

Jonathan Ornstein

Chief Executive Officer, JCC Krakow

Jonathan Ornstein, a primary architect of Poland's contemporary Jewish rebirth, is a frequent international speaker and media contributor on topics including Jewish Poland and global antisemitism as well as an activist for Holocaust survivors.

Jonathan has served as Chief Executive Officer of JCC Krakow since King Charles III opened the center in 2008 with the mission of rebuilding Jewish life in Krakow. The JCC has grown exponentially to include 1,100 Jewish members; it also welcomes 10,000 visitors each month and is one of the most visible signs of Poland's Jewish revival. Jonathan created Ride For The Living and Holocaust Survivor Day, global initiatives that engage tens of thousands of people. After the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Jonathan initiated and directs JCC Krakow's humanitarian aid operation, having assisted almost 400,000 refugees and counting.

A native of New York City, Jonathan moved to Israel in 1994, lived for 7 years on a kibbutz in the Negev desert, and, as a Lone Soldier, served in an IDF combat unit before moving to Poland in 2001. Prior to launching the JCC, he taught Modern Hebrew at the Jagiellonian University for 6 years and founded the Gesher Association for Polish-Israeli Dialogue. He is a founding member of the Krakow Association of Christians and Jews, where he serves as the vice president. He also serves on the boards of the Krakow branch of Child Survivors of the Holocaust, Hillel Poland, JCC Global, and the Abraham Global Peace Initiative.