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**For Immediate Release**

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## **The Darrell D. Friedman Institute Presents Jewish Community Awards**

(Baltimore, MD) - The Darrell D. Friedman Institute for professional Development at the Weinberg Center (DFI), a program of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, presented three prestigious Jewish communal awards at its annual Celebration of Professional leadership, which occurred on May 23 at Beth Tfiloh Congregation.

Leslie Pomerantz, MSW, Chief Development Officer at The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, received the Daniel Thursz Distinguished Jewish Communal Service Award. This annual award recognizes an individual who has worked in the field of Jewish communal service for at least 20 years, serves the greater Baltimore community and demonstrates leadership and exemplary professional skills.

Lauren Shaivitz, Esq., LGSW, Director of Programs at CHANA, received the Outstanding Jewish Communal Professional award for demonstrating exceptional promise and a commitment to a career in Jewish communal service.

In addition, Sara Rubinstein, MA, Special Needs Program Director at the Jewish Community Center received the Neely Tal Snyder Community Impact Award. This award honors the memory of Neely Tal Snyder z"l by recognizing a professional with a strong commitment and passion for Jewish community. The winner of this award has helped to build immersive and hands-on experiences/programs that have community impact and demonstrate creativity, openness and inclusion.

**About Leslie Pomerantz:** In her current position as Chief Development Officer for the Associated, and throughout her 24-year service to the Jewish Community, Leslie Pomerantz exemplifies excellence in leadership, Jewish knowledge, creativity, and personal commitment to those she works with and serves. Leslie's vision for a thriving vibrant Jewish Baltimore is demonstrated through her passion for inspiring professionals and organizations to be their own adaptable, nimble agents of social change. In her many active roles over the years including JCC camp director and special needs coordinator, Maccabi director, and as a creator of Jewish Volunteer Connection and

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CCEL engaging volunteers, and even as vocal soloist at Temple Oheb Shalom, she has gained incredible firsthand knowledge of the Baltimore Jewish community.

She is both admired and respected by colleagues, lay leaders and community members, a feat accomplished by keen interpersonal awareness, exceptional priorities, and a genuinely good heart. Leslie may have said it best herself: “My job wouldn’t be complete if I didn’t help make ‘my people’ the best professionals they can be – and to give them the tools, coaching and platform to do so. It is about positioning all of us to achieve great things for our organizations because we need ALL of us to succeed for our collective efforts to succeed.”

**Lauren Shaivitz** has used the skills she developed as an attorney with the House of Ruth Maryland and as a social worker with the Baltimore Child Abuse Center, to increase the safety and wellbeing of women and children in the Baltimore Jewish community as Director of Programs at CHANA for the past 6 years. In this role Lauren has overseen several innovative offerings that have broadened the depth and breadth of services available to CHANA clients, and to the general Baltimore community. To that end, Lauren’s role at CHANA has included involvement with task forces and other groups that review policies, laws and legislation that impact people affected by abuse. She is active in Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, Maryland Agenda for Women and the Multi-Cultural Roundtable that involves leaders of faith and ethnic minorities to discuss and examine issues of abuse and trauma. Lauren’s experience on the board of Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence has impacted the way our state responds to instances of domestic violence.

Lauren brought her commitment to the Jewish community with her to her role at CHANA, but also found her ties further strengthened. At CHANA she has deepened her appreciation for the value of having community-based services and learned the advantages of working within a system that supports meaningful connections among professionals, volunteers, and community members.

**Sara Rubinstein** perfectly epitomizes the qualities one needs to fulfill the role of Special Needs Director at the Jewish Community Center. Sara is committed and passionate about shifting minds to create a culture of inclusion for individuals of all abilities and is a driving force behind this transformation. Sara’s professional growth from manager to leader is evident in everything she has accomplished.

Sara has an impressive list of accomplishments. She studied creative arts and dance movement therapy at Drexel University. She implemented the first JCC staff training, establishing a special needs lay committee for the JCC, coordinated community events during Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month, managed the Baltimore Jewish Abilities

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Alliance website, become a DFI Friedman Fellow, attended the Jewish Leadership Institute on Disabilities and Inclusion, and will soon add to her list of accomplishments a Master's in Leadership and Disability Services from the University of Delaware.

Motivated by Jewish values, Sara is setting the standards for best practices of inclusivity to create meaningful experiences and opportunities to enrich, connect and celebrate the uniqueness of every Jew.

### **About The Associated**

The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore strengthens and nurtures Jewish life by engaging and supporting community partners in Greater Baltimore, Israel and around the world.