

21/64

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR //

We are trying to help young funders, as we would their parents and grandparents, find the intersection of their own souls and business plans to make the experience of philanthropy meaningful and strategic.

A number of years ago, I met with two sisters who had been entrusted with their parents' foundation – a fund with distributions exceeding \$1 million annually. They began by saying that their father's death and mother's incapacity due to Alzheimer's disease left them cursed. I reacted empathetically, as I expected that they were going to discuss their feelings of loss. Imagine my surprise when they talked about the curse as having to give away this sum each year, since they were neither interested in their parents' charities, nor in working together.

Thankfully, at 21/64, we are discovering that this story is the exception more than the rule. We have found that the next generation is motivated by opportunity more than burdens of responsibility. Therefore we are trying to help young funders, as we would their parents and grandparents, find the intersection of their own souls and business plans to make the experience of philanthropy meaningful and strategic. Early lessons like these are important to share, and your feedback ensures that we are communicating effectively.

Many of you wrote after the first edition asking for more copies to distribute to

family members, foundation board members and colleagues. We are pleased to provide extra copies, as we understand that by presenting next generation issues analytically, the newsletter becomes a tool to discuss a complicated topic within family and communal settings.

Many of you also offered critical feedback on what you would like clarified and what you would like to know more about. You asked us not just to frame the intergenerational issue, but to illuminate the next generation's voice.

We are pleased to offer this second volume of the newsletter that will hopefully provide more insight into the motivations, feelings of responsibility and opportunities of the next generation. As usual, don't hesitate to be in touch; let us know what you think and what you are learning from your work.

Best Regards,



Jeff Solomon



innovation

IN HIS NEW BOOK, *AMERICAN JUDAISM*, HISTORIAN JONATHAN SARNA WRITES, “OVER AND OVER AGAIN FOR 350 YEARS ONE **FINDS THAT JEWS IN AMERICA ROSE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES** BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THAT THREATEN JEWISH CONTINUITY – SOMETIMES, PARADOXICALLY, BY PROMOTING RADICAL DISCONTINUITY. CASTING ASIDE OLD PARADIGMS, THEY TRANSFORMED THEIR FAITH, REINVENTING AMERICAN JUDAISM IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE IT MORE APPEALING, MORE MEANINGFUL, MORE SENSITIVE TO THE CONCERNS OF THE DAY.”



SO WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS OF THE DAY? //

Each generation creates social mechanisms to respond to the specific needs of their day.

Robert Putnam, in his much publicized, *Bowling Alone*, suggested that decreased participation in America's voluntary associations such as Lions' Clubs and bridge games was leading to the decline of social capital. Yet, in his less publicized but

more optimistic follow-up, *Better Together*, Putnam suggests that the institutions of the 1950s were responsive to the social climate of that era, and that each generation creates social mechanisms to respond to the specific needs of their day.

ROOTED IN CHANGE //

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To reflect on Sarna's and Putnam's theories of generational change, we invited 20 historians to recount what they saw as the forces and changes of the last 350 years of American Jewish life. (See back for more information on this historical tool, *Rooted in Change*).

A key lesson from this discussion was that the social innovations that now seem ordinary were actually remarkable responses to concerns of their time. Be

it the federation system that emerged in Boston in response to the influx of Eastern European immigrants in the late 1890s; Jewish Community Relations Councils founded in the wake of the Holocaust and founding of the State of Israel in the late 1940s and 50s; or Jewish continuity programs developed after the National Jewish Population Study reported high intermarriage rates in 1990.

GRAND STREET //

Grand Street began as an experiment to provide young Jews with the space to raise critical questions about today's challenges and the tools to turn their observations into strategic grantmaking plans.

Given this research, we then examined the question: how will the next generation of Jews respond to the concerns of today like generations of Jews before them?

Grand Street began as an experiment to provide young Jews with the space to raise critical questions about today's challenges and the tools to turn their observations into strategic grantmaking plans. We facilitated a three-day summit for members of the next generation who are or will become involved in their family philanthropy, and invited participants to frame their own questions among peers.

Letting young Jews determine what they feel is significant for their generation might seem risky to parents and grandparents, but the

results reflect an accountability of young Jews to their families and communities.

As soon as they were at the table, participants raised significant questions such as: What is my relationship with Judaism and how does that inform my philanthropic choices? How do we prepare ourselves for the responsibility of leading the Jewish community? How do Jewish values translate in an interconnected world?

Scott K. Belsky, third generation of the Rita and Stanley Kaplan Foundation, articulated his motivations for participating in philanthropy and exploring generational issues with his peers. He explained:



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21/64 at ACBP
110 East 59th Street, 26th Floor
New York, NY 10022
P / 212 931 0109
info@2164.net

JEFFREY R. SOLOMON, PhD
ROGER BENNETT
SHARNA GOLDSEKER

GRAND STREET // CONTINUED

‘What do we want the Jewish community to be like in 20 years’ was one of the most important conversations I’ve ever had.

I realize I have a responsibility and a lot to learn. As a result of framing my own questions about the future, I have a more focused and educated approach to Jewish philanthropy – one that I personally connect with.

Scott’s sense of responsibility demonstrates how the next generation balances commitment to Jewish heritage with an interest in incorporating today’s realities. This opportunity—to help build the Jewish future—is a powerful motivator.

Danielle Durschlag, fourth generation of the Nathan Cummings Foundation observed:

My place is to consider different approaches and check in with future leaders of the Jewish community to see what we can do together. ‘What do we want the Jewish community to be like in 20 years’ was one of the most important conversations I’ve ever had. It enabled me to grow into a more informed role within my family foundation. I hope to revisit the strategic discussion every year.

While Grand Street began as an experiment, it is expanding due to demand. We added a second cohort to the network and are

recruiting a third, evidence of young Jews hunger to explore Jewish identity and communal responsibility.

We firmly believe that given the permission to ask their own questions, the next generation will meet the “concerns of the day” with responsibility, strategy and passion.

For more information about Grand Street, please call 212.931.0109.

ROOTED IN CHANGE

Rooted in Change is a map of the evolution of Jewish Community, that traces key social innovations, experiments, leaders and movements that emerged in the first 350 years of American Jewish life and the forces that catalyzed them. The map is a tool to allow readers to ask themselves critical questions about the evolution of Jewish community, the challenges and responses to historical events, and helps readers to locate themselves on the communal map. Who am I, what am I inheriting and what am I going to do about it?

To order *Rooted in Change* and other 21/64 tools, please call 212.931.0109 or order off our website www.2164.net.