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Contact: Brook Bissinger
Marketing/Fundraising Director
(504) 897-0143 ext. 147
brook@nojcc.org

JCC New Orleans names new Executive Director

Leslie Fischman, assistant director of the New Orleans Jewish Community Center for the past six years, has been named the agency's executive director effective February 28.

Fischman will succeed current director, Arlene Barron, who is retiring at the end of February after a decade as the JCC's top executive.

"I am honored to have been chosen to succeed Arlene," Fischman said. "Arlene has been the perfect role model and mentor not just to me but to the entire JCC staff."

Fischman was selected for the position by a search committee led by former JCC President Toni Weiss and consisting of several current and former executive officers as well as general board members.

The committee worked closely with the Jewish Community Center Association, which sent a representative to New Orleans to help guide it through the hiring process. The committee considered several other candidates but in the end found what it was looking for in its own backyard.

"Leslie is phenomenal," Weiss said. "We are very, very excited. We know she is going to do a fabulous job."

Fischman, a native of Union Springs, Alabama and a resident of Metairie, has served as assistant director since 2004, helping rebuild and stabilize the JCC following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As assistant director, she also supervised the marketing, fundraising, Jewish enrichment, adult, senior adult, summer camp, children's and teen departments.

Prior to that, she served as the JCC fundraising and special events director, organizing the center's annual Center Celebrations, golf tournaments and mah jongg tournaments as well as staffing and promoting the Elderhostel Program.

Fischman, a graduate of Tulane University's Newcomb College, got her start at the JCC as a volunteer. Among other things, she helped with programming and fundraising at the original Metairie campus and served on the board of directors.

Fischman credited Barron with leading the JCC to new heights and said she looks forward to following in her footsteps.

“Even though I will miss collaborating with Arlene on a daily basis, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside her in creating Jewish journeys for the community,” she said. “Arlene has helped prepare me for this job and I look forward to leading the Center successfully into the next decade.”

In addition to her work at the JCC, Fischman has served in various other volunteer positions, including vice president of the Gates of Prayer Sisterhood, vice president of Jewish Children’s Regional Service, a member of the Isidore Newman School Parents’ Association, a member of the Jewish Federation’s Lemann Stern Young Leadership Program and treasurer of the Overture to the Cultural Season Fundraiser.

Fischman is married to Dr. Nathan Fischman and is the mother of two grown children, Martin Fischman of New Orleans and Annie Fischman of San Antonio, Texas.

The Jewish Community Center of New Orleans is a non-profit organization that continues to serve the entire New Orleans community with quality programming in the areas of pre-school education, daycare, summer programming, adult programming, physical education, public affairs, political forums, lectures and especially Jewish education. The mission of the Greater New Orleans Jewish Community Center is to promote and insure the well being of our Jewish community and to instill an understanding of Judaism and its heritage by providing a Center where all can enjoy, learn, experience and share in quality activities in a Jewish environment.

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