Boston Workmen’s Circle is:
A community and spiritual home for secular Jewish life;
A voice for progressive Jewish values and social change;
An arts and education center celebrating Yiddish, Jewish, and progressive culture.
Dear BWC Members,

We are nearing the end of another BWC program year and we have much to show for ourselves! Together we have welcomed a total of 1,000 individual people ages 0 - 96 to 143 different programs. These programs were organized by over 100 BWC member volunteers. We are a prolific community and no one person could possibly attend all our programs. In the pages of this annual report you will learn about all that took place in the year gone by and you may discover a new program or committee you’d like to join in the year to come.

Last year at our annual meeting, we shared a vision of growing a beloved community at BWC, across generations, so that together we would represent one continuous community that welcomes participation and leadership from young children & teens all the way up to our elders. We asked ourselves some hard questions: How can we work as a Jewish community for racial justice? How can we better welcome and include all of our members? How can we better care for each other through the life cycles? This year we took some important steps towards answering these questions and living into our vision.

We restructured our staff to create a Youth & Community Organizer position in order to explicitly prioritize teens at BWC, and we revived our youth program: Teens Acting for Social Change (TASC). The teens both ventured off into the broader community to learn and organize on issues of racial and economic justice and returned to their shule community to mentor younger students. We welcomed two new committees: Aging in Community, with the aim of creating a nourishing and sustaining community for BWC’s older members through the aging process; and the Caring Committee, which offers support to our members in times of need, builds community and welcomes new members. Both committees hit the ground running, and the need for their work was quickly evident. We re-formed our Acting for Racial and Economic Justice Committee which is ready to launch its first campaign. We entered into dialogue with allied organizations about racial justice in the broader Jewish community. BWC members attended the first National convening of Jews of color, led by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice in New York City.

This year we also launched the Leadership Team with the goal of deepening relationships among committee leaders, strengthening relationships and participation between committees and the board, providing peer support around rising challenges and coming together to share successes, enabling cross-committee programming and communication, and discussing integration of overarching BWC goals in committees. The Leadership Team is a place to seed new leaders across generations.

We are walking the path together towards creating the beloved community that we all envision. This year we hope to grow that community to 500 members.

Thank you for contributing your voice to this community.

Warmly,

Jen Kiok
Executive Director

Rosa Blumenfeld
Board President
JEWISH MUSLIM RELATIONS

- Cosponsored “Resisting Surveillance: Racial and Religious Profiling in Boston and Beyond” & “Resisting Surveillance: Countering Counter Intelligence Creatively”
- Spoke at press event opposing the Countering Violent Extremism Initiative
- Wrote articles and letters to the editor in response to Greater Boston anti-Muslim actions
- Co-led an anti-Islamophobia workshop in June
- Participated in a community conversation with 200 interfaith partners at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC)

ACTING FOR RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Attended The Summit on Race and Equity: A Call to Government And Community

Expanded our mission last spring to include racial justice with a community-wide meeting exploring the question - How can we as white Jews, Jews of Color and our allies work for racial and economic justice in the BWC community and the Boston community at-large?

Mobilized over 200 BWC members and allies to support GBIO’s successful criminal justice reform campaign

Supported the Mother's Day Walk for Peace —walked from Dorchester to downtown Boston, raised over $800.

Launched a Campaign for Racial Justice in the Town of Brookline

MIDDLE EAST WORKING GROUP

- Hosted a five-part film series with the Adult-Education Committee to broaden participants understanding of Israel/Palestine
- Hosted a discussion with Rabbi Arik Asherman from Rabbis for Human Rights: Challenging Land Confiscation and Defending Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
- Hosted discussion with New Israel Fund and Adalah about justice and equality in Israeli Society
- Organized a BWC team in the 1for3 Walk for Water for Palestinian refugees, raised $2,890
SHABES

- **We had 6 lovely Shabes gatherings this year.** People from different parts of our community hosted and participated each time, and brought their own themes and interests to the ritual.
- **Themes have included:** Building Community in a Fractured World; Light Menorahs for Peace; Singing as Sanctuary; Jewish Humor; May Day Yiddish Shabes hosted by Yiddish Committee; Wildlife & Conservation hosted by Shule Committee; Shedding winter, Welcoming Spring hosted by Young Adults.

RITUAL

- **Hosted** high holiday services, Tu B’Shvat, and the Community Passover Seder.
- **High holidays** brought together 500 people from our community. This year’s d’var was about racial and economic justice.
- **The Tu B’Shvat Seder** focused on food justice and environmental justice.
- **Our Pesakh Seder** theme this year was Welcoming Refugees. 250 people joined us—a full house!
- **Developed new ritual materials** for all of the holidays - Haggadahs, high holiday service programs.

AGING IN COMMUNITY

- **Formed this year** to gather the voices of BWC’s older members to determine how our community can sustain and nourish us as we age.
- **First community meeting** was attended by 50 members and focused on opportunities for learning, support and activism.
- **Developed a four-session, facilitated series** entitled “Aging in Community”. 40 people registered.

CARING

- **Formed this year** to offer support to our members in times of need and to build community.
- **Distributed a survey** to assess the needs and capacity of our community.
Committee Reports

**Yiddish**

- **Hosted 48 programs this year**, including:
  - Yiddish Sing (monthly)
  - Yiddish Vinkls in 3 locations (monthly)
  - Yiddish Trip to the Museum of Science
  - Yivo Archives Lecture
  - Sholem Berger Poetry Reading
  - May Day Yiddish Shabes
  - Sholem Aleichem Lectures
  - Polina Shepherd Concert and Workshop
- **Offered two semesters of Yiddish Classes:**
  - Our Fall Semester ran for nine weeks, had three class levels, and 21 students. Our Spring Semester ran for 12 weeks, had three class levels, and 16 students.

**Chorus**

- **A Besere Velt hosted “Tevye’s Daughters: Journeys to a Better World”** celebrating the 100th yortsayt of Sholem Aleichem. Over 1,000 people attended.
- **Performed** at the Rosenberg Fund for Children 25th Anniversary Concert, and at a Boston Jewish Arts Festival puppet show.
- **The chorus mini-ensemble** performed at the Shule Chanukah party, the 50th anniversary gala of the Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, a Holocaust Remembrance event at the US Department of Labor, and the Shule graduation/B’Nei Mitzvah.

**Adult Education**

- **The Circle Book Group** met monthly throughout the year, reading books like: *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg* by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik; *Tevye’s Daughters* by Sholem Aleichem; *Frank* by Barney Frank; *An Officer and A Spy* by Robert Harris;
- **Co-hosted events** with the Middle East Working Group (film-series) and the Yiddish and Chorus Committees (Sholem Aleichem lectures)
**SHULE**

- **Enrolled** 70 Shule and Circle Playtime families, with 90 children in our programs
- **Taught** 22 Shule sessions throughout the year
- **Hosted two holiday parties:** Purim Carnival and a Chanukah Party
- **Held annual labor protest** at Dunkin’ Donuts, supporting the Fight for $15 and a union campaign

**TEENS ACTING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

- **Received trainings** on classism and racial justice from Boston Mobilization
- **Marched** in the Wage Action: Fight for $15 Rally and the Youth Jobs Rally
- **Lobbied** Representative Frank Smizik about Youth Jobs
- **Collected signatures** for the Fair Share Amendment
- **Performed** a skit at the Shule Chanukah Party
- **Trained** Shule students about racial justice

**YOUNG ADULTS**

- **Hosted the BWC Chanukah Party:** made latkes and applesauce, lit a peace and justice human menorah, wrote holiday cards to LGBTQ prisoners, hosted performances by the Klezmer Jam and Klezmer Ensemble.
- **Grapper, our annual purim shpil and party,** had over 200 attendees this year. The theme was water rights in Palestine.
- **Hosted Young Adult Shabes Gatherings**
- **Collaborated with Keshet and Moishe Kavod House:** Trans Day of Remembrance Ritual, phone banking for the MA Transgender Public Accommodations Bill, and the Fargesn Film Screening, telling the stories of the organizers on the streets of Ferguson.
For the Year Ended August 31, 2015

REVENUE AND SUPPORT:
Support
Contributions $266,640
Grants $56,300
Membership dues $59,682
Revenue
Events revenue $46,651
Service fee revenue (tuition) $88,606
Rental revenue $28,004
Investment income (loss) $(56,146)
Total revenue and support $539,737

EXPENSES:
Program services $256,533
Fundraising $61,819
General and administrative $93,019
Total expenses $411,371

Change in net assets $128,366
Net assets, beginning of year $1,442,391
Net assets, end of year $1,570,757
Our People

BOARD
Rosa Blumenfeld, President
Riva Pearson, Vice-President
Deborah Katz, Secretary
Micha Josephy, Treasurer
Sefira Bell-Masterson
Jenny Hochstadt
Norman Berman
Marsha Lazar
Clayton Cheever
Patty Nolan
Andrew Cohen
Diana Parad
Laura Derman
Dianne Perlmutter
Anne Greenwald

SHULE TEACHERS

Circle Playtime: Meira Soloff
Kindergarten: Lily Sieradzki
Alef (1st grade): Sarah O’Connor
Beyz (2nd grade): Sarah Robins
Giml (3rd grade): Pauline Katz
Daled (4th grade): Celia Lechtman
Hey (5th grade): Mirah Sand
Vov (6th grade): Nellie Shippen
Zayin (7th grade): Megan Wolf
Music: Bob Follansbee

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Jewish Muslim Relations:
Laura Derman
Middle East Working Group:
Stanley Habib, Karen Klein
AFREJ: Tolle Graham, Chris Messinger
Yiddish: Mike Katz, Lily Weitzman
Ritual: Linda Gritz
Shabes: Marie Ariel, Jill Edelson
Shule: Jackie DeLisi
Chorus: Andy Strauss, Bob Follansbee
Adult Ed: Marguerite Rosenthal
Caring: Diana Parad, Clayton Cheever
Book Group: Marie Ariel, Deborah Good
Aging in Community: Dianne Perlmutter, Marsha Lazar

STAFF
Jen Kiok, Executive Director
Liz Krushnic, Youth & Community Organizer
Jenny Silverman, Education Director
Michelle Weiser, Communications & Development Manager
Sandy Martin, Office Manager

If you are interested in getting involved in our programs, contact our Youth & Community Organizer Liz Krushnic: liz@circleboston.org (617) 566-6281

My voice is Yiddish-inflected, with its roots in Eastern Europe, expressing the radical changes that exploded over a hundred years ago as progressive Jews fought for social justice.

These values are baked into Yiddish culture, into the songs and stories.

This voice is Jewish and progressive in the same breath and can help carry these values forward here at the Boston Workmen’s Circle.

- LINDA GRITZ