



*Andrea Towers*

## 2025 Phyllis Bernstein Kuchner Scholarship Award Recipient

One of my favorite things about Judaism is the fact that you are continually encouraged to learn. This is something I've experienced firsthand at our JCC, where my children have gone through/are currently going through their preschool learning journeys, and where I have had the pleasure of serving my community by volunteering on the Philanthropy committee, Arts & Culture Committee and on the Early Childhood Parent Committee (ECPC).

I was thrilled that the Phyllis Bernstein Kuchner Scholarship helped me to take my learning to another level by allowing me to enroll in the Strategic Communications and Corporate Storytelling Course offered as part of NYU's Professional Writing and Communications Certificate Program. I was especially thrilled the timing came on the heels of serving as the ECPC's inaugural Communications Chair during the 24-25 school year. Throughout the five-week course, we were taught not only the importance of storytelling as it relates to both a company/brand and our own successes, but also how to create a compelling communications narrative that we could apply to different situations. This is something that deeply resonated with me, as I was able to take the skills I was learning and apply them to my own personal ideas of how to best serve my community at the JCC as a volunteer.

One of the highlights of the course was our final presentation, where we used what we'd learned over the five-week course to create a PowerPoint slideshow presenting our personal communications plan for a hypothetical scenario about an internet hacking. I leaned on the way I have seen emergencies and sensitive situations handled at our JCC and brought that foundation to my final work, building on it with what I learned in our class sessions, receiving positive feedback from my professor. It was also a rewarding and enlightening experience to learn from other students in the class, all who came from different professions, about how they would adapt different communications techniques to their scenarios or real-life experiences. Since the class was remote, we used a weekly discussion board to interact with each other which enabled us to ask questions, elaborate on our answers and make connections with other professionals. In turn, I shared what I had learned from being an involved JCC parent, which allowed me to reflect on how rewarding it is to work alongside such dedicated volunteers and professionals in our community.

As I look forward to another year of serving as ECPC's Communications Chair, as well as staying involved with my JCC community in other volunteer capacities, I am excited to use what I learned to better connect with other parents and professionals. This course has left me feeling even more inspired to keep educating myself, and I'm looking forward to expanding my expertise in the area of communications/storytelling so I can continue to help my community thrive.