DEAR KAVANA PARTNERS, FRIENDS & FAMILY,

It’s hard to summarize a year that had two such distinct parts, and has been such a roller coaster!

As Kavana entered into Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 last summer, we were still looking ahead to our community’s B’nai Mitzvah celebration. And truly, it was a remarkable first eight months of the fiscal year: with an incredibly successful fundraising campaign to support our community’s future growth, a wonderful series of community-led events through the fall and winter, a fabulously fun party in November, and a generally great program year. Hopefully it will feel good to read the next couple pages of this Annual Report and remember what the world felt like “before.”

Then, as we all know all too well, as Purim approached (right on cue!) the world turned completely upside down. Our regular seasonal conversation around costume-ish “crowns and masks” shifted to be about the corona-shaped virus and face-masks for protection. Overnight, our ability to gather in groups for face-to-face interaction -- something that has been the cornerstone of relationship-building at Kavana since day one -- disappeared.

Fortunately, Kavana has many super-powers, and these include our community’s creativity and nimble nature. These enabled us to pivot quickly towards providing support to our community members during a time of radical transition, shifting existing programs to online platforms, and creating new programming to provide even more regular touchpoints during an otherwise isolating chapter under stay-home orders. The last four months of FY 2020 (March through June) have represented a very different Kavana reality, but in its own way, quite a strong finish to the year!

As different as these two parts of the year felt from one another -- and it’s hard to overstate the contrast between dancing the hora with so many of you on the dance-floor at Kavana’s B’nai Mitzvah party, and then conducting life cycle events from my home via Zoom(!) -- Kavana’s sense of purpose has remained a constant. In the first part of the past year, our board concluded a strategic planning process, ratifying a revised purpose statement and approving a new 5-year Strategic Plan. Even as we have reviewed this document again in recent months, well into these new Covid-19 times, we find that our intentions are unchanged. We are still steering Kavana’s ship towards exactly the same point on the horizon!

The world around us may feel pretty wild right now, but we are so very lucky that Kavana has prepared well and set ourselves up for success. As you will see in this report, our organization is on a strong course, and we are prepared to help our community weather this strange and unpredictable time, and continue to deepen our connections to Judaism and to one another in meaningful ways as we go.

I am so grateful for your continued support, partnership and participation, and I look forward to the coming year with all of you, whatever it may bring!

Warmly,

Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum,
Executive Director
CELEBRATING THE B’NAI MITZVAH MILESTONE

In November 2019, we paused to celebrate the fact that -- thirteen years into this marvelous experiment -- Kavana is a vibrant and increasingly multi-generational community made up of the most incredible people, where Judaism is brought to life in a rich variety of ways! Kavana has touched thousands of lives directly, and our work now reverberates far beyond Seattle, as Jewish communities around the country draw on our example as a source of inspiration. As we celebrated this “coming of age” milestone, we also talked explicitly about what it means to take on even more responsibility for our own Jewish experiences and identities, and for leaving a positive imprint on the world around us. Kavana is proud to be growing up quite nicely!
This has been a GREAT programmatic year for Kavana. It’s hard now to remember what life was like “before,” but here are some glimpses:

This year, Kavana organized and participated in rallies and protests (particularly for immigrants rights), held educational events, and worked to build relationships with elected officials. We also hosted a first-ever Seattle Jewish Climate festival, featuring Nigel Savage of Hazon and a panel of Seattle City Council members and indigenous leaders. In all of these ways and more, we are working actively to put Jewish values into action in our society.

Before Covid slowed down our ability to gather in person, Kavana brought people together in so many wonderful ways… to cook, to camp, to harvest, to pray, to celebrate holidays and life cycle events, to volunteer together, to reflect, and of course to learn.
When it became clear in March that physical gatherings were no longer safe due to Covid, Kavana rolled into high gear online. Our first Zoom event was our Purim Megillah reading, which was interactive and fun, with costumed megillah readers participating from their couches! Next, we moved all of our existing programs onto online platforms, from kids’ and family education programs like Moadon Yeladim (pictured above) and Prep & Practice, to adult gatherings like the Singing Circle and Book Club. We conducted our very first “Zoom-mitzvah” ceremonies (see photo top left; mazel tov, Orly and family!). Friday evening Virtual Candle-Lightings (pictured lower left) became a regular touchpoint where people could share words of Torah and passion projects; matzah, grocery and meal deliveries provided physical connection points where possible. And, of course, there were times when showing up in person still felt critical... like the Black Lives Matter protests in June (photo lower right), where our rabbis were part of interfaith chaplaincy efforts in CHOP. The bottom line: even (especially?!) since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Kavana community has remained strong and figured out creative ways to connect people to Jewish life and to each other!

“Currently, I am okay and don’t need much in the way of support but it is so good to know that the community is there if I do. As my therapist says, in times of stress, look to your faith, family and friends. In so many ways, I feel like Kavana is all three.”

- (Anonymous Kavana partner, June 2020)
A YEAR IN NUMBERS

B’NAI MITZVAH CAMPAIGN
Kavana’s first board-driven fundraising campaign was an unqualified success! Around the B’nai Mitzvah milestone, we set out to raise $180K (10x chai, meaning life) to ensure Kavana’s sustainability and future growth. Our community members and supporters responded generously, pledging over $205K! Huge gratitude to the board members who led this effort, and to everyone who participated!

$180K GOAL SURPASSED OUR GOAL! $205K

The number of months of cash reserve we have on hand as of June 2020
(Goal: to maintain 3-6 months of operating expenses on hand in this “rainy day” fund)

The number of Kavana Rabbinic Fellows (out of two) who are still serving the Seattle-area Jewish community.
Rabbi Josh Weisman is the new Senior Jewish Educator at UW Hillel, and Sydney Danziger is the Senior Rabbi at Temple B’nai Torah.

The number of new Kavana partner households this year, for a total of 165

The number of foundations that have underwritten the Jewish Emergent Network’s Rabbinic Fellowship over the past 4 years.
We are grateful for the generous support of the Jim Joseph Foundation (lead donor), the Charles H. Revson Foundation, Crown Family Philanthropies, William Davidson Foundation, Circle of Service Foundation, Glazer Family Philanthropies, Righteous Persons Foundation, Lippman Kanfer Family Philanthropies, and Donald & Carol Chaiken Foundation.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET

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<th>EXPENSE</th>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSE</strong></td>
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Kavana is a 501(c)3 organization. Tax ID # is 83-0448252. All donations to Kavana are fully tax deductible.