

JESNA: Non-Stop Action at the GA

Continental Council: Improving Day School Education

The Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education, which was formed to strengthen national cooperative efforts to improve day school education, sponsored a standing room only workshop at the 2002 General Assembly (GA), entitled “It’s Not the Same Old Day School Story: New Opportunities, New Achievements.” The program focused on three of the Council’s five key content areas – marketing and advocacy, affordability, and community relations.

A highlight of the workshop was a videotape appearance by Alan Dershowitz, Harvard

The Continental Council, convened by JESNA and UJC, includes representatives from a wide array of key stakeholders interested in assuring the vitality of day school education.

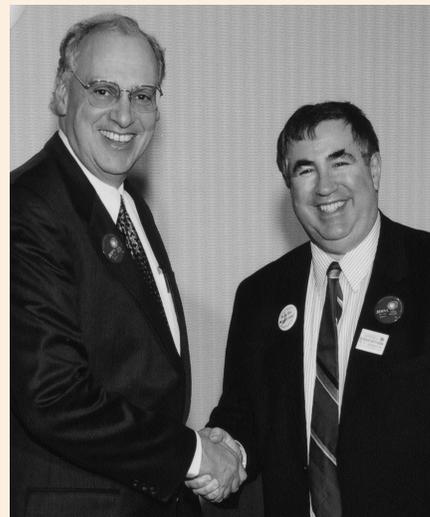
University Professor of Law, who spoke about the importance of his day school education and how it shaped his personal and professional life. He was such a hit that people are still sending in requests for a copy of his videotape!



Jaymee Alpert, a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary (left), and Yehuda Kurtzer, a Wexner Fellow at Harvard University (right), spoke about the significance of day school education in their lives.

Joe Kanfer Completes Term As Chair — Maintains Close “Alignment” with JESNA Board

Joe Kanfer has expertly guided JESNA with rare intelligence and superb management skills over the past three years. His quest for consistent excellence at JESNA and in Jewish education as a whole has inspired JESNA’s most



Joe Kanfer and Jon Woocher.

ambitious endeavor ever: the drafting and implementation of the agency’s new Strategic Plan, “Building Jewish Education for the 21st Century.”

As president and CEO of GOJO Industries, Joe has brought successful business models to JESNA. He

helped JESNA adopt the “alignment model,” which transformed the way the agency does its business. Through the use of this model, JESNA has been able to ensure that its strategies, structures and processes serve to fulfill its purpose and vision.

With the Strategic Plan now completed, Joe has turned his attention to one of the key requisites for its successful implementation: the need to raise substantial new resources to support JESNA’s new initiatives. He has accepted the position of Chair of the Financial Resource Development Cabinet and will remain an active, committed shaper of JESNA’s and Jewish education’s future.

CHAIR'S COLUMN



Helene Berger

Facing the Future Together

Thanksgiving and Chanukah allowed us time to step back, to be with family and come up for air after JESNA's exhilarating and multi-faceted sessions at the GA in Philadelphia. Our Board and working sessions and the Hadesh conference, sponsored by the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance, were all well attended and well received.

The universal positive comments from our many partners across North America who participated in our programs were a strong expression of support for our common agenda — seeking excellence in Jewish education. In addition to the concrete programs and ideas that were highlighted at these sessions, there was a more intangible but powerful sense of connection between the growing

number of us who are convinced that the future of our people depends on the quality and scope of Jewish education we offer every Jew.

If we are indeed dedicated to the collective vision of giving our youth a foundation on which they will continue to build throughout their lives, if we are seeking to make Jewish education relevant and alive, if we hope to touch the next generation spiritually as well as intellectually, then we, both lay and professional leaders, have a monumental role to play.

1. We look to lay leaders throughout the country who hold respected leadership positions at home, to be effective advocates for Jewish education in their communities.
2. We are proud of JESNA's role as a catalyst for an expanding network of relationships that foster collaborative and systemic approaches to strengthening Jewish education. We look not only to our Board members, but to all the lay leaders who serve on the boards of many of these organizations, to encour-

age the wide array of partnerships and collaborations between agencies with shared interests or complementary strengths.

3. Our quest for excellence in Jewish education will require a financial investment as large as our vision. We look to every lay leader, not only for their personal financial commitment, but to seek and encourage the communal and private dollars that will fuel the transformation.

As I begin my tenure as the Chair of JESNA, I am cognizant of all the work that has been accomplished by so many to bring the agency to this day. A long line of remarkable leaders have preceded me. I particularly want to acknowledge my deep gratitude to Joe Kanfer who moved us to places we never dreamed were possible three years ago. We are grateful for his leadership, enthusiasm, financial commitment, and especially for his continuing significant role as the head of JESNA's new Financial Resource Development (FRD) Cabinet. We are also blessed with an extraordinary, dedicated and

committed staff, with Jon Woocher's intelligence, ability, and guidance at the helm.

Our Board has helped to develop the vision delineated in the Strategic Plan and has committed their time, their collective wisdom and their finances to ensure that JESNA is the catalyst for transformation.

Yet we know that we cannot accomplish the enormous task before us alone. We shall increasingly seek the guidance and support of the many organizations and institutions who are our partners and of the visionary funders who are changing the face of Jewish learning and living every day.

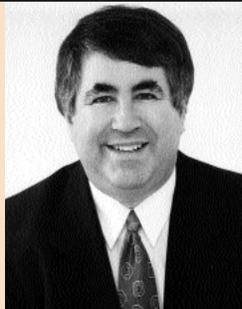
It is both a new beginning for me and for JESNA as together we embark on carrying out our Strategic Plan which seeks a Jewish educational system of consistent excellence. I truly believe that JESNA is ready to lead the renaissance in Jewish education that will bring greater spirituality and meaning to our lives, thereby strengthening and reshaping the Jewish community and insuring a vibrant Jewish future.

Mark Your Calendars!

Upcoming JESNA Meetings

- Sunday, June 1, 2003 – JESNA Board Social Dinner, New York City
- Monday, June 2 through Tuesday morning, June 3, 2003 – JESNA Board Meetings, New York City
- Sunday, October 26 through Monday, October 27, 2003 – JESNA Board Meetings, New York City
- Sunday, February 8 through Tuesday, February 10, 2004 (tentative) – Proposed Jewish Education Leadership Summit, South Florida
- Friday, February 6 through Sunday, February 8, 2004 – Proposed Pre-Summit Board Shabbaton, South Florida
- Sunday, June 6 through Monday, June 7, 2004 – JESNA Board Meetings, New York City

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dr. Jonathan Woocher

Why Not the Best? Getting Serious About Jewish Education

Jewish education is vitally important for our future. While Jews may disagree about many things, this is a proposition about which there is little argument. Calls for more Jewish education, better Jewish education, and more spending on Jewish education emanate from every quarter of the community. In fact, many good things are happening in Jewish education. Day schools are proliferating, Jewish summer camps are filled to capacity, adults are flocking to intensive study programs.

So, if things are so good, why are they so bad — well, perhaps not really “bad,” but certainly far from being as good as they could and should be? As almost anyone can tell you, Jewish education still has plenty of problems: a chronic shortage of quality personnel; “Hebrew school” programs that are uninspiring and ineffectual; large numbers of drop-outs after Bar or Bat Mitzvah;

tepid parental support; and the fact that significant numbers of individuals never find their way into the educational system altogether. The problems are real, but so too is one simple fact: We can solve them. We have reached a time in American Jewish life when we can have great Jewish education for everyone. We know enough (not everything, but enough), and we certainly have enough resources, both human and financial, to create a Jewish educational system whose hallmark is consistent excellence. And if we do this, we know that the payoff will be enormous. Jewish education works — more and better Jewish education means deeper and more enduring Jewish commitment and involvement. What we need are the vision and the determination to go after the goal of consistently excellent Jewish education and the strategies that will take us there.

I know this is a possible dream because there are already numerous examples before us of excellent Jewish education of every type. Not perfect, not guaranteed to work for every individual all the time, but, really, really good — engaging, rich in Jewish content, delivered and experienced joyfully, thought-provoking, and action-inspiring. Every denomination has examples

of quality Jewish education. There are day schools and congregational schools that offer it, camps and youth groups, early childhood and adult programs, trips to Israel and sites in cyberspace. So, why isn't this everyone's Jewish educational experience? Because we haven't yet insisted that it be so. Because we've tolerated mediocrity too often, and because we've failed to make the changes that would make excellence not a rare exception, but a consistent achievement.

What do we need to do? A lot. We need so much — new facilities, new programs, more and better personnel — that it almost seems impossible. I want to suggest, though, that we look at the challenge differently. There are three principles that if applied assiduously will enable us to create great Jewish education in North America. These principles are core values for JESNA, which has made “leading the communal commitment and mobilization for excellence in Jewish education” its vision. The three principles are not, however, limited to any single agency or institution. If applied widely and consistently, these principles would dramatically transform the educational landscape and lay the groundwork for the cascade of change that will make today's educational

achievements merely a harbinger of what is yet to come.

The three principles for creating consistently excellent Jewish education are: 1) leverage; 2) partnerships; and 3) continuous improvement.

Leverage enables us to take advantage of what already exists and use it to achieve even greater results through multiplier effects. It means asking not only what the outcomes of a specific program are, but how we can capitalize on those outcomes to achieve something else. If Jewish early childhood education programs, with their tens of thousands of participants, made explicit efforts to guide families into continuing the early childhood experience in Jewish day schools, enrollment in these schools would increase dramatically. Leverage means recognizing that relatively small changes at one point can produce large-scale changes over time. If congregations built a summer of Jewish camping into the fabric of their educational programs by making it normative for every child, the religious school experience throughout the year and over the years would be transformed. Thinking this way opens up a wealth of possibilities that today are more often missed opportunities.

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Partnership as a way of doing business makes leverage work. In the business world, almost no enterprise can thrive today without a network of strategic alliances and partnerships. Yet Jewish education is notable for its absence of such relationships. Institutions operate largely in isolation. Why aren't more day schools, congregations, and training institutions partnering to deal with the challenge of recruiting, developing, and retaining quality personnel? Why aren't JCCs and synagogues working together more to create diverse and vibrant opportunities for Jewish adolescents to learn, socialize, recreate, and serve the community? By eschewing opportunities to work together, institutions wind up diminishing their resources and effectiveness, and in the end, everyone — especially the Jews seeking the highest quality education — loses.

Continuous improvement requires ongoing effort, not sporadic attempts or waiting for someone else to make change happen. Great Jewish education doesn't happen serendipitously. Improvement comes through a process of experimentation, assessment, learning, and re-testing that goes on constantly. Jewish education doesn't operate this way today. "Experiments" in the form of innovative programs — new curricula, new initiatives — do take place. But,

the next steps in the process — rigorous assessment, distillation and application of what is learned, a second wave of implementation to test revisions — rarely happen. Our approach to improvement in Jewish education is almost entirely unsystematic. Institutions experience great difficulty in learning from their own experience, much less from that of others, and even where learning takes place, the tools and training to apply that learning — i.e., actually to do things better — are missing. If we want consistently excellent Jewish education, we need to build the systems that will define and support the achievement of excellence through continuous improvement.

The formula for producing great Jewish education is not mysterious. I don't mean to pretend, though, that getting there will be easy. First, we will need to challenge and overthrow long-held assumptions and habits. Thinking and behaving in accordance with the principles of leverage, partnerships, and continuous improvement requires that we "do" Jewish education differently, that we operate as a true educational system. We need to use all of the tools available to us, multiple settings and methodologies, including non-traditional ones, and take full advantage of the revolutionary power of technology. We need to put the

learner — not institutional interests — at the center of our attention. Absolute institutional autonomy will have to give way to a new mind set of collaboration and accountability.

Second, we will need to invest a great deal more in Jewish education. The \$3 billion or more that currently is being spent on Jewish education in North America is an impressive figure. But, it is simply not sufficient to achieve consistent excellence. The resources for substantial new investment in Jewish education from both consumers and philanthropists do exist. If we can convince these potential funders that their increased spending will buy a truly superior product — excellent Jewish education for themselves, their families, and the Jewish community — I believe that they will make the decision to invest. Here too, putting the principle of leverage into play is key: A relatively small additional investment made smartly — i.e., in ways that will promote leveraging, partnerships, and continuous improvement — will yield huge dividends. For example: Creating a true "knowledge infrastructure" for Jewish education, a framework for systematically gathering, processing, and disseminating the vast amounts of information about the state of our current endeavors and the lessons from our efforts

to improve them that are needed to drive successful change, will cost several millions of dollars. But, the gains in educational productivity that will result will be many times the investment and will justify the vastly larger amounts that need to be spent on facilities, personnel, and programs where excellence will then be manifested.

Yes, we can have great Jewish education. We deserve it and we need it for our future. JESNA is determined to lead the way in making this the North American Jewish community's rallying cry for the next decade and more. We are substantially expanding our work to recruit and prepare the people who will drive the process of improvement, to provide them with the knowledge and know-how they need to create excellent programs and institutions, and to give them the tools and the hands-on support that will enable them to succeed in the difficult work of change. We are ready to be Jewish education's "system-builder," using the principles of leverage, partnerships, and continuous improvement to envision and help fashion a Jewish educational enterprise in North America that will power a Renaissance of Jewish learning and living of historic proportions. It's possible; it's achievable. Why should we aim for anything less?

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

How Can Knowing What You've Done Make What You Do Better?

It is remarkable how the “evaluation market” has grown over the past few years. It was not too long ago when it was rare for funders or program providers in the Jewish community to consider the need to evaluate their programs. Today, “evaluation” has not only become part of the common vocabulary, but a growing number of funders of Jewish programs are requiring systematic evaluations as a condition of their grants. The demand for professionally trained, skilled evaluators who know Jewish education and the Jewish community has sky-rocketed. The **Berman Center**, since its establishment in 1992, has conducted close to 100 evaluation studies and consultations, and each year the number of communities, foundations and national programs seeking evaluation consultation multiplies.

This growth reflects a developing appreciation and understanding of the value of evaluation. Funders, program providers, community decision-makers, program participants, and a myriad of other stakeholders are coming to recognize that the evaluation process can help clarify program goals, determine the extent to which programs and initiatives are aligned with their goals, identify the strengths and weaknesses of program implementation, provide feedback to guide mid-course corrections, and assess the impact and effectiveness of programs. Findings from evaluations not only provide accountability measures, but can also guide next steps in program development – and positive results can surely be used for marketing and promotion.

A few of the **Berman Center** clients speak out on the “value of evaluation”...

The Emigre Leadership Institute (ELI) is a San Francisco community initiative that trains and involves individuals from the former Soviet Union in Jewish communal activities and leadership. Lisa Taback, director of ELI in San Francisco, comments “the recommendations from the **Berman Center** evaluation of the ELI have provided the roadmap for revising the program after its pilot year. We have already been able to implement some of the suggestions in our second iteration of the program and the results have been a great success.”

The DeLeT leadership has worked closely with the **Berman Center** to apply a cutting edge model of evaluation. This model places the evaluation focus on helping DeLeT decision makers learn about how specific assumptions and decisions impact upon program outcomes, as they move quickly in the pilot phase. Over time, the evaluation focus will change as the DeLeT program stabilizes and the organization develops a long range business plan for the post-pilot phase. Jane West Walsh, executive director, explains, “a complex, innovative project like DeLeT needs such a responsive evaluation design to be able to learn, and succeed, over time.”

In Baltimore, where the **Berman Center** is providing ongoing evaluation consultation to the Meyerhoff Teen Initiative (MTI), local youth professionals are gaining valuable tools and skills that enable them to monitor their programs and assess how effective they are in achieving their goals. According to Gayle Bloom, community youth professional coordinator, “the portfolio assessment is helping the community youth professionals become more reflective practitioners, assess their accomplishments, and identify areas for improvement. And from our standpoint, guidance from the **Berman Center** has been instrumental in increasing local capacity to conduct ongoing evaluations.”

Helen London, executive director of MTI, reports that, “data from the **Berman Center**’s evaluation has yielded important information about factors that have contributed to the success of the Initiative. Among other benefits, this information will be important in terms of identifying issues that need to be improved, and will allow others to replicate our efforts.”

The bottom line is that evaluation, when done well, is far more than a scorecard of success or failure. It’s a vital component of building a successful program, and an investment that pays dividends well beyond its cost.

For more information on the activities of the **Berman Center**, please contact Leora Isaacs at leora@jesna.org.

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Professional Opportunities in the Jewish Community: The “Recruitment Team” and Their Road-Show

Contributed by: Rachel Brumberg, JESNA; Rachel Gurshman, Hillel; Amy Wagner, UJC; and Stephanie Wener, JCC Association

On any list of critical issues facing the Jewish community today, the recruitment of talented new professionals is sure to rank near the top. JESNA has been focusing on this issue since the early 1990s, when it launched the **Lainer Interns for Jewish Education** Program, the first of a series of successful recruitment initiatives that today includes the **Graduate Seminar in Jewish Education**, **Jewish Educators Corps**, and **Everett JewishJobFinder**.

But JESNA has hardly been alone in

recognizing the need to revamp and upgrade professional recruitment efforts. In 1998, Hillel created a new recruitment model that involves a concerted joint recruitment effort by a consortium of agencies on behalf of the Jewish community. Hillel recognized that college students were a prime, easily reached recruitment target. By investing more time and resources in on-campus recruitment efforts and providing students with a broad overview of professional opportunities, rather than scattered on-campus

recruitment efforts by individual agencies, the yield of future professional leaders could be substantially increased.

Today the core “Recruitment Team” is comprised of Hillel, JCC Association, JESNA and UJC. The Team also partners with organizations on a local level to insure that all the opportunities available within the Jewish community are represented. On each campus, the Team meets with relevant academic and professional departments such as the career center, school of social work, Jewish studies, and school of management, educating them so that they can become better resources. Often the Team participates in the campus career fair, where they attract students who may not be active members of Hillel. In the evening, they run a pro-

the Everett **Jewish Job Finder.com**

Boasts Successful First Year of “Matchmaking”

Can you really find a job in the Jewish community or fill a staff position on the Web? For a growing number of job seekers and employers, the answer is a resounding “yes!” **Everett JewishJobFinder** (www.JewishJobFinder.com) is celebrating its first birthday with close to 1,300 resumes, almost 200 jobs and over 3,000 registered employers and job seekers on the site. Since last year’s launch, an average of 5,265 visits have been made to the site each month, which translates to an average of 173 visits per day. In just one year, **Everett JewishJobFinder** has won tremendous acclaim from the field, has seen a marked increase in the number of employers and job seekers turning to it for assistance, and has been responsible for a number of successful, yet diverse, matches.

Brooke Heilweil, a recent graduate from Yale University, found a teaching job at a congregational school through **Everett JewishJobFinder**. With an original plan to head straight to law school, Brooke “got hooked” her sophomore year in college while

teaching at Hebrew school. “Once I started teaching,” she explained, “I realized that there was no other career that would allow me to connect so well with people and that would be as rewarding.”

Susan Detwiler, a mid-career professional, also successfully found a job through the Web site. She was drawn to the field of Jewish communal service after several years working in the secular world. She claims “something clicked” after attending a conference where she had a discussion about the shortage of Jewish professionals — and she found herself inspired to devote her full-time professional energies to Jewish communal work.

JESNA’s Berman Center is now planning a full-scale evaluation of **Everett JewishJobFinder** in order to identify how it can serve both employers and job-seekers even more effectively. Updates and new features are regularly being added to the site, increasing its value as an information resource as well as a placement service.

Everett JewishJobFinder was established thanks to a generous gift from Henry and Edith Everett, and is sustained by individual donations.

For further information, please contact Judith Goldstein-Fischer at judith@jesna.org.

gram for Jewish students who are interested in learning about career opportunities in the fields of Jewish communal service and Jewish education, including information on graduate schools and scholarships to fund these programs.

As the Recruitment Team travels from community to community and campus to campus, up to 10 campuses a month, they've been receiving positive feedback from students, professionals and faculty members about the importance of presenting a unified message. What is most heartening is that the student quality is high and many are excited about working for the Jewish community. It is becoming increasingly obvious that feeder programs are succeeding; Hillel and other university program participants, Israel experience alums, overnight camp and youth group leaders all become exceptional candidates. Often, they want to begin working immediately after completing their undergraduate studies and to have professional experiences before committing to graduate school. Thus, the most popular opportunities are one-year programs.

There is no doubt that the "road-show" is succeeding at changing current perceptions and proving that the field of Jewish communal and educational work is both professional and "cool." However, there are challenges as well. Because the team is not in one place long enough to establish an ongoing relationship with potential candidates, follow-up is critical. Ideally, local constituent agencies will become ongoing contacts and role models so that a network of recruiters and resources will be in place, not only to encourage students to enter the field, but to support future members of the professional Jewish community from the outset of their career.

Everyone involved with the Recruitment Team is excited about the inter-agency partnership that has been forged, and about getting the word out about the opportunities available. But above all, they want to help guide students towards a meaningful career that is in line with their goals, and matches their skill sets. By knowing what options are available – whether they are one-year fellowships, entry level job openings, academic programs and scholarship opportunities, or Israel programs – interested students can find their place in the Jewish community and become an important part of its future.

For more information, please contact Rachel Brumberg at rabrumberg@jesna.org.

The Aspen Retreat: Creating a Systematic Strategy for Educator Recruitment

In October 2001, the **Covenant Foundation** and JESNA assembled professionals from across the country to share and reflect upon their experiences in seeking to redress the universally recognized shortage of qualified Jewish educators. What emerged from that day-long consultation was a clear sense that the dimensions and significance of the recruitment challenge warrant a strategic national response.

One of the key recommendations of a follow-up report, prepared by Shani Bechhofer, senior research associate of JESNA's Berman Center, was to convene a group of respected professionals, researchers, and communal stakeholders in the field of Jewish education for an extended and intensive "think tank" aimed at taking the ideas raised at the consultation to the next level. In response, the **Covenant Foundation** and JESNA organized a two-day retreat in October, 2002 in Aspen, Colorado, hosted by Susan Crown, to begin to shape a systematic and comprehensive recruitment initiative.

At the retreat, 30 educators and funders looked at the full array of challenges involved in recruiting and retaining quality educators for the many settings in which Jewish education is carried out. The participants recommended a comprehensive and systematic initiative, focused on three areas for action:

- Developing a recruitment infrastructure capable of proactive, assertive recruitment to the field of Jewish education, on the national and local levels;
- Addressing the structural and cultural impediments to attracting and retaining talented individuals for careers in Jewish education; and
- Gathering the information and empirical evidence needed to inform and guide successful recruitment efforts.

The **Covenant Foundation** and JESNA are now taking the lead to make this vision a reality. They have launched the **Jewish Educator Recruitment Initiative**, with initial seed funding from the **Covenant Foundation**, as a collaborative endeavor that will involve a broad group of academic, organization, and philanthropic partners. Working groups will soon be assembled to plan for each of the three action areas, and a number of "fast track" pilot projects will be coordinated with the planning efforts.

What began in New York and continued in Aspen will now, hopefully, become a national endeavor to make the shortage of Jewish educators only a distant memory.

CONTINENTAL COUNCIL: IMPROVING DAY SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Continental Council, convened by JESNA and UJC, includes representatives from a wide array of key stakeholders interested in assuring the vitality of day school education. The Council met twice during the past year, and its five working groups have launched a number of projects to increase communal support for day schools and enhance their financial viability.

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Josh Elkin, a co-chair of the Council (left) with Robert Aronson, chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit (right), one of the Council's presenters who described the creation of Detroit's Jewish Education Trust.

The Continental Council will play a prominent role in the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education's (PEJE) inaugural Leadership Assembly to be held in Los Angeles on February 3 and 4. Senior lay and professional leaders of day schools, federations, community foundations and bureaus of Jewish education will gather to address four key areas: student recruitment, affordability, resource development and personnel.

Members of the Continental Council's Steering Committee will facilitate and lead several sessions at this gathering. A report based on a marketing research study of lay and professional leaders of federations — sponsored by the Marketing and Advocacy Working Group — will be presented at the Assembly. Attendees will also learn

about the results of an updated study conducted for the Council's Affordability Working Group on Tuition Subvention programs. The work of the Council in the areas of compensation philosophies and professional recruitment, development and retention will also be featured at sessions.

Dr. Lynda Giles and Rabbi Joshua Elkin are the Council's co-chairs and Claire Ellman and Rabbi Robert Hirt are vice-chairs.

For more information, please contact Steve Kraus at steve@jesna.org.



Gary Shiffman, chair of the Shiffman Family Day School Assistance Fund in Detroit (left), explained during his presentation what his family's motivation was for creating this multi-million dollar day school tuition assistance fund. Howard Jacobson, president of the Jewish Federation of Kansas City (right), described the process in which Kansas City's JCC and day school learned to work together to share human and financial resources on a newly developed campus. His presentation was so successful that Mr. Jacobson has already been booked to fly to another community to consult with them on this issue.

About Helene Berger

Helene Berger brings to her new role as JESNA Chair a long history of leadership in the Jewish communal world, including her lifelong commitment to Jewish education. In addition to serving



Helene Berger holding the yad that Joe symbolically passed to her during the installation ceremony.

as President of the Miami Central Agency for Jewish Education, Helene has served in many national positions. She was the National President of the Council of Jewish Federations Women's Division, and a long-time Board member of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). She is known as an inspirational speaker, an effective trainer, an innovator in leadership development programs, and as a builder of consensus on boards. JESNA is honored to have her lead us as we embark on the next stage in our efforts to create vibrant Jewish life through Jewish learning.

As Helene Berger accepted the mantle of leadership at JESNA, she said, "I feel deeply privileged to be asked to follow such illustrious leaders, to work with such a talented, committed staff, and to be at the helm of a dynamic organization dedicated to strengthening and reshaping Jewish education for the 21st century to insure a vibrant Jewish future."

JESNA Board, staff and friends are proud to welcome Helene to her new role.

President of the Miami Central Agency for Jewish Education, Helene has served in many national positions. She was the National President of the Council of Jewish

JESNA Board Installation and Dessert Reception



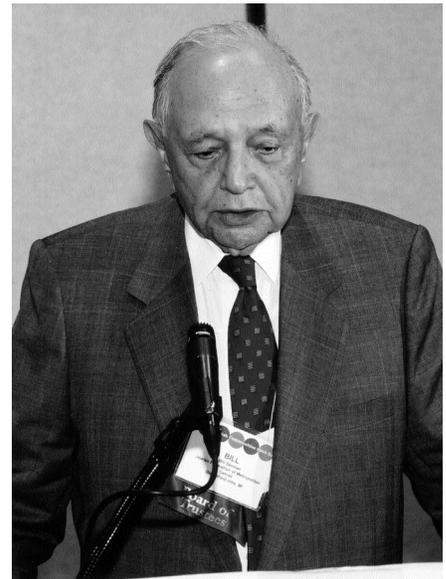
Helene Berger celebrating with her two granddaughters, Emily (left) and Madeline (right), along with Sue Stevens, Covenant Foundation, and Helene Kalson Cohen, co-chair of the Board Installation and Dessert Reception.



Helene Berger with JESNA past presidents (left to right) Billie Gold, Joe Kanfer, Bill Berman, Bennett Yanowitz (co-chair of the Board Installation and Dessert Reception), and Mark Lainer.

Happy Birthday Bill Berman

On Tuesday evening we paid tribute to Bill Berman, our honorary chair, on the occasion of his 85th birthday. Bill, one of JESNA's founders and the man who has made possible the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation, has a passionate commitment to our people and to study as a way of life. He has poured energy, time and dollars into Jewish



Bill Berman.

education and a host of other Jewish causes over the course of a lifetime of service and leadership. Bill, till a hundred twenty!

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Hadesh Conference: Uniting Renaissance and Renewal Efforts

There's a Jewish Renaissance occurring in North America, and the UJC/JESNA Renaissance and Renewal Alliance is helping it flourish. For the first time in three years, communities were given the spotlight to showcase their current renaissance efforts at Hadesh: Renewing Jewish Communities, a conference held November 18–19 in Philadelphia, PA, prior to the UJC General Assembly. This conference, which attracted over 225 participants, challenged communities to create effective long-term strategies for their Renaissance work, and offered practical guidance as they seek to transform themselves into vibrant centers of Jewish learning and living.

Hadesh, which was heralded as a great success by participants, was organized by the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance, in partnership with JESNA.

Other programs run throughout the two-day event included a reception co-sponsored by the Jewish Publication Society, an inspiring performance by Bikkurim resident Storahtelling called “Pillow Talk: Bedtime Stories to Wake You Up,” a session with Dr. Steven M. Cohen of Hebrew University about issues in North American Jewish identity, and multiple workshop sessions in Renaissance and Renewal program areas.



At the closing session participants heard from Barry Shrage of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston (pictured above), Richard Joel of Hillel: the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (soon to be President of Yeshiva University), and Renaissance and Renewal Pillar member Marion Blumenthal, all of whom have been instrumental in creating change and inspiring Renaissance and Renewal projects.

At every opportunity, the conference schedule encouraged community leaders to network, building a sense of larger community. Hadesh attendees also had a chance to hear from Dr. Jonathan Woocher, JESNA's president and the lead professional person for the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance.

At the UJC General Assembly that followed Hadesh, the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance held a full range of successful programs. The nine GA sessions sponsored by the Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance featured presenters from communities of all sizes from all over North America. Sessions of note include “Jewish Camping at 100,” which included not only speakers but a songleader as well! The R&R Forum, “Rebels with a Cause: A Jewish Identity Report Card,” was one of the liveliest sessions of the entire GA program. Four “generations” of Jewish activists dialogued on the achievements of the Jewish community in strengthening Jewish identity and engagement since the famous student protests at the 1969 GA and on the challenges still to be met. R&R also sponsored sessions on adult Jewish learning, outreach, synagogue renewal, Israel education, early childhood education, arts & culture and a Thursday morning performance and workshop by Storahtelling.

For more information, please contact Andrea Fram Plotkin at Andrea.Fram@ujc.org.



The keynote address was given by Rabbi Saul Berman (right) and Dr. Leonard Fein (center) who spoke on forging a vision and strategy for Jewish community. Dr. Alisa Rubin Kurshan (left) moderated the conversation, which was lively and set the tone for discussions at the conference.



Dr. Beryl Geber, chair of the Renaissance and Renewal Pillar, framed the conference by discussing the importance of national networking.



The success of Hadesh: Renewing Jewish Communities was due in large measure to the passion and dedication of the conference chairs, Lawrence A. Sherman of Chicago, IL (left), and Elaine Schreiber of Phoenix, AZ (right), members of the R&R Pillar Committee and JESNA Board.

Teachers Uplifted by Grinspoon-Steinhardt Events at the GA

The third class of Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award recipients, outstanding Jewish teachers from North America, came to the GA for three days of learning and celebration. Thirty-six of the 44 Award recipients attended the seminar and Awards ceremony. The teachers honored this year represented all denominations and Jewish school settings – a true microcosm of the field. The opening orientation, led for the second year by Cheryl Finkel of PEJE, was warm and spirited, with teachers introducing each other to the group. It was not uncommon for the teachers to express their amazement at the commonalities among them, despite the diversity in their teaching experience and the settings and communities they came from.

The teachers also attended the JESNA Board dinner, hosted by Diane Troderman and Harold Grinspoon, where they had the opportunity to hear Barry Shrage, president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, offer an inspiring vision of how education can power a Jewish Renaissance in North America.



2002 Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award Winners with Harold Grinspoon and Diane Troderman.



From right to left: Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award winners Ilana Schechter, San Francisco, CA, and Aliza First, Los Angeles, CA, enjoying the JESNA Board dinner.

Other highlights included a guided tour of the National Museum of American Jewish History and Congregation Mikveh Israel, the Covenant Awards Luncheon, and, of course, the Grinspoon Steinhardt Awards reception, attended by over 300 people who came to honor the teachers.

Teachers were effusive in their praise of the Awards. “We want more communities to participate next year,” one commented. “I am going home to tell the leadership of my federation and Central Agency what an important event this was in my professional development.” Many of



Jon Woocher, JESNA President, with Larry Moses, The Wexner Foundation President.



Diane Troderman and Harold Grinspoon share a laughing moment during the Awards reception.



From right to left: Barry Shrage and Dan Segal, JESNA Board member.



From right to left: Rabbi Avraham Schwartz (NY), Neil and Judy Weintraub (St. Louis), Marsha Goldstein (Cleveland) and her sister Lois Mager.

the teachers hope to be able to reunite this coming summer as the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards program offers its first seminar in Israel for the first three cohorts of Award winners.

For more information, please contact Amy Amiel at amamiel@jesna.org.

RENAISSANCE AND RENEWAL

Tune Into Israel Education Month: There's Something for Everyone

How can students living in Chicago, Kansas City and Pittsburgh all enjoy the same Tu B'shvat Seder without having to travel to a common location? Sounds 'virtually' impossible, right? Now they can! There will be a 'virtual seder', accessible to day schools throughout North America as the first of many unique opportunities that will be offered from January 19 through February 16 as part of Israel Education Month. Israel Education Month (IEM) is an initiative of the UJC/JESNA Jewish Renaissance and Renewal alliance in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel's Jewish-Zionist Education Department, as well as a host of national and local partner agencies.

IEM calls attention to the important role that engagement with Israel should play as part of every individual's Jewish educational experience. IEM will serve as the springboard for ongoing efforts to strengthen Israel education in formal and informal settings, and to develop new approaches to involving young people and adults in meaningful educational encounters in Israel, its people, its significance in Jewish history and its place in contemporary Jewish life.

IEM is a month-long cornucopia of programs and activities taking place locally, nationally, and in cyberspace. One highlight is an online flash video that brings to life Israeli sights and sounds that can be viewed privately or downloaded and shared with an audience as an educational tool. Another IEM initiative is called



“House Calls,” in which master educators and tour guides who have led Israel experience trips for North American communities will run sessions for teachers,

Israel-related committees, adults, high school and college students in North American communities. In addition to programs sponsored by JAFI, UJC-JESNA, and other national partner agencies, communities will be provided with tools to create their own dynamic educational programming.

A special Web site, www.israeleducationmonth.org, has been setup to serve as a resource clearinghouse for IEM. In addition to a host of educational materials, the site will also feature contributions by prominent figures like Gil Troy, author of *Why I am a Zionist* and professor at McGill University, who is writing age-appropriate pieces for educators to use in classrooms and informal settings.

Another highlight of IEM is *Libi B'Mizrach*, a satellite conference that will be held on January 30 sponsored by the UJC Rabbinic Cabinet and the R&R Pillar in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). This special program, which is taking place in Israel, and broadcast live to local federations, will engage rabbis in study about the land, people and our connection to Israel. The opening address will be delivered by Noam Zion, director of curriculum and teacher education at the Shalom Hartman Institute. Respondents will include: Rabbi Michael Marmor, dean HUC-JIR Jerusalem; Rabbi Einat Ramon, Ph.D., Schechter Institute; and Rabbi Ed Snitkoff, JAFI Education Department.

The success of IEM reflects the efforts of the many agencies involved that are providing programmatic resources to schools, college campus, early childhood, and adult Jewish learning programs – all with the goal of heightening people's awareness of and connection to the land of Israel. A partial listing of partners includes: ADCA, the Association of Directors of Central Agencies; Hillel: Foundation for Campus Jewish Life; the Jewish Community Centers Association; birthright israel; the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and other national Jewish agencies.

For a full listing of IEM programs, as well as how IEM can help you, visit www.israeleducationmonth.org.

For more information, please contact Rafi Cohen at Rafi.Cohen@ujc.org.

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

DeLeT Vision Leads to Early Successes: Teachers Better Prepared to Hit the Classroom

Laura Lauder, a day school parent, venture capitalist, philanthropist, and new member of the JESNA Board had first hand experience with the challenges of finding talented individuals to teach a demanding integrated day school curriculum. But Laura didn't stop with recognizing a problem. Using



HUC-JIR Dean Lewis Barth (right) and Professor Sara Lee, director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education and co-chair of the DeLeT Academic and Professional Advisory Committee (left) discuss DeLeT at a meeting at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

her entrepreneurial skills, she proposed and spearheaded the development of a solution: a new recruitment/fellowship-training program for day school teachers – **DeLeT: Day School Leadership Through Teaching**. With assistance from Jonathan Woocher, JESNA's president, and Josh Elkin, executive

director of Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), Laura initiated a planning process that shaped her idea into a groundbreaking program. Finding partners who shared this vision led to the venture philanthropy partnership that initiated **DeLeT**'s three-year pilot phase, which is now in the middle of its second year.

DeLeT's donor partners today include Laura and Gary Lauder, Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, Edgar Bronfman, Debbie and Jeffrey Swartz, Howard and Leslie Schultz, Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, The Crown Family Foundation, The Covenant Foundation, The Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and The Albert and Janet Schultz Supporting Foundation. Their dollars are making possible a multi-dimensional program that incorporates:

- a pre-service preparation and induction program for teachers that include generous fellowship stipends and scholarships;
- Mentor Teacher Institutes and stipends for day school teachers who commit to a year of learning how to teach new teachers about teaching through processes of mentoring, co-planning, and coaching;

- a national day school teacher recruitment project that introduces Jews across the country to a Jewish education career in day school teaching with the help of the **DeLeT** Web site and follow-up support from the national **DeLeT** office; and
- an evaluation project that will spread ideas about improving teacher learning throughout the Jewish community.



With the dynamic direction from Academic Directors Sharon Feiman-Nemser (Brandeis University) and Michael Zeldin (HUC-JIR, Los Angeles), Program Directors Judy Elkin and Luisa Latham, and the clinical staff and faculty, Laura's vision is now operating in the real world of classrooms, teachers and students. Nine day schools, 18 Cohort One fellows and their 20-plus mentor teachers are working on the front lines to implement a new model for teacher preparation and support.

According to **DeLeT** Executive Director, Dr. Jane West Walsh, **DeLeT**'s success depends on partnerships of many different kinds. She explains, "JESNA, Brandeis, HUC-JIR, and nine **DeLeT** day schools from across the country have been the institutional partners that have helped launch **DeLeT**'s pilot program year. The partnership of first-rate academic institutions, innovative day schools, caring veteran teachers, a group of far-sighted and generous financial supporters, an outstanding advisory team, and JESNA, which stepped forward to serve as our fiscal and administrative home, has produced a program that we believe can produce dozens of new teachers to inspire hundreds of young people and help change the face of day school teaching across the continent."



DeLeT fellows and their mentor teachers enjoy a meal as they begin their year of work together at the first Summer Institute.

DeLeT is now recruiting candidates for Cohort Two, whose fellowship will begin in July 2003. For more information or to refer candidates to this program, contact Dr. Jane West Walsh, executive director, at jane_west_walsh@delet.org or check out the Web site at www.delet.org.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Engaging Our Youth: Partnering Communities Program Strengthens Youth Initiatives

Initial Success in Vancouver and Kansas City

Here's a paradox to ponder: Active Jewish involvement during the adolescent years is perhaps the single most powerful spur to lifelong Jewish commitment. Yet, before they graduate from high school, more than half of our Jewish teenagers will drop out of Jewish education and activities.

In an effort to change this pattern, five communities have joined with JESNA and the Institute for Informal Jewish

Education (IJE) at Brandeis University to launch the Partnering Communities Program (PCP). PCP is an outgrowth of the successful network that JESNA has developed with IJE for communities that are engaged in community-wide youth initiatives. PCP will serve as a laboratory for developing and testing "new practice" aimed at strengthening these initiatives as vehicles for engaging and educating larger number of Jewish teens. The program focuses on collective problem solving that allows each community to identify and address its needs with the aid of professional and peer assistance.

Below are highlights of two of the PCP communities that are working with JESNA:

VANCOUVER

The Vancouver community is comprised of a number of micro-communities with limited interagency communication or understanding of the nature of social and programmatic networks. To help, JESNA has joined with the JCC of Greater Vancouver and the planning department of the Federation to promote a greater degree of interaction between the different sub-communities in Vancouver.

As the Vancouver "team" begins the process of creating better and more inclusive youth programming and network systems, one initial step they are taking is the facilitation of an environmental scan to identify what teen programming and services already exist, who and how many staff members work in these programs, and what types of background, training and experience the staff possess or still need. JESNA's staff, primarily Wendy Rosov, senior research associate at the Berman Center, and Devorah Silverman, director of youth initiatives, are providing expert guidance and assistance with this process.

With JESNA's assistance, the Vancouver community will now be armed with the instruments required to move forward in a systematic, effective, and all-inclusive effort. Beginning this January, approximately 30 youth serving organizations such as camps, youth groups, synagogue programs, day schools, and others, will be guided through a

comprehensive self-assessment process. Once the environmental scan is complete, the next step will be to begin the Needs Assessment Study, which will identify how the community will fill in the missing gaps that currently exist.

KANSAS CITY

Kansas City, which began its collaboration with JESNA even before the Kol Ha Na'ar conference in 2001, has a number of overall goals: to engage under-engaged youth; to develop community-wide programming for youth; and to contextualize short-term intensive programs for youth.

About nine months ago the Kansas City Team began working with JESNA's staff, primarily Wendy Rosov, senior research associate at the Berman Center, and Devorah Silverman, director of youth initiatives, and Joe Reimer, director of the IJE, to begin this process. Their first step is to develop a sophisticated tracking mechanism, which will detail the affiliation of all the youth involved in congregational life. With seven congregations and over 1,000 students, they are looking to track every informal experience that their youth are engaged in. Their pilot effort will focus on pre- and post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah age students, and subsequently they hope to track everyone who is in third grade through young professionals up to 26 years old.

Karen Gerson, director of Learning for Life at the Central Agency for Jewish Education and the Federation, explains, "This is a much larger age group than is usually tracked, and is thus requiring a rather complicated tracking mechanism that has never before been used within the Jewish world. Wendy Rosov from the Berman Center has been a terrific fit for us, and her expertise is allowing us to create the system needed to track the continuum of informal experiences of our youth. Our ultimate goal is to raise the consciousness and awareness of this age group who are currently dropping out after Bar and Bat Mitzvah."

After Kansas City successfully tracks their youth and finds out how many people are participating in what programs, the next step is to create more effective programming for them, and for the professionals who work with them.

PCP efforts are being facilitated, in part, thanks to the generous support of individual donors and foundations, including the Jewish Community Foundation, which is actively involved in the process.

For additional information about the Partnering Communities Program, or the five current participating communities (Atlanta, Boston, Kansas City, San Francisco and Vancouver), please contact Devorah Silverman, director of youth initiatives, at devorah@jesna.org.

Covenant Award Recipients Honored at November Luncheon in Philadelphia

Over 300 people attended the festive Covenant Awards luncheon at the Crystal Tea Room in conjunction with the November 2002 General Assembly.

The Awards were presented by Susan Crown, a co-founder of the Covenant Foundation, Lester Crown, and Renee Schine Crown to, respectively, **Rivy Poupko Kletenik** (Seattle, WA), **Rabbi Sidney Schwarz** (Silver Spring, MD) and **Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan** (San Francisco, CA).

Each recipient spoke movingly about their experiences as teachers and Jews. Ms. Kletenik, nominated by Michelle Rosen, was honored for her work as a community educator. Rabbi Schwarz, nominated by Dr. Shulamith Reich Elster, was recognized for his work with Jewish youth as the Founder and Director of PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values. Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan, nominated by Dr. Isa Aron, was accorded this honor for his work as a synagogue educator at Congregation Emanu-El. Eli Evans, chair of the Covenant Foundation board of directors, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the occasion.



From left to right: Lester Crown, Rabbi Sidney Schwarz, Rivy Poupko Kletenik, and Rabbi Peretz Wolfe-Prusan.

Welcome New JESNA Board Members

We are pleased to announce our five new Board Members and one new Chair's Appointment. Please join us in welcoming...



Paul Flotken from St. Louis, Missouri



Michal Hart Hillman from Atlanta, Georgia



Martin Kaminer from New York City



Laura Lauder from Atherton, California



Searle E. Mitnick from Baltimore, Maryland

Chair's Appointment



Alan Ades from Longboat Key, Florida

Order Form For:

Building Jewish Education for the 21st Century: JESNA's Strategic Plan



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Please return form to Amy Stein, JESNA, 111 Eighth Avenue, 11th floor, NY, NY 10011.



Center for Excellence in Congregational Education: Promises Much More than “Supplemental” Improvements

Thanks to a generous grant from the Ricky & Andrew Jay Shechtel-Philanthropic Fund and additional support from Charles Nirenberg, JESNA has embarked on the next stages of its efforts to strengthen congregational and communal Jewish education. Guided by the recommendations of the Task Force that JESNA convened three years ago to deal with this critical arena, JESNA has been identifying and disseminating promising strategies for improving congregational education and forging links with cutting edge projects and thinkers.

Now, with the support from the Shechtel Foundation, JESNA is designing and laying the groundwork for a **Center for Excellence in Congregational Education**. The Center will serve as a catalyst, convener and resource for improvement efforts throughout the field. The planning committee for the Center, which is chaired by Gail Weinstein, consists of JESNA Board members, lay leaders, representatives of a number of partnering organizations and interested funders.

Ricky Shechtel, a day school graduate and a parent who sends her children to congregational school, considers herself a staunch supporter of Jewish education. “We are pleased to be

supporting the **Center for Excellence in Congregational Education**,” she comments. “I am particularly interested in change on the national level, and for all aspects of congregational education to be affected, including lay leadership, curriculum, quality of teachers, etc.” The Foundation is also funding a congregational education program at the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education in Philadelphia as well as IFund, a project of Jewish Funders Network, CAJE and JESNA.

The first step in creating the Center is to further develop the knowledge base that is crucial to guide new initiatives in the field. Although more Jewish children and their families are educated in congregations than in any other setting, there is surprisingly little systematic information about the state of congregational education and about current efforts to improve it.

Working with JESNA’s Berman Center, the planning committee will start to gather relevant material, extant research, and publications, and conduct additional data gathering and post the information online on JESNA’s Sosland Online Resource Center. The committee also plans to bring together many of the key players who participated in last December’s Congregational Education Think Tank again in May along with others working in the field and outside experts to address the question of how to “scale up” improvement efforts that are currently working.

For more information, please contact Steve Kraus at steve@jesna.org.

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.



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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.