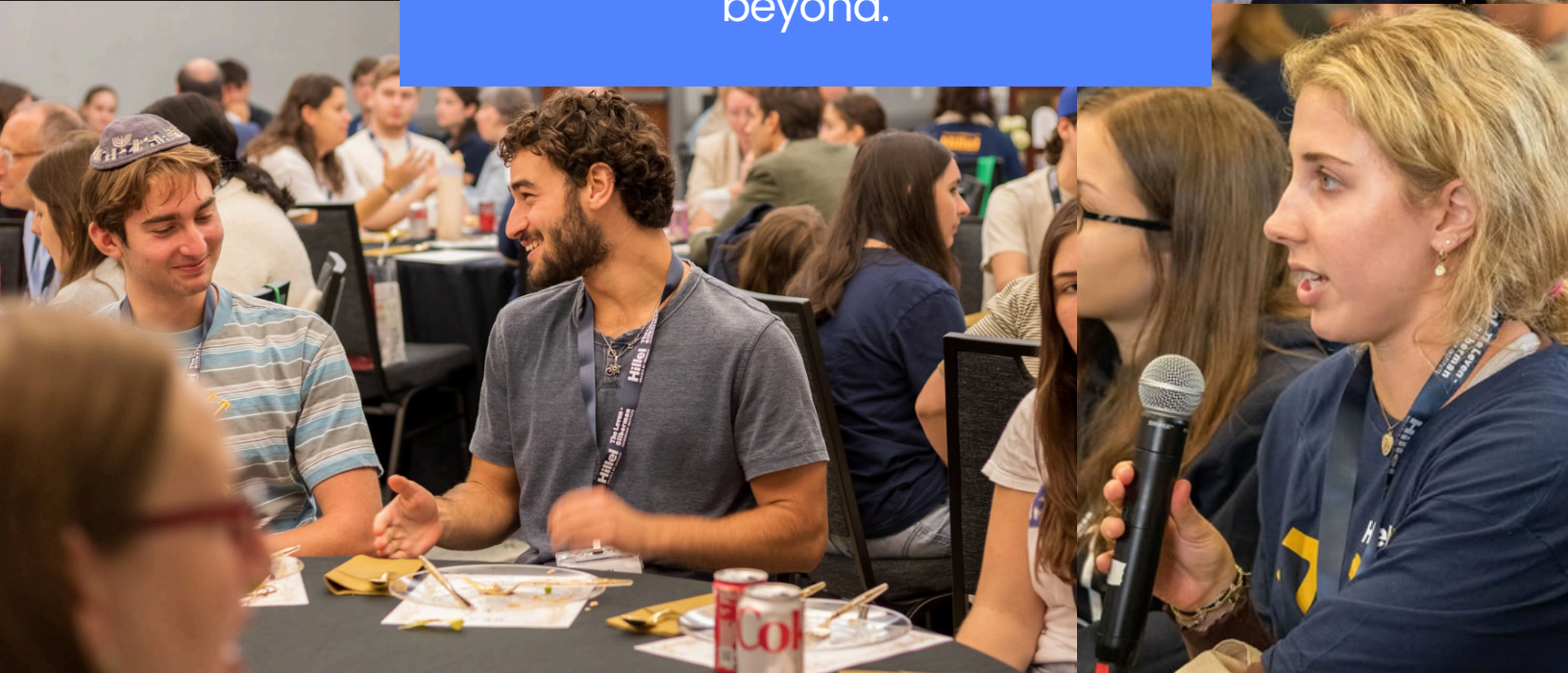


134

unique students held leadership roles, including serving on student boards and leading campus programs and initiatives.

Leading Jewishly

Through the Leven-Silberman Leadership Institute (LSLI), student boards, and structured mentorship, we prepared students to lead Jewishly and confidently on campus and beyond.





570

unique students joined us for
at least one meaningful
Shabbat experience this year.

Living Jewishly

Hillels of Georgia provided
weekly Shabbat dinners,
holiday celebrations and
rituals, Jewish learning, and
pluralistic experiences for
students of all backgrounds.

106

students studied together as part of JLF
(Jewish Learning Fellowship), Kol Yisrael,
and HLI (Hillel Leadership Initiative).



4

Israel Fellows
brought Israeli
culture and
tradition to
campus.



Israel Connection

Hillels of Georgia hosted
IsraelFest programs, facilitated
Israel travel and internships,
engage Israel Fellows, and
created formalized educational
opportunities and fellowships.



577

students
participated in
Israel programs



1535 Social Programs



Building Community



Hillels of Georgia serves as a Jewish "home away from home," cultivating vibrant, welcoming Jewish communal life on every campus we support while fostering meaningful connections across campuses across the state.



1015 Bagel Programs



Our Reach

Our primary audience is Jewish undergraduate students ages 18–23 in Georgia, though we also serve graduate students in fields like medicine, law, and business.

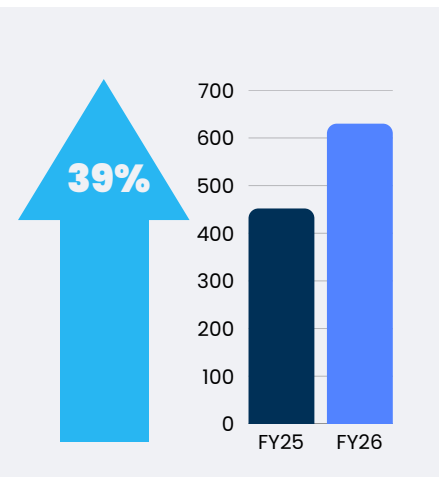
OUR LARGEST COMMUNITIES HAVE DEDICATED HILLEL DIRECTORS:

Emory University
Georgia College & State University
Georgia State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia Southern University
Kennesaw State University
Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)
University of Georgia

WE ALSO WELCOME STUDENTS FROM SMALLER CAMPUSES:

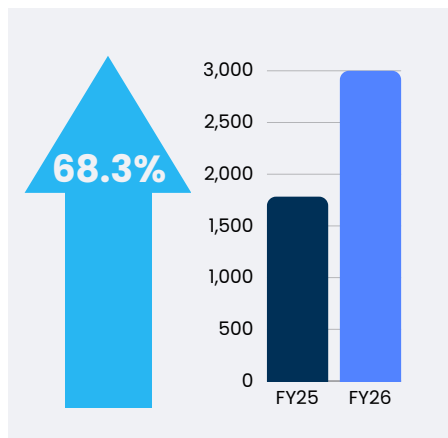
Agnes Scott
Chattahoochee Tech
Oglethorpe University
Spelman College

And other institutions across the state.



39% Growth in Student Engagement (Depth) Since FY25

68.3% Growth in Student Engagement (Breadth) Since FY25



Hillel UGA

At the University of Georgia, Jewish life continued to thrive this year through student-led programming, meaningful leadership opportunities, and a growing sense of community centered at the Orkin Hillel Center. With the addition of a new Greek Engagement Associate, Hillel expanded its reach and deepened connections across campus, helping create an even more vibrant home for Jewish Dawgs.



JADA MONROE '27

When Jada Monroe first walked into Shabbat dinner at the Orkin Hillel Center, she never imagined it would become the heart of her college experience. Some of her favorite memories are gathered around crowded Shabbat tables, preparing for events with friends, and lingering long after programs ended.

"Hillel became the place I always knew I could go," Jada said. "Whether I needed a break between classes, wanted to be around people who understood me, or just needed a good meal and familiar faces, it was always there."

Through Hillel, Jada found leadership opportunities, built friendships across Georgia, and helped create welcoming experiences for other Jewish students. "Hillel gave me a place where I truly belonged."



Hillel UGA, AEPI, and TEP came together for a high-energy charity basketball game benefiting *The Israel Bridge*.



Nearly 90 Sigma Delta Tau members joined a dozen Hillel at UGA alumnae for an intergenerational networking event.





I have decided to make Aliyah.

When I entered college, I was afraid for awhile to wear a kippah, but Hillel at UGA was my safe place to be as Jewish as I needed to be. I started wearing a kippah around campus and, for the majority of the time, I've only received positivity, curiosity, and love from people within and outside the Jewish community. My advice? Hillel is a place to be comfortable being Jewish, but don't let it be the only place you're Jewish.

**Matthew Aftergut,
UGA '26**



838 unique students participated in at least 1 Hillel UGA event

Emory Hillel

At Emory University, Jewish life continued to grow through strong relationships, student leadership, and programs that brought students together throughout the year. Through Shabbat dinners, 'Take Care Tuesdays', Israel programming, Jewish learning, and more Emory Hillel provided a welcoming home where students formed lasting friendships, explored their Jewish identities, and found opportunities to lead.

"We are no longer focused solely on fighting detractors, **but are thriving as Jewish students and leaders both in class and beyond.** Organizations like AJC and Hillel enable this."



SOPHIE KALMIN, EMORY HILLEL '26

Student leader, Sophie Kalmin, received the American Jewish Committee's Sharon Greene Award for Campus Advocacy, recognizing her leadership in combating antisemitism and supporting Israel. **"Organizations like AJC and Hillel enable this,"** Sophie shared. **"We are no longer focused solely on fighting detractors, but are thriving as Jewish students and leaders."**



First-year students explored the Georgia Aquarium together through the *Newish & Jewish: Exploring Atlanta* series.



Emory Hillel welcomed more than 130 students over two nights of Rosh Hashanah celebrations.





unique students participated in at least 1 Emory Hillel event



Some of my favorite Emory Hillel memories were attending weekly Shabbat dinners and traveling to Mexico City with Hillel over spring break. Through Hillel, I found incredible friends and a strong Jewish community that made campus feel like home. My advice to younger students is to be creative, make your voice heard, and help shape Hillel into the community you want it to be.

**The more you put into it,
the more you'll get out of it.**

**Dixie Baronofsky,
*Emory '26***

GT Hillel

At Georgia Tech, the dedication of Hillel's first permanent home transformed Jewish campus life. The new space made it possible to welcome more students for Shabbat, expand student-led programming, deepen Israel engagement and Jewish learning, and create a true "home away from home" where students can connect.



SAMANTHA WEINICK, GEORGIA TECH '27

Asked to moderate a panel at the Leven-Silberman Leadership Institute's (LSLI) statewide conference, Samantha Weinick stepped outside her comfort zone. "Leadership isn't about feeling completely ready. It's about being willing to step up when you're given the opportunity," she reflected.

Now an LSLI Fellow, Samantha believes leadership means "choosing to lead with empathy, to create spaces where others feel included, and to make a lasting impact."

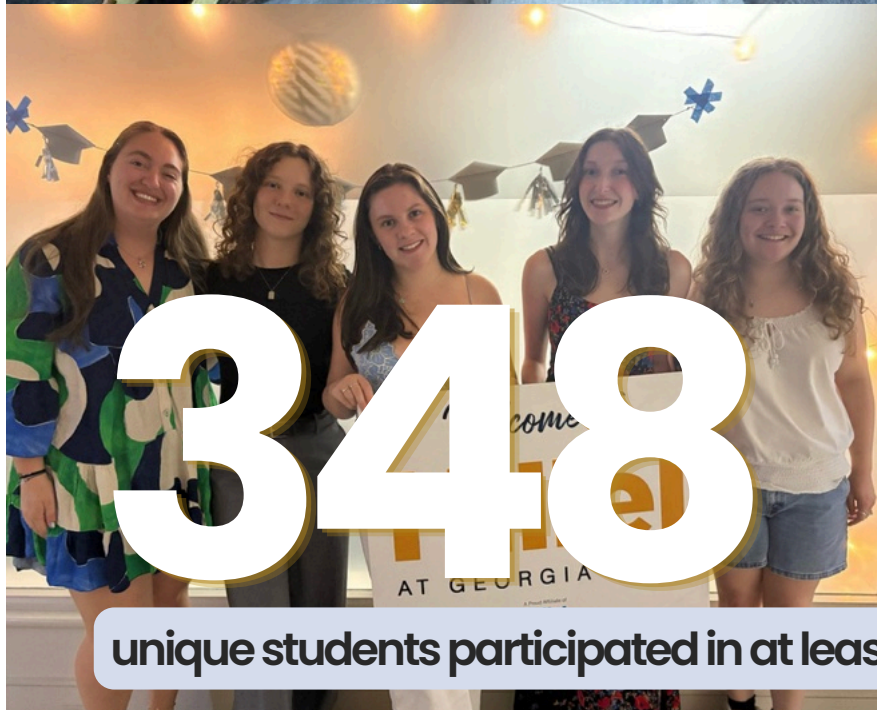


Hillel at Georgia Tech celebrated the dedication of its new space with a mezuzah hanging, marking a new chapter for Jewish life on campus.



Hillel hosted fellows from Technion to share their experiences as students in Israel, offering a powerful perspective on resilience and the realities of balancing rigorous academics amid ongoing security challenges.





“After taking time off last spring, coming back in the fall was really hard. I felt frustrated. I went to Hillel at Georgia Tech’s Lounging with Leah, where I finally had space to talk and be heard. Having Leah [Faupel, Springboard Fellow] remind me that my feelings were valid and simply be a supportive shoulder made all the difference.”

Zina Shimov
Georgia Tech '26

unique students participated in at least 1 Hillel at Georgia Tech event

KSU Hillel

At Kennesaw State University, Hillel continued to be a place where Jewish students found community and connection. Throughout the year, students gathered for Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, IsraelFest, Hebrew conversation groups, and social events that brought people together. Whether stopping by for coffee, celebrating a holiday, or stepping into leadership, students found a welcoming space to build friendships and strengthen their connection to Jewish life.



ARIEL BEN-SENIOR, KSU HILLEL '26

After attending her first Hillel event, KSU student Ariel Ben-Senior found the friendships and community that shaped her college experience. Today, as Hillel's Israel Chair and an inaugural LSLI fellow, she leads Israeli cultural programs and has helped bring Hillel students together, creating a more welcoming Jewish community on campus.

"Hillel is all kinds of Jewish," she said. "Some people speak Hebrew, some people don't. It was accepting, and I think it's really important to have that kind of space."

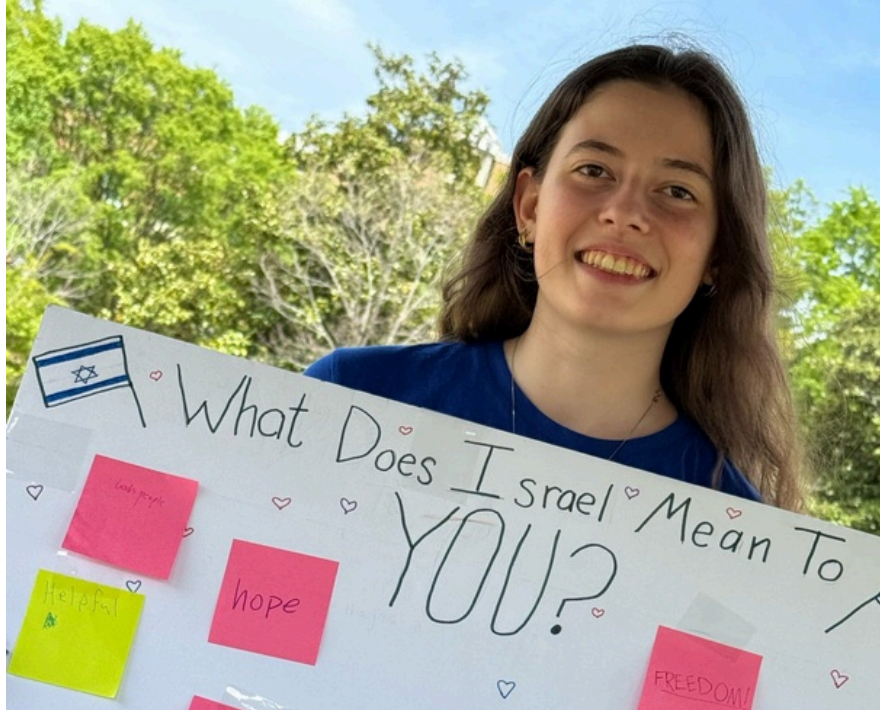


KSU Hillel launched Kol Yisrael this semester, helping students explore Israel's ethnic diversity and deepen their understanding of its people, cultures, and complexities.



Students of varying Hebrew levels gathered at Café Ivrit to practice language skills





unique students participated in at least 1 KSU Hillel event



At a commuter school like KSU, it can be hard to find consistency and community, but Hillel provided that space for me. My advice to incoming students is to put yourself out there, start conversations, and be open to new experiences. It can feel intimidating at first, but the connections you make are absolutely worth it.

**Shea Levine,
KSU Hillel '26**

GCSU Hillel

At Georgia College and State University, Jewish life reached a historic milestone with the hiring of the campus's first-ever full-time Hillel director. The addition of dedicated leadership transformed Jewish life, creating a welcoming home where students gathered for Shabbat, celebrated Jewish holidays, explored their identities, and built a vibrant community that grew dramatically throughout the year.



"Hillel at Georgia College allowed me to keep Judaism a prevalent part of my life and share that good Jewish joy with other students! I didn't have many Jewish friends outside of synagogue growing up, and fostering this on-campus community led me to some of my closest friends and support system I have today.

Without Hillel, college would've been a lot tougher. "

ODEYA ATAR, GEORGIA COLLEGE '26

3.8X

Increase in Student Participation
in 6+ or high impact events from FY25 to FY26



83

**unique students participated in at least
1 Georgia College Hillel event this year**



25 unique students participated in at least one event with Hillel at Savannah College of Art and Design this school year. SCAD Hillel built community through holiday celebrations and one-on-one connections, while connecting with other HGA students statewide.

GSU Hillel

Growing up in Jasper, Georgia, where her family was the only Jewish family she knew, Sierrah Rice spent much of her life explaining her Jewish identity to others. At Georgia State, Hillel changed that. It became a place where she found friendship, community, and the freedom to simply be herself.

As Sierrah reflected, "Hillel gave me a place where I didn't have to explain who I was. I could just be Jewish."

Through Hillel, she discovered not only a sense of belonging but also the confidence to become a leader who helps other students find that same welcoming community.



Georgia Southern Hillel continued to grow as a welcoming Jewish home through Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, coffee chats, and creative outreach events that sparked meaningful conversations about Jewish life. Whether introducing students to Hillel at Boro Browse, celebrating Sukkot and Tu B'Shvat, or sharing Jewish traditions with classmates and faculty, students found community, strengthened their Jewish identity, and helped build understanding across campus. **89 unique students participated in at least one Georgia Southern Hillel event this year.**

The Leven – Silberman LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Inspired by our students and Mike Leven, we launched the Leven–Silberman Leadership Institute (LSLI), a statewide initiative equipping Jewish students with the skills, mentorship, and confidence to lead with purpose.

Two statewide leadership conferences brought student leaders from across Georgia together to build relationships, explore Jewish values, and network with local Jewish leaders and mentors, strengthening the next generation of Jewish leadership.



In its inaugural year, the LSLI Fellowship brought together a select cohort of student leaders from across Georgia for mentorship, hands-on leadership development, and a meaningful capstone project that shapes Jewish life on their campuses.



**2 STATEWIDE CONFERENCES
80 STUDENTS REPRESENTING
8 GEORGIA UNIVERSITIES**



After attending LSLI, I realized that, as a Jew in the diaspora, the greatest service I can do is to strengthen the Jewish community around me. Jews united anywhere who feel part of a strong community mean a stronger Jewish nation."

**Alan Gerber,
Emory Hillel '26**



STAND WITH HILLEL

Presented by Andrea and Mike Leven



TOGETHER, WE LEAD.



At our sold out 2026 Stand With Hillel celebration, more than 400 community members, students, alumni, and supporters came together to celebrate the strength of Jewish life on Georgia's campuses. The evening honored Dr. Steve Oppenheimer, recipient of the Billi & Bernie Marcus Visionary Award, for his extraordinary leadership and commitment to the Jewish community, and Alli Medof, recipient of the We Stand with Israel Award, for her steadfast advocacy and dedication to Israel. Through powerful student stories and inspiring moments of recognition, the evening showcased the lasting impact of Hillels of Georgia and the vibrant future of Jewish leadership.

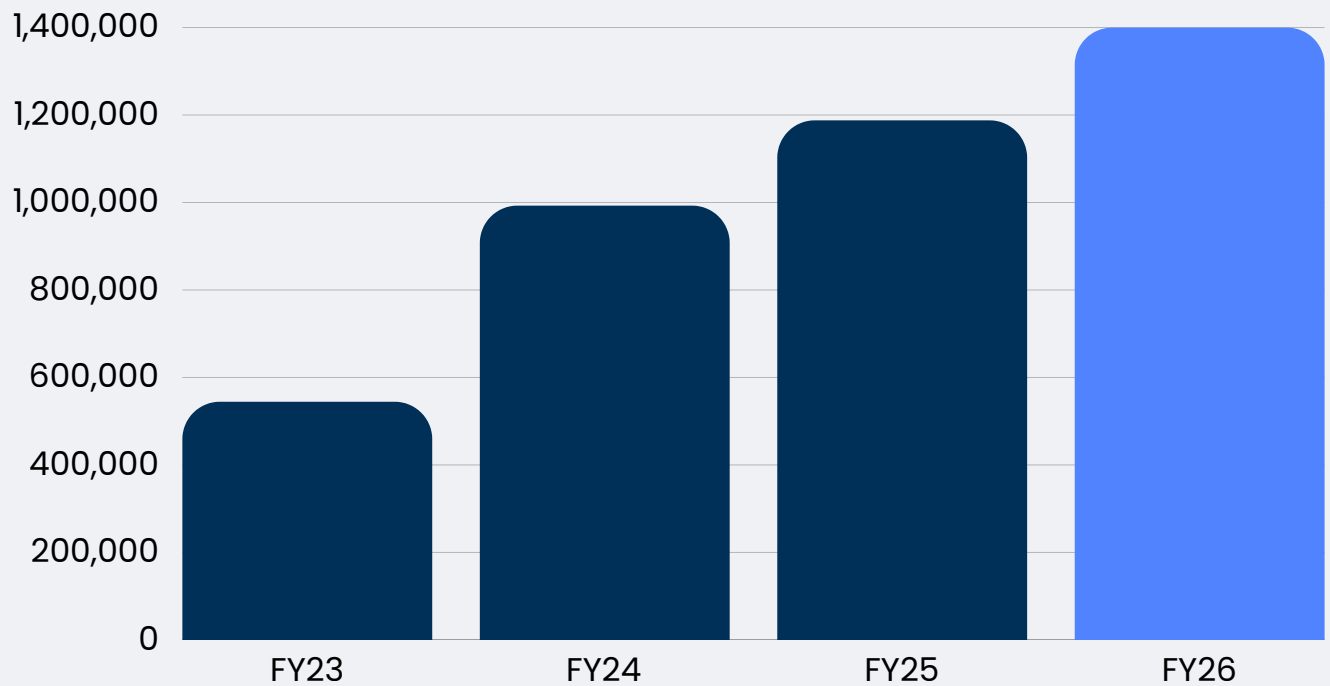


ANNUAL FUND COMPARISON

The annual fund is the primary tool we use to raise necessary funds to operate the organization.

In FY26, Hillels of Georgia raised \$1,400,000 from 1,288 gifts

Previous Annual Fund Totals



Our Supporters

Your generosity sustains and strengthens Jewish life across Georgia campuses.

Hillels of Georgia extends our deepest appreciation to all who contributed to the 2025–2026 Annual Fund. Your generosity has strengthened Jewish life on campuses across the state, enabling students to engage meaningfully in Jewish learning, leadership, and community-building. Thanks to your support, we can continue to inspire vibrant Jewish experiences that empower the next generation of leaders and ensure a strong Jewish future.

Hillels of Georgia is proud to be a beneficiary of



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Support our Mission

Hillels of Georgia is able to thrive because of generous supporters like you. Thank you for helping us build vibrant Jewish life on campus and create meaningful experiences for Jewish students across the state.

If you'd like to help make even more of these meaningful programs possible in the coming school year, we invite you to make a gift at hillelsofgeorgia.org/supportus.



Hillel
HILLELS OF GEORGIA