

21/64

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR //

Are we too close to our work to see its next r/evolution, or the next generation, in our respective fields?

Sometimes when we are too close to today's issues we cannot see tomorrow's solutions, even if they are right in front of us. *The Innovator's Dilemma* by Clayton M. Christensen describes how IBM was too set in its ways to see the next iteration, so Microsoft created Windows. But then Microsoft became too close to its operating system solution, so Google created its own search engine. Christensen's argument begs the question: Are we too close to our work to see its next r/evolution, or the next generation, in our respective fields?

In Volume 4 of the 21/64 newsletter, we featured *Slingshot '05: a Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation*, which included 50 innovative responses to Jewish life today. When we launched that first edition, we discovered that many of you are also interested in grappling with questions of the Jewish future. We distributed nearly 5,000 copies of *Slingshot '05*, thousands more were downloaded from www.2164.net, and many of you called to obtain more information on the groups found within.

This issue of the newsletter announces the release of *Slingshot '06*

and conveys some of the lessons we learned in the process of assembling this year's guide. The collection of *Slingshot* organizations reflects what we have learned about the next generation of Americans, including Jewish Americans: multiple identities abound, values-driven innovation flourishes, and just as department stores have been replaced by boutiques, umbrella organizations have given way to niche programs that cater to a diversity of interests. The issues of the past, whether we like it or not, are not necessarily the drivers of the future.

Whether this year's *Slingshot* includes the next Windows or Google, we do not yet know; however, we do know that only by taking a step back and broadening our idea of what is possible will we find solutions to today's issues that we would otherwise be too close to see. We hope you will join us in investing in new experiments and in the next generations, as they are our bridge to the future.

Sincerely,



Jeff Solomon

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

Since we launched the 21/64 newsletter, many people have asked to join our mailing list in order to understand the attitudes and perspectives of the next generations. In previous volumes and related articles, we have discussed certain organizing principles that are worth underscoring again here.



In much of our work we:

- › Network next generation peers;
- › Allow them to ask their own questions;
- › Invite them to respond with solutions that resonate with their generation's social culture.

To many parents, grandparents, and even advisors, this can sound like giving the kids the keys to the car without asking where they are going. However, we have found that trusting the next generations to tell us how they want to be involved leads to more, and more lasting, engagement over time.

Slingshot' 06 is an example of trusting those three main organizing principles, and the returns have been unexpectedly fruitful.



GRAND STREET //

Grand Street is a network of 18 to 28 year-olds who are or will be involved in their family's philanthropy.

As many readers will recall, we recently helped create Grand Street, a network of 18 to 28 year-olds who are or will be involved in their family's philanthropy. Because the responsibility and family dynamics involved with philanthropy can be overwhelming, Grand Street is organized as a peer environment where participants frame their own questions, and programs or tools take shape based on their needs.

After the second annual Grand Street gathering, we asked the group what resources would be helpful in their next philanthropic steps. One person commented that he did not know how to navigate the map of Jewish non-profits, learn more about the leadership of each, or find those that resonated with him.

SLINGSHOT '05 //

Slingshot is a simple yet powerful tool, and we are even more convinced that our core organizing principles led to its success.

In response to that need, we helped create *Slingshot: a Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation*. 25 of our funding colleagues assisted us in vetting more than 100 nominees against the criteria of innovation, impact, organizational effectiveness and leadership.

We were quite surprised to find that a resource tool requested by a Grand Street participant would succeed in generating such response. Not only did we distribute 5,000 print copies to people of all ages across various

continents, we also inadvertently created a term that has become a brand connoting Jewish innovation.

Slingshot is a simple yet powerful tool, and we are even more convinced that our core organizing principles led to its success. These principles are not unique to the Jewish community. If we can trust young people to work together, ask significant questions and articulate their responses, we are optimistic that they will tell us how they want to experience philanthropy moving forward.

SLINGSHOT '06 //

We are learning an enormous amount about the evolving themes of the next generations.

We are only in year two of developing *Slingshot* guides, but we are learning an enormous amount about the evolving themes of the next generations, some of which are included below.

» This year's *Slingshot* groups illustrate the diversity and multiple identities of Generation Y that we have seen in recent research (see www.2164.net for the latest *OMG* and *Latte* reports). Ethiopian Jews, Latino Jews, Russian Jews, Gay and Lesbian Jews, boys, girls and teen-age Jews, a myriad of identity

groups are defining their own questions and expressions of Jewish life.

- » A hunger for inquiry and good old-fashioned debate is demonstrated in the multiple new media and mechanisms for education and preserving culture and history.
- » Innovation does not mean Jewish "lite." Many of the *Slingshot* 50 are grounded in Judaism, from new minayim to new ritual groups. Individuals are empowered to create



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their own meaning, whether in prayer, meditation or at life cycle events.

questions, express Jewish answers and build meaning and connectivity.

» Culture has evolved from an aesthetic experience to become a catalyst, convener and communicator of Jewish significance. A variety of media, including film, music and visual arts, helps Jews pose new

» Young Jews find meaning in helping others and repairing the world, as evidenced by the number of local, national and international social justice organizations that were nominated this year.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK //

The largest portion of philanthropic dollars is contributed by individuals; so appreciate the impact you can have no matter how large or small your gift.

Start by prioritizing your values. Articulate the issues, geographic locations or audiences that you want to fund.

community that is vital and relevant for their generation.

Then, whether you are a teen donating \$200 a year, an adult funding at the \$2,000 annual level, or a foundation granting \$200,000, set aside a portion of your philanthropy to support slingshots that meet your strategic funding plans. In the United States, the largest portion of philanthropic dollars is contributed by individuals; so appreciate the impact you can have no matter how large or small your gift.

These younger funders and other members of their generation are self-confident about their identities. If we can commit to the organizing principles described above—encouraging peer networks, allowing young Jews to ask their own questions and find their own answers—we can also be confident about the future.

If you're interested in supporting the next generation even further, a group of younger funders decided to take the book to the next level by creating a Slingshot Fund to further the visions and leadership behind the projects selected for *Slingshot* each year. In doing so, they aim to build a Jewish

SLINGSHOT '06

21/64 subscribers will automatically receive a copy of *Slingshot '06*; feel free to e-mail us at info@2164.net



for information about the new Slingshot Fund or other 21/64 resources.