

## Empowering Jewish Teens... JESNA's Strategies At Work

Historically, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah marked the beginning of a boy/girl's full involvement in Jewish life. Today, ironically, statistics demonstrate that for far too many of our adolescents, Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks instead the end of their Jewish education. And, even among those teens who do continue beyond age 13, the "drop out" rate from Jewish involvement during the high school years is alarmingly high.

Alarming, because research proves that Jewish educational experiences during adolescent years have an enormously positive impact on Jewish identity, commitment, and involvement. The challenge, therefore, is to find ways to engage more of our youth in meaningful Jewish education during their formative years so that they can embrace it throughout their adult lives. When this is done successfully, we can reshape the Jewish future in a decidedly positive direction – it's that simple, yet that challenging!

During the past decade, programs targeting Jewish teens have been gradually building momentum. Although there has never been a comprehensive national blueprint to engage teens, individual programs (*March of the Living*, *'Panim El Panim,'* and *Genesis* at Brandeis) have proven track records. Local and national initiatives to send thousands of teens and now college age and young adult Jews on an Israel Experience have also begun to pay dividends.

Still, everyone acknowledges that individual programs, no matter how powerful in the short term, are not the whole answer. We need to ensure that our "core" programs for Jewish adolescents – youth groups and movements, summer camps, and high school programs –

are also creative and innovative, high quality, well-staffed, and well-marketed. To meet this challenge, numerous communities throughout North America are reinventing and rebuilding their teen programs. With all this renewed interest and momentum in the teen arena, what is JESNA's role? How are we responding to this elusive communal educational challenge of engaging Jewish adolescents and teens in meaningful Jewish life?

### THE CORE STRATEGIES

To carry out our overall vision – of leading the communal commitment and mobilization for excellence in Jewish education – JESNA has adopted a number of overarching strategies. We use these throughout every area of our work.

#### JESNA's seven core strategies are:

- 1. Knowledge dissemination**  
acquire and disseminate cutting-edge knowledge and skills.
- 2. Capacity building**  
provide our primary constituencies with high quality services.
- 3. Fostering collaboration**  
convene key professionals and lay leaders to identify promising initiatives.

### NEWS BYTE

**Jewish Family & Life!**—the country's foremost Jewish content web provider — and JESNA are partnering to create the first interactive distance learning network for teacher professional development, thanks to a generous grant from the **Nash Family Foundation**. The network will be piloted in twenty-five day schools in the Northeast, and will provide ongoing, state-of-the-art professional development for teachers in both Judaic and general studies. Plans call for eventually using the technology involved to create 24 hour a day, 7 day a week programming.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dr. Jonathan Woocher

“Leading the communal commitment and mobilization for excellence in Jewish education.” This is JESNA’s vision of who we are and what we do. Obviously, it’s a tall order. The sheer

scope and variety of Jewish education in North America—millions of participants in thousands of settings—make it impossible for any single agency to aspire to across-the-board direct impact. We’ve learned that for JESNA to have the lead role we seek in the ongoing drive for educational excellence, we need to be strategic. We need to focus our energies and select the areas and approaches that will maximize and leverage our expertise and resources.

The feature article in this issue of @jesna.org is about our seven core strategies and how we employ them in one of the areas in which JESNA is focusing its energies today: engaging, empowering, and educating Jewish youth. These strategies define the “how” of JESNA’s approach to leading toward excellence. But, the “what” and “where”—in which arenas of Jewish education we will be most active—is also critical to our overall strategic vision.

There are many such arenas, each worthy of our efforts. And, in fact, there are few aspects of Jewish education in which JESNA is not involved to some extent, often by participating in and assisting coalitions of key actors seeking to advance the state of the art in a particular area—like special education or adult Jewish learning. Certainly, JESNA is proud to be an advocate for every form of Jewish education; our central value is a commitment to lifelong Jewish learning for every Jew. But, realistically, we too must make choices about where to place the relative weight of our time, volunteer and staff energies, and financial resources.

At this point in our history, we have identified six focus areas for JESNA:

- 1 Day school education
- 2 Congregational and communal education
- 3 Jewish youth
- 4 Recruiting Jewish educators
- 5 Research and evaluation
- 6 Media and technology.

In each of these areas, JESNA is deeply involved in working with local communities, by providing consultation and support for their endeavors. JESNA is also deeply involved with national and global partners, by developing exciting, cutting-edge initiatives that will expand the scope and improve the quality of Jewish education in the communities we are pledged to serve. (Many of these initiatives have been highlighted in issues of @jesna.org, including this one.)

What makes our focus on these six areas especially powerful from a strategic perspective, we believe, is that these areas are more than their intrinsic importance and central place on the overall landscape of Jewish education today. JESNA would be terribly remiss, our leaders believe, if we were not putting substantial effort into strengthening Jewish day schools, one of the great educational success stories of the 20th century, or congregational education, the venue where the largest single number of Jews engage in Jewish learning. But, equally important, we have found that the six areas we have chosen lend themselves to the creation of exciting synergies. We do not tackle each area separately; rather, we seek to weave together projects and initiatives that tie the areas together, using activities in one area to enhance our impact in another.

A few examples:

- JESNA’s acknowledged leadership as a program evaluator allows us to be involved with some of the most innovative local

initiatives in the areas of youth programming and congregational education.

We can then apply what we have learned to new projects that JESNA is helping to spearhead, like the National Jewish Diffusion Network for Excellence in Congregational Education, being implemented together with the central agencies for Jewish education and the religious movements. Also, the Youth Initiatives Portfolio, being developed with Brandeis University and the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values will likewise benefit.

- JESNA’s extensive experience in utilizing technology to enhance Jewish learning and teaching has set the stage for us to become partners with Jewish Family & Life! in an ambitious initiative, funded by the Nash Family Foundation, to create an interactive, video and web-based network to provide professional development for day school teachers.
- The same technology expertise has positioned us to develop JewishJobFinder.com, a web site aimed at encouraging and helping young people to enter the field of Jewish education. The web site will complement our existing programs such as the Lainer Interns for Jewish Education and the new Crown Campus Jewish Educator Recruitment Initiative.

Increasingly, we are finding new ways to synergize our work in our six key focus areas. The examples above, however, highlight two other aspects of JESNA’s activity that are critical to our overall strategy: We are a confirmed cooperator, and inveterate bridge-builder between national resources and local communities. Our “value-added” strategy is predicated on these two ingrained dispositions. JESNA invariably seeks out partners who can add their expertise, positioning and resources to our own. And, we try to design

## CHAIR'S COLUMN



Joe Kanfer

During the past few months, I've had an opportunity to get a feel for my still relatively new role as JESNA's board chair—at our Kallah in California, on a trip to meet with community and philanthropic

leaders in several Florida communities, at the Jewish Funders Network conference in Arizona, and at the UJC Owners Retreat in Washington, DC. I was formally representing JESNA only during the first two of these events, but I can assure you that even without my JESNA hat on, the agency is never far from my mind.

I've learned a lot during this period. One paramount conclusion is that JESNA has a tremendous opportunity to extend its impact — if we continue the process of building our capabilities that we have embarked upon these past few years. I've learned, not to my surprise, that there are a lot of people who still don't have a good sense of what JESNA is about, of what we do and how well we do it today. I'm happy to be able to tell JESNA's story to these people, and the story of how I came to be so committed to the agency. I feel this way because of something else I've learned: There's a real need for JESNA today, perhaps more than ever before.

This isn't because Jewish education is in trouble and JESNA will save it. It isn't, and we won't. Yes, there are real problems, such as the pervasive personnel shortage, and JESNA is taking steps, like our new Campus Jewish Educator Recruitment Initiative, to deal with these. But, Jewish education is an area today marked by tremendous creativity, growing financial support, and a new spirit of collaboration. And, it's JESNA's ability to tap into and augment these positive trends that make it so important. We've sometimes described JESNA as a "know-how accelerant." We fan the flames of good Jewish education, trying to make them burn hotter and spread faster.

How we do this is what this issue of @jesna.org is all about. As you'll see, we have well-thought out strategies to expand excellence, and we apply them in key areas of Jewish educational activity that can impact millions of learners.

As I talk to JESNA board members, to local leaders, our partners in the central agencies for Jewish education, to funders seeking to transform the educational landscape, and to national leaders committed to creating a Jewish renaissance, I feel increasingly good about JESNA's initiatives, our vision, and our achievements.

However, as JESNA's board chair, I also know that the role we've chosen to take on is incredibly demanding, and that the resources available to us to fulfill it are still far too meager for what needs to be done. In the language of today's business world, JESNA is pre-eminently a "knowledge management" agency. We seek out, gather, assess, refine, add to, demonstrate, and disseminate knowledge about how to make Jewish education better. These are the "core processes" that allow us to realize our purpose and vision. Today, we do them reasonably well. But I know that we could, and in the future will have to, do them far better. I believe that we in the Jewish communal organizational world are just beginning to understand that in terms of contemporary business practice and capabilities, most of our organizations are in the "mom and pop" era. As good as JESNA is — and I think we're quite good — we would be so much better if we had the tools and the staff to operate at the speed and level of sophistication that many of us are coming to expect in our business and professional lives.

So, one of my goals as JESNA's board chair is to see that JESNA develops the internal capabilities commensurate with its vision, strategies, and commitment to congregational and day school education, to Jewish youth, to recruiting and developing new educators, to research and evaluation, and to harnessing the power of technology. I hope some of you will join me in this endeavor, because it will take money and expert assistance. Building JESNA's knowledge management capabilities may not be as visible to the outside world as our latest program initiative, but it's what will ensure that JESNA continues to be a first-rate agency making a real and lasting difference to Jewish life.

As I keep traveling, I'll keep learning. But I also hope to keep teaching as well — to help others understand what JESNA is, why it matters, and how we can make it an even greater force for good in the Jewish world.

our initiatives so that they result in better Jewish education at the local level. This often means having local agencies and communities as direct participants in our work.

Successfully implementing JESNA's strategies in the six key areas of Jewish education we are focused on today — and the others in which we are less broadly involved, but nonetheless remain deeply interested — is a substantial challenge. Being strategic when there are so many requests for our services and worthy calls on our energies is itself a challenge. But, it is one we feel that we must meet if we are to have the positive impact we seek. I believe we are doing an increasingly good job, thanks to our agency leadership, staff, and the growing number of financial supporters who are stepping forward to provide the resources we need to match our ambition.

In the end, it's about our vision and our purpose. It's about helping to promote and ensure the excellence in Jewish education that should be every Jew's birthright. It's about creating "vibrant Jewish life through Jewish learning." Seven strategies, six focus areas. They're not the five books of the Torah, but they are JESNA's way of trying to make sure that Torah continues to be studied and taught wherever there are Jews.

## NEWS BYTE

Funders who want to support Jewish education frequently seek help in determining *where* and *how* to invest their philanthropic dollars wisely. The **Jewish Funders Network (JFN)**, an association of more than seven hundred funders of Jewish causes, turned to JESNA to help build its resource clearinghouse for funders interested in Jewish education. JESNA supplied material for the JFN private web site to create sections on adult, day school, early childhood, family education, technology and youth education. Each section includes publications of interest, suggested bibliographies, web links, contacts and organizations, and projects of note.

# KALLAH 2000

## BUILDS THE JESNA/CENTRAL AGENCY PARTNERSHIP



*Billie Gold and Mark Lainer, JESNA's two immediate Past Presidents, flank our new Board Chair, Joe Kanfer.*

Lovely Newport Beach, CA was the setting for JESNA's annual Jewish Education Leadership Kallah, a gathering of the JESNA board, staff and central agency presidents and executives. The beautiful surroundings helped enhance everyone's opportunity to learn, relax and meet our goals of having Jewish educational leadership interact, share ideas and discuss new projects while celebrating Shabbat together.

With a packed schedule of joint educational sessions and learning forums, this was the perfect opportunity to solidify relationships.

JESNA board members were offered a welcome opportunity to interact with ADCA (Association of Directors of Central Agencies) members, whose professional development seminar and meetings coincided with the Kallah.

Claire Ellman, JESNA Kallah co-chair, stressed the importance of building individual bridges and working together. "It is so seldom that our national board and ADCA members are gathered together for extended periods of time like this," says Ellman. "This Kallah offered a chance to interact with other Jewish education advocates and leaders in an informal way."



*Hal Kravitz, Orange County CA Federation Vice President and JESNA Board Member, and Bunnie Mauldin, Federation Executive Director, bring greetings from the local Orange County community.*

One engaging session focused on ways in which the central agencies and JESNA can partner more extensively and effectively to make positive change at the local and national levels. Chaired by Jeffrey Lasday, central agency of St. Louis executive vice president, and Minna Ellison,

central agency of Rhode Island director, a prime example of this partnership was discussed – The National Diffusion Network for Excellence in Congregational and Communal Education in North America. The project, in which central agencies are



*Bill Berman offers reflections and wisdom at the dessert reception.*

partnering with JESNA as well as the denominational movements, will document and disseminate best practices in congregational education.

Another ADCA session attended by JESNA staff and several Board members was entitled, "Leadership for Change: Perspectives and Tools for Effective Consultation," and was led by Dr. Michael Zeldin of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. With the creative use of Hebrew text, Michael discussed strategies to implement change in central agencies' leadership structures, an important area of focus.

Eleven central agency presidents met in a special session to share issues of common concerns as leaders of their agencies.



*(right to left) Ralph Lipper, Montreal Central Agency President, shares a moment with JESNA Board Members, Jack Meyers and Bob Sachs.*





*Many enjoyed dancing and singing along at the dessert reception.*

Shabbat was a time for participants to relax, to pray, and to learn together. We enjoyed listening to Scholar-in-Residence Rabbi Brad Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and a vice president of the University of Judaism, who provided engaging and thought-provoking ideas and prescriptions for building a community of learners, the overall theme of the Kallah.



*Claire Ellman (far right) and Paul Schlesinger (far left), JESNA Kallah Co-Chairs, along with Dr. Gil Graff (middle left), and Daniel Bennett (middle right), ADCA Co-Chairs.*

After Shabbat we honored Joe Kanfer, JESNA's newly-installed Board Chair, during a festive dessert reception. Joe's tremendous leadership efforts were recognized by Mark Lainer, the immediate past president, who also acknowledged the generous support of the Lippman/Kanfer families to the agency's Campaign for Jewish Learning and Living. JESNA is using this major gift to support initiatives aimed at generating change in Jewish educational and communal organizations. Joe's gracious and inspiring

remarks about JESNA and a magnificent reminiscence offered by Bill Berman, JESNA's honorary chair, topped off this special evening of tribute and celebration.

Paul Schlesinger, who co-chaired the Kallah with Claire Ellman, left the weekend with a number of fond memories. In addition to the stimulating brainstorming sessions and committee meetings, he was moved by the pre-Shabbat discussion on preparing a *d'var torah*, given by Daniel Bennett, executive director of the Colorado Agency for Jewish Education and an ADCA program co-chair. Schlesinger recalls, "I liked the fact that there was serious learning. This not only left me feeling inspired, but reminded me that we should always strive for something more." He was pleased at the opportunity to use his new *d'var torah* skills at a Camp Solomon Schechter reunion following the Kallah!

Dr. Gil Graff, ADCA program co-chair, feels strongly about the genuine collaborative efforts that JESNA and ADCA are striving towards. "JESNA and ADCA are both very important mechanisms for advancing Jewish renaissance and renewal," says Dr. Graff. "The shared activities of the two become greater than their individual initiatives.



*Billie Gold, Michael Kligfield, JESNA Board Members, and Daniel Bennett, Executive Director of the Denver Central Agency (far left), at work at the Kallah.*

The collaborative energy of ADCA and JESNA can create a significant force in furthering Jewish life."

But when all is said and done, what did we really get out of the Kallah? Hal Kravitz, JESNA board member from sunny Orange County, CA, describes having most enjoyed "the feeling of excitement and friendship that permeated all the JESNA activities." Our sentiments exactly, Hal!



*What a song and dance! Some of our newer staff members at the post Shabbat celebration. (left to right) Judith Goldstein, Rachel Brumberg, Amy Amiel and Anna Beckerman.*

## NEWS BYTE

How can we sustain the growth that Jewish day schools are experiencing today? Part of the answer lies in ensuring that day schools have the expert assistance they need to provide a quality Jewish and general education with effective and efficient management. JESNA, with support from the **Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, the Schultz Family Foundation, and Andy Groveman**, has engaged Technical Development Corporation, a Boston consulting firm, to recommend a design and implementation plan for a vehicle that will work with day school associations, academic institutions, and other individuals and organizations. The plan will enable day schools to access affordable, top-quality technical assistance in a variety of educational and administrative areas.

#### 4. Model building

undertake initiatives to stimulate broad scale improvements in select critical areas.

#### 5. Leadership development

identify, recruit, train and support individuals to play leadership roles as volunteers and professionals.

#### 6. Advocacy

vigorously promote the importance of quality Jewish education.

#### 7. Promoting financial investment

encourage and guide current and potential financial supporters of Jewish education.

So, how do we put these strategies to work in the area of programming for Jewish youth?

First, we need to be clear as to what we are not. “JESNA is not just another agency operating programs for teens. Our strategy is clear. We help design and test new models, learn lessons about what works and then spread the word,” says Michael Kligfeld, chair of JESNA’s youth services committee. “In other words, we are a national catalyst that provides added value and excellence to local educational programming.”

#### NEWS BYTE

Look out for JESNA’s newly released Jewish continuity and renaissance handbook, titled **Beyond Continuity - Taking Steps: A Handbook for Jewish Renaissance and Renewal.**

JESNA’s task is to weave together our strategies with the areas of special expertise we have developed as an agency. We then create a “package” of guidance and support for those doing the work – in this case, in youth

education on the front lines. JESNA is able to leverage its resources in ways that create ripple effects throughout the field. How? We bring new knowledge to those on the front lines. We help them develop new skills and perspectives. We work with them to create and test new program models. We network with one another and with the best experts in the field. We forcefully advocate the priority of youth education. We seek out partners at the national level who have great expertise and substantial resources, who can then help improve what takes place locally. The result is that JESNA is helping catalyze a broad-based continent-wide endeavor. Rooted in local communities, this endeavor will expand and improve youth programming, and has the potential to engage tens of thousands of young people who might otherwise not be able to find a meaningful Jewish life.

## PUTTING OUR STRATEGIES TO WORK

Here are some specific examples of our strategies at work:

### Youth Initiatives Portfolio

How can we create higher quality, more inspiring, better-staffed programs and deliver these to a larger number of Jewish teens? JESNA believes that one way to do this is to build systematically on the success of a handful of programs that represent the “best” in Jewish adolescent education.

#### NEWS BYTE

**Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas**, a project of JESNA, the United Jewish Communities and the **Kaminer Family Foundation**, is off to a roaring start. Watch out for profiles of each Incubator participant and his/her project in upcoming JESNA publications.

Together with the originators of these programs, JESNA is creating resources, program adaptations, and training experiences for youth workers that will be made available to communities around the continent. As a result, communities will be able to take advantage of these national

model programs to enrich the experience of local teens in ways that they could not otherwise do on their own. Thus far, ten communities have joined the process of developing this Youth Initiatives Portfolio which can be customized to fit local needs and circumstances. Organized in partnership with the Genesis Summer Program and Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University and the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, the project is supported by planning grants from the **Righteous Persons and Nathan Cummings Foundations**.

### Peer Networking

Good programs make a difference only if teens participate in them. To address the challenge of engaging uninvolved youth, JESNA has forged another local-national partnership.

With support of the **Brody Fund for Youth Initiatives**, JESNA, in collaboration with Brandeis University’s **Acharai Institute**, is developing and testing a promising new approach in MetroWest, NJ – called the Peer Networking Youth Outreach Program. We are assisting with program design and providing evaluation support to this cutting edge effort. That program is designed to develop groups of capable ‘peer networkers’ – teens armed with the necessary skills to reach out and help other Jewish teens explore their Jewish identities and experience Jewish community. It’s all about the empowerment of teens!

Synagogues and agencies in MetroWest have nominated twenty high school juniors who are being trained as peer mentors this

## NEWS BYTE

Building on the success of JESNA's Lainer Interns of Jewish Education, JESNA is launching the Jewish Educator Corps. The program encourages university students on North American campuses to explore career opportunities in Jewish education. Thanks to a grant from the **Crown Family**, the Jewish Educator Corps will be inaugurated in San Diego and St. Louis in Fall 2000. This is a partnership between JESNA, each community's central agency for Jewish education, and Hillel.

winter and spring. Next fall they will start using their newly learned skills in marketing, outreach and the A, B, C's of Jewish youth opportunities, to engage Jewish teens in Jewish youth groups and other programs. In addition, this class will serve as coaches for the next class, which will begin training in the fall.

### Gesher L'Keshet

Of course, the best time to reach uninvolved teens is before they drop out. Gesher L'Keshet, designed in the early

1990's by the Princeton Center for Leadership and Training (PCLT) in partnership with a local synagogue, seeks to do this by using older adolescents to work with their younger counterparts in the congregational school setting, and provides a meaningful Jewish learning experience for both. In the years since its initial development, the program has been expanded to additional synagogues across the nation, but the sense of its sponsors is that it has the potential to grow much further.

To test this potential, JESNA is working with PCLT (thanks to a grant from the **Nathan Cummings Foundation**) to evaluate the program's status, training structure and curriculum. We are determining factors that lead to successful implementation of the program, as well as limiting factors that might be mitigated. For instance, is Gesher L'Keshet more effective in informal settings than in congregational school settings?

If the assessment and redesign process proves successful, this initiative will be folded into our Youth Initiatives Portfolio.

### Networking with Local Professionals

But, will communities have the human resources to take advantage of these new programmatic and training models?

To help increase the likelihood that they will, JESNA, with support from the **Yanowitz Foundation**, organizes activities for a network of community youth resource workers—individuals responsible for coordinating and assisting local youth programming. The network involves more than a dozen communities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal, MetroWest, Baltimore, Washington DC, and Atlanta.

Through the network, JESNA is helping new youth workers learn about efforts underway in other communities and is conducting periodic conference calls to discuss issues of mutual concern, e.g., how to engage larger numbers of Jewish teens.

On May 25, JESNA sponsored a video teleconference convening local professionals from several communities. The topic was 'programming,' and the discussions included practical ideas for laying the framework and building a sense of anticipation for next year's programs.

### San Francisco Teen Initiative Project

Ultimately, JESNA's aim in all of its youth initiatives is to help local communities do their educational work on the front lines as well as they possibly can. Therefore, communities need to engage in continuous self-evaluation and improvement. But, where can they turn to acquire the skills to carry out this challenging mandate, and who will model it for them?

## NEWS BYTE

Mazel tov to the recipients of the first annual, national **Grinspoon Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education**. Official recognition of all awardees will be made through the Jewish media in the fall of 2000.

For a growing number of communities, JESNA's Mandell L. Berman Center for Research and Evaluation is the answer. San Francisco is a community that has benefited from the Berman Center's evaluation and capacity building. San Francisco's Teen

Initiative is a collaborative project designed to help Jewish teenagers become more involved in Jewish living and learning. The initiative is one of the most ambitious in the country, embracing professional development for youth workers, an intensive Wexner-style leadership training program for teens, new regional supplementary Havurah high schools, and direct subsidies for teens to attend leadership conferences.

JESNA's work in San Francisco starts with helping the community evaluate each of their programs – not at the end, but along the way, so that improvements can be made. But, evaluation guidance isn't all that JESNA has provided. The Berman Center has served as a coach and consultant to the Director of Teen Initiatives. The Teen Advisory committee, comprised of community leaders, sets policy and determines future directions for the Teen Initiatives. Based on JESNA's findings, the Teen Advisory Committee encouraged the development of a Spirituality Retreat. This program was held in the beginning of the year at Sonoma's Westerbeke Ranch, and was led by Rabbi Amy Eilberg. This successful retreat helped create group cohesion between youth professionals and took advantage of the finding that they crave

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## NEWS BYTE

Thanks to a grant from the **Irving and Varda Rabin Philanthropic Fund**, JESNA is partnering with the San Francisco BJE to develop a special early childhood section of the Jewish Educators Electronic Toolkit.

sustained professional development in a retreat setting.

From JESNA's perspective, evaluation is as much about learning as it is about accountability. Our greatest success comes when program directors feel that the evaluation

process has helped them clarify their goals and improve the quality of the product they can deliver. That's just what is happening today in San Francisco and in the other communities where JESNA is involved in youth initiative evaluations.

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge dissemination; capacity building; fostering collaboration; model building; leadership development; advocacy; and, promoting financial investment:

These strategies allow JESNA to help lead Jewish education for teens and Jews of all ages, toward excellence. They provide JESNA with a powerful set of mutually reinforcing tools to assist communities and educators to do their vital work more effectively. They're the vehicles we use to add value in youth education and in all of the domains where JESNA is actively engaged in promoting "vibrant Jewish life through Jewish learning."

For additional information about JESNA contact **Amy Stein**, director of marketing and communications, at 212.284 6896 or [astein@jesna.org](mailto:astein@jesna.org).

## TEENS SURF THE WEB

### GENERAL INTEREST

**Building a Virtual Jewish World**  
[www.jewish-world.org.il](http://www.jewish-world.org.il)

In conjunction with Partnership 2000, this website presents a range of online activities that include Jewish roots projects and "twinning" initiatives with Jews around the world.

**JVibe**  
[www.jvibe.com](http://www.jvibe.com)

A website for Jewish teens from all over the world, presenting new avenues for Jewish expression and new perspectives on Jewish culture.

**JSOURCE: Jewish Student Online Research Center**  
[www.us-israel.org/jsource](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource)

A "living library" that includes information about Jewish history, Israel, U.S.-Israel relations, the Holocaust, anti-semitism, and Judaism.

**Navigating the Bible**  
[www.bible.ort.org](http://www.bible.ort.org)

A website designed to aid in the learning and understanding of bar and bat mitzvah portions using audio and text.

**Sparks**  
[www.sparksmag.com](http://www.sparksmag.com)

A "webzine" for kids with adventure stories, information on the latest movies, computer games, and a place to chat with other kids.

**Teen to Teen**  
[www.ttt.org.il](http://www.ttt.org.il)

A website that brings Jewish teens the world over together to share articles, creative writing, jokes, and friendship online.

**Virtual Jerusalem: Teens**  
[www.virtualjerusalem.com](http://www.virtualjerusalem.com)

A mega website that features a teen channel that includes articles of special interest, puzzles, jokes, and polls.

### RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS, YOUTH GROUPS AND CAMPS

**Jewish Reconstructionist Federation**  
[www.jrf.org](http://www.jrf.org)

**OU: Orthodox Union**  
[www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org)

**UAHC: Union of American Hebrew Congregations**  
[www.uahc.org](http://www.uahc.org)

**United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**  
[www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org)

### PARENTING AND TEEN LEADER SITES

**Jewish Family & Life**  
[www.jewishfamily.com](http://www.jewishfamily.com)

A "webzine" with a focus on family, parenting, and other issues of interest to Jewish families. Website features **JewishTeens.com**-  
[www.jewishteens.com](http://www.jewishteens.com).

**JewishYouth.com**  
[www.jewishyouth.com](http://www.jewishyouth.com)

A website for Jewish youth workers and volunteers that includes program ideas and job listings.

**Mishpacha**  
[www.mishpacha.org](http://www.mishpacha.org)

An online community for parents, including resources on Jewish beliefs, practices, holidays, and text sources for parenting.

**OUR PURPOSE:** Vibrant Jewish Life *through* Jewish Learning

**OUR VISION:** Leading *the* Communal Commitment *and* Mobilization *for* Excellence *in* Jewish Education

The information contained in this report is general in nature and subject to change. It is not intended to provide comprehensive information about JESNA's programs or capabilities.



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JESNA was created in 1981 as the Jewish Federation system's educational coordinating, planning, and development agency. JESNA is widely recognized for its leadership in the areas of research and program evaluation, professional recruitment and development, media and technology, organizational change and innovative program design and dissemination.

JESNA is a national, non-profit agency governed by a board of directors comprised of lay and professional leaders in Jewish education from across North America, including individuals from the major Jewish religious movements. JESNA is a beneficiary of Jewish federations throughout North America and other private and communal funders.