

SLINGSHOT

A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation

05

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21/64

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A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR JEWISH INNOVATION

This book may be small, light on analysis, and lighter still on statistics. It may also be one of the most optimistic portrayals of the American Jewish community written in a long time. It is a resource list of some of the most innovative organizations, projects, and leaders across the country, all of them offering meaningful experiences and Jewish community from different perspectives, strategies and in different locales.

Our story as a Jewish community in America has been one of consistent innovation, imaginative vision, and bold leadership. The historian, Jonathan Sarna, has called it a history of “challenge and response.” Every generation faces its own unique set of challenges, from immigrant resettlement to inclusion of women’s voices to our relationship to Israel; the American Jewish community has adapted remarkably in the face of changing external realities.

So what challenges do we face in 2005? Today, we neither live in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, nor socialize in exclusively Jewish social circles. As a community, we are compelled to develop innovative experiences of Jewish life that ensure Jewish identity, ritual, history, tradition, and community remain engaging now that Jews have access to everything American.

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Designed by
Laurie Fink, NYC

INTRODUCTION

How This Evolved

At 21/64, we have dedicated significant time to this challenge. 21/64 is a division of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, based in our New York offices and serving families, foundations, and communities internationally. We take a multi-generational approach to working with young next generation funders, family foundations, federations, and other groups to articulate their values, explore their visions for the Jewish community, and develop their own analysis of Jewish life.

This publication is a manifestation of one of our projects, *Grand Street*, a burgeoning network of young Jews (ages 18-28) who are or will be involved in their families' philanthropy. After several years of exploring their values and visions, Grand Street members identified a barrier to their own funding; and the revelation was as simple as it was powerful. They could neither understand the Jewish landscape nor how to navigate it. Thus, *Slingshot* was born.

What This Is. What This is Not.

This book is not meant to be a comprehensive list of every Jewish organization or project in existence. Nor is it an objective assessment. Rather, it is our attempt to collect, in one digest, some of the more exciting new expressions of Jewish life in America.

We did this by asking our colleagues in the funding community which organizations inspired them. With their feedback, the final list took shape. It is a composite of diverse and confident interpretations of Jewish life today; the projects and organizations we have highlighted are grounded in Jewish values, rich in education, celebratory of culture, and, extremely positive.

While *Slingshot* was catalyzed by the needs of young Jews in Grand Street, this book is meant to be used by funders of all sizes and ages who want to support innovative expressions of Jewish life.

A Note on Our Methodology

This book has been created with a blend of experimental spirit and

purpose. To assemble the final product, we sought the wisdom of our colleagues in the funding community, and consulted the non-profit practitioners featured in these pages.

In the first phase of research, we asked colleagues to name the organizations that inspired them. This yielded a list of more than one hundred Jewish organizations of virtually every size and shape, representing a broad range of geography, denomination, and longevity. By seeing which among those one hundred organizations were identified by the most people, we narrowed the list down to eighty-eight.

In the second phase, we asked twenty-five foundation professionals with expertise in funding Jewish life to evaluate those eighty-eight against four criteria: innovation, impact, leadership, and organizational effectiveness. Within the criteria were provocative questions:

Innovation: How creative, inventive, pioneering, or even groundbreaking is the organization in responding to the

changing needs of the Jewish community and the world around it?

Impact: Does the organization reach a critical mass of people? Is it affecting the attitudes and behaviors of its constituents and the Jewish community?

Strong Leadership: Is there someone at the helm of the organization who brings character, vision, and guidance? Is this person paving a new path in the Jewish community? Is s/he seen as a strong leader by her/his organization? Is s/he a mentor to others?

Organizational Efficiency: Is the organization sound? Is it strategic in the way it does its business? Is it efficient and responsible about how it spends money?

With feedback from twenty-five of our peers, the final list took shape. The summaries we have included about each organization or project reflect the origin, mission, and strategy of each, as well as some details about its unique character and ethos. We have included comments from reviewers in the descriptions on each page, but we have left those

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quotes unattributed. While we are grateful to our colleagues for their input in the development of this book, 21/64 takes full responsibility for its contents.

Though the list is ordered alphabetically, we have asked each organization to provide data on its size, board composition, years in operation, and other criteria for comparison. Some readers may prefer to fund organizations of a particular size; others may prefer a range of types and sizes or a range of “risk.”

For more comprehensive descriptions of the organizations and projects listed in the *Slingshot* resource guide, we encourage you to visit www.2164.net, or contact the organizations directly.

Your Role

This book is being published at a momentous time. Technology, culture, and identity are evolving rapidly, and the Jewish community is evolving too. We hope this resource guide can play a small and positive role by ensuring that everyone—from

established funders choosing among many proposal submissions, to young funders seeking programs that match their own values—has the tools to identify, evaluate and choose among the best of these innovations.

You may not like every entry in this book, but we invite you to thumb through these pages, as there is surely something for everyone. From large or existing organizations who continually evolve to remain relevant, like the Isabella Friedman Jewish Retreat Center in Connecticut, to small, niche projects looking for nascent-stage support, like The Jewish Salon in Toronto, this eclectic list is a testament to the spirit of innovation that is the hallmark of our community.

We encourage readers to find their favorite entries and take a “*Slingshot*” to propel a number of projects forward. We invite you to follow up with any of the organizations in this book. They would love to hear from you.

Please Be in Touch

As this is the inaugural *Slingshot*, we welcome your feedback on what

worked, what didn’t work, and how you want to see this information provided in the future. Using the book as your guide, we also hope you will explore Jewish life in America and send us your feedback from the road. The only way we can improve the quality of the list is to add your evaluations to it.

We plan to publish this list annually, and we hope that the creation of the list will become an interactive experience, so please email us as you learn more about each organization. You are also invited to submit names of other exciting projects that we should consider including next year, but we can only accept nominations from people who have visited other organizations listed in the book. We look forward to hearing from you.

At 21/64, we do not have all the answers to Jewish life—sadly, there is no panacea for Jewish continuity. However, we are blessed to be working with so many professionals dedicating their talents, passions, and energies to the Jewish future. Only by equipping these programs

and practitioners with the resources they need to succeed will the Jewish community continue to thrive.

Thanks to those individuals who have devoted their professional lives to creating the vibrant Jewish options which fill these pages. You inspire us all. We hope this project helps to cultivate the resources you need to grow from strength to strength.



— Roger Bennett and
Sharna Goldseker
New York, 2005
info@2164.net

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Special thanks to Scott Belsky, Danielle Durschlag, Melissa Brown Eisenberg, Jacob Israelow, Rebecca Richards, David Slifka and others involved in Grand Street whose passion for their identities and interests in funding the Jewish community inspired us to create this book.

Particular thanks to Erica Schwartz and Ariel Silberman who gave many hours of thoughtful reflection and

tireless attention to bring the idea to reality. Thanks also to our copy editor Margot Douaihy and to Laurie Fink for her design of the book.

Thanks to our active partners: FJC and The Nathan Cummings Foundation. Without your commitment to the next generation of Jews and Jewish life, we would not be able to do our work.

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TOP 50 FUNDS

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Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community

01

1114 Avenue of the Americas
Suite 3400
New York, NY 10036

contact: Audra Berg
phone: 212.869.9700 x 224
e-mail: aberg@betterorg.com

board chair: Shifra Bronznick
budget: \$332,000
inception: 2001

Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community

Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community (AWP) was founded in 2001 to confront gender inequality in the top ranks of Jewish communal service. No women currently lead any of the top 20 largest federations, and among the major Jewish organizations in the educational, religious, policy, and social service arenas, only a handful of women serve as chief executive officers.

Through a variety of educational methods, advocacy projects, talent cultivation and work-life initiatives, AWP promotes leadership of women professionals, gender equity and organizational effectiveness within the Jewish communal environment. Examples of their projects include collaborations with Hillel, Jewish Board of Family and Children Services, and United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism where AWP helped to design and implement customized intervention strategies that expand opportunities for women within those organizations.

Despite many waves of feminist movements, gender bias does persist in the Jewish world. AWP has steadfastly worked on this complicated issue catalyzing discussion and change. While the ripple effects of AWP's initial work are just beginning to surface, widespread support of founder "Shifra is outstanding" and highly successful Jewish women are steering this "critically important and very strategic approach."

Adventure Rabbi

02

2990 Vassar Drive
Boulder, CO 80305

contact: Rabbi Jamie Korngold
phone: 303.417.6200
e-mail: info@adventurerabbi.org
website: www.adventurerabbi.org

board chair: Jeff Finkelstein
budget: \$161,000
inception: 2001

Adventure Rabbi

Faced with the reality of modern America's pull on young Jews today, Rabbi Jamie Korngold founded this unique organization which combines outdoor adventure with Jewish study and ritual. Because 70% of young Jews regularly miss synagogue, Adventure Rabbi experiments with ways to reach those who have found Judaism "to be spiritually unfulfilling, inaccessible or irrelevant. Often these Jews look to Buddhism to meet their spiritual and theological needs." Adventure Rabbi provides a Jewish framework for these spiritual outdoor enthusiasts.

Based in Boulder, CO, Adventure Rabbi facilitates weekly Shabbat hikes and ski trips where Saturday morning services are proffered out of handmade siddurim amid the Colorado wilderness. The absence of membership fees and sanctuary seat assignments encourage participation, and sensitivity to young Jews' lifestyle increases the likelihood of repeat attendance. Without membership fees, however, Adventure Rabbi struggles to meet the demand for over-subscribed programs.

Rabbi Korngold has become a positive Jewish role model for many and often officiates at weddings, baby naming's, and other rituals appropriate to this age cohort. This organization has incredible potential; with a little support and guidance, this Rabbi could go for miles.

American Jewish World Service

03

**45 West 36th Street
10th Floor
New York, NY 10018**

**contact: Riva Silverman
phone: 800.889.7146
e-mail: ajws@ajws.org
website: www.ajws.org**

**board chair: Marty Friedman
budget: \$10,000,000
inception: 1985**

American Jewish World Service

American Jewish World Service was recommended by more people than any other organization in this book. AJWS is well known as a Jewish response to poverty, hunger, disease, and disaster around the world as well as for the powerhouse leadership of Executive Director, Ruth Messinger.

Since 1985, AJWS continues to “breathe life into Judaism’s imperative to pursue justice and helps American Jews act upon a deeply felt obligation to improve the chances for survival, economic independence and human dignity for all people.” AJWS provides a vehicle for individual contributors to support organizations in underdeveloped nations and also sends skilled volunteers with technical assistance to more than 160 community-based organizations in Africa, Asia and the Americas. AJWS also supports Jewish and human rights projects in Russia and Ukraine through its Jewish Community Development Fund.

Twenty years after its founding, AJWS stays innovative by adding fresh programs such as Alternative Spring Break trips to Central America for college-age and other young Jewish volunteers looking to define their Jewish identity in an international service context. “Simply dynamite.”

AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps

04

443 Park Avenue South
11th Floor
New York, NY 10016

contact: Rabbi David Rosenn
phone: 212.545.7759
e-mail: info@avodah.net
website: www.avodah.net

board chairs: Aliza Mazor,
Elsie Stern
budget: \$1,002,500
inception: 1998

AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps

AVODAH aims to tackle two problems simultaneously: the plight of America's urban poor and the need for compelling ways to engage young people in Jewish life. Based in New York with a more recent franchise opened in Washington, DC, AVODAH offers post-college Jews a one-year fellowship to live in a communal setting while they work full-time in a social justice organization.

There is currently a waiting list of both young Jews seeking AVODAH fellowships and nonprofit organizations recruiting fellows. Participants work as legal advocates, case managers, mentors, and organizers at reduced cost to those organizations. In parallel, fellows receive Jewish teaching and support through the AVODAH program. After one year of service, fellows join the alumni network and continue their connection to both AVODAH and the Jewish community.

The organization has "great impact on *avodahniks* who in turn impact the people and the agencies in which they work." With Rabbi Rosenn's leadership, AVODAH exploded on the scene with "solid progress." Moving forward, it is stabilizing the model and expanding to other cities.

Ayecha Resource Organization

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11 Eighth Avenue
11th Floor
New York, NY 10011

contact: Yavilah McCoy
phone: 800.929.3242
e-mail: info@ayecha.org
website: www.ayecha.org

board chair: Andria Simckes
budget: \$143,000
inception: 2000

Ayecha Resource Organization

“And G-d said to Adam in the Garden of Eden, ‘Ayecha,’ ‘Where do you stand?’”

The Ayecha Resource Organization provides outreach and community-building for Jews of color, and also provides diversity awareness and training for the rest of the Jewish community; therefore, when G-d asks “Where do you stand?” We can all answer, “We stand together.”

It is with this clarity of passion and mission that Yavilah McCoy founded Ayecha. As the demographics of the American Jewish community change, Ayecha is the only organization training, developing curricula, and fostering community for Jews with diverse racial and cultural backgrounds; it does so through its Rabbinical Advisory Council, Jewish Diversity Initiative, and other strategies.

Based in St. Louis, McCoy recently opened an office in New York and is establishing herself as a start-up presence on the national Jewish scene.

Brooklyn Jews

06

**20 Plaza Street
Brooklyn, NY 11238**

**contact: Rabbi Andy Bachman
phone: 718.398.4759
e-mail: Andy.bachman@gmail.com
website: www.brooklynjews.org**

**board chair: Joshua Kranz
budget: \$105,000
inception: 2003**

Brooklyn Jews

What started as a weekly Shabbat group in the home of Rabbi Andy Bachman and his wife Rachel Alstein, Brooklyn Jews has blossomed into a grassroots community effort in Brownstone Brooklyn for unaffiliated Jews in their twenties, thirties, and early forties. These Brooklyn Jews are no longer in institutional settings, rather they have self-organized into a more comfortable and intellectually challenging milieu.

Weekly learning draws approximately 40 people to each session, and High Holiday services were moved to the Brooklyn Lyceum to accommodate nearly 500 people who wanted to attend. Participants have begun to arrange myriad programs to meet their evolving needs including literary discussions on Chosenness, Ethics, Jews, and Humor. From social action projects to Hebrew classes for children, Brooklyn Jews' programming continues to expand.

Still early in its development, Brooklyn Jews has begun to build a new Jewish life that is "creative, joyous, meaningful, and rooted in learning for this population that demands authentic connection, intellectual content, and fun." If you are in the 'hood, check it out and if you are in the 'hood with an empty storefront to offer, Brooklyn Jews is looking for a new home.

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah

07

**57 Bethune Street
New York, NY 10114**

**contact: Ilene Sameth
phone: 212.929.9498
e-mail: isameth@cbst.org
website: www.cbst.org**

**board chair: Lisa Kartzman
budget: \$1,400,000
inception: 1973**

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah

Congregation Beth Simchat Torah is New York City's gay synagogue, dedicated to the proposition that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Jews are wholly legitimate members of the Jewish people and of civil society. CBST "was a radical idea in 1973 and remains one today for many Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews whose first steps toward coming out often include a trip to CBST."

CBST is not only the synagogue for New York's 200,000 GLBT Jews, attracting 800 members each week and 4,000 for High Holiday services, but also is the largest gay synagogue in the world and arguably the most influential. It is not affiliated with a movement or denomination. Its existence alone "is a political act." Under the leadership of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum CBST advocates for change all over the world.

Whatever your sexual orientation, CBST is a very welcoming synagogue, down to its Open Door Campaign when everyone is invited to attend High Holiday Services—a rare find in the Jewish community.

Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations

08

100 Church Street
Suite 1608
New York, NY 10007

contact: Alec Brook-Krasny
phone: 212.566.2120
e-mail: alcojeco@aol.com
website: www.cojeco.org

board chair: Feliks Frenkel
budget: \$380,000
inception: 2002

Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations

During the past three decades, the American Jewish community has worked to resettle refuseniks and other emigrants from the Former Soviet Union. These campaigns have been quietly successful; in New York alone, nearly 25% of the Jewish community is from the FSU. Despite the percentage, the number that actually participates in Jewish activities is significantly smaller.

While these Jews are well integrated into American society, they are not integrated into the American Jewish community. The Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations was founded to assist Russian-speaking Jews in finding their Jewish identities and building a Jewish community.

As an umbrella organization, COJECO provides a unified voice for the New York Jewish émigré community and assists its member organizations in becoming vital Jewish institutions that offer quality religious and cultural experiences to their community. Known for its leadership, COJECO represents a new way of relating to Jews from the FSU and a set of organizations with whom to partner.

The Curriculum Initiative

09

**305 Madison Avenue
Suite 514
New York, NY 10165**

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e-mail: info@thecurriculum.org
website: www.thecurriculum.org**

**board chairs: Dana Raucher,
Pamela Dubin
budget: \$814,5000
inception: 1996**

The Curriculum Initiative

Many Jewish teens are enrolled in high-quality private schools where the dominant American culture pervades. The Curriculum Initiative was founded to offer such independent high schools Jewish life programming, teacher training, and other resources to benefit their Jewish students. TCI envisions a time when schools will invite a course on Judaism, offer *hevruta* (Jewish study in pairs), and facilitate Jewish study clubs.

While TCI has primarily operated in the Northeast where many independent schools include with high Jewish enrollment, the organization is interested in expanding its reach to other regions across the nation.

One reviewer noted, TCI is the “unsung hero of the Jewish engagement movement with the potential to reach more young Jews than any day school or camping program every will.” For more information on how to bring TCI to your city, visit www.thecurriculum.org.

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education

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**37 West 65th Street
5th Floor
New York, NY 10023**

**contact: Daniela Weiss
phone: 212.595.0307
e-mail: inquiry@drisha.org
website: www.drisha.org**

**board chair: Belda Lindenbaum
budget: \$2,300,000
inception: 1979**

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education

Drisha was founded in 1979 by Rabbi David Silber as the world's first center for women's advanced study of classical Jewish texts. At the time, high-level learning was not available to women. "When Drisha opened its doors, women of every age traveled, juggled work and personal responsibilities to get there, often with little external encouragement; but their thirst for learning was the driving force."

Today, Drisha continues to provide equal access to the study of classical Jewish texts to the Jewish community. Its graduates continue on to teach Talmud to boys and girls, develop curricula, and serve as spiritual leaders in synagogues; moreover, Drisha's education model catalyzed other Jewish institutions to consider providing similar access. Signing up for a course at Drisha is one of the best ways to experience this open and respectful learning environment.

Despite being one of the older organizations in this book, Drisha remains profoundly innovative in the way it has "moved the agenda on feminism and women's leadership in the traditional Orthodox community for almost 25 years. No organization has had more of an impact on the *halachic* feminist community."

Facing History and Ourselves

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16 Hurd Road
Brookline, MA 02445

contact: Margot Strom
phone: 617.232.1595
e-mail: info@facing.org
website: www.facinghistory.org

board chair: Seth Klarman
budget: \$12,598,000
inception: 1976

Facing History and Ourselves

In the late 1970s, Margot Strom, a passionate 8th grade teacher, was troubled by the lack of attention paid to the Holocaust in public school textbooks. She created Facing History to confront this dearth of information—to educate students not just about the triumphs of history but also the failures and tragedies as well. Years later, Facing History has become an international educational and professional development organization that gives teachers the curricula and training to engage students in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism.

By studying the historical development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of collective violence, students make connections between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. Facing History also adapted their classroom resources into a Jewish Education Program. To date, more than 600 educators from approximately 200 Jewish day and supplementary schools across the United States and Canada have attended Facing History programs.

For people who are interested in supporting different approaches to Holocaust-related programs, check out Facing History and Jewish Partisans Foundation also listed later in the book.

Foundation for Jewish Camping

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**6 East 39th Street
10th Floor
New York, NY 10016**

**contact: Jenny Lebowitz
phone: 212.792.6222
e-mail:
questions@jewishcamping.org
website: www.jewishcamping.org**

**board chairs: Rob Bildner,
Elisa Spungen Bildner
budget: \$3,350,000
inception: 1998**

Foundation for Jewish Camping

Founded by the husband and wife team of Rob Bildner and Elisa Spungen Bildner, the Foundation for Jewish Camping is the central address for information about and advocacy for non-profit Jewish overnight camps. FJC provides leadership, expertise, and financial resources to camps, campers, and their families across North America.

Research reveals that Jewish camps are one of a handful of programs that can provide the building blocks to Jewish commitment and identity. The Foundation offers on its Web site a directory of Jewish camps, a listing of scholarship opportunities, and even postings for camp counselor positions. In addition, the Foundation makes grants to promote programmatic excellence and opportunities for growth of camps and enrollment.

With new leadership and a five-year strategic plan, the Foundation is ready to grow its platform and “make a strong impact on the map of Jewish youth and identity building.”

Gan Chaim

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**5342 Tilly Mill Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338**

**contact: Daron 'Farmer D' Joffe
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e-mail: daron.joffe@atlantajcc.org
website: www.ganchaim.org**

**board chair: Project of Marcus JCC
budget: \$\$50,000
inception: 2000**

Gan Chaim

Gan Chaim has developed a vibrant, Jewish, informal education curriculum; using an organic garden, this unique project teaches kids, adults, and seniors about Jewish holidays, values, and traditions as well as lessons about nutrition, ecology, and agriculture. The garden is located in Dunwoody, GA, on a small parcel of land on the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta property.

The Marcus JCC is a story of Jewish suburbanization unto itself, as the JCC has moved further away from the city center into the lush suburbs where the majority of Jewish families now live. The JCC is home to a residential summer camp and senior facility, and is the counterpart to other JCCs where Gan Chaim provides programming for the region.

A year ago, we had the benefit of visiting the Dunwoody Campus for a tour of Gan Chaim given by Daron Joffe. A true salt of the earth, "Farmer D" is the gardener, teacher, entrepreneur, and inspiration behind Gan Chaim. In person, one begins to understand why this program is "building slowly;" but if you have the patience for organic growth, learn how you can transplant one of Farmer D's gardens in your community's JCC, summer camp, or senior center.

Genesis at Brandeis University

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415 South Street
MS 085
Waltham, MA 02454

contact: **Bradley Solmsen**
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e-mail: genesis@brandeis.edu
website: www.brandeis.edu/genesis

board chair: **Project of Brandeis University**
budget: **\$500,000**
inception: **1996**

Genesis at Brandeis University

Genesis is a summer program based at Brandeis University that assembles a geographically and Jewishly diverse group of 11th and 12th grade high school students to learn and build community. The curriculum integrates humanities and Jewish studies and is taught by formal and informal methods to teens that are involved and also on the fringes of the Jewish community. Whatever their Jewish background, the program demands the complete participation, self-reflection, and willingness of students to be learners and educators while in the program.

Initially founded by the Righteous Persons Foundation, Genesis offers a remarkable experience for a select group of students each year and is one of the few “innovative options for high school-age Jewish students.” Moving forward, Genesis aims to broaden its funding base and stay ahead of the curve of informal Jewish education.

To sign up for the program or to become involved as a partner, visit www.brandeis.edu/genesis.

Halachic Organ Donor Society

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111 Eighth Avenue
11th Floor
New York, NY 10011

contact: Robert Berman
phone: 212.213.5087
e-mail: admin@hods.org
website: www.hods.org

board chair: Michael Feldstein
budget: \$350,000
inception: 2001

Halachic Organ Donor Society

Thousands of people die every year due to organ failure, so in 2001, Robert Berman founded the Halachic Organ Donor Society to offer Jews a way to donate according to their halachic beliefs and to disseminate information showing halachic and rabbinic support of organ donation.

Berman relays the perception of one transplant surgeon, “Jews are known as a people who take organs when they need them, but they don’t donate them when asked.” The HOD Society attempts to dispel widely held misconceptions about Jewish law that prevent people from donating their organs and encourages Jews to save a life in this particular way.

At first blush, this may not sound like a sexy project to support, but HOD Society is taking on a concern of our day, encouraging awareness about this critical issue. By distributing brochures, giving lectures, managing an educational Web site, and advocating on this issue, HOD is saving lives—one person at a time.



**111 Eighth Avenue,
11th Floor
New York, NY 10011**

**contact: Nigel Savage
phone: 212.284.6812
e-mail: info@hazon.org
website: www.hazon.org**

**board chair: Richard Dale
budget: \$550,000
inception: 2000**

Hazon

Best known for its Jewish Environmental Bike Rides, Hazon has captivated hundreds of cycling enthusiasts and other adventurers who gather annually for these Jewish experiences. Hazon utilizes extraordinarily committed volunteers to organize its New York Ride and Israel Ride, and once even a Cross-USA Jewish Environmental Ride.

In 2004, Hazon launched the first Jewish Community-Supported Agriculture Project (CSA) on the East Coast; 80 members signed up to join this national trend in a Jewish context. Whether it's through bike rides or CSAs, Hazon fosters its name—"vision" in Hebrew—as it attempts to inspire new vision for Jewish communal experiences.

"Hazon is a solid, even amazing organization," "an idea on the rise." We recommend checking out a bike ride by visiting www.hazon.org.

Heeb Magazine

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New York, NY 10012**

**contact: Joshua Neuman
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e-mail: josh@heebmagazine.com
website: www.heebmagazine.com**

**board chair: Project of National
Foundation for Jewish Culture
budget: \$328,700
inception: 2001**

Heeb Magazine

Four years ago, Jennifer Bleyer founded this ironic, irreverent (and sometimes kitchy), progressive magazine. While much controversy surrounds its coverage of Jewish life, *Heeb* has quietly been building a significant following. Claiming 10,000 young Jews on its listserve, 25,000 copies of each issue sold, and hundreds of people standing in line for events, *Heeb* is more than a magazine, it is becoming a community.

Less well known is *Storytelling*, founded in 2003, which provides a regular, unorthodox venue for connecting to Jewish heritage. Curated evenings with half a dozen stand-up storytellers feels somewhat of a cross between Def Jam poetry meets the Catskills. Or as the all-volunteer staff describe, "It is a sweaty prizefight between hip hop and sushi in this corner and klezmer and kugel in the other."

No matter what you think about its taste, the *Heeb* team is expanding definitions of what it means to experience and express Jewishness, and it is attracting thousands of young Jews in the process.

**5870 West Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036**

**contact: Natalie Stern
phone: 323.634.1870
e-mail: rabbi@ikar-la.org
website: www.ikar-la.org**

**board chair: Melissa Balaban
budget: \$317,500
inception: 2004**

IKAR

One of the most passionate, powerful, and intellectual rabbis, Sharon Brous emanates spirituality. This thirty-something petite force recently left New York and Bnai Jeshrun Congregation to move to Los Angeles with her husband. It didn't take long for her LA-based followers to implore Rabbi Brous to start a congregation locally.

IKAR, a self-described "Jewish spiritual community," is attempting to create a new model that attracts young, unaffiliated Jews who have felt alienated by synagogue life. IKAR proposes to be "authentic, smart, relevant, unafraid to engage in politics, take risks, and ask important questions about what it means to be a Jew and human being in the world." Through its commitment to Torah, social justice, inclusion, and vibrancy, IKAR values both the personal spiritual journey as well as the broader communal mandate.

While IKAR is less than a year old, 200 people attend weekly Shabbat services, and the organization is attracting the attention of Jews locally and nationally who are seeking help in revitalizing their own institutions. IKAR is a good team to get involved with on the ground floor, and will be one of the projects to watch as it develops over the course of this year.

Institute for Jewish Spirituality

19

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So. Deerfield, MA 01373**

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e-mail: rachelcowan@mac.com
website: www.ijis-online.org**

**board chair: Larry Schwartz
budget: \$876,500
inception: 1999**

Institute for Jewish Spirituality

Anyone who knows a rabbi, Jewish professional, or lay leader knows how hard they work. These individuals are dedicated to Judaism and the Jewish community, often at the expense of their own personal and spiritual lives. The Institute for Jewish Spirituality was founded in 1999 to help these dedicated leaders better meet their own spiritual needs and the needs of the communities they serve.

Today, IJS's vision is even broader as it responds to the desires of many American Jews to cultivate their "inner lives" in a Jewish context. "American Jews, like Americans throughout the country, are looking to their religious traditions for wisdom and guidance about how to live meaningfully in a post-modern age... They work longer and harder hours at breakneck speed [which] often leaves them feeling isolated or without a clear sense of purpose or place."

Through meditation, yoga, prayer, study, and conversation, IJS helps to sustain Jewish professionals and lay leaders, and supports those who wish to create a vocabulary and practice in their local communities. One participant exclaimed, "I cannot overemphasize the importance of this gift to my own spiritual life and to my rabbinate." With its new Director, Rabbi Rachel Cowan at the helm, IJS is an incredible resource for the community.

**P.O. Box 9129
Newton, MA 02464**

**contact: Edmund C. Case
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e-mail: edc@interfaithfamily.com
website: www.interfaithfamily.com**

**board chair: Esta Epstein
budget: \$400,000
inception: 2001**

InterfaithFamily.com

With the reality of intermarriage as a factor in the Jewish community, Interfaithfamily.com has emerged to meet the needs of this growing audience. "Instead of wringing its hands and assuming the loss of its children and grandchildren, the Jewish community can and must reach out in a welcoming fashion to interfaith families and encourage them to find fulfillment in Jewish life and within the Jewish community."

While most people are unaware of its presence on the Web, InterfaithFamily.com has a steadily growing readership of 27,000 unique users which has increased at a rate of 35% a year. Content includes a biweekly web magazine, more than 1,000 archived articles, a program calendar connecting interfaith families to events in local communities, and more.

While it's a "small operation," its goal is to maximize the number of interfaith families who raise their children Jewish. Director Ed Case is "determined" about it; he manages this "valuable service" as a "support mechanism beyond just the Internet site." It is a good idea, and one that is in need of resources and human capital to take it to the next level.

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center

21

116 Johnson Road
Falls Village, CT 06031

contact: Adam Berman
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email: info@isabellafreedman.org
website:
www.isabellafreedman.org

board chair: Laura Rothschild
budget: \$1,700,000
inception: 1893

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center

Definitely the oldest organization in the book, Isabella Freedman epitomizes—even celebrates—the ability of a Jewish organization to evolve with the times. Founded as the Jewish Working Women’s Vacation Society in 1893, its original mission was to provide free summer vacations for Jewish women who worked in the sweatshops in New York City.

In the late 1950s the mission changed to reflect the needs of a growing low-income senior citizen population in New York. In 1959, two week summer vacations in the Connecticut Berkshires became the vogue. And in the early 1990s, the Center changed its mission to be “a model of spirituality vibrant, socially progressive, multigenerational Jewish community and to inspire all who participate in our programs to live these values.”

Today, Isabella Freedman is still a retreat center for the Jewish community. It offers numerous programs in its bucolic setting such as ADAMAH, a three-month residential training program for Jewish adults in their twenties that integrates organic farming, environmental study, Jewish learning, and community service; and the ADAMAH Teen Institute, a similar six-week leadership program.

To plan your next Board retreat at the Center, or learn about its many offerings, e-mail info@isabellafreedman.org.

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Suite 1108
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

contact: Larry Weinberg
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e-mail: info@israel21c.org
website: www.info@israel21c.org

board chair: Zvi Alon
budget: \$750,000
inception: 2000

Israel21C

Since the second *intifada*, Americans have been bombarded with violent images of the State of Israel via the media. An estimated 98% of media coverage of Israel, in America, is about the conflict. Information technology and communications have become powerful weapons themselves. Therefore, Israel 21C was founded to build a positive image and a better brand for modern day Israel.

The organization started its own media channel online with a Web site that is visited by thousands daily. If you haven't been one of those visitors, you've probably read their stories which are used by federations, community newspapers, and organizational newsletters regularly. Israel21C also places articles in the mainstream media—nearly 2,000 since its founding. Its premise is that every story should provide Americans with a reason to care about Israel because of their contributions such as technology or biomedical discoveries that enhance our daily lives.

To check out what has been called “the best out there on Israel advocacy,” visit www.israel21c.org.

JDub Records

23

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New York, NY 10003

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e-mail: aaron@jdubrecords.org
website: www.jdubrecords.org

board chair: Rabbi Andy Bachman
budget: \$350,000
inception: 2002

JDub Records

JDub Records provides proof that young Jews may be uninvolved in institutional Jewish life, yet they are not uninterested in Judaism or their Jewish identity. If “music is their cultural language and a powerful medium to transit values,” then JDub is capitalizing on this by producing, presenting, and disseminating new, innovative, and authentically Jewish music through which young Jews are connecting to their Judaism and to one another.

Since its launch three years ago, JDub has reached more than 45,000 people directly through events and CD sales, tens of thousands more through its Web site and mainstream media press coverage. They have experienced “very impressive results in a short time” and it’s possible that at this rate, JDub could support its operating costs through CD sales within five years; however, until then, this new Jewish music market needs support to grow.

As young Jews are looking for positive and celebratory ways of experiencing Judaism—and ways to experience it with their non-Jewish friends—JDub’s reggae, hip hop and world rhythm sound is providing that opportunity for thousands.

Jewish Coalition for Service

24

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e-mail: info@jewishservice.org
website: www.jewishservice.org

board chair: Arthur Shapiro
budget: \$485,000
inception: 2001

Jewish Coalition for Service

Imagine meeting a fellow Jew one day and asking them not where they live or went to college, but where they did their service. That's the vision of the Jewish Coalition for Service: to inspire everyone in the Jewish community to devote a part of their lives to full-time, hands-on volunteer service. To facilitate this vision, the Coalition helps volunteers and service providers connect by acting as the central resource on the more than 40 Jewish service programs in the United States and Israel.

With the rise of service on the American political agenda, Jews are increasingly signing up for volunteer programs; however, they are choosing secular volunteer service programs because they do not often know about the dislocated myriad of Jewish service options. The coalition and its member agencies are trying to change that. In a unique cooperative effort, Jewish service programs recognized that together they could be more powerful in advancing this vision than any of them could on their own. Therefore, the Coalition appears to "have promise," "lots of potential," and should make a "real contribution" in the community.

For a service program near you, visit www.jewishservice.org.

Jewish Fund for Justice

25

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Suite 1401
New York, NY 10001

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e-mail: jfjustice@jfjustice.org
website: www.jfjustice.org

board chair: John Levy
budget: \$1,900,000
inception: 1984

Jewish Fund for Justice

Founded in 1984, JFJ is the only national Jewish organization solely committed to fighting poverty in America. Even among faith-based poverty groups, JFJ is the only Jewish presence that plays a critical role in assisting grassroots organizations of low-income people to achieve decent housing, schools, healthcare and jobs.

At its core, JFJ seeks to embody the values of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and *tzedakah* (righteous giving) in everything it does, from its celebrated Women of Valor annual event to its curricular and educational components.

For the past year, JFJ has been in transition as the organization underwent a search for a new Executive Director. The organization has hired Simon Greer who begins this spring and promises to bring his much anticipated vision and experience to take JFJ's critical mission even further.

Jewish Organizing Initiative

26

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Suite 600
Boston, MA 02111

contact: Michael Jacoby Brown
phone: 617.350.9995
e-mail: joi@jewishorganizing.org
website: www.jewishorganizing.org

board chair: Adam Rogoff
budget: \$450,000
inception: 1997

Jewish Organizing Initiative

In 1997, Michael Brown had the unique idea of developing a place where young Jews, interested in pursuing a career in social justice, could learn practical skills in a Jewish context. While other organizations have built on JOI's original model, JOI, its leadership, and pedagogy remain well respected in the field.

Each year, 12 young Jews from around the world are selected to participate in a leadership training program where they learn about community organizing and Jewish tradition while working in a social justice community or labor organization. Weekly Jewish learning helps fellows understand the context of their work and sustains them in their efforts.

In under a decade, JOI has become a tried and true fixture in the community. For more information on becoming a fellow or to get involved with the organization, visit www.jewishorganizing.org.

Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance

27

15 East 26th Street
Suite 915
New York, NY 10010

contact: Robin Bodner
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e-mail: jofa@jofa.org
website: www.jofa.org

board chair:
Carol Kaufman Newman
budget: \$627,000
inception: 1997

Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance

While most people outside of the Orthodox community do not know of JOFA, they are expanding spiritual, ritual, intellectual, and political opportunities for all women. Founded in 1997 after the first International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy, JOFA was established to educate, advocate and serve as a forum for men and women dedicated to increasing women's participation in Orthodox Jewish life.

JOFA's strides have also set the tone for women's inclusion in Jewish ritual everywhere. For every innovation (within the boundaries of *halacha*) that JOFA advances, women of all denominations can say, "If JOFA established permission for this within the Orthodox community, then we can allow women to do it in our synagogue." In particular, JOFA's Web site has become a reference and its international conferences are acclaimed.

Their latest endeavor is to provide a *halachic* solution to the *agunah* problem, where Orthodox women seeking a divorce are not given a *get* or a document from their husbands to free them from their marriages. An awareness campaign and resource materials are in development.

Jewish Outreach Institute

28

1270 Broadway
Suite 609
New York, NY 10001

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phone: 212.760.1440
e-mail: info@joi.org
website: www.joi.org

board chair: Terrence A. Elkes
budget: \$1,600,000
inception: 1998

Jewish Outreach Institute

JOI seeks to empower and help the Jewish community welcome all members of interfaith families into Jewish life, and to work with them to deepen their Jewish engagement. JOI originally began as a research institute and think tank in 1988, producing several important studies and an academic conference that helped transform communal attitudes toward intermarried families. JOI now offers “direct service through programming” and has reached 120,000 participants in nearly 25 cities.

Most “outreach” programs expect people to walk into Jewish institutions despite the barriers to entry common in synagogues and other communal settings. But JOI’s approach takes Judaism directly to where Jewish people are. Often misperceived as unaffiliated, intermarried households exist on a broad spectrum of Jewish engagement; hundreds of thousands are raising strongly identified Jewish children. From interfaith couple support groups and mentoring partners to “December Dilemma” discussions around the holidays, JOI offers the range.

Many feel this is “an important idea yet fully realized” and a good opportunity for involvement. To sign up for a program or learn how to get involved, visit www.joi.org.

Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation

29

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San Francisco, CA 94109

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phone: 415.563.2244
e-mail: info@jewishpartisans.org
website: www.jewishpartisans.org

board chair: Paul Orbuch
budget: \$528,393
inception: 2000

Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation

So much of the language and imagery around the Holocaust is devastating and disturbing to say the least. But the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation reveals Jewish heroes who fought back against the Nazis during World War II. While most people do not even know about the Partisans, JPEF is capturing their stories (before it's too late) and transforming accounts of these living legends into educational materials for Jewish schools, summer camps, Hillel groups, and more.

Nearly 1,000 study guides are downloaded off their Web site each month free of charge. Video interviews and other multimedia materials are also available. Further dissemination of their resources will be JPEF's next challenge, now that production of its curriculum is nearing completion.

While one funder said, "This is a well run group if the Holocaust is your thing," another proactively conveyed, "This is a great way to get lessons of the Holocaust across to children without transferring a victimization complex as well."

The Jewish Salon

30

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**contact: Mireille Silcoff
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e-mail:
mireille@mireillesilcoff.com
website:
www.mireillesilcoff.com**

**board chair: N/A
budget: \$20,000
inception: 2003**

The Jewish Salon

Founder Mireille Silcoff is very clear about what her Salon is and is not: it's neither a "dating scene" nor a "networking party;" rather, a monthly "talking party" where Jews in their twenties and thirties can explore Jewish ideas and the idea of being Jewish. Led by Silcoff with sharp intellect and wit, each Salon has a prescribed theme and set of readings. While not a lecture, the Salon is a "community-building project, bringing young Jews together, and binding them through and ideas rather than ritual."

Since its inception, the Toronto Salon has been extremely popular among "Jews who never thought they would ever go to a Jewish event." From Mireille's apartment, the Salon grew quickly and moved to a stylish hotel. Now it is held in different secular environments that are made to feel Jewish by the exchange of ideas.

A number of individuals have contacted Silcoff to help them bring the the Toronto model to other cities. She hopes to develop a "Salon network" across North America where readings are open-sourced and participants feel not only part of a local community, but also a larger phenomenon.

To bring the Salon to your town, contact Silcoff at mireille@mireillesilcoff.com.

Jewish Women's Archive

31

138 Harvard Street
Brookline, MA 02446

contact: Ellen Kanner
phone: 617.232.2258
e-mail: info@jwa.org

board chair: Nicki Newman Tanner
budget: \$1,850,000
inception: 1995

Jewish Women's Archive

The mission of the Jewish Women's Archive is to uncover, chronicle, and transmit the rich legacy of Jewish women and their contributions to our families, communities, and the world. JWA was founded to create that comprehensive record of American Jewish women's achievements and did so by producing the first-ever Web site that made it possible to discover women's contributions online; developing resources and programs to make that information accessible; and by paying tribute to those accomplishments through public events.

Examples of its work includes: Women of Valor (on-line and in print posters), honoring sixteen trailblazing women; through primary sources and curricula, JWA brings women's stories into the classroom; and, through its virtual archive, JWA enables people to do research into sources on women and women's contributions.

Visit www.jwa.org to discover its online resources or learn more about how to include your story in the archive.

Jewish Women Watching

32

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New York, NY 10021**

**e-mail:
jww@jewishwomenwatching.com
website:
www.jewishwomenwatching.com**

**board chair: N/A
budget: N/A
inception: 1999**

Jewish Women Watching

This mysterious, anonymous, and often controversial feminist collective emerged on the scene in 1999 to rouse the Jewish public to challenge and change “sexist and discriminatory practices in the American Jewish community.” Modeled after the Guerilla Girls—a group of women rousing public action in the art world since 1985—JWW uses satire and real life facts to focus attention on these issues.

Anonymous, yet active, JWW members volunteer their time to produce projects such as “Strange Bedfellows;” published in 2002, JWW distributed 10,000 condoms emblazoned with the words “Practice Safe Politics” to describe the mainstream Jewish community’s alliance with Christian Right leadership over Israel, and warned the public about the anti-feminist, homophobic, anti-Semitic leaders of the Christian Right. The Jewish Telegraph Agency cited JWW as “an authoritative voice of Jewish dissent.”

Even if you are not into public demonstrations, you can appreciate JWW’s use of humor as a tactic for advocacy, spotlighting critical issues, spurring debate, and catalyzing change.

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New York, NY 10025

contact: Elie Kaunfer
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e-mail: egalminyan@hotmail.com
website: www.kehilathadar.org

board chair: Elie Kaunfer
budget: \$93,850
inception: 2001

Kehilat Hadar

Kehilat Hadar (Community of Praise) is an independent, egalitarian community devoted to spirited traditional prayer, study, and social action. As one of the new spiritual communities described in this book, Hadar presents a response both to denominationalism and to the traditional synagogue model. Led entirely by volunteers, Hadar has five *gabbai'im*, leaders who organize Shabbat services, and an impressive list of new Jewish expressions that have grown out of the Hadar vision.

Hadar has quickly become a primary Jewish community for the majority of people who have encountered it. Its list of programs includes: Shavuot retreats annually for more than 300 people; twice-weekly Jewish education classes on Torah commentary and basic ritual skills; a CD of Hadar melodies sold in 25 states; a partner in NY Housing advocacy coalition; and a model for numerous other communities in Boston, DC, Berkeley, and other locals.

Moving forward, Hadar is beginning to explore new venues that can host hundreds of worshippers and is transitioning to a full-service community organization for its members. To check out this new model of a prayer community, visit www.kehilathadar.org.

Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project of the JCC in Manhattan

34

334 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10023

contact: Eve Landau
phone: 646.505.4432
e-mail: eve@mayan.org
website: www.mayan.org

board chair: Barbara Dobkin
budget: \$500,000
inception: 1993

Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project of the JCC in Manhattan

When Ma'yan was founded more than ten years ago, it had two goals in mind: to offer a feminist seder to the community and to match Jewish women donor activists with projects by and for Jewish women. It has surpassed its original goals, and no one organization or person can be credited with making the Jewish community more open and responsive to women than Ma'yan and its founder, Barbara Dobkin.

Located in New York City, this organization's impact has been felt around the country as thousands of women travel to Ma'yan seders every year—so many that seders are repeated four nights in a row to sold out crowds. In addition, Ma'yan has worked collaboratively with Kolot to create www.ritualwell.org and the Jewish Women's Archive Women of Valor posters.

In addition, Ma'yan commissioned *Power and Parity: Women on the Boards of Major American Jewish Organizations* which gave birth to Advancing Women Professionals, now an organization featured in this book. Ma'yan's report, *Listen to Her Voice*, was just released spring 2005.

For more information on Ma'yan, how to subscribe to its print journal, *Journey*, or to participate in programming, visit www.mayan.org.

Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center

35

1838 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02466

contact: Aliza Kline
phone: 617.244.1836
e-mail: info@mayyimhayyim.org
website: www.mayyimhayyim.org

board chair: Anita Diamant
budget: \$400,000
inception: 2001

Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center

Mayyim Hayyim has reinvented the ancient mikveh ritual immersion into a contemporary practice for the 21st century Jewish community. While the ritual bath exists within the facility, the space and ritual have been transformed into welcoming rites of passage for converts to Judaism, adopted children, “affirmation ceremonies,” brides and grooms, and for people recovering from illnesses.

In 2004, construction of this new facility was completed, and since that time, 650 men, women and children of immersed themselves in Mayyim Hayyim— living waters. In addition, “mikveh guides” have worked with more than 2,500 members of Greater-Boston synagogues, school, and other Jewish communal groups to teach them about the mikveh and encourage its creative use.

One participant who came to the mikveh as part of her conversion to Judaism said, “Today marks an incredible moment in a long journey to Judaism.” Another male who chose to be Jewish said, “Thank you for a wonderful beginning to my Jewish life.” To explore this innovative approach to tradition or to bring the concept of Mayyim Hayyim to your local community, visit www.mayyimhayyim.org.

Mazon

36

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contact:

H. Eric Schockman, Ph.D.

phone: 310.442.0020

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website: www.mazon.org

board chair: Eve Biskind Klothen

budget: \$4,990,000

inception: 1995

Mazon

In 1985, Physicians Task Force on Hunger in America estimated that 20 million people—one in every 12 U.S. citizens—suffered from hunger. Spurred by that statistic as well as an article by Leonard Fein challenging Jews to self-impose “a tax” on joyous occasions, Mazon was formed. The organization raises consciousness within the Jewish community regarding its obligation to alleviate hunger; advocates donating 3% of the cost of life cycle events to Mazon as well as for other ways to end hunger; and, provides for people who are hungry.

Over the years, Mazon has granted more than \$34 million to emergency food providers, food banks, multi-service organizations, and advocacy groups which seek long-term solutions to the issue of hunger. Mazon has also been recognized for its fiscal stability rated highly by Charity Navigator, American Institute of Philanthropy and the Better Business Bureau.

If you are interested in learning how you can contribute 3% of your next simcha to Mazon, e-mail mazonmail@mazon.org.

MOSAIC

37

**P.O. Box 18743
Denver, CO 80218**

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e-mail: info@jewishmosaic.org
website: www.JewishMosaic.org**

**board chair: David Shneer
budget: \$211,000
inception: 2003**

MOSAIC

The Jewish community has begun to focus on the issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) inclusion in recent years, but until MOSAIC was founded in 2003, there was no Jewish organization solely devoted to full inclusion of LGBT Jews in the Jewish communal world. MOSAIC is the national organization that connects local LGBT Jewish advocacy groups to one another, collaborates with allies in the communal world, keeps LGBT issues on the communal agenda and provides resources, education, consulting, and diversity training to Jewish organizations throughout the country.

As the Jewish community worries about its decreasing numbers, LGBT Jews are hoping to be “counted” and included in Jewish life. MOSAIC helps to make visible these vibrant members of our community, aims to reduce homophobia, and helps communal institutions see how inclusion of LGBT Jews can enrich their organizations.

Run by a small but strong team of academics and organizers in Denver, CO, this organization’s impact has reach far beyond its local. To check out their offerings, visit www.JewishMosaic.org.

Newish Jewish Catalogue: A Guide for Co-Creators of Jewish Life

38

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#1C
New York, NY 10027

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e-mail: ariykelman@yahoo.com

board chair: Nathaniel Duetsch
budget: \$30,000
inception: 2004

Newish Jewish Catalogue: A Guide for Co-Creators of Jewish Life

It is often alleged that when the Jewish community searches for the next big thing, we neglect tried and true solutions from the past. This project is a bold attempt by leading young academic and rabbinic scholars in their twenties and thirties to build on and update the 1970s -era "Jewish Catalogue" and replicate the impact the book had.

The creative team sees this print and Web-based project as a resource for building creative Jewish life and imagining Jewish alternatives. They will invite users to explore ways of becoming co-creators and experimenting with new forms of Judaism beyond three previous categories of religion, Holocaust and Israel. From this team of talented academics and rabbis offering inspiring suggestions, readers of the Catalogue will be able to revitalize their Jewish lives by hosting their own discussion salons, festival observances, and life cycle events.

The authors promise nothing short of a grassroots Jewish revolution. Want to join in?

PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values

39

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phone: 301.770.5070
e-mail: info@panim.org
website: www.panim.org

board chair: Laura Katz Cutler
budget: \$1,600,000
inception: 1988

PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values

The brainchild of founder and long-standing director, Rabbi Sid Schwartz, PANIM was originally a response to what he thought was both ineffective institutional Jewish education and uninformed Jewish adults participating in public affairs. To those ends, PANIM has focused its attention on preparing young Jews to assert *tikkun olam*—repair of the world—as a core principle of their Judaism.

Through its flagship program, Panim el Panim, high school students from across the religious spectrum as well as the country, travel to Washington, DC to learn about politics, political activism, and civic engagement in the context of Jewish texts and values. Participants gain a deeper appreciation for Judaism and a sense of empowerment about how they can find a role in changing the world.

PANIM continues to fill a critical need in the community for social justice programming for teens. For more information, visit www.panim.org.

Progressive Jewish Alliance

40

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Los Angeles, CA 90036**

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phone: 323.761.8350
e-mail: office@pjalliance.org
website: www.pjalliance.org**

**board chair: Aryeh Cohen
budget: \$600,000
inception: 1999**

Progressive Jewish Alliance

PJA was founded in 1999 by Jewish Angelinos asserting a grassroots progressive Jewish presence in the campaigns for social justice in Southern California. Los Angeles is the nation's second largest city and second largest Jewish community, but one that is notoriously decentralized. PJA therefore works to reinvigorate the progressive Jewish landscape and foster a Jewishly literate membership.

PJA lives by the motto: to kvetch is human, to act divine. It is with this spirit that PJA educates, advocates, and organizes Jews on issues of peace, equality, diversity and justice through a variety of programs. Current activities include a campaign to improve working conditions and secure a living wage for low-income workers; trainings for PJA volunteers to mediate between non-violent juvenile offenders and their victims; and facilitating dialogues between members of the Muslim and Jewish communities in Los Angeles.

With many of its 2,000 members in their 20s and 30s, PJA is meaningfully engaging young and unaffiliated Jews. Based on its track record, PJA is opening an office in the Bay Area this year.

Reboot

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website: www.rebooters.net**

**board chair: Erin Potts
budget: \$900,000
inception: 2003**

Reboot

Reboot is a remarkable experiment based on the belief that it is the obligation of every generation to define Jewish meaning and community on its own terms. In its first years of operation, the organization engaged a network of young creatives from an eclectic set of backgrounds including the literary, technology, entertainment, media, political, social justice, academic, and rabbinic worlds. Since its inception, this growing network of people has come together to question and reclaim their Jewish identity, heritage, ritual, and values.

Reboot's approach, which began as an experiment, appears to be paying dividends. It has fostered a series of creative collaborations including a quarterly journal both intriguing in title and content, *Guilt & Pleasure*; a record label reissuing lost Jewish musical classics; a series of book projects including one with David Mamet; a documentary film production company; a salon movement; and a national research arm all driven by an amazing cast of participants. They are wildly successful in their careers and also motivated by an age-old conversation about Jewish meaning.

Time will tell if Reboot has the ability to garner the resources necessary to nourish the passion, creativity, and networks of its participants, but this year will certainly be transformational as the first wave of projects emerges from the organization.

Rockwood Leadership Program

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info@rockwoodleadership.org

website:

www.rockwoodleadership.org

board chairs: Chris Desser,

Howard Schechter

budget: \$1,300,000

inception: 2000

Rockwood Leadership Program

Though “leadership” is of paramount importance in the Jewish community, few organizations offer cutting-edge leadership skills tailored to a Jewish audience. In partnership with the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Rockwood created a leadership training program for the Next Generation of Jewish Social Change Leaders.

Applicants were selected to participate in a “collaborative training” which delivers a powerful and tested core set of leadership skills—purpose, strategic focus, partnership, state-shifting, performance, authenticity and personal ecology—in a four day management and leadership retreat. By providing theory and practice from top-notch management trainings and linking those teachings to the challenges faced by emerging Jewish leaders, Rockwood is beginning to build a cohort of individuals dedicated to being effective and enduring leaders in the Jewish community.

The program met with rave reviews in its first year. Follow-up modules are now offered for the original cohort and a second year of the Leadership Program is underway. This is “an exciting new initiative that supports next generation leadership.” “It is a powerful model with great long-term potential.”

Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!

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board chair: Sally Gottesman
budget: \$1,037,000
inception: 2000

Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!

Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing! is a contemporary monthly celebration of the ancient New Moon holiday for girls in grades 6-12 that builds self-esteem, Jewish identity, and leadership skills. Now in its third year of national replication, It's a Girl Thing! has 150 groups being operated for girls by 92 institutions across the spectrum of Jewish life.

It's A Girl Thing! operates with an intimate model where small groups of girls (7-15 years old) meet for monthly celebrations to discuss what Judaism has to say about girl-related issues. Each group is facilitated by a female psychologist, social worker, or educator who is trained by It's A Girl Thing! and uses a step-by-step meeting plans from the comprehensive guide, *Rosh Hodesh: It's A Girl Thing! Sourcebook for Leaders*.

While Rosh Hodesh: It's A Girl Thing! used to be run out of Kolot, the program is now operating independently. To find a program for your daughter or to bring It's A Girl Thing! to your community, e-mail dmeyer@newej.org.

Sharsheret

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**board chair: Amy Mines Tadelis
budget: \$378,360
inception: 2001**

Sharsheret

As a community, we have learned that Ashkenazi women have an increased genetic risk of breast cancer. Rochelle Shoretz confronted both the disease and then took on the communal need for a response on all our behalf. From her hospital bed, Rochelle founded *Sharsheret* (“chain” in Hebrew) to link those experiencing similar life events as well as diagnoses with support and resources.

Shasheret’s Link Program connects women who want to talk about their medical issues as well as their personal experiences with cancer, addressing provocative questions such as: What is the role of religion in my daily life with cancer? What is the impact on my rituals? How does this affect my fertility and ability to parent? In addition to the Link Program, Sharsheret works with esteemed medical institutions to offer symposia on the issues its constituents face.

While Sharsheret has been successful in its first three years at meeting the needs of its constituents —primarily young Jewish women with breast cancer—there is a remarkable demand for services for women of all ages facing other cancers as well. For information on the Link Program, symposia or other resources offered, visit www.sharsheret.org.

Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning

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1 East 65th Street
New York, NY 10021

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website: www.adultjewishlearning.org

board chair: Charles Grossman
budget: \$600,000
inception: 2001

Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning

Founded in 2001, the Skirball Center sought to provide a “sophisticated and open learning environment for Jewish study” as there were “too few opportunities for non-Orthodox Jews to engage in serious study.” Interest appears high for such education, as Skirball has had to increase its courses each semester from 12 to 40 to meet the growing demand. Three thousand teachers and students of all ages have signed up for courses such as East vs. West: Israeli Fiction, Cinema and Society.

One of the most innovative additions to Skirball’s offerings is its Ideas Café which “embraces Talmudic attitudes toward debate transporting ancient values into a contemporary public arena.” While the weekly repartee in itself is worth experiencing, Skirball’s vision for the Cafe is nothing short of the transformation of Jewish life. Only by providing people with the language of Judaism and relevance of the text in contemporary Jewish life, Skirball believes, can they become engaged partners in the community.

For more information on the Ideas Café and Skirball’s full offerings, visit www.adultjewishlearning.org

Sol Goldman 14th Street YM-YWHA of the Educational Alliance

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**board chair: Marvin Israelow
budget: \$3,900,000
inception: 1900**

Sol Goldman 14th Street YM-YWHA of the Educational Alliance

Founded at the turn of the last century, the 14th Street Y has been reincarnated more than once; from its original Enamu-El Brotherhood it transformed into the Emanu-El Mid Town 14th Street Y, later becoming part of the Educational Alliance after it was slated for closure due to demographic and financial changes in the early 1990s. Now at its current and refurbished home on East 14th Street, the Y works at reflecting the character and sensibility of its neighborhood.

While it is equipped with everything common to a standard community center, from preschool services to a fitness room, the Y also offers unique programming geared to young artists, intellectuals, and hip moms living in the East Village. From daytime comedy performances for moms and their babies called “Moms Cracking Up,” Slivovitz and Soul (a music series co-sponsored with JDub Records), to “Novel Jews” for the literary crowd, this community-based institution knows its audience.

If you are interested in taking a class or helping to build this new brand of a community-based center, e-mail margo_bloom@edalliance.org.

Storahtelling

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**board chair: Marina Pinto-Kaufman
budget: \$400,000
inception: 1998**

Storahtelling

Based on a deep reverence for Judaism's 5,000 year old history, Storahtelling makes relevant this sacred tradition for a modern audience. Founded by Amichai Lau-Lavie, one of the most talented Jewish educators today, Storahtelling revitalizes and remakes Jewish rituals, producing them in an inclusive and accessible way for today's audiences.

Self-described as a "radical fusion of storytelling, Torah, traditional ritual theater, and contemporary performance art," Storahtelling brings to life the weekly Torah portion in a dramatic performance for synagogues, schools, and even late-night audiences.

In its initial six years, Storahtelling has grown from the creative genius of one man to a sustainable company with trained troupes of 'Storahtellers' around the country. For more information on how to bring Storahtelling to your city, visit www.storahtelling.org.

Talking Streets

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website: www.talkingstreet.com**

**board chair: David Solomont
budget: \$175,000
inception: 1998**

Talking Streets

One of the most innovative ideas in the book, *Talking Streets: The Lower East Side Birthplace of Jewish Dreams* is a cell phone walking tour. A combination of Jewish heritage sites and modern technology, this easily accessible walking tour allows users to interact with history. Pick up a map at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum or download one online, and then dial in to hear Jerry Stiller give two minutes of commentary when you have reached each numbered location. The experience is also enhanced by having lunch at Katz's deli after the tour.

The brainchild of Miles Kronby, a technologist from Candide Mediaworks, Talking Streets combines Miles' expertise in audio and web-based production with his self-awareness of young Jews' desire to explore their Jewish identity.

While the Lower East Side was Talking Streets' first cell phone tour launched in 2002, the technology is ready for replication in other cities. Plans include Jerusalem by 2006. To experience Talking Streets or to bring one to your city, visit www.talkingstreet.com.

The Ritualist

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website: www.theritualist.org

board chair: Toby Rubin
budget: \$120,000
inception: 2003

The Ritualist

While many are concerned about finding new ways to engage the “unaffiliated” in Jewish life, many do not realize that the “unaffiliated” *are* often interested in Judaism even if they are not interested in communal institutions. The Ritualist hopes to meet the needs of the unaffiliated (and affiliated) Jews who they call “independents”—people wanting to create lifecycle rituals that are meaningful, personal, and innovative, inside or outside of synagogue or institutional settings.

Founders Rachel Brodie and Julie Batz do this by researching and developing Jewish lifecycle rituals—from baby namings to funerals—and train laypeople and clergy to facilitate these rituals outside of a synagogue. Currently, they are working on a Web site that will connect independents to ritual facilitators and to other resources available in the Jewish community.

The Ritualist appreciates that many people—rabbis in particular—are concerned that this encourages worship without synagogues. But since independents and lifecycle rituals are “de facto aspects of 21st century American Jewish life,” Brodie and Batz want to educate “consumers” about the Jewish resources available to them. To learn about Jewish resources in your area, visit www.theritualist.org.

The Tribe

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board chair: N/A
budget: \$270,000
inception: 2002

The Tribe

Tiffany Shlain sought out not only to create a vehicle that would speak to her peers in their twenties and thirties, but also to design a project that empowers *them* to speak. She realized that young Jews “crave conversation, debate, insights, and dialogue about identity and meaning.”

A filmmaker and technologist by trade, Shlain brings her experience as co-creator of the Webby Awards (the Oscars for the web) and *Life, Liberty & Pursuit of Happiness* (a film project she produced on reproductive rights) to bear on this current Jewish challenge: how to engage young Jews who are disconnected from organized Judaism and allow them to discuss Jewish identity and what it means in the 21st century in America.

The Tribe is both a short film (currently in production) followed by a discussion guide to facilitate conversations. “Media, the Internet, and film are tools that speak to my generation. The Tribe is a modern tool to facilitate age-old debates like ‘What does it mean to be a Jew?’”

For more information on The Tribe, e-mail tiffany@webbyawards.com.

ORIGINS, TOOLS, AND WHAT SLINGSHOT CAN DO FOR YOU

About Grand Street

The origins of *Slingshot* lie in Grand Street, a network of young Jews (ages 18-28) who come together to explore their involvement in family philanthropy. As it can be intimidating for young people to confront these issues within their families, a network of peers can provide a supportive space for independent, yet informed, exploration.

Grand Street began in 2003 as a gathering of young people who assembled for a weekend to ask their own questions, develop Jewish philanthropic analysis, sharpen their strategic thinking, and create safe space for personal development. With an additional cohort added each year, they became a network of young Jews with similar philanthropic legacies.

We believe this is a unique opportunity. If you or your family members are interested in joining Grand Street, do not hesitate to contact us.

Taking a Slingshot

At 21/64, we use at least two other philanthropic tools when we work with individuals, families, and foundations to develop their funding

strategies. Feel free to use one, two, or all three to inform your giving, but, as with everything in life, the more thought you put into articulating your reasons for giving, the better aligned your results will be with your intentions.

Rooted In Change: Through our work, we have realized that many people have little historical knowledge beyond the era in which they were raised. But by looking backwards, and putting the past into context, we can see where we fall along a continuum, and locate ourselves on a communal map. Rooted in Change is a tool we have created to help readers ask critical questions about themselves and their roles in Jewish continuity: Who am I? What am I inheriting? What am I going to do about that legacy? How can I contribute and help shape future generations?

Once funders become aware of what they have “inherited” from their families and the community, we help them articulate their motivational values for giving.

Motivational Values Cards: We believe the more aligned your giving is with your values, the more fulfilling and strategic your philanthropy can be. Funders of all ages benefit from

the opportunity to reflect on the values that motivate them to make philanthropic decisions. We have developed a stack of Motivational Values Cards, each representing an issue that drives a personal and philanthropic process. Users prioritize the cards by sorting those values that most motivate their philanthropic decisions. Experienced with other family members, the cards can also encourage discussion across the generations.

Slingshot: With a clear sense of what you have “inherited” from your family and community, plus an articulation of the values that most motivate you, you are ready to decide what you want to fund. Slingshot is a resource that gives readers an array of options. For example, consider funding the Institute for Jewish Spirituality if spiritual growth is your top value or the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning if personal growth is your top value. There should be a funding opportunity on the list that meets everyone’s heritage, values, and passions.

Slingshot Fund

Jewish history is one of challenge and response. Our community has

consistently evolved and adapted to adjust to our changing realities in America. These changes have come about because we have supported new ideas and visionaries who can provide new forms of identity, community, and meaning. Whoever you are—whether you give away \$500 or \$5 million annually, to established projects or to innovative ones—we hope you will consider setting up a fund where you devote at least a small percent of your annual allocation to higher-risk, innovative projects or start-up organizations. This small percentage can become an important but manageable component of your overall philanthropic investment portfolio. If you decide to utilize the tools described above, or to set up your own Slingshot Fund, we would love to hear about your experiences. Feel free to contact us and let us know what you have learned.

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