

# Gilbert discusses 'dream year' at NCJW/Cleveland meeting

KRISTEN MOTT | STAFF REPORTER  
kmott@cjn.org | @KristenMottCJN

Resiliency is a key component of Cleveland's recent momentum, according to David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland and the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission.

"We're an incredibly resilient place and a place that I believe wholeheartedly has people here who are second to none. I think that overall that's why we're seeing the growth that we have," said Gilbert, who served as the guest speaker at National Council of Jewish Women/Cleveland's winter meeting Feb. 8 at Landerhaven in Mayfield Heights.

Gilbert, who said he's always been passionate about the local community, referred to 2016 as a "dream year," making nods to the Republican National Convention, the Cleveland Cavaliers' NBA championship and the Cleveland Indians' World Series run. As for why Cleveland has seen so much growth lately, Gilbert credits cooperation between the civic and public and private sectors, especially during the RNC.

"It was incredibly successful. That is absolutely the credit to how many different public, private and civic sector people and organizations worked together to see it happen," he said.

He also noted the impact of private investment as well as a renewed sense of self-confidence among residents.

"If you go into something thinking you're not going to win, you're not going to win, and I think that the fact that there's such a change in that mentality, more than anything, is what can help us sustain this growth," he said.

But Gilbert said the city can't be fooled by a successful year and must work to capitalize on the momentum. There may also be some risk involved, he said.

"We've been a very risk-averse community. We have to continue entrepreneurship and encourage small businesses to add to the base that we have and not be afraid to take some risks," he said. "When you take risks, there may be some failure, and that's OK. Failure happens and you learn from it and you move on. ... We have to maintain our confidence and we have to know what a great community we are."

Prior to Gilbert's talk, Debbie Rosenthal of Orange, Liz Rumizen of Solon and Shani Spiegle of Orange were awarded the 2017 Emerging Leader Award. The award is given by NCJW/Cleveland annually to someone who has shown potential for future community leadership and NCJW



David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland and the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, serves as guest speaker at NCJW/Cleveland's winter meeting Feb. 8. | CJN Photos / Kristen Mott



Emerging Leader Award recipients Shani Spiegle, from left, Debbie Rosenthal and Liz Rumizen

chairperson of an existing committee.

Rosenthal became a member of NCJW/Cleveland nine years ago when she was gifted a membership by her mother, Linda Barnett, immediate past president of the organization. Her main focus is the Share What You Wear event and she's also involved with Designer Dress Days, serving as co-chair of accessories for the event. She's a board member and serves on the membership committee.

Rumizen joined NCJW/Cleveland three years ago. She works with students through the organization's literacy initiatives and volunteers with Reading Buddies and Book Club. She's a board member.

Spiegle has been involved with NCJW/Cleveland for the last four years. She's co-chair of Broadway in the Burbs and co-chairs the costume jewelry department for