

CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNAL JEWISH EDUCATION

Center for Excellence in Congregational Education: An Ideal Becoming Real

JESNA's Efforts to Strengthen Congregational and Communal Jewish Education Advance

Full 2003 will mark the formal launch of the Center for Excellence in Congregational Education, which was approved by JESNA's Board at the 2003 Winter Kallah. The development of the Center has been generously funded by the **Ricky and Andrew Jay Shechtel Philanthropic Fund**, with additional support from **Charles Nirenberg**. The **Jim Joseph Foundation** has given JESNA a two-year challenge grant to help support the launch of the Center.

The most recent step in designing and beginning the work of the Center was a *Think Tank*, held in June in New York City. The *Think Tank* focused on identifying the strategies and steps needed to achieve improvement in congregational education on a systemic scale, and how the Center for Excellence in Congregational Education can facilitate this work. This *Think Tank* also afforded JESNA the opportunity to continue to forge links with cutting-edge thinkers and partners.

The formulation this summer of the new Center's work plan and its formal launch in the fall are the culmination of several years of intense research and evaluation, deliberations with leaders from throughout the field, and initial projects aimed at strengthening congregational education. Highlights of the process included:

Summer 2000

JESNA published *A Vision for Excellence*, the report of the Task Force on Congregational and Communal Jewish Education.



Spring and Fall 2001

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. Steve Kraus, JESNA's director of school support and development, and Rob Weinberg, ECE's executive director, prepared a report of findings for presentation at a December 2001 *Think Tank*.

Winter 2001

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

Lead Collaborators and Donors to the Center for Excellence in Congregational Education

- ADCA (Association of Directors of Central Agencies)
- Departments of Education of the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Movements
- Ricky and Andrew Jay Shechtel Philanthropic Fund
- Jim Joseph Foundation
- Charles Nirenberg

JESNA utilized the results of the *Think Tank* to prepare an options paper for strategic funding of congregational and communal Jewish education improvement initiatives. The paper incorporated the ideas generated at the *Think Tank* and lessons learned from the site visits and previous research.

Spring 2002

The first concept paper for the Center was drafted. JESNA's Committee on Congregational and Communal Jewish Education reviewed the Concept Paper and recommended that planning proceed.

Winter 2003

JESNA's Program Planning Work Group reviewed the proposal

CHAIR'S COLUMN



Helene Berger

I write this column, having just returned from my first Jewish Funders Network (JFN) conference in San Jose, CA. I am exhilarated for many reasons.

First, it was inspiring to be surrounded by hundreds of people, half of whom seemed to be in their thirties, who are not just blessed with abundant financial resources, but who choose to use those resources to create a better Jewish world.

Next, I was delighted to see the keen interest, and yes, even passion, in the many sessions devoted to Jewish education.

Third, I felt unabashed pleasure in the many expressions of the high regard in which JESNA is held. I only wish I had a video camera to record the unsolicited accolades for JESNA's role as a convener, enabler, inspirer, evaluator, collaborator, nurturer, advocate, resource and visionary.

JESNA has long understood, and is creating a climate where others understand, that if Jewish education is to move toward the universal excellence it envisions, it must operate through a network of strategic partnerships and alliances. We can no longer operate in isolation — each institution acting alone as if it did not have similar challenges and similar goals.

It struck me, both as I reviewed the articles slated for this issue of @jesna.org, and the activities that have engaged us so strongly over the past six months, that the thread running through this issue of the newsletter and our work is

connections or relationships. We are beginning to think in terms of a "system" for Jewish education that is marked by a complex web of voluntary, respectful relationships between organizations of all sizes, purposes and viewpoints.

JESNA's vast experience in building these types of relationships, exemplified by those profiled in this issue — partnerships, cooperative ventures, vendor-client relationships, the convening of like-minded or similarly motivated groups and individuals — is our hallmark and the key to an amazing array of successful projects and collaborations.

I believe that the JESNA Board itself reflects the diversity described above with its varied experiences, talents, passions and even geographical spread. Each brings their unique vision to the table, yet we build consensus that enhances all our endeavors. Ours is not a silent or passive Board. I marvel at the many

times a few of us with staff have worked for weeks to refine a document or a plan until we're sure it's good only to bring it to the Board for approval in a conference call, and emerge with an essentially different plan. There is such depth of knowledge and wisdom and experience on our Board. That coupled with our equally strong and talented staff constantly challenges us to expand our vision and our determination to seek inspiring and consistently excellent Jewish education.

Seeking excellence is a demanding goal — but one to which we are committed. Together as our connections grow, as we continue to move towards cooperation in building a system that reflects what we universally aspire to for Jewish education, we will fulfill our thousands of years old mandate to transmit our rich heritage in a compelling way to future generations of Jews.

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

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during the 2003 Winter Kallah and recommended that JESNA's Board approve the creation of the Center for Excellence in Congregational Education.

Spring 2003

JESNA convened its second *Think Tank*, which:

1. Presented the findings from a series of interviews that JESNA conducted with lay and professional leaders of congregational schools about the status of improvement initiatives;

2. Examined in greater detail the "theories of change" embodied in these initiatives – and what it actually takes to substantially improve a congregation's education;
3. Explored the complementary and unique roles that the Center and its partners will play; and
4. Discussed what type of human resources, tools and knowledge base will be needed to improve the quality of congregational education.

For more information on the Center for Excellence in Congregational Education, please contact Steve Kraus at steve@jesna.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dr. Jonathan Woocher

JESNA's new Strategic Plan describes our role on the Jewish educational landscape as being that of a "system-builder." Fancy language. But what does it actually mean, and why do we see this role as so critical to Jewish education's success and JESNA's future?

The focal point and driving force for all of JESNA's work is our goal: creating consistently excellent Jewish education for every Jew. Why "consistent excellence?" Because without it, we as a community will be short-changing the millions of Jews who deserve to know that being Jewish is a precious opportunity to live a life of joy and responsibility, warmth and courage, connection and fulfillment. Inspiring, engaging, challenging, satisfying Jewish learning experiences, whether in schools, camps, synagogues, JCCs, Hillels, on the Internet, or on trips to Israel, convey this message with unmatched impact. If we want a vibrant Jewish future in the 21st century, we need consistently excellent Jewish education. It's as simple as that.

But how do we achieve such excellence, not just in a few places, but wherever Jews learn? The only way is by empowering and assisting those charged with creating such excellence, the educators and institutions on the front lines, to excel. "System-building" is about putting in place and making available to those whom we charge with the awesome responsibility "*v'shinantem l'banekha*" — "teach them diligently to your children," and we would add "your adult peers" as well — what they need to succeed in their sacred work.

Those on the front lines of Jewish education today, whether parents, teachers, day school heads, camp directors, curriculum writers, or the myriad others responsible for education's impact, all depend on help and support to get their job done. They need financial resources to be sure. They also need ready access to good ideas and the lessons learned from others' experiences. The vast majority need educational materials and resources — and some guidance as to which are the most appropriate and effective for various populations under various circumstances. Individual educators need productive relationships with parents, boards, supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues. Institutions need similarly good relationships with organizations they look to for support,

guidance, or to complement their educational efforts. Often, those on the front lines need hands-on help to solve problems and deal with the inevitable challenges that emerge along the way.

The list could go on. The bottom line is that almost no one can create excellent Jewish education in a vacuum. Like it or not, we are all part of systems that inspire, shape, and support our efforts. We can do much better education when that system is responsive, easy to navigate, reliable, and itself high-performing.

And therein lies the problem. The educational "system" today too often can't deliver what those on the front lines need. It is under-capitalized, not only in monetary terms, but in terms of intellectual, human, and social capital. There's an enormous amount that we don't know about what it takes to create excellent Jewish education: what has worked in the past, when and why; what the needs, concerns, and attitudes of our target populations are; how best to translate these into effective educational experiences and programs. Even what we do know is often inaccessible to those on the front lines — they don't know where to find it or how to separate the kernels of useful knowledge from the chaff of unsupported opinion. And basic statistical and descriptive data about the shape of

and developments in the field? Fuhgedaboutit! What we don't know, and therefore can't make use of, would fill many books — the number of schools, the preparation of educators, trends in adult learning participation, use of technology, etc., etc., etc.

We also don't have nearly enough well-trained people to help guide educators and institutions to perform up to their potential. We need coaches, trainers, and mentors, and, of course, the materials they need to do their work effectively — case studies, toolkits, "best practices" compendia.

Of course, we don't have enough educators period. No principal is better than the teachers she or he is able to send into the classroom. Where will these educators come from? Today, we place too much of the burden for recruitment and preparation on individual institutions and on the handful of currently operating, invariably under-funded, educator training programs. We lack sophisticated, systematic approaches to educator recruitment, development and retention, and we pay the price for this in too few talented individuals entering the field and too few remaining to make long-term careers.

The dearth of collaborative activity in this area mirrors what goes on in the field as a whole. Despite substantial

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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good will and frequent good intentions, Jewish education today remains what Susan Shevitz described as an “organized anarchy.” Inducing institutions to cooperate, to see themselves and behave as allies in a common struggle rather than competitors, remains far more difficult than it should be. Collaboration is not natural; it requires effort and resources. Nor is it a panacea for education’s ills. But, heightened cooperation will open up many opportuni-

ties for savings and synergies that will make every front-line educator’s and institution’s efforts more productive and more efficient.

So, where does JESNA fit into this picture? As an organization dedicated to and exceptionally capable of building the support system for educational excellence on the front lines that does not yet exist. We do this through expanding, bundling, and smartly deploying Jewish education’s human, intellectual, social, and financial capital. We gather, organize and disseminate knowledge. We bring parties who

can learn from and support one another together. We make educational resources and expertise easy to find and to access. We enlist front-line partners in exploring the new frontiers of best practice. We help practitioners and policy-makers learn from their experiences and improve their performance. We go where individual institutions can’t to identify promising pools of talent for Jewish education and to encourage them to make this their life’s work. We identify the tough problems and assemble the coalitions needed to create solutions –

and then we’re there to staff, support, and guide this work.

“System-building” sounds esoteric, but it isn’t. It’s a nuts and bolts, day-by-day job, guided by a strategic vision of how to create enduring change. We often use a quote (borrowed from BASF) to describe what we do and the impact we have: “At JESNA, we don’t make Jewish education; we make Jewish education better.” System-building is how we do this, and how we’ll do it increasingly well and with growing impact over the years ahead.

DAY SCHOOL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

A Passion for Jewish Renaissance

More than 600 Gather to Support Jewish Day Schools at PEJE Assemblies in Los Angeles

Professional and lay leaders from Jewish day schools and communal organizations, including a large contingent of JESNA Board members, joined forces en masse for the first time to act as advocates for North American day schools during the Donor and Leadership Assemblies hosted by the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) in Los Angeles, February 2–4, 2003. A number of JESNA staff members planned and presented sessions and prepared materials distributed at both meetings. The **Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education**, convened jointly by JESNA and UJC, played a prominent role at the Assemblies and was featured in several sessions. (To read more about the Continental Council see page 16.)

“You are at the forefront of making North American day schools accessible, affordable and of the highest caliber,” said keynote speaker and mega-philanthropist Michael Steinhardt to the crowd of more than 600. Steinhardt called the Assemblies, “the largest pluralistic gathering ever devoted to day school education in North America.”

The Assemblies focused on how to strengthen on day school advo-

cacy, financial support and management. The event was divided into two parts: the Donor Assembly, which began on Sunday, February 2, and the first ever Leadership Assembly which picked up where the Donor Assembly left off on Monday afternoon.

Increasing the number of day school donors was on the top of the agenda at the Donor Assembly, the first of the two meetings.

“Frankly, our efforts have not been enough,” Steinhardt remarked during his address at the opening plenary session for the Donor Assembly. “Currently there are approximately 1,800 major day school donors in North America. We need to double that number.”

Steinhardt noted that, in total, the North American day schools are short about \$500 million in operating and building costs and endowments. “Unless we find a way to fill this funding gap, schools will not be able to maintain competitive salaries to attract top-notch teachers; scholarships to attract a diverse student body; and endowments to ensure long-term financial security,” he said.

After the plenary session, donors participated in workshops where they brainstormed and traded ideas on the best ways to attract more day school supporters and donors.

Research Findings Unveiled

Leora Isaacs, JESNA’s vice president for program and organizational learning, presented the latest research conducted on pro-

grams designed to make day schools more affordable (i.e., tuition subvention, reduction and scholarship programs that are funded by foundations, federations and schools.) The Affordability Working Group of the **Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education** commissioned this research.

During a session focused on strengthening the case for increased day school support, PEJE released the findings of a national research study on donor attitudes toward day schools to help solicitors better understand the motivations of current and potential donors to Jewish day schools. Also discussed at the Assembly was a parallel study of the attitudes of federation leadership toward day schools, undertaken on behalf of the **Continental Council**, to guide advocacy efforts with federations.

“Research has become a very important tool for fundraising,” said Emilie Kendall, senior consultant of TDC, a non-profit consulting and research firm, who spearheaded both research studies. “For example, we found that 82% of the donors questioned said they give to day schools to ensure Jewish continuity. This information, along with the rest of the results from the recent study, can inform future donor communication and cultivation strategies.”

Jeffery Swartz Addresses Leadership Assembly

Jeffery Swartz, CEO and President of the Timberland Company, PEJE partner, and father of three day school children, opened the Leadership Assembly on Monday afternoon. “In order to build Jewish institutions, a Mishkan in the desert, or truly excellent day schools in America, we need a long list of different materials – from curriculum to teacher training, from board development to financial resources. And, in order to develop these materials, we need a committed congregation of leaders whose hearts will motivate them to give time, money and expertise.”

“We have to recruit, train, love and value the teachers. We have to create the curriculum that delivers uncompromising excellence, we have to build the boards to govern, and create the resource network that will support all this and more. And it is time for us to stop being so polite about our agenda,” says Swartz.

After the speech, attendees at the Leadership Assembly joined work groups on topics relating to financial resource development, student recruitment, affordability, leadership/board issues and personnel issues. PEJE, JESNA, and the **Continental Council** are following up vigorously on these and other issues aired at the Assemblies in order to continue the process of building a strong day school movement in North America.

For more information on the Continental Council and JESNA's day school initiatives, please contact Steve Kraus at steve@jesna.org.

Covenant Foundation Announces New Award Winners

The Covenant Foundation announces the recipients of the 13th annual Covenant Awards for outstanding Jewish educators in North America. The impressive award carries a **\$25,000** prize to the award recipient, and an additional **\$5,000** to the recipient's institution. Each winner embodies leadership and excellence within the field of Jewish education. The distinguished recipients are **Rabbi William C. Berk**, Senior Rabbi, Temple Chai, Phoenix, nominated by Dr. Lois J. Zachary; **Vicky Kelman**, Director, Family Education Project of the Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (BJESF), San Francisco, nominated by Robert Sherman; and **Zipora Schorr**, Director of Education, Beth Tfiloh Community School, Baltimore, nominated by Dr. Chaim Y. Botwinick.

This year's winners were nominated by colleagues and lay leaders, and supported by community members, as well as current and former students. The three educators have each contributed significantly to the field of Jewish education. Whether by contributing to synagogue life in a distinctive community, by growing and nurturing the emerging field of Jewish family education, or by creating a standard of excellence in day school education, each winner has modeled Jewish education's finest practices in diverse settings.

For more information on the 2003 Covenant award winners, please contact Linda Shriner-Cahn at Linda@covenantfn.org.

JESNA Congratulates the 2003 Covenant Award Winners

Rabbi William C. Berk, Phoenix
Vicky Kelman, San Francisco
Zipora Schorr, Baltimore

The Covenant Foundation was established in 1990 by the Crown Family Foundation in partnership with JESNA. The purpose of the Covenant Foundation is to build on existing strengths within the field of Jewish education in North America across all denominations and in all educational settings. By honoring outstanding Jewish educators and supporting creative approaches to programming, the Covenant Foundation hopes to strengthen endeavors in education that perpetuate the identity and heritage of the Jewish people.

2003 Winter Kallah

Over 75 attend productive Winter Kallah in San Fernando Valley

Sunny Woodland Hills, CA served as the backdrop to the 2003 Winter Kallah held at the Marriott Warner Center. Over 75 people attended



Barbara Shuman, Kallah co-chair.

the event including JESNA Board members, ADCA members and Central Agency presidents. A special thank you to our Winter

Kallah Co-Chairs, **Claire Ellman**, **Barbara Shuman**, **Gil Graff**, and **Cecile Jordan**, who worked tirelessly to produce a fantastic event.

With a very full agenda that included work, discussion and learning, the Kallah's theme, *Creating Community: Strengthening the JESNA/ADCA*



From left to right: Seth Krosner, president of San Diego's Agency for Jewish Education; Claire Ellman, Kallah co-chair; Ann Jaffe, JESNA Board member and Cecile Jordan, Kallah co-chair.

Partnership in Pursuit of Excellence in Jewish Education, remained at the forefront of the action-packed meeting.

There were many highlights during the four-day conference including the JESNA Board's wholehearted endorsement of the evolving creation of a new **Center for Excellence in Congregational Education** (see page 1 for more information).

Another conference highlight included the opening session "debate" between Board members **Richard Krugel** and **Barbara Shuman** on whether JESNA is a service-agency or a force for social change. Each of the presenters made compelling arguments, and the verdict is in – JESNA will continue to provide service while it presents opportunities for change to educational leaders within local commu-

nities. A warm thank you to **David Steirman**, who introduced the session, **Leora Isaacs**, who expertly facilitated the conversation, and **Cass Gottlieb**, who eloquently wove it all together.

Scholar-in-residence **Rabbi Ed Feinstein** spoke about how the writings of Abraham Joshua Heschel offered a real prescription for a Jewish community struggling to find personal



Board members Mark Lainer, Richard Krugel, and David Steirman with Elaine Bloom, JESNA's major gifts officer.

meaning while maintaining its sense of community. Rabbi Feinstein provided the group with tremendous guidance by tying the teachings of Heschel with the work that JESNA and ADCA are doing today with Jewish education.

A final highlight to the Kallah was the very last session conducted by Benita Gayle-Almeleh on Advocacy for Jewish Education, which was chaired by **Martin Kaminer**, and fostered a lively discussion.

But, of course, the favorite among Winter Kallah attendees had to be the lovely reception

Saturday evening at the home of **Ellie and Mark Lainer**. A fabulous collection of artwork that included magnificent pieces in glass, and a delicious dairy buffet complemented an extremely memorable evening of wonderful food and delightful conversation. Thank you Ellie and Mark!

Southern California in the winter...

A delightful interlude at the home of Ellie and Mark Lainer...

Spirited discussions...

Lively debates...

The Winter Kallah brought together a broad range of professionals who examined a universal set of issues in a lovely and productive setting. It's official... *the Winter Kallah exceeded everyone's expectations.*

Questions about the Kallah? Please contact **Ellen Goldstein** at ellen@jesna.org.

Media Meida: Where Jewish Educational Professionals Connect

Originally published by JESNA as a newsletter for Jewish educators interested in educational technology, *Media Meida* has risen from the ashes of its youth. Today it is paperless – and is filled with valuable tips and news.

Based on a survey conducted by JESNA last summer, the new *Media Meida* is offered quarterly to subscribers and includes several new features. *Media Meida* fosters networking and the sharing of resources among educational professionals who are interested in or working with media and technology in Jewish education. News and announcements from subscribers, tips on innovative products and services, and real life experiences on the use of media and technology in Jewish education are included in this new online resource.

Subscriptions to *Media Meida* are free! But, you must opt-in to subscribe. Contact Elisa Haidt at ehaidt@jesna.org and stay connected with your peers through *Media Meida*.

If you have news or tips that you want to share on the use of media and technology in Jewish education, please contact Elisa Haidt at ehaidt@jesna.org.

Media Meida, a free online newsletter for Jewish educators, features:

- Curricular initiatives involving Jewish technology
-
- Articles and/or advice on integrating educational technology in school settings
-
- Web sites
-
- Software
-
- News
-
- Professional Development Opportunities
-
- Distance Learning Opportunities
-
- Events
-
- Research

Updated Survey of Distance Learning in Jewish Education Available Now

2002 Survey Updated and Available Online

Providing sustained Jewish education, especially for educators, is not a new phenomenon. But the ability to do this through the use of online distance learning is a rapidly developing one — and there are many noteworthy initiatives of distance learning in Jewish education available today.

JESNA's *Survey of Distance Learning in Jewish Education* presents different models with an emphasis on programs for the professional development of Jewish educators. The original survey, published in May 2002, is a work in progress that is revised and expanded as other programs are identified and data is refined.

The 2003 Survey of Distance Learning in Jewish Education is available now at www.jesna.org. A terrific resource for educators and students, the survey provides information on the registration process, interactive and time-bound courses, and educational goals of institutions across North America.

For additional information on JESNA's Survey of Distance Learning in Jewish Education, please contact Elisa Haidt at ehaidt@jesna.org.

NECC Annual Conference: June 29–July 2, 2003

All Jewish Educators Invited!

JESNA, the Associated Talmud Torahs (ATT) of Chicago, and the Board of Jewish Education (BJE) of Greater New York co-hosted the annual Jewish Educators Network at the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) from June 29 through July 2 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in Seattle. This year, Madeline Rothbard and Leora Wollner of The Epstein School, a Solomon Schechter Day School in Atlanta, were the featured speakers at the Jewish Educators Network. Madeline and Leora shared their experiences of how they integrated the media and technology departments in a Jewish day school to serve as a hub of information literacy.

Thank you for joining us at this exciting conference and learning how to apply educational technology and media to Jewish education!

For more information on the NECC Annual Conference, please contact Elisa Haidt at ehaidt@jesna.org.

Nearly 20 Grinspoon-Steinhardt Award Winners Participate in Kivunim 2003

Educators joined 70 others at the Eugene Weiner Israel Summer Institute for Teachers in North American Jewish Schools this summer.

Nearly 20 educators from North America joined 70 others on **Kivunim 2003** in Israel this summer. These esteemed **Grinspoon-Steinhardt** winners used part of their professional development cash award to participate in a renowned program developed by Peter Geffen, a Jewish educator and founder of the Abraham Joshua Heschel School in New York.

“I truly believe that Israel is magical and I am absolutely thrilled to be included in this study trip,” said Norine Rosenblum of

Steinhardt award recipient has opened doors for further personal and professional enrichment opportunities. In our busy professional lives, we don’t often have the time to participate in such an experiential learning program, either because of time or financial commitments. To be together with other great educators, as a *Chevruta*, with an itinerary of this caliber, is a privilege. I look forward to being among and learning from some of the most gifted and talented Jewish scholars in Israel,” said Tarshish.

I am excited to be part of Kivunim 2003. First of all, the opportunity to go to Israel at any time is spiritually enriching. Secondly, to make connections with Israeli educators and gifted professionals will be a great learning opportunity. Additionally, being with the other Grinspoon-Steinhardt award recipients will allow us to network and learn from one another, creating a bond that would not necessarily otherwise happen.

— Heidi Tarshish, 2001 Grinspoon-Steinhardt award winner and Kivunim participant.

Kansas City, MO, a 2002 award winner. “I want to explore learning through the five senses on this trip. It is just a wonderful and incredible opportunity for us teachers to be around each other in such a magical environment.”

Heidi Tarshish, a teacher from Minneapolis and 2001 recipient of a Grinspoon-Steinhardt award, joined Rosenblum in Israel. “Being a Grinspoon-

Kivunim 2003 began Monday, June 30 with a visit to Tayelet, the Sherover Promenade lookout over the city of Jerusalem. There, Kivunim participants got a general introduction to the city, its topography, setting, climate, and most of all, its mystery and eternity. Dr. Avram Infeld, Founder of the Melitz Institute of Jerusalem, spoke of his personal experience with the city. Participants then lis-

Mazal Tov to the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Teachers Participating in Kivunim 2003

- Ines Ades, Cleveland, OH
- Marcia Anouchi, Cleveland, OH
- Mary Baumgarten, Minneapolis, MN
- Barbara Freedman, Montreal, PQ
- Ilana Friedlander, San Jose, CA
- Marty Gardner, Greater New York Area
- Marsha Goldstein, Cleveland, OH
- Jill Maidhof, Greater Kansas City
- Miriam Mazor, Greater New York Area
- Ellen Moss, Akron, OH
- Norine Rosenblum, Greater Kansas City
- Ilona Schacter, San Francisco, CA
- Maya Shmoel, Indianapolis, IN
- Shoshana Stotland, San Diego, CA
- Heidi Schoenberger Tarshish, Minneapolis, MN
- Kathy Wise, Cincinnati, OH
- Edna Yedid, San Diego, CA

tened to Paul Simon’s *Silent Eyes* before returning to the hotel.

Sessions began on Tuesday, July 1 with an introduction to the Jewish ethnic communities, *edot*, from a sociological and historical perspective, followed by an interactive presentation and discussion with famed photographer Frederic Brenner. Brenner shared his magnificent photographic slides and discussed Jewish communities around the world and their journey to Israel with Kivunim participants.

The program continued for over a week with activities, tours, day trips, lectures, and discussions planned daily beginning at

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Update: DeLeT

Phase One — Concludes for Cohort One; Begins for Cohort Two

This July DeLeT's Cohort One Fellows will participate in the second Summer Institute, the third and final stage of Phase One of their fellowship, at Brandeis University in Boston and at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles. At the same time, Cohort Two will begin its Phase One program. This will be the first time that DeLeT will have two cohorts of fellows learning at both academic sites at the same time. Over the summer 38 DeLeT fellows from Cohorts One and Two will be joined by over 40 mentor teachers, day school heads and liaisons, from at least 11 day schools from across the country.

As Phase One concludes for Cohort One and begins for Cohort Two, we can reflect on the many indicators of success:

- notable collegial bonding among fellows;
- gratitude for professional development opportunities related to mentoring;
- a sense of accomplishment and pride among fellows and mentor teachers;
- development of a recruitment infrastructure; and
- strategies for professional counsel and career support.

As Cohort One fellows complete a year of teaching and learning, they are busy making final decisions about what they will do when they become Phase Two fellows this August.

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Interview with Glenna Halperin — a DeLeT Intern

Glenna Halperin of Westchester, NY had little knowledge of Judaism growing up. “I attended summer camps and a Conservative Jewish Hebrew School, but I really didn’t know much about Judaism... and I certainly could not speak Hebrew.”

That all changed for Halperin in college during a year abroad in France. “All of a sudden I had this need to connect to my family back home and so I began to visit synagogues. Combined with my passion for teaching, I started to realize that I wanted to be in the Jewish world, so to speak, in an academic environment.”

Halperin discussed her ambitions with a friend and considered a Hillel Fellowship. “But then my friend told me about DeLeT.” Halperin contacted Executive Director Dr. Jane West Walsh and soon was off to the Rashi School in Newton, MA as a DeLeT Fellow for her intensive training.

DeLeT — Day School Learning Through Teaching (and Hebrew for “door”) — is a national fellowship program conducted in two phases. Phase One is a 13-month initial phase that provides DeLeT fellows with preparatory workshops and practical experience in a classroom along with collaboration with a network of professional colleagues and mentors. Phase Two continues for approximately two years with DeLeT fellows teaching in a day school while pursuing an advanced degree such as a master’s in Jewish education and/or a state teaching credential.

The goal of the DeLeT program? To attract, train, inspire, and retain top-quality educators in day schools.

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8:00 a.m. and lasting until 8:30 p.m. or later. One night of the trip was set aside for a special **Grinspoon-Steinhardt** celebration.

“I just wish my parents were around to see my success as a teacher. I know my mom would be so happy to see that I am meeting my goals as a teacher and fulfilling a dream that I have had since I was in third grade,” said Rosenblum.

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Jewish Life Network, in partnership with JESNA, sponsors The Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education annually. Designed to recognize, honor and support outstanding Jewish educators in day schools and other formal Jewish educational settings on the local level, these national Awards are presented to professionals across North America. Award winners are chosen through their central agency or, where no central agency exists, through their federation. Over 100 Jewish educators have received prestigious Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards since the program’s inception three years ago.

For more information on Kivunim 2003 or to learn more about the Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards, please contact Amy Amiel at amamiel@jesna.org.



The *Real Real* World

First Cohort of Lainer Interns Exceptionally Committed to Jewish Education

One of the premier recruitment initiatives for Jewish educators, the Lainer Interns for Jewish Education (developed in 1992 by JESNA’s Paul Flexner and David Resnick, who is also a professor at Bar-Ilan University in Israel), has some phenomenal news to share regarding its first cohort of students.

They were a pioneering group of 24 young and vibrant individuals from all over the North American continent who picked up a flyer or attended an information session and committed themselves to a new and fledgling program. “I went to an initial information session because many of my friends were attending and because it sounded like a great way to do something different with my year abroad... but for no other reason. I was looking to try something different and this program fit the bill,” said Sara Shapiro-Plevan, a Lainer Intern graduate. Sara and several other graduates of the 1992-1994 cohort share similar serendipitous stories about discovering or enrolling in the program. “I really don’t remember how I heard

about the program. Perhaps it was through an Education Abroad Program office...or maybe I was just choosing my classes and I just saw it on a list,” remarked another graduate, Ellen Lefkowitz. While their initial introduction to the Lainer Intern program was uneventful, the graduates of the first cohort are an inspiring and interesting success story – a group of motivated, energetic, and remarkable women and men who are committed to lifelong learning and involvement in Jewish education and the Jewish community.

Here’s a peek at just a few of the remarkable success stories:

In addition to serving as the Education Director at Congregation Habonim in

New York, **Sara Shapiro-Plevan** is enrolled in the Ed.D program at the Davidson School at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) where her area of research is congregational education. Sara holds a BA from Brandeis, an MA from JTS, and is a graduate of the Senior Educators Program of the Melton Centre at Hebrew University. “I feel very fortunate to have worked with so many wonderful mentors and colleagues, many

“I would absolutely recommend the Lainer Intern program to others. Seeing the success and knowing the need for good Jewish educators and professionals, this program is vital to the future of Jewish education.”

— *Ellen Lefkowitz*

of whom have encouraged me to take on new projects and to really push myself. I am certain that I made the right choice when I chose this field. And I am thrilled that JESNA supports the exposure of young people to the world of Jewish education so that others will be inspired like me.”

Lainer Interns for Jewish Education: Cohort One

Amy Ament	Aliza Kline	Robin Mencher	Danielle Salem
Orly Bender Frank	Aleza Kulp	Michelle Neuman	Leslie I. Rosen Stern
Naomi Cohen	Ellen Lefkowitz	Tamar Newman Shapira	Stephanie Stern Fink
Shoshana Cooper	Shawna Lovinsky	Sara Shapiro-Plevan	Tziona Szajman
Hannah Estrin	Jennifer Davidow Magalnick	Wendy Rapport	Michele Waldman
Ari Kelman	Jonathan Mars	Caron Blau Rothstein	Jennifer Zwilling

1992-1994 Lainer Intern Graduate Statistics

Number of Students Who Participated in the Program:24

Graduate Degrees

MA in Jewish Education10

MA in Jewish Communal Service . . .6

Rabbinical School2

MA in Rabbinical Studies1

MA in Teaching1

Ph.D. in History1

Employment

Jewish Educational Leadership (Principals or other roles)10

Teachers in Jewish Schools4

Teachers in Public Schools2

Jewish Federations3

Jewish Community Centers2

Other Jewish Organizations1

Rabbinical School1

Graphic Designer1

Hannah Estrin did not grow up immersed in Judaism. After spending several years working in a variety of positions in Jewish education, Estrin enrolled in the rabbinic program at the University of Judaism in order to deepen her own knowledge and commitment. Although on track to go into education, Estrin had not yet considered Jewish education when she enrolled in the Lainer Intern program. “The Lainer Program provided me a tremendous opportunity to see what was available in the Jewish education world. In addition, having the opportunity to meet and



Lainer Interns spend an evening at the Milky Way Restaurant in Los Angeles, owned by Leah Adler, mother of famed film director, Steven Spielberg. Pictured are Lainer Interns from the 10th Cohort. From left to right: Joshua Shrager, Naomi Abelson, Olga Frankstein, David Bluman, Dana Levin, Hillel Kurlandsky, Miriam Pullman, and Leah Adler.

learn from some top educators in their fields provided ideas, contacts, and background that I would not have otherwise gained during my year in Israel.”

Ellen Lefkowitz, a 1999 graduate of Hebrew Union College’s Rhea Hirsh School of Education in Los Angeles, is about to start a new position as the Family Learning Coordinator at Temple Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, CA. “Temple Beth Am is a unique synagogue because it puts education at the forefront of their mission and is a very exciting place to be educationally. I am honored to be working in this capacity. It is a really big step forward for me professionally,” said Ellen.

Did the Lainer Intern experience motivate Ellen to choose a career in Jewish education? “The program really did strengthen my own thoughts about working in the Jewish community. It was great to have a cohort of people who were strongly connected and committed to the Jewish community. The

social/peer component was very powerful for me. The exposure to the various avenues of professional opportunities also showed me how creative, innovative, and exciting work in the Jewish community could be. I saw that there was more out there to Jewish education than being a religious school principal,” said Ellen.

An exceptional group of graduates, the 1992-94 class of Lainer Interns remains committed to Jewish education and continues to enrich their lives through lifelong learning. As Ellen Lefkowitz remarked, “I would absolutely recommend the Lainer Intern program to others. Seeing the success and knowing the need for good Jewish educators and professionals, this program is vital to the future of Jewish education.”

For more information on the Lainer Interns for Jewish Education, please contact Paul Flexner at flex@jesna.org.

JESNA's Funder Services Initiative



“JESNA has meant the difference between success and stagnation in my family’s philanthropy. They are my trusted partner for all my work with Jewish organizations, delivering value and maximizing return on charitable dollars. JESNA has the ability to bridge the Jewish establishment with the Jewish future which makes them superbly positioned to serve as an advisor to funders seeking to make a difference.”

— Martin Kaminer, *Kaminer Family Foundation*

JESNA's Funder Services Initiative provides *expert consultation* and *hands-on assistance* to today's leading philanthropists. Our services are available to funders interested in Jewish education and identity-building as well as those whose philanthropy in other areas may include a Jewish educational component.

Now, we can put our *knowledge* and *experience* to work for you to increase your effectiveness as a funder.

JESNA can:

- Help you assess the overall impact of your Jewish educational philanthropic activity
- Craft effective strategies for your giving
- Identify worthwhile prospects for financial support
- Assist your grantees in building their own performance evaluation capabilities

- Enhance grantee effectiveness through consultation, coaching, professional development and technical assistance
- Research topics of interest in Jewish education and philanthropy
- Develop and administer programmatic initiatives

JESNA's outstanding professional staff provides unmatched expertise on what works, why and how it can be applied to your grantmaking.

With experience in every important area of Jewish educational and communal activity, JESNA is leading today's mandate to promote excellence in Jewish education and Jewish life.

JESNA is your gateway to expertise in:

- Adult Jewish Learning
- Congregational and Communal Education

JESNA's Expertise Can Move You from Making a Grant to Making a Difference

- Jewish Day Schools
- Early Childhood Education
- Family Education
- Formal and Informal Youth Programming
- Camping
- Israel Programs
- Human Resource Development
- Technology for Education and Professional Development
- Special Needs Jewish Education

JESNA works with you to ensure your vision is realized.

To schedule a preliminary consultation and explore how you can benefit from JESNA's Funder Services Initiative, please contact Amy Amiel, director of project development, at 202-223-6963 or amamiel@jesna.org.



The JESNA Family Continues to Grow

Development, Board and Community Relations

Welcome to **Cheryl Cook**, our associate director of development, board and community relations. In this capacity, Cheryl works with the Board and staff on various issues including campaign management and Board development. One of the first major projects she is tackling is the complete restructuring of our database system.

Cheryl has been working in the Jewish community for the past 11 years. Most recently, she served as the Associate Director of New Israel Fund in New York. Prior to that, she was the Director of Membership and Community Development at Makor, and before that, the Hillel Director at Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, Haverford Colleges and Villanova University. Cheryl received her B.A. in History from University of Wisconsin at Madison, her M.A. in Jewish Studies from Jewish Theological Seminary and her MSW from Columbia University.

Welcome as well to **Becky Strauss**, our administrator of development, board and community relations. In this newly created position, Becky is responsible for a myriad of activities from event planning and conference coordination to board relations and communications. Becky joined the JESNA staff in March 2003 after working as an assistant to Dr. David Altshuler at the Trust for Jewish Philanthropy in New York.

A 2002 University of Wisconsin graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Art History and a minor in European Studies, Becky was an active development volunteer throughout her college career interning at numerous art galleries and museums including Elvehjem Museum of Art in Madison, Wisconsin and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. In addition to working full-time at JESNA, Becky is a volunteer at the Museum of Natural History in New York City.

We also **welcome** **Elaine Bloom**, our major gifts officer. Based in Miami, Elaine has recently joined the JESNA staff to

assist in meeting our fundraising goals. She works with Board members and others in reaching out to new prospects for JESNA's new giving societies for unrestricted gifts as well as with foundations and individuals for designated gifts of all sizes.

Elaine has extensive fundraising experience, both as a volunteer leader and solicitor for her federation and other organizations, and as a very successful fundraiser for political campaigns, including her own. She served in the Florida House of Representatives for over 18 years and was elected by her peers as Speaker ProTem (1992-94).

Mandell L. Berman Center for Research and Evaluation

Welcome to **Lauren Raff**, our Midwest-based (Cleveland, OH) senior research and evaluation associate. In this position, Lauren conducts formal external evaluations of programs around the country, conducts needs assessments, prepares reports and presents evaluation findings, and develops action plans that help communities meet their Jewish educational needs. Prior to joining JESNA, Lauren served as Director of Research for eight years at the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, where she was responsible for a Jewish Population study in 1996.

Lauren has a B.A. in social science from the University of Michigan and an M.A. in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently, Lauren is completing her dissertation in Sociology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. When not working full-time for JESNA and working towards her Ph.D., Lauren teaches sociology at Cleveland State University.

Finance and Operations

Welcome to **Eileen Schofield**, our new office manager, who is focusing her efforts primarily on office logistics and human resources. Before joining the JESNA staff, Eileen worked as a project manager for MovieFone at AOL, and prior to that she was the office manager at *Makor*—The Partnership for Jewish Life.

Welcome to **Fred Epner**, our new information technology staff associate. Fred brings extensive technology skills to JESNA having previously worked at a multimedia company where he specialized in web design and data storage systems. At JESNA, Fred works primarily on network management and

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EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Update: The Jewish Educator Recruitment/Retention Initiative

The Jewish Educator Recruitment/Retention Initiative (JERRI) is a major collaborative initiative to expand and enhance Jewish educator recruitment and retention in North America. The initiative was established after a retreat in Aspen, CO in October 2002 to discuss the issues of recruitment and retention in Jewish education.

At the retreat, which was convened and hosted by the Covenant Foundation in partnership with JESNA, 30 educators and funders, led by **Susan Crown**, looked at the challenges involved in recruiting and retaining quality educators for the many Jewish educational settings. After identifying three broad areas for action to increase recruitment and retention for the field (see sidebar), the Aspen group developed a comprehensive plan and initiative for Jewish educator recruitment and retention. This plan includes the following key steps:

- Organize planning teams to develop action plans
- Identify and begin work on “fast track projects”
- Identify and reach out to natural partners
- Prepare action plans to be pre-

sented at the **Leadership Summit on Jewish Education** in February 2004

- Convene follow-up think-tanks

In April, 2003, Dr. Meredith Woocher was hired by the Covenant Foundation to serve as the Director of JERRI. Under her direction, this collaborative endeavor has attracted a broad group of academic, organization, and philanthropic partners and created key planning teams for each of JERRI’s three action areas including Recruitment, Culture Change, and Research.

JERRI’s Areas for Action... In a Nutshell

Strengthen the recruitment process.

- Develop a broad marketing approach for the field including a message or set of messages aimed at prospective Jewish educators.
- Create a multi-faceted plan to disseminate the message to key audiences.
- Enhance the recruitment infrastructure to reach and impact target audiences more consistently and effectively.

Change the culture and structure of the system.

- Identify structural and cultural changes needed in the field of Jewish education and make it easier to attract and retain talented individuals.

Engage in ongoing research.

- Create a research agenda for the field that will provide the knowledge required to recruit, develop and retain quality educators more effectively.
- Increase research and knowledge of what works in recruitment and retention, how it works, why it works, etc.

Questions about JERRI? Contact Dr. Meredith Woocher at meredith@covenantfn.org.

These teams include some of the leading researchers and practitioners in the field of Jewish education. Team members provide ideas and insights about the key issues in these three areas, which will lead to strategic action plans.

February 2004 will mark the first **Leadership Summit on Jewish Education**, which JESNA is convening. The issues of Jewish educator recruitment, development, and retention will be prominently featured at the Summit, which will bring together volunteer, professional and philanthropic leaders. All planning team members will be invited to participate at the conference and draft action plans in each of the three JERRI planning areas will be presented with additional feedback gathered and recorded by collaborative partners. Following the Summit, JERRI collaborators and planning team members will create final action plans.

For more information about JERRI, please contact Dr. Meredith Woocher at meredith@covenantfn.org.

UPDATE: DELET

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During Phase Two, DeLeT fellows will execute their individual DeLeT-approved Phase Two Professional Development Plan (PDP). They will also teach at a day school anywhere in the country, for at least two years, and continue studying towards a graduate degree, in a DeLeT approved graduate program. With DeLeT's help and support, each fellow finds his or her own Phase Two teaching position, and can receive up to \$10,000 in scholarships that can be put toward graduate school.

If your community has three or more day schools, and if you are interested in hosting a sub-cohort of Phase One fellows, contact Dr. Jane West Walsh, executive director, at 847-564-4515.

Day schools committed to assisting novice teachers should post open positions on www.jewishjobfinder.com. Copies of listings should also be sent to info@delet.org.

Mazal Tov to Cohort Two DeLeT Fellows!

Brandeis University Fellows

Meg Berenson
Sara Mason
J. Libi Most
Leign O'Sullivan
Jared Matas
Jocelyn Segal
Josh Joffe
Elizabeth Corman
Megan Harris-Linton
Lucy Hirsch

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles Fellows

Diana Blank
Esther Cohen
Ora Gittelsohn David
Anat Harel
Sandra Lamphear
Abbi Levine
Rebecca Saliman
Talia White
Jacob Wirtschafter
Julia Witkow

THE JESNA FAMILY CONTINUES TO GROW

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database application development. Holding a B.A. from Brooklyn College, Fred has experience in network and PC support as well as multimedia and 3D architecture.

Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas

Welcome to **Nina Bruder**, our new director of Bikkurim, who will be responsible for the oversight and management of the program. Most recently, Nina was the Executive Director of Drisha Institute for Jewish Education for six years and is re-entering the work force after taking off eight months to spend with her new daughter.

As JESNA's fifth Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumna, Nina received her M.A. in public policy with a concentration in non-profit management from Harvard University.

Welcome to **Aliza Mazor**, Bikkurim's organizational development specialist. Aliza has already been integral to Bikkurim as its OD consultant, and has recently expanded her work with the resident groups to a half-time position.

And, last but not least, **welcome** to the three new Bikkurim projects:

- Halachic Organ Donor Society – Robby Berman
- JDub Records – Aaron Bisman and Ben Hesse
- J2J Network – David Borowich and Raphi Salem

More information on these projects will be included in the next issue of [@jesna.org](http://jesna.org).

INTERVIEW WITH GLENNA HALPERIN — A DELET INTERN

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According to Halperin, DeLeT does just that. "This program has given me a tremendous foundation. It has sparked passion and interest in me that I never knew before. I have challenged myself and learned things that could not have been accomplished without the terrific structure and organization of a program like DeLeT. The classroom aspect alone has been such a great experience for me."

Now attending the Jewish Theological Seminary, where she is pursuing a Master's degree and perfecting her Hebrew skills, Halperin will return to the Rashi School in the fall to teach first grade again. "I really enjoy the Rashi School and I have never felt more a part of a community."

In the meantime, while job offers pour in from all over the country, Halperin remains realistic about her experience and her decision to become a Jewish day school teacher. "It is a tremendous amount of work, but work with a purpose. That is rewarding to me."

What else is rewarding to Halperin besides work with a purpose, a strong network of teacher-mentors and friends, and the adoration of first graders? The DeLeT experience has opened the door, quite literally, to something else in Halperin's life—passion about Judaism. "Judaism has come to life for me," she says.

Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education

Meeting Held at First CAJE Conference for Day School and Early Childhood Educators

The Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education met on Monday, June 23 at Hofstra University in New York during CAJE's first conference for Day School and Early Childhood Educators. JESNA and the Continental Council were co-sponsors of this four-day CAJE conference, attracting more than 600 participants.

A highlight of the Continental Council meeting, attended by more than 40 volunteer and professional leaders, was a training session led by Rae Ringel Hochstein, who provided Council members with guidelines on how to design and effectively deliver an advocacy presentation in their local communities. Council members received a Toolkit of the latest research, and other relevant materials produced by each of the Council's five Working Groups (Affordability, Community Relationships,

Compensation Systems, Marketing and Advocacy, and Professional Recruitment, Development and Retention), to be used in their local advocacy efforts to help day schools confront challenges in these five areas.

The Continental Council is focusing its work on mobilizing community support to strengthen day schools, in addition to providing Council members with training and support so that they can more effectively advocate and educate fellow lead-

ers. The Council will begin next year to work with specific communities on projects related to the five areas that the working groups are exploring.

The CAJE conference itself achieved multiple goals. It served as a vehicle for those working within the same school to plan cross-functional and interdisciplinary programs and provided professional development opportunities for teachers and heads of schools. The conference also aimed to enhance the status of the early childhood and day school educators, advocate for improved conditions for recruitment, training and retention, and help educators implement meaningful integration of Jewish and general studies.

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

For more information on the Continental Council for Jewish Day School Education and the CAJE Conference, please contact either Steve Kraus at steve@jesna.org or Ari Schuchman at ari@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.