

## CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNAL JEWISH EDUCATION

## JESNA Convenes “Think Tank” on Congregational and Communal Jewish Education

The think tank examined a number of critical success factors and change strategies for congregational education that have been tested over the past several years.

More than 40 high-profile leaders in congregational education met at JESNA on December 12 to assess a decade of research and experimentation focused on strengthening congregational and communal Jewish education, and to recommend strategies for future initiatives.

Participants included directors of innovative programs, funders, policy leaders, academics and practitioners. The think tank was funded by a generous grant from the R&A Shechtel Foundation, with support for some of the preliminary research coming also from Charles Nirenberg.

The think tank examined a number of critical success factors and change strategies for

congregational education that have been tested over the past several years. Prior to the meeting, JESNA and the Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE) conducted site visits to a number of traditional and non-traditional schools with reputations for high performance. Steven Kraus, JESNA’s director of school support, and Rob Weinberg, executive director of ECE, reported their findings and discussed what makes these schools models of excellence.

Nachama Moskowitz, director of curriculum resources at the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, talked about the importance of curriculum as a focal point for school renewal. She advocated a systematic process of curriculum and professional development, geared to “big ideas” of Judaism and the

aim of developing deep understanding among students.

Another presentation, prepared by Serene Victor, focused on the Mandel Foundation’s Teacher Education Institute, a program that prepares teacher educators who are prepared to employ the best current thinking about teaching as reflective practice.

One of the goals of the think tank was to generate options for funders who are seeking effective strategies to improve congregational education.

Congregational schools have not yet attracted the kind of mega-philanthropic support that other Jewish renaissance efforts, such as day schools, campus Hillels and synagogue transformation efforts, have recently garnered. Carol Robbins, JESNA Board

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Ricky Shechtel and Jonathan Woocher.



Janice Alper speaks on the power of professional development.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dr. Jonathan Woocher

One way in which JESNA is marking our 20th anniversary year is by looking at the future of Jewish education and what our role can be in making it brighter. We've embarked on a strategic planning process, geared to our belief that Jewish education is poised to make dramatic and exciting progress over the next few years — if the Jewish community has the vision and will and is prepared to make the financial investment needed to complete the process of transformation that began during the past decade.

Doing strategic planning is not a rare event at JESNA. In fact, we have been engaged in a nearly continuous planning process throughout the last ten years. The pace of change, both for Jewish education and for JESNA, has been so rapid that we find ourselves constantly facing new opportunities and challenges. As JESNA has moved from being a largely reactive service agency to a proactive initiator of new projects and partnerships aimed at dealing with the most formidable issues on the Jewish educa-

tional agenda, we have regularly had to readjust our sights and map out new directions for our work. This is what we are doing now, and we expect the results to be far-reaching for the agency.

Underlying our current round of strategic planning is a sense of both extraordinary possibility and considerable urgency. Jewish education today marked by realities in tension with one another:

- Many promising developments in virtually every sector — growing day schools; crowded summer camps; community-wide efforts to improve congregational and youth education; booming family education and early childhood programs; serious, high quality adult Jewish learning reaching thousands of new participants; the astounding success of birthright israel and the revitalization of Hillel.
- Pockets of excellence throughout Jewish education, but also large expanses of mediocrity or worse. For every 10 children or adults who are enjoying a fine educational experience, there are perhaps 50 or 100 whose experience is disappointing, or who are having no experience at all.
- The recent emergence of a cadre of philanthropists who are propelling today's

efforts to strengthen Jewish education, but many others with the capacity to invest more in Jewish education — including potential consumers of Jewish education — who are not doing so, often because their experiences of Jewish education have not convinced them that it can be a powerful, positive, life-enhancing, Jewish identity-building force.

- In sum, a situation in which Jewish education, despite recent gains, remains over-matched against the array of forces pushing and pulling the Jewish populace in a myriad of directions — many of which are inimical to the Jewish future that we would like to see. Jewish education does not yet have the muscle and the savvy to drive and guide Jewish life in the direction we want it to take.

We believe that this situation can — and must — be changed. We can do better, and we will have to if we are serious about creating a Jewish Renaissance in North America.

We also have some ideas about what needs to be done. We see a strategic agenda for transforming Jewish education that embraces three central tasks:

1. Forging a new vision for Jewish education appropriate for the era in which we

live; learner-centered, with rich experiences of Jewish living at its core, delivered with consistent high quality and attentiveness to the new modes of learning that the 21st century makes possible.

2. Tackling on a vastly expanded scale the personnel crisis that dominates the educational landscape today.
3. Building a true educational *system*, capable of engaging dramatically larger numbers of Jews in Jewish learning throughout their lives.

In all of these areas, Jewish education has made some important strides in recent years. Our collective challenge is to build on the achievements that have been fashioned thus far and to address the unfinished tasks, which remain formidable, but not impossible.

The immediate question before us as an agency is: what is JESNA's role in propelling forward a genuinely transformational agenda for Jewish education? We have some ideas here as well. They too begin with building on our successes of recent years:

- the tremendous growth of the Berman Center into a national resource in the areas of educational program evaluation and “best practice”;

- the rapid expansion of JESNA's educator recruitment initiatives, including the new Everett [Jewishjobfinder.com](http://Jewishjobfinder.com);
- the field-wide impact of the policy task forces JESNA has convened to recommend new directions for youth education, media and technology, day school education, congregational and communal education, and personnel;
- the forging of a host of new partnerships and coalitions to operate in all of these areas, launching new pro-

grams, establishing new standards of excellence, and sharing knowledge about how to reach these.

But, as with Jewish education writ large, we recognize that there is much more that JESNA could be doing. So, we will be identifying these opportunities, re-imagining how JESNA should look and operate in order to pursue them, and laying out the steps we need to take to transform ourselves and to secure the resources needed in order to take on an even bigger and bolder agenda. We will be seeking input from our many

friends and colleagues along the way, since ultimately, JESNA's value is determined by what we can help achieve for Jewish education, not what we achieve for ourselves. What the specific elements of our plan will be remains to be determined. But, that JESNA is ready to rise to the challenge of helping Jewish education thrive in the 21st century, I have no doubt.

As they used to say on billboards — “watch this space.” Over the coming months, we will be sharing our thinking about possible initiatives —

perhaps a Jewish Educational Leadership Academy for both professional and volunteer leaders seeking to improve the institutions they shepherd; perhaps a global online network for professional development; perhaps others not yet imagined. And, we will be working hard to make JESNA an agency to be proud of — never satisfied to rest on our laurels, always seeking to learn and improve, forcefully committed to our vision: “vibrant Jewish life through Jewish learning.” It's going to be fun.

## CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNAL JEWISH EDUCATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

member and a think tank participant, expressed pleasure at the number of funders present at the think tank. “This is the perfect forum to generate money for new initiatives. It is our responsibility to inform family foundations about what is going on in the field so they know where to spend their money.”

Jonathan Woocher, JESNA president, concluded the meeting by guiding the participants to identify the key strategies that would impact the critical areas that had been discussed. Participants agreed that although there are distinct strategic emphases on training leadership, promoting congregation-wide change and improving teaching and content, ideally all these strategies should be used together. Participants were energized by the potential for

meaningful change in congregational and communal Jewish education, and impressed with JESNA's focus and determination to achieve tangible results.

JESNA has utilized the results of the think tank to prepare an “options paper” for strategic funding of congregational/communal Jewish education. The paper incorporates the ideas generated at the “think tank” and lessons learned from the site visits and previous research. It recommends more than a



Susan Shevitz and Gina Farahnick

half dozen promising investment strategies including principals' institutes, expansion of programs like ECE, introduction of alternative models of congregational education that are not limited to traditional times and locations, and systematic diffusion of research validated “best practices.”



Marvin Smotrich, Natalie Goldfein, and Gail Weinstein.

**For more information on JESNA's Congregational and Communal Education Initiatives, please contact Steve Kraus at 212-284-6893.**

## CHAIR'S COLUMN



Joe Kanfer

### JESNA Annual Kallah in Israel: Past Forward

We held our annual Kallah in Israel to show solidarity and to immerse ourselves in the well-spring of our tradition as we move forward at a critical time in our strategic planning process. Our organizers planned and executed brilliantly.

Personally, I came to the Kallah with the enormity of the challenges and opportuni-

ties facing Jewish education and JESNA on my mind. Only a few days in Israel reaffirmed how laden with riches we are — the land and people of Israel, the brilliance of our tradition, our Israeli partners, and our extraordinary JESNA staff and Board.

At a time when we have just read Torah about the building of the Mishkan — learning how our ancestors managed to find troves of resources in the desert to create a portable dwelling of unimagined power to inspire, fortify, and sustain the emerging nation — I feel uplifted and confident that we too at JESNA have the capacity to assemble the resources and to catalyze the talent to build Jewish education that will sustain

the Jewish people.

It is hard to describe how intently we concentrated on Jewish education, in the midst of, and perhaps amplified by, the distracting and disturbing security situation. The pain each of us felt for the slain and for all Israelis was personal and profound.

I came to the closing dinner prepared to read a blessing\* expressing gratitude for our stay in a place of wisdom. At the last minute I noticed, with a chill, that opposite this blessing was another.

Let me share them both, because they capture the duality of the JESNA Kallah: intense excitement and pleasure from sharing learnings and deep longing for the cessation of suffering.

**Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam shechalak meichokhmato li'rei'av.**

*Blessed is God, who shares divine wisdom with those who are God-fearing.*

**Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam, oseh hashalom.**

*Blessed is God, who will bring peace.*

Our people too well understand how learning contextualizes sorrow and holds the promise of overcoming it. *Keyn yehi ratzon. May it be so.*

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\*Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Israel – A Spiritual Travel Guide: A Companion for the Modern Jewish Pilgrim* (1998), pp. 206-207, Jewish Lights Publishing.

## MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

### The Jewish Technology Collaborative

A Partnership of the New York Institute of Technology and the BJE of Greater New York

The Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York and the New York Institute of Technology have teamed up to create an exciting new initiative that provides teacher leaders with the opportunity to receive a Master's degree in Instructional Technology. This groundbreaking partnership is funded through a generous grant from the Covenant Foundation.

Twelve graduate fellows were selected to participate in the two-year program based on their leadership skills and teaching experience in Jewish settings. The program, which integrates principles of educational technology with Jewish content, meets on Sundays at the BJE's state-of-the-art wireless computer lab. In addition to the coursework, participants are linked with mentors who were

chosen based on their pioneering roles in Jewish educational technology. The mentors include central agency staff from around the country, a multimedia entrepreneur based in Israel, a school-based curriculum expert, and JESNA's own Caren Levine.

Graduates from this first cohort will be prepared to integrate educational technology into their own work and provide professional development and assistance to their colleagues in their educational settings. "Not only does this initiative provide leading educators with a quality education, it creates a systemic approach that promises to maximize their impact in the field of Jewish education," Caren Levine noted.

Future plans for the Master's program may include an online/in-residence program offered to educators nationwide.

**For more information on JESNA's Media and Technology Initiatives, please contact Caren Levine at 212-284-6898.**

## DAY SCHOOLS

### First Meeting of the Continental Council

#### Moves Agenda Forward

Fifty volunteer and professional leaders from day schools, federations, national organizations and foundations met in New York on November 29 for the inaugural meeting of the Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education. The Council, convened by JESNA and UJC and staffed by JESNA, brings together for the first time the full range of stakeholders in day school education for joint planning, advocacy, and information sharing.

The creation of the Council was recommended by the UJC/JESNA 1999 Task Force on Day School Viability and Vitality. Claire Ellman, chair of JESNA’s day school committee and a vice chair of the Council, described the Council as an important new actor on the national scene for those seeking to increase support for and improve the quality of Jewish day schools. “The Council will be a forum for discussing day school issues, a central address for advocacy for day schools, and most importantly a vehicle for promoting collaborative action.”

Lynda Giles, JESNA Board member and chair of the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal day school subcommittee, and Rabbi Joshua Elkin, executive director of PEJE, serve as the Council’s co-chairs, and Rabbi Robert Hirt, representing the



Rabbi Robert Hirt, Lynda Giles, Rabbi Josh Elkin, Claire Ellman.

Association of Modern Orthodox Day Schools, is another vice chair.

In the meeting’s opening session, Patrick Bassett, president of the National Association of Independent Schools, presented a keynote on strategies for raising teacher salaries. Citing the experience of a number of independent schools, he argued that raising salaries is both possible and crucial to attracting and retaining quality teachers. Bassett offered a number of provocative suggestions for new ways of structuring compensation plans and for coming up with the funds needed to pay higher salaries. He argued that compensation models for the 21st century must respond to the need for teachers to expand their skills and to take on more ambitious leadership roles, and that they must reward these behaviors.

In the afternoon Council members divided into five work groups to begin developing action agendas in five key areas: salaries; benefits; marketing/advocacy; relationships between day schools and other segments of the community; and affordability. Participants produced numerous suggestions for initiatives at both the local and national levels that could be fostered by the Council.

Lynda Giles called the sessions “highly productive and an

excellent start toward creating the environment of collaborative action that the Council seeks to foster.” Gary Gross, a day school leader from Cleveland, also came away pleased with the day. “Other people helped spark my own thinking and forced me to think in new directions,” he stated. “It was helpful for me to understand how different people approached the same problem, and to realize that there is more than one solution.” Amy Goott, a participant from Washington, DC and a JESNA Board member, described the meeting as stimulating, attributing its success in large measure to the high caliber of people who attended.

Since the inaugural meeting, the executive leadership team of the Council and staff have drafted an action plan that suggests projects to undertake in each of the areas, e.g., creating a resource bank of marketing materials and working with pilot communities to design and test “low cost” benefits packages for teachers. They are also recommending that the Council add the area of professional recruitment, development and retention to its agenda, adopting some of the proposals for initiatives developed by JESNA’s day school committee. A number of projects are being launched immediately, with initial progress reports planned for the Continental Council’s next meeting on June 4.

**For more information on JESNA’s Day School Initiatives, please contact Steve Kraus at 212-284-6893.**



Nachama Moskowitz, director of curriculum resources at the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.



Yossi Prager, Allison Nagelberg and Eli Schaap.

## Where Do You Go for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education?

### The Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center

The word is definitely out that JESNA's Berman Center is the address for quality research and evaluation in Jewish education. Demand for the Berman Center's evaluation and consultation services has grown so much in the past year that we have extended the west coast regional office to full time, and have engaged a second senior research associate and a full-time intern to work in the New York office. Many communities, programs and organizations are recognizing the value of evaluation and are turning to the Berman Center to help them plan and implement evaluation processes. Funders are also recognizing the importance of ongoing evaluation of their projects, and are working with the Berman Center for consultation and assistance.

Recent evaluation projects have focused on programs that address the areas of recruitment, training, and professional development of Jewish educators; synagogue improvement projects; and youth initiatives. In addition, Berman Center professionals have also evaluated programs for congregational school improvement, teen and adult leadership development, and community engagement.

In addition to conducting formal external evaluations of various programs around the country, the Berman Center also works to build the capacities of local communities, programs and organizations to incorporate ongoing evaluation in their work. The Berman Center provides coaching and training that enables local staff and lay leadership to create and implement mechanisms for internal accountability that will continually enhance their Jewish educational offerings.

As an educational leader, JESNA must also incorporate evaluation in its own practice. The Berman Center is currently involved in a growing roster of JESNA and JESNA-partnered projects including **Bikkurim** (see page 7 for more information), **JSkyway**, **DeLeT** (see page 12 for more information), the **Kol HaNa'ar Youth Conference**, and the **Jewish Educators Corps**. These evaluations contribute to JESNA's culture as a learning organization marked by

thoughtful, reflective practice.

Berman Center staff also serve as part of JESNA's consulting teams, conducting needs assessments and developing action plans to help communities meet their Jewish educational needs. Consultations designed to lead to the establishment of super-funds and endowments for Jewish education are currently underway in Pittsburgh, Houston, South Palm Beach and South Jersey.

As the Jewish community has become more strategic in its planning, the desire for informed decision-making has led the Berman Center to initiate a number of descriptive data gathering projects. Studies of day school enrollment and tuition, distance learning models, the unique Jewish education needs of small communities, and federation allocations to Jewish education nationwide are all currently underway.

With a growing knowledge base about "what works" in the diverse world of Jewish education, the Berman Center plays a key role in facilitating knowledge management on both the communal and national levels. Demand for high-level evaluation and data gathering to inform the work of Jewish education has never been higher, and JESNA is committed to responding to the challenge.

**For more information on JESNA's Research and Evaluation Initiatives, please contact Leora Isaacs at 212-284-6899.**

**One example of JESNA's capacity building in local communities is Wendy Rosov's work with the TiKeA Fellows in San Francisco. TiKeA is an innovative professional development program for community youth professionals. After providing a basic orientation to evaluation, Wendy has been meeting individually with TiKeA fellows to help each of them craft an evaluation strategy for his/her project. By means of one-on-one coaching, Wendy is not only enabling these fellows to more successfully implement their current projects, but she is also augmenting their professional skills for the future.**

## Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas

Halfway into its second year, JESNA/UJC's **Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas** is an ongoing experiment yielding exciting results. Each project that we are helping incubate has made strides thanks to resident talent and vision, coupled with the access, networking and insight to the Jewish and non-profit communities afforded by Bikkurim. Evaluations conducted since the project's inception illustrate how a relatively low-cost initiative like a business incubator can benefit the Jewish community, and also highlight important areas of future growth and lessons learned for Bikkurim. While resident projects have already begun to give back to the Jewish community — offering services and resources of their own — the long term impact of this project is likely to be felt for years to come.

The first cohort of Bikkurim residents — *MATAN*, *Storahtelling*, *Mach"ar*, the *New Shul* and *Heeb* — officially complete their tenancy this coming August. JESNA/UJC professionals are working with residents to ensure that their transition into the next phase of their growth is productive and smooth.

A second round of Bikkurim residents is currently being selected. These new projects will bring with them a wealth of energy and innovative ideas that we hope to nurture into solid and successful programs. With the initial success of Bikkurim, inquiries are also beginning to arrive about how this incubator model can be replicated in other communities across North America. Imagine if we had 10 Jewish idea incubators in cities from Los Angeles to Atlanta, each with projects to nurture, creativity to channel, leadership to cultivate... It's enough to make a Jew optimistic about the future!

One of *MATAN*'s most notable achievements over the past few months was the receipt of a Covenant grant. Over the next three years, this special-needs consulting firm will be able to program and expand its services. *MATAN* is now offering its specialized services in 10 schools and to families and children with a variety of Jewish learning needs. They are especially excited to have developed a special needs curriculum for children with Asperger's Syndrome, a form of high functioning Autism.

Bikkurim Resident Update: Winter 2002

*Keren Mach"ar* has been enjoying a number of exciting accomplishments. Devoted to deepening young Jews' understanding of poverty in our society through projects that embody Rambam's highest level of *tzedakah*, the project currently runs at three schools across the U.S. Recently a number of meetings were held to lay the groundwork for additional schools interested in incorporating the service learning model. *Keren Mach"ar* continues to be proud of its partnership with the Shefa Fund, which administers a number of the organization's pieces. Be sure to check out *Mach"ar*'s newly updated Web site at

[www.macharfund.org](http://www.macharfund.org) offering further details about their program as well as

### Storahtelling

was recently the recipient of a prestigious grant for the NY UJA

Federation Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal, chaired by JESNA Board member Marion Blumenthal. This grant has allowed

*Storahtelling* to expand to a professional staff of two and to engage additional communities all over the world through Jewish performance art. Recently visited communities and events include: Temple Emmanuel, Beverly Hills, Fort Worth, TX; Congregation Oheb Shalom, South Orange, NJ; The Village Temple, NYC; B'nai Jeshurun, NYC; the Synagogue 2000 conference; the North American Alliance for Jewish Youth Conference; The Knitting Factory (a trendy performance space in NYC); and a second European debut in Copenhagen.

*Storahtelling* was also featured at the GA this past November in Washington, DC.

Jews, justice and social action in a number of contexts and forms.

For more information on Bikkurim, please contact Amy Amiel at 202-223-6963.

Finally, as many of you know, one of our original resident projects, the Jewish

Deaf Resource Center, Inc. withdrew from Bikkurim in the fall. We were extremely pleased to fill this spot with a recently launched, 64-page, national quarterly magazine, called *Heeb*. Targeted at young Jews in their 20's and 30's *Heeb* features social commentary, investigative pieces, and different takes on Jewish arts and culture coverage.

*Heeb*'s editor, Jennifer Bleyer, came to Bikkurim via the Joshua Venture Fellowship, of which she is a resident. *Heeb*'s first official publication landed in bookstores nationally the week of January 22, 2002; a launch party kicked off the magazine's first edition in early February.

The *New Shul* continues to grow itself into a progressive community of learners in downtown Manhattan. Log onto their recently launched Web site: [www.newshul.com](http://www.newshul.com) and learn about New Shul happenings including services, programs, Hebrew school and membership information. The shul leadership is thrilled to announce the hiring of its first executive director, Deborah Goldberg, who began work with the shul just after the secular New Year.

Stay tuned for news on JESNA's second round of Bikkurim residents in our next edition of [@JESNA.org](http://@JESNA.org)!

2002 JESNA KALLAH/ADCA MIFGASH

# Two Paths, One Destination: Israel, North American Jewry, and Jewish Education

**A**t no time in recent history has it been more vital for committed leaders of the North American Jewish community to come together with our Israeli counterparts to reflect on the challenges we face and the opportunities we have



ADCA chair Jeff Lasday, with Rabbi Benjamin Segal, President, Melitz: The Centers for Jewish and Zionist Education.

to learn from, support, and work with one another in meeting these challenges. It was therefore fitting that this year's JESNA Board Kallah and ADCA Mifgash take place in Israel. The meetings were aptly titled: Two Paths, One Destination: Israel, North American Jewry, and Jewish Education. The two groups, totaling over 40 people, were comprised of JESNA Board members, central agency presidents and members of the Association of Directors of Central Agencies for Jewish Education (ADCA). The initial impetus for meeting in Israel was to learn how to do a better job educationally in dealing with the central role of Israel in historic and contemporary Jewish life, and, perhaps, to help those in Israel who are seeking new approaches to transmitting Jewish values and a sense of connectedness to world Jewry. But, there is no doubt that the desire to be in Israel went beyond educational concerns. Each attendee felt compelled to be in Israel to express solidarity and to make a bold statement to Israel and to the world. This became evident as we witnessed the current "Matsav" change before our



Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior and Blanche Sosland, JESNA Board member.

very eyes from a "situation" into a war.

The experience in Israel left us all with many mixed emotions. On the one hand, there were the substantive,

thought-provoking sessions that had been planned. Participants enjoyed a full and impressive agenda, including meetings with Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior, US Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer, Minister of Education Limor Livnat, noted journalists, heads of schools, foundations, and other top-ranking educators. On the other, the chilling realities of living in Israel today during a time of unbelievable uncertainty were a constant subtext, as inescapable as the broadcasts that brought news of new bombings and shootings almost literally just outside our windows.



Kallah co-chair Paul Schlesinger thanks US Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer.

in a non-religious setting. Recognizing the parallels between their challenges and those faced in North America was particularly meaningful. However, it was most poignant when we learned that while we were being introduced to their innovative programs, conversing with enthusiastic and bright students, and watching a dynamic film documenting Israeli teen

life in one part of the auditorium, the names of two newly fallen former students were being added to the memorial on the far side of the room. It was a grim reminder of the everyday stresses faced by Israeli students and citizens as they seek to build meaningful lives.

**What is it that we would truly be willing to give our lives for? Only when we are prepared to ask and answer this question do we know that our educational efforts have reached the depth that they should.**

—Dr. Daniel Gordis





Bob Sachs and  
Gottlieb.  
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The ADCA Mifgash, co-sponsored by the JAFI Jewish Education Department and hosted by Project Oren, met for an additional three days after the Kallah. The Central Agency Directors were joined by



JESNA and ADCA group inside the new Davidson Visitors' Center.

25 Israeli educators representing the Ministry of Education, Jewish Agency, and other Israel-based organizations offering Israel-based education programs for North Americans. The Mifgash provided ADCA members with additional opportunities to deepen a col-

laborative working relationship between North American and Israeli educators and to build new initiatives and structures for Israel engagement. The group addressed big picture future directions as well as short-term immediate projects.

In both the Kallah and the Mifgash the participants from JESNA and ADCA examined the practical and theoretical challenges facing Jewish education in North America and Israel. Our ensuing goal is to take all that

The JESNA Kallah/ADCA Mifgash group in the Archaeological Gardens in front of the Southern Wall.



Abe Silver, our tour guide, lecturing outside of the Davidson Center in the Southern Wall Archaeological Gardens.

we considered and experienced and use it to enhance our work and touch lives in our commu-

nities. The challenge can be compared to the creative process described by David Moss, a renowned Judaica artist, during a visit by the group to his home and gallery. Moss explained that he often creates a piece and then moves away from it for a time.



Minister of Education Limor Livnat.



Journalists Carolyn Glick, chief diplomatic commentator from Makor Rishon; Stuart Schoffman, columnist for the Jerusalem Report; and Claire Ellman.

When he returns, he often sees his work in new light. Applying that metaphor, JESNA and ADCA members must now reflect on the conversations and deliberations that were initiated in Israel, and apply the new perspectives to

address the mutual challenges faced by North American and Israeli Jews.

The meeting's success was due in large part to the hard work of the Kallah's four co-chairs: Brenda Gewurz, Michael Rukin, Paul Schlesinger, and David Steirman, and to Deborah Price and Jeff Lasday who took lead roles in organizing the ADCA Mifgash. David Resnick, JESNA's Israel representa-

tive, and Paul Flexner worked closely with the co-chairs and played a key role in planning all aspects of the meeting.

Caryl Kligfeld, Cynthia Morin, Cass Gottlieb and Claire Ellman in Tel Aviv.



**Special thanks to Bob Sachs, JESNA Board member, for contributing many of these photographs.**



Cheryl Finkel, middle, with Award winners Leora Bednarsh, right, and Heidi Schoenberger Tarshish, left.

Cheryl Finkel, head of school at the Epstein Solomon Schechter School in Atlanta, led a seminar designed to celebrate the teachers' accomplishments and reflect on the power and significance of being a Jewish educator. The seminar was conducted using interactive and informal methodologies, as well as a text study of Jewish sources relating to Jewish education.

## Highlights of the Grinspoon Teacher Events at the GA in Washington, DC



2001 Harold Grinspoon Award Winners.



Avraham Infeld.

Teachers were invited to join the JESNA Board at dinner as guests of Harold Grinspoon and Diane Troderman. All those attending were moved and enthralled by the power of Avraham Infeld's message, laying out the essential elements of a meaningful Jewish identity for Jews today.



Award winner Etty Segal with her husband Israel.



Jonathan Woocher, Joe Kanfer, Diane Troderman, Michael Steinhardt, Harold Grinspoon and Rabbi Yitz Greenberg.

The Grinspoon Awards reception provided additional excitement when Harold Grinspoon and Michael Steinhardt formally announced their partnership to sponsor an expanded awards program in 2002.



Judith Ginsberg, executive director; Lorraine Posner Arcus, 2001 Covenant Award Winner; Renee Schine Crown; and A. Steven Crown at the Covenant Awards luncheon.

On Monday, the Grinspoon Award winners went on a guided tour of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with Dr. Steven Feinberg, director of educational outreach, who provided unique perspective on the museum's exhibits. Following the museum tour, teachers attended the Covenant Awards luncheon where they joined in saluting the 2001 national award winners and celebrating the achievements of Jewish education.



Award winner Dr. Yoram Dahav, Harold Grinspoon and Diane Troderman.

Dr. Yoram Dahav, the award recipient from South Palm Beach County, FL, spoke on behalf of all of the award winners and presented Harold and Diane with a booklet of personal thank you letters composed by each of the teachers.

Since the GA, JESNA has been engaged in intensive efforts to recruit new communities, both small and large, from all over North America to participate in next year's Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards. We are pleased to announce that most communities who participated last year are returning this year. Plans are already underway to bring the teachers to Philadelphia for a reception and program at the 2002 GA in November.

**For more information on the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards, please contact Amy Amiel at 202-223-6963.**

## EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

### Helping to Solve the Teacher Shortage Crisis

“Wanted: Passionate, well-prepared, committed teachers for day schools, congregations and other Jewish educational settings.” This ad or one like it could appear in the Jewish

newspaper in nearly every community across North America. In response to the critical shortage of Jewish teachers, a number of new teacher recruitment and preparation initiatives are underway or soon to be launched that seek to attract new talent for the field.

Below we provide short profiles of five such programs. Each program is distinctive, but they all share the goal of providing an attractive pathway into the field of Jewish education for those who otherwise may not have considered Jewish teaching as a career.

**DeLeT** (Day School Leadership through Teaching) is a full-time, pre-service Jewish day school teaching fellowship, designed to launch people into a professional Jewish day school teaching career. A bachelor’s degree, in any field, is required for acceptance into the program. Qualified candidates will be serious about starting a career in day school teaching, have a deep commitment to service on behalf of the Jewish community, love learning and working with children, and a desire to become part of an innovative new professional learning community that is interested in Jewish day school teaching.

The first cohort of Fellows will begin in summer 2002 at one of two prestigious DeLeT academic center locations — Brandeis University or Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles campus.

Phase One of the Fellowship includes two summers of study at

one of the two academic center locations and an internship that provides a structured program of teacher learning at a DeLeT site day school during the academic year between the summers. During Phase One, Fellows receive \$15,000 from DeLeT, in addition to the compensation package provided by the internship sites in which they are working.

During Phase Two, Fellows can apply for up to \$10,000 in scholarships as they continue to teach in a day school for at least two years and continue their studies for a master’s degree in Jewish education or teacher certification.

DeLeT will accept 20 Fellows for the first cohort, and applications are invited from both recent college graduates and from those considering making a mid-life career change.



**For more information, contact Jane West Walsh at 847-564-4515.**

### Jewish Teacher Service Corps

**A** new continental recruitment initiative called the Jewish Teacher Service Corps (JTSC), modeled after Hillel’s Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps and Teach for America, is being launched to place hundreds of Jewish young adults into classrooms, youth groups, camps, and synagogues for a two-year experience of service and professional exploration.

Seeking top quality recent

college graduates with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, JTSC is being spearheaded by the University of Judaism. The program plans to begin in July 2003 with an intensive summer “jump start” program focused on pedagogic training and Jewish studies. In addition to meeting and learning from some of the finest educators in the Jewish community, Fellows will receive specialized training in new models of educa-

tional programming, for example, implementing social justice projects in schools.

After the training, JTSC will create cohorts of Fellows and place them in pilot cities where they will become immersed in the educational life of the communities and assigned a local on-site supervisor who will provide them with professional development and mentoring. All Fellows will be required to enroll in professional development programs

and ongoing Jewish studies.

Crucial to the program’s success is the three-way partnership that will be forged between the host community’s central agency, JTSC and the schools and synagogues. Through this partnership each Fellow will work full-time in a custom-designed combination of internship opportunities in day schools, afternoon schools, youth groups, early childhood programs, synagogues and community centers.

**For more information, contact Cheryl Davidson at 818-986-0209.**

## The Jewish Teacher Corps

**T**he Jewish Teacher Corps (JTC) is an initiative of Edah, with support from the Avi Chai Foundation. JTC is an intensive program that will train and recruit college graduates to teach for two years in Modern Orthodox day schools as well as non-denominational community schools. Scheduled to begin in the fall of 2003, the program is modeled after Teach for America.

There are four elements essential to its success. The first is recruitment and selection, which begins on college campuses and is aimed towards juniors and seniors. Applicants will be selected based on their textual knowledge as well as passion and commitment for the program and its goals.

The second and most critical component to the program is mentoring. Mentors, who will be compensated specifically for this, will be trained to provide continual support while the Fellow is working in his or her school. The role of the mentor will be to guide the Fellows in their ongoing growth as

educators, by observing them in the classroom and providing assistance and direction.

**For more information, contact Uri Gordon at 212-244-7812.**

A vital element is the selection of Jewish day schools where Fellows will be placed. The school will be expected to pay the usual starting salary for new teachers, as well as provide the framework and personnel for supervision throughout the year. The schools will be within one region, within commuting distance of each other to ensure close contact between Teaching Fellows.

Another crucial component of the program is the pre-service training. During the spring semester prior to their own service Fellows will observe outstanding teachers in the classroom as well as attend seminars and do readings. In the summer, an intense four week full-time training program will be implemented, and it will be designed in collaboration with institutes from around the country who have undertaken similar ventures.

## Pardes Educators Program,

located at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, combines intensive text study at Pardes with a graduate degree in education from the Hebrew University. Though based in Israel, the program aims to prepare teachers for Jewish day schools in North America. In addition to two years of study in Jerusalem, students return to North America twice during the program to teach each time for a month in exemplary day schools.

**For more information, contact Jane Rosengarten at 212-447-4333.**

Participants in the Pardes Educators Program are trained in classical texts and are required to pass the Hebrew fluency exam of the

Hebrew University Ulpan. In addition to the classroom requirements, students spend at least two years living in Israel (most opt to spend more), integrating the classroom learning experience with the broader and experiential rhythm of the Jewish calendar.

The participants in the Pardes Educators Program come from a range of backgrounds, and are equipped to teach in any Jewish day school. The first group of 15 participants will graduate this summer, and an additional 13 participants are now in the middle of their first year of study.

## HaSha'ar

**T**he New York based HaSha'ar is a fully funded, full-time one-year program to prepare day school teachers with a three-strand curriculum.

It integrates classes in Jewish texts, seminars in the ideas and practices in Jewish education, and fieldwork in Jewish day schools. At the end of the year, fellows commit to teaching for two years in North America.

The program approaches education based on the question: what does it mean to be involved in religious education? The answer provides HaSha'ar with its distinctive focus on the integration of text study with teaching text. The intellectual approach attracts individuals who might otherwise not consider a profession in Jewish education.

Presently, there are 11 participants enrolled in the program. HaSha'ar seeks between eight to 12 fellows annually, who come with a college degree and, ideally, with a strong background in Jewish texts.

**For more information, contact Ruth Fagen at 212-595-0307.**

PARTNERSHIP

## Covenant Foundation Grant Recipients “In Action”



Since 1990, The Covenant Foundation, a partnership of the Crown Family Foundation and JESNA, has been promoting innovation and excellence in Jewish education through its Awards and Grants programs. The Covenant Awards, designed to honor outstanding Jewish educators, are awarded each year to three outstanding educators. Beginning in 2002, Award winners receive \$25,000, with an additional \$5,000 going to the institution for which the educator works. The Covenant Grants, which support innovative programs in Jewish education, are awarded to as many as 10 institutions per year and can provide support up to \$250,000 over a five-year period.

Read below for highlights of what some of the Covenant grantees have been doing recently.

### In technology...

In New York, the **Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York**, in collaboration with the New York Institute of Technology, has instituted a unique Masters of Instructional Technology program. The first of its kind, the program enrolls 12 participants who are focused on integrating the fruits of their studies in educational technology into Jewish learning environments. (Read more about this on page 4.)

Not far away, in Newark, NJ, the **Center for Creative Educational Solutions** is in the production stage of creating a CD-ROM that focuses on making the Talmud accessible through the use of animated characters to illustrate and explain the fine points of *halakhah*. This exciting new animated adventure is sure to give “Shrek” a run for its money!

The **Jewish Community Centers Association** has posted an entire year’s worth of creative Judaic content and materials on their early childhood Web site ([www.jcca.org](http://www.jcca.org)). They will be continuing to add ideas and activities to their Web site “This New Month,” every *Chodesh Chadash*. A special video helps

train JCC educators to use this site.

### In community-building...

**Ziv Tzedakah**, of Millburn, NJ, has been on the road creating a *mitzvah*-oriented community in Providence, RI, and is planning for future activity in Raleigh-Durham, NC. Ziv’s “conference without walls” features presentations by local Mitzvah Heroes. One session even taught children and adults how to “clown around” as they took part in a half-day session on clowning as a therapeutic art

form. Following the session, the group took their act to a local nursing home.

**Lehrhaus Judaica** of Berkeley, CA, has also reached out, continuing to develop and integrate adult education programming in the communities of St. Louis, MO; Sacramento, CA; and Nashville, TN.

### In teacher training...

The Teacher Education Programme at **York University** has been hard at work recruiting new teachers for Canadian day schools. They will be admitting a third group of students in the fall of 2002. This spring the first cohort will conduct a field-study and visit schools where they may teach in the future.

Do, re, mi... *alef, bet, gimmel...* the **New Jewish High School**, Waltham, MA, and **The Jewish Community Day School**, Newton, MA, are working together to create “An Integrated Model for Music and Jewish Education.” Over the past year they have been exploring the use of music to develop Jewish identity, enhance *tefila*, and develop an interdisciplinary curriculum.

**Want to know more? Visit the Covenant Foundation’s Web site ([www.covenantfn.org](http://www.covenantfn.org)) to learn more about the newest Covenant Foundation Grant Recipients.**

The 2001 Covenant Grant recipients are:

- Beth El Congregation of the South Hills (Pittsburgh, PA), \$27,000;
- DeLeT (Northbrook, IL), \$50,000, (beginning in 2003),(to read more about DeLeT, please turn to page 12);
- Foundation for Jewish Camping (New York, NY), \$158,000;
- Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (New York, NY), \$180,000;
- Jewish Education Association of MetroWest (Whippany, NJ), \$74,922;
- The Jewish Education Center of Cleveland (Cleveland Heights,OH), \$175,000;
- Matan (New York, NY), \$135,000, (to read more about Matan, please turn to page 7);
- Minneapolis Jewish Federation in collaboration with Gratz College, (Minnetonka, MN and Melrose Park, PA), \$229,912; and
- Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services (Commack, NY), \$75,000.

## GA 2001 in Review

### Renaissance and Renewal Pillar Programming Highlights

**D**r. Beryl Geber, Professor Steven M. Cohen, and Rabbi Hayim Y. Herring presented at the Renaissance and Renewal forum on *Re-envisioning the Jewish Community*. They conducted a lively discussion on the implications of the changing shape of Jewish identity and the Jewish community before a standing room only crowd.

R&R's chair, Dr. Beryl Geber, was given the honor of chairing the special GA Convocation: *The Meaning of Community*, which featured presentations by Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president, Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Dr. John Ruskay, executive vice president, UJA-Federation of New York. The session focused on the nature and meaning of the religious, national, and organizational communities of which we are a part.



Dr. Beryl Geber, Chair of the Renaissance and Renewal Alliance.

**F**or the first time in GA history a set of special sessions were created for the Next Generation of Jewish



Dr. Michele Sackheim, the R&R Next Generation Committee Chair.

young adults. Programs included *Transforming Communities Through Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship*, *Challenges of Mobilizing the Next Generation of Lay Leaders: Some Questions and Answers* and *The Next Generation Congress*. *The Next Generation Congress: "Giving the Next Generation a VOICE in the System,"* gave young adults attending the GA a forum to discuss their vision for the future of the Jewish community. The Next Generation programming at the General Assembly was a great success. Thanks to Michele Sackheim, the R&R Next Generation Committee Chair, for all of her work on this new program.

**R**enaissance and Renewal also sponsored a think tank session on Professional Recruitment, Retention and Development in the fields of Jewish communal service and Jewish education. *Who Will Teach Our Children? Who Will Lead Our Communities? The Personnel Crisis and What We Can Do About It* featured keynote addresses from Shifra Bronznick of Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community, and Larry Moses from the Wexner Foundation.

### NEWS BYTE — Youth Initiatives

Over several years of increasingly intensive work with community-based youth initiatives, JESNA has heard growing calls for reliable information about "best practices" in the field. Professional and lay leaders continue to request information about lessons that have been learned — what works and what does not work in relation to programming for youth and the development of the professionals who work with them.

To help answer these questions, JESNA and the IJE (Institute for Informal Jewish

Education at Brandeis University) are developing a Partnering Communities Program. The project will identify three to four local communities with which JESNA and the IJE will work intensively over a 2-3 year period, beginning in fall 2002. During that time, the communities will plan and implement pilot initiatives that address some of the most challenging issues in the field of youth education: how to engage "under-involved" teens; how to blend formal and informal education; how to train local youth workers, most of whom are part-time para-professionals;

how to build volunteer support and adequate funding for youth education. JESNA's involvement in this program will both enrich local efforts and afford the agency the opportunity to develop and then to disseminate "best practices" for the field at-large.

**For more information on JESNA's Youth Initiatives, please contact Devorah Silverman at 212-284-6887.**

## What's New — An Update on the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal Alliance

### Renaissance and Renewal Community Consultation

The Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance (R&R) is intensifying its focus on local community renaissance programming. A Renaissance and Renewal Community Consultation is being planned prior to the General Assembly in Philadelphia on November 18 and 19, which will be preceded by two smaller conferences in June (see below). Communities will be invited to send teams of volunteer and professional leaders involved in renaissance programming to the November conference, which will also include participation from the broad array of constituencies represented on the Renaissance Pillar. The Conference will provide an opportunity for participants to examine what has been learned over the past several years of Jewish renaissance activity, to assess the implications of the new data from NJPS 2000 which will be available next fall, and to collaborate in shaping the next stages of the renaissance agenda.

### Alliance for Adult Jewish Learning

R&R is co-sponsoring a conference with the Alliance for Adult Jewish Learning and the Community Foundation for Jewish Education of Metropolitan Chicago, bringing together top scholars and community leaders working locally on adult Jewish learning for sessions on planning, program development and professional development. The conference, June 9–11 in Chicago, will give local AJL activists the opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from across the country as well as experts in the field.

### Next Generation

R&R will also be holding a “Next Generation” Consultation in

partnership with the Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation on June 9–11 in Memphis, TN, as a follow up to the successful program held in the spring of 2001. A group of leading next generation (young adult) program providers, both community-based and independent, will convene to discuss how to strengthen their programs and relationships with the organized Jewish community.

The NI2 project, a cooperative venture with the Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Jewish Family & Life!, is working to develop a coordinated Web presence and outreach vehicle for the 20-and-30-something Jewish community. The present phase of the project involves soliciting feedback from young adult service providers as well as community representatives on the viability and potential success of the Web site.

### Israel Education

With the current situation in Israel, R&R and JESNA are continuing to seek ways to strengthen connections between North American Jews and our counterparts in Israel. R&R worked closely with the North American Alliance for Jewish Youth (NAA) to organize a mission of youth leaders to Israel in mid March of this year. UJC has provided a substantial financial subvention to make this mission possible. The participants are all leaders in various youth movements who are going on the mission both to demonstrate solidarity and to learn valuable skills in advocating for Israel travel by their peers. R&R has also been working with the NAA to plan a “Youth Summit on Israel” in the summer of 2003, again with significant financial support from UJC. The week-long summit for Jewish youth group leadership at a North American campsite will give students the opportunity to explore topics of Jewish identity and Israel and to then become emissaries to their youth groups.

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

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

For additional information on JESNA please contact Amy Stein, director of marketing and communications, at (212) 284-6896 or [astein@jesna.org](mailto:astein@jesna.org).



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**JESNA** – the Jewish Education Service of North America, Inc. was created in 1981 as the Jewish Federation system’s educational coordinating, planning and development agency. JESNA is widely recognized for its leadership in six different areas, including media and technology, research and evaluation, engaging and empowering Jewish youth, educator recruitment and development, day school education, and congregational and communal education.

**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.