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Enriching Teen Identity: New Approaches



Eli Valley
Editor

Erica Coleman
Copy Editor

Janet Mann
Administration

Yakov Wisniewski
Design Director

JEWISH LIFE NETWORK STEINHARDT FOUNDATION

Michael H. Steinhardt
Chairman

Rabbi Irving Greenberg
President

Rabbi David Gedzelman
Executive Director

Jonathan J. Greenberg z"l
Founding Director

CONTACT is produced and distributed by Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, 6 East 39th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10016.

Phone: (212) 279-2288

Fax: (212) 279-1155

Email: info@jewishlife.org

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Jewish Life Network is dedicated to strengthening and transforming American Jewry to ensure a flourishing, sustainable community in a fully integrated free society. We seek to revitalize Jewish identity through educational, religious and cultural initiatives that are designed to reach out to all Jews, with an emphasis on those who are on the margins of Jewish life.

Photographs in this issue appear courtesy of contributors, Art Today, and Photos.com.

Enriching Teen Identity: New Approaches

For vast segments of the American Jewish community, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is not an entrance exam into Jewish adulthood, but the final exam of one's Jewish affiliation. For all the effort that precedes the event — the immersion in Hebrew school, the preparation to be called to the Torah, the study of adult responsibilities — B'nai Mitzvah observances are more often than not followed by an immediate drop-off in Jewish affiliation. Part of the problem is that although becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah signifies a rite of passage into Jewish adulthood, the community rarely offers genuine leadership opportunities to teens.

This is especially grim in light of the crucial importance teenage years play in the development of identity. High school is in many ways a training ground for adulthood — a place where teens make their first independent decisions and begin to carve out unique personal identities. It is precisely at this age that outlets for Jewish affiliation are invaluable. In order to strike a resonant chord, teen programs should do more than simply lead Jewish teens to socialize exclusively with Jews. The goal of teen programs should be to convey the vibrancy, meaning and fun of Jewish living, and to convey the deep Jewish values that will help teens make informed and responsible decisions.

To be sure, each of the denominational movements supports youth branches that serve the needs of high school-aged youth. NCSY, USY and NIFTY have provided a wide range of programs and activities for teenagers, and they continue to inspire teens to pursue Jewish life and identity. But many young Jews do not identify themselves chiefly through a denominational lens. In our increasingly fluid and diversified society, many Jewish teens respond best to pluralistic programs that are not linked to any single movement. Partly in response to these needs, we have seen a recent emergence of non-denominational programs that seek to facilitate Jewish experiences in venues with which teens are most comfortable.

This issue of CONTACT is devoted to dynamic new approaches in reaching Jewish teens. From service learning to outward-bound adventures, from day high schools to arts camps, outlets for Jewish identity exploration are becoming as diverse as the Jewish community itself. The success and expansion of these and other programs can help transform the high school years from a relative limbo of Jewish affiliation into a richly textured period of Jewish growth.

Eli Valley
Eli Valley



By creating new programs of Jewish service and expanding existing Jewish service outlets, we can create meaningful opportunities for the next generation that will significantly expand teenage views of what being Jewish is all about.

Jewish SERVICE as TEEN Empowerment

by MAGGI GAINES

Ask typical American Jewish teenagers what Judaism means to them, and the responses will often range the gamut of popular consumer culture: Adam Sandler's "Hanukkah Song;" a favorite episode of *Seinfeld*; and knishes, bagels and lox. Press harder, and you might hear mention of Hebrew school and synagogue visits that by and large ceased the day they became a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Rarely will you hear that Judaism encompasses an ethical system that places paramount importance on community service. Among those who serve — and increasing numbers of American teens are engaged in some form of service — the Jewish impetus behind service is often unknown.

The silver lining here is that we have a tremendous opportunity for Jewish engagement. By creating new programs of Jewish service and expanding existing Jewish service outlets, we can create meaningful opportunities for the next generation that will significantly expand teenage views of what being Jewish is all about.

Social activities, Israel trips and camping are successful ways to encourage teen Jewish involvement. Service is somewhat different, because it has the potential to facilitate interactions not only among Jews, but between Jews and the larger world. By doing service, the volunteer recognizes that his or her presence is vital to a human being, a community or a specific project. This invests teens with a sense of responsibility and empowerment — a major goal of all engagement efforts.

Providing a Jewish Lens for Service

It is clear that Jewish teens will be engaged in service whether or not we provide Jewish outlets for doing so. The question is whether we are willing to seize this opportunity to inculcate values-based Jewish identity. Jewish service experiences provide an invaluable lens through which Jewish teens can learn about social justice, community activism, and the relevance of their religious tradition.

Look at it this way: If the Jewish community does not provide a Jewish context for service — if we don't provide engaging, exciting service experiences for teens — we will lose the precious opportunity of

inspiring our youth with the Jewish dimensions of community involvement and activism. Teens will come to associate service with universal values instead of uniquely Jewish teachings. They will think of their religion largely in terms of atavistic memories and generalized mass-market culture, and they will not recognize the religious, cultural and historical imperatives of service in Jewish tradition.

On the other hand, if we do promote service as a preeminent Jewish value, teens will see service as a Jewish way of being. They will see service through a Jewish lens and indeed see that there is a Jewish lens, that there are thoughts, leaders, role models and teachers within their own community who actively engage the world in addressing societal problems. They will discover entirely new dimensions to their Jewish experience.

In addition, among many assimilated teens in secular America, there is a fear that Jewish activities by definition mean a withdrawal from the secular world. An emphasis on the community-activism dimensions of Jewish involvement alters perceptions so that being Jewish means actively participating in the community.

Maggi Gaines is Executive Director of spark: Partnership for Service. For more information on spark, please go to www.sparkpfs.org.

Giving Teens a Voice

Although a gateway into Jewish engagement is one benefit of Jewish service, it is by no means the only one. One of the most common complaints of teens is that nobody listens to them. Indeed, it is an irony of growing up that during the very years that adolescents are developing their own voice, they often feel that they are singing and shouting in a vacuum.

This is true in secular as well as religious communities. Jewish communal life offers little opportunity for post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah teens to feel that their voices count.

Enter community service. Service has the capacity to radically alter the paradigm of teen empowerment. Community service provides much more than individual involvement in the Jewish community and in the larger world. In a very real way, service allows a hands-on, participatory approach to being a positive force in society.

What's more, Jewish service trains youth to be leaders. Currently, much of the community's leadership development agenda is geared towards the future, ignoring the present. The Jewish community is no different than the general society in this regard. We think of teens as potential future leaders, instead of making them leaders in the here and now. Service gives youth a greatly-needed voice, and Jewish service gives youth a Jewish voice as well as a voice in the Jewish community.

In this manner, service benefits not only the community, but the participants themselves. For example, when a teen finds that an elderly Jew at a retirement community has come to depend on him or her for emotional support, the teen realizes that they are a necessary cog in the community structure. When a teen forms a relationship with a child he/she is tutoring, or with people with whom he/she is building a house, community ties become that much stronger.

Teens become invested in their community, and they derive a sense of purpose and connection. Ultimately, the tangible feeling of making a positive change — and of seeing the results of that change — binds teens to the community in ways that are difficult to replicate in other arenas. This is extremely important for teens, who are often searching for individual identity and social outlets as they mature into young adults.

The Limitless Potential of Service Learning

It is unlikely that service alone will create lasting connections to Jewish values. But learning and Jewish reflection solidify the experience, imparting a deep and meaningful connection to Jewish tradition. Indeed, Jewish service learning opens up a world of Jewish thought and practice that is difficult to convey in a classroom. For example, teens can learn about the Jewish concept of *bikur holim* in Hebrew school, but until they experience visiting the sick themselves, they will not understand the full practical, philosophical and personal dimensions to this work.

Jewish service learning is well-suited to teens, who are actively searching out their own identities, group affiliations/affinities, etc. With Jewish service learning, teens play an active role in their own educational process. They get the information themselves, from life experience. In this way, Jewish service learning is self-empowering. It gives teens a stake in their own religion, spirituality, identity and community. In pursuing their own knowledge, teens involved in Jewish service learning are actually pursuing their own destiny.

For teens, Jewish service learning could hardly come at a better time. When preparing for and studying for their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, young people are motivated by specific goals (learning the Haftarah, the

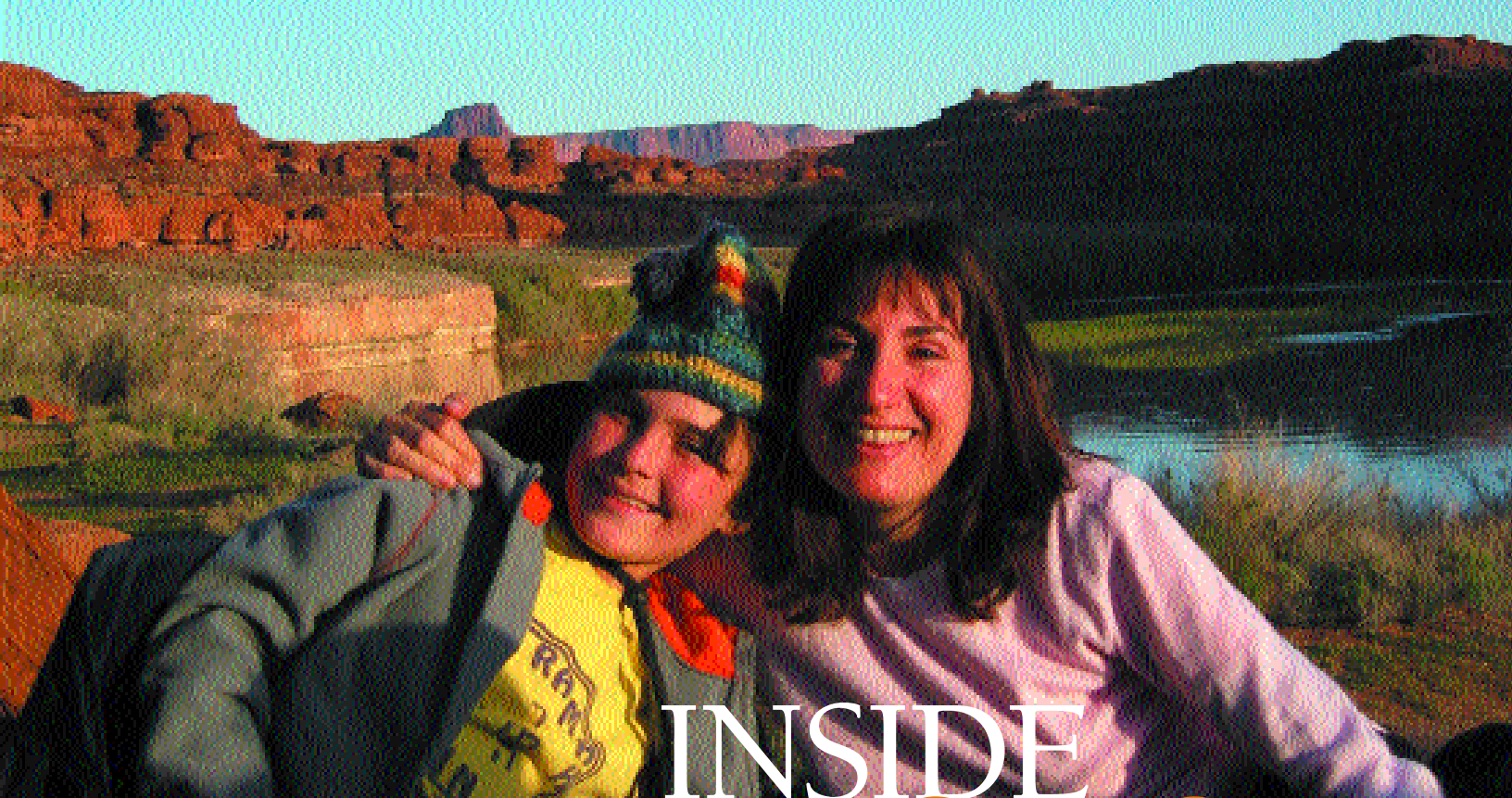
prayer service, etc.) After the B'nei Mitzvah, the intense goal-oriented preparation is over, and learning possibilities are less enticing. Beyond Hebrew school, which teens often consider to be boring and irrelevant, there are few options. Jewish service learning makes Jewish education relevant to the teen's life — to the choices and decisions the teen makes in his/her engagement with the world.

Finally, one of the major advantages of Jewish service learning is its emphasis on critical reflection. Volunteers are encouraged to move beyond applauding themselves for doing good work. Instead, they explore the religious, ethical, social and political dimensions behind societal problems and our proper response to these problems as Jews. For example, in examining why people are homeless, or why elderly people are confined to institutions, Jewish service learning gives teens an opportunity to explore their responsibilities as Jews in the larger world. In addition, Jewish service learning advances the much-needed notion of reflection as habit. In our overly programmed world, Jewish service learning offers teens an invaluable opportunity to step back, stand still and reflect.

Teens need to understand their proactive responsibilities as Jews and as citizens. There are few better ways to do this than through Jewish service learning. Jewish service learning for teens engages Jews at the age when they are just beginning to make their first adult decisions. It makes them “step up” as responsible Jewish adults whose heritage informs their commitment to repair the world. As a values-based community determined to inspire the next generation, we must devote ourselves to creating and sustaining a network of exemplary Jewish service opportunities to guide our children as they grow into young adults. 🌸



Teens need to understand their proactive responsibilities as Jews and as citizens.



INSIDE through the OUTSIDE

Jewish Nature Adventures for Teens

by GABE GOLDMAN

- Canoeing through the morning fog on the Delaware River
- Greeting a sunrise from atop a mountain in Joshua Tree National Park
- Backpacking the Appalachian Trail
- Experiencing a traditional native sweat lodge ceremony
- Hiking through a lava tube in Oregon

Dr. Gabe Goldman is Director of The JENE Institute for Jewish Environmental and Nature Educators. For more information on how to develop a Jewish environmental or nature program for teens, or to learn more about existing trips and programs, please email Gabe at primskills@yahoo.com.

The list at left reads like the cover of *Outdoor Life Magazine*. In fact, it describes a few of the diverse outdoor adventures attracting thousands of Jewish teens across the United States. Never has there been as exciting a selection of outdoor Jewish adventures challenging teens to discover for themselves the value of Judaism and Jewish community.

These outdoor Jewish adventures are far more than “travel trips.” They integrate the teaching of *tikun olam* (actions that “heal” social problems), *shomrei adamah* (ecological awareness and earth stewardship), and *c’lal Yisrael* (the importance of Jewish community) with spiritually uplifting experiences of nature. These trips and experiences are part of a new field of education that is sweeping the United States. Called Jewish Environmental and Nature Education (JENE), they include experiences of informal Jewish education that transform the outdoors into a natural Jewish learning environment.

Trip options are available for congregations, schools, JCCs, youth organizations and communities throughout the United States and offer every conceivable program type, ranging from three days to six weeks in duration and with accommodations as diverse as tents, wigwams or retreat lodges. While many of these programs are specifically limited to teens aged 12

to 18, other programs are designed for teens and their parents, or for teens as part of a more diverse group of participants.

Such was the case with the recent Passover Canoe Trip in the Canyonlands co-sponsored by The JENE Institute and Outdoor Jewish Adventures (OJA) and co-led by this writer and OJA’s founder, Josh Lake. Several teens and pre-teens participated in this wilderness canoe trip through the hundreds of thousand of acres of red sandstone bluffs that comprise the Canyonlands National Park near Moab, UT. The teens, with their parents and a larger group that included college students and Jewish professionals, spent seven days canoeing the Colorado River while learning about Jewish environmental wisdom and living as a self-contained Jewish community. Though they were from diverse Jewish backgrounds, these participants came together to experience Passover in the desert. The Seder, held on a large, flat-topped boulder at the site of a thousand year old Anasazi Native campsite, definitively answered the question, “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

The Shalom Nature Center (Malibu, CA) and United Synagogue Youth offer a four-week trip for Jewish teens, grades 10 to 12, that includes visits to Mt. Rainer and Mt. St. Helens, sea-kayaking and camping in the Puget Sound,

TRAINING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

by DANA RAUCHER

The Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel (BYFI) was founded in 1987 by Edgar M. Bronfman to educate teens and to develop an interdenominational cadre of future community leaders committed to Jewish unity.

Each year, 26 exceptional high school juniors from a wide variety of geographic, religious and social backgrounds are selected to be Fellows. The Fellows participate in BYFI's centerpiece program, a five week trip to Israel during which they are given the tools for communal dialogue, Jewish study and community leadership, as well as the opportunity to form a close connection to Israel and to one another. Within the framework of an intensive, first-hand experience of Israel, Fellows meet with Israeli political, literary, intellectual and artistic figures, who provide them with a challenging and diverse picture of Israeli life. BYFI's faculty of rabbis and educators includes Israelis as well as Americans. They are associated

with various movements and perspectives within Judaism.

In 1997, BYFI launched the Amitei Bronfman Fellowship Program in Israel. Each spring, 20 outstanding Israeli high school juniors are selected to participate in a series of seminars, trips and educational programs which take place over a ten-month period. The pro-

gram includes a weeklong *mifgash* (encounter) in Israel with the Fellows from North America, a week of community service and a two-week trip to the United States designed to introduce the Amitim to different facets of American Jewish life.

Both the American Fellows and the Amitim are required to do at least 40 hours of individual community service during their senior year in high school.

From its inception 17 years ago, BYFI has been dedicated to building and nurturing an active alumni community. We support and mentor our alumni in a wide range of activities, including study, community service, campus activism, fellowships and internships in various areas of Jewish communal life. We also organize informal networking and gatherings in the U.S. and Israel. BYFI makes funding available to support a wide variety of alumni initiatives. With our help, alumni have launched many exciting programs, including The Artist's Workshop Experiment, The Diversity Beit Midrash in Toronto and Shop2Give.

Today, the BYFI alumni community consists of a remarkable group of young Jewish leaders. Our Fellows include Jewish communal professionals, writers, actors, educators and professionals who continue to see their ongoing relationship to BYFI as central to their Jewish identities.

Dana Raucher is Executive Director of The Samuel Bronfman Foundation.

and hiking through a giant lava tube in Oregon, where they hold a spectacularly dramatic Havdalah ceremony. So successful was the 2002 trip that the number of participants has tripled for the 2003 trip.

Another highly successful trip, now in its fourth year, is the TIYUL of the 92nd St. Y, a six-week community service and travel program in which teens perform community service and travel to several Jewish communities throughout America. TIYUL participants become pioneers as they create new views, visions and insights into what it means to be American and Jewish in the 21st century.

The Teva Learning Center, in cooperation with the New Jersey Metrowest Jewish Community Center, is offering an East Coast trip this summer for teens in grades 10 to 12. Participants will travel to Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Vermont and Massachusetts. Throughout their journey, participants will explore the meaning of Jewish life and thought, the value of Jewish community, their own roles as environmental leaders and how best to care for nature while living in its midst.

These groups embody the philosophy of the burgeoning field of Jewish environmental and nature education. Guiding its development and application in formal and informal Jewish educational settings is a newly created national consortium, Partners in Creation, or PIC. Founding institutions include The JENE Institute, the Foundation for Jewish Camping, Teva Learning Center, Shalom Nature Center and Hazon. PIC Partners share the belief that this form of education is matched in its effectiveness to rekin-

dle and/or enhance the sparks of Jewish identity only by Israel educational and travel experiences. In fact, while the ongoing violence in Israel has resulted in the devastating loss of tourism and travel to the State, it has greatly boosted the number of schools, youth groups, JCCs and colleges turning to Jewish nature trips to engage and inspire teens.

Teen educators and program directors not previously familiar with Jewish environmental education are nothing less than amazed by the reaction of their teens and their staffs to these programs. Inevitably, "first-timers" express the belief that their teens are too urban to appreciate the outdoors. More often than not, program leaders point to particular teens they expect to be "difficult." And just as often, these are the very kids who turn out to be the most enlivened by their experience and who gain the most from it. Program evaluations of hundreds of teens reveal that over 90 percent view their trips as "the most meaningful experience" they have ever had.

Perhaps the main reason for the success of these programs is revealed in the following anecdote that comes to us from the pre-Holocaust days of Eastern Europe. We are told of a father, the rabbi of his village, who taught his son each morning from the Torah. Each afternoon, the boy would head into the woods to do his learning and return before dark. One day, the father asked his son, "Why do you go to the woods every afternoon to learn about God and the Torah? Aren't these things the same wherever you are?" The son responded, "Yes, father, they are — but I am not." 🌸

Program evaluations of hundreds of teens reveal that over 90 percent view their trips as "the most meaningful experience" they have ever had.





Engaging the **WORLD**: The Day High School Experience

by **LEAH STRIGLER**
with **BONNIE HAUSMAN**

Over the last decade, the number of day high schools outside the Orthodox world has tripled, from ten to more than 35. A dozen or so have opened in the past few years alone. These schools have brought greater attention to the unique possibilities day high schools can offer teenagers. They engage teens during a crucial time in their development, when they are negotiating their emerging identities and beginning to explore life independently in the real world. Some critics worry that day high schools are sheltering environments. In truth, the best of these schools offer many opportunities to encounter the broader society. Such experiences allow students to reflect on their identities and responsibilities both as Jews and as citizens of the world. As one student from the Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit (JAMD) noted, "Some people say that coming to a Jewish day school means that I do not experience

diversity. But I say that when I get to college, I will be able to contribute to its diversity because I have learned who I am."

Social Action and Tikkun Olam

Community service and social action programs are often found in American high schools. In day high schools, these programs are strongly grounded in the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*. Students volunteer in a variety of Jewish and secular institutions. At the Chicagoland Jewish High School, for example, students serve on a *tikkun olam* committee and bring their ideas and interests to *tikkun olam* projects. The school works with students to find ways to connect them to suitable organizations. Rabbi Elliot Goldberg, Director of Religious Life, explains that "most of what we are doing is because they said here is something we want to do.... They run with it, and we're trying to keep up with what they want to accomplish."

Political Activism and Awareness

Political activism, especially on behalf of Israel, is a strong value at JAMD. Last year the school chartered a plane so that students could participate in the Washington, DC rally for Israel. During the trip the students, inspired by the experience,

brainstormed how to follow up at home. When they returned to Detroit, they orchestrated a teen rally in support of Israel. The preparations for this event included securing a site and permission from the township as well as recruiting speakers and participants. This past Fall, when the University of Michigan hosted a conference on divestment from Israel, students traveled to Ann Arbor a few days beforehand to participate in a non-confrontational, pro-Israel rally. Rabbi Lee Buckman, Head of School, notes, "If we are serious about nurturing a generation of leaders and not just thinkers, then we need to provide students with opportunities for leadership."

In addition to activism, students gain political awareness when they meet people who help them explore issues in new ways. A few years ago, there was a union dispute at the neighborhood supermarket near Gann Academy — the New Jewish High School of Greater Boston. The school invited representatives from both sides of the conflict to present their perspectives on the issues. At the New Community Jewish High School in West Hills, CA, a homeless woman and her son were invited to share their story with the Ninth Grade students. A frank discussion ensued, as students

Leah Strigler served most recently as Program Officer for Education at Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation. In the fall of 2003 she will begin a Ph.D. program in Education Studies at the Steinhardt School of Education of New York University. Bonnie Hausman, Ph.D. is Program Officer at the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education.

struggled to understand how homelessness happens. The students subsequently began fund-raising to aid the family.

Community and Cultural Opportunities

Many schools emphasize the importance of developing partnerships with community organizations. For example, The Heschel High School in New York City draws upon a number of unique city resources. Through a residency program with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the school

features a different type of world music each year. As part of the program, they studied the featured genre of South African Jazz and then attended a concert with students from throughout the city. Students also attended a student concert at Julliard.

When Chicagoland learned that a production of *Brundibar* would be staged in their community, they planned to attend a performance. The piece, an opera composed and performed in Terezin, inspired the faculty to explore the theme of creativity as a

encouraging students to move beyond the walls of the school. During its Exploration Week in March, student groups travel abroad to England, Mexico, Italy or Greece. Exploration Week also offers domestic options, such as an Outward Bound program, an exploration of bird habitats with the Massachusetts Audubon Society and full-time community service placements.

Building a Network

Jewish high schools also expand their reach through collaborations with one another. The North American Association of Jewish High Schools (NAAJHS), founded in 1999, counts approximately 40 schools from throughout North America as members or affiliates. The organization is engaged in a variety of projects centering on youth leadership and community development, and hosts a Continental Shabbaton for students in all member schools. This past year, the organization also offered a Youth Leadership conference, at which student leaders were trained in community-building within the school context. The goal of these programs is to develop a continental community of Jewish high school students and a larger cohort of teens who share this intensive educational experience. NAAJHS also works with school Israel programs and encourages schools to work together. The organization ultimately hopes to develop its own program.

In truth, almost any school activity affords teachable moments that highlight these issues. Bruce Powell, Head of School at the New Community Jewish High School, noted that when his school's lacrosse team played at a nearby boarding school, the opposing team invited them to stay for dinner. The other team then assured their visitors that they would receive a dairy meal, out of sensitivity to kashrut. "That was nice," Powell noted, "both for them and for us." Such integration of Jewish values in the larger world represents a worthy ideal for all Jewish high schools. ✿

These schools engage teens during a crucial time in their development, when they are negotiating their emerging identities and beginning to explore life independently in the real world.



received a Company dance teacher and students were invited to a company performance. They also participated in Carnegie Hall's Global Encounters program, which

response to tragedy and as a means of survival. The theme became the focus of their *Yom HaShoah* commemoration this year.

Gann casts the net very wide in

FACING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values began with a simple vision. If Jewish teens from across the country would come to Washington, DC for a multi-day series of meetings, lectures, policy debates and exposure to the institutions of government,

they would become excited about Jewish values and inspired that they could change the world.

Started in 1988 as the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, PANIM has hosted more than 10,000 Jewish teenagers through its two flagship programs, Panim el Panim and the Jewish Civics Initiative, a service learning-based program and winner of a prestigious Covenant Grant in 1996.

PANIM strengthens Jewish identity among teens and instills in them a passion for social justice by seamlessly integrating Jewish learning, values and social responsibility. PANIM's latest offering to teens is Summer JAM (Judaism, Activism and Mitzvah Work). Summer JAM brought 40 to 50 high school juniors and seniors to Washington, D.C. this Spring for three weeks of Jewish learning, community service and

advocacy training.

According to Rabbi Sid Schwarz, Founder and President of PANIM, the organization "helps American Jews live Torah" by providing them not only with the vehicle for reaching out to those who are in need, but also with the Jewish language to understand how this behavior fulfills the prophetic mandate "to care for the stranger, the widow and the orphan."

Young people instinctively understand that denominationalism in a youth program is divisive. They see the BBYO experience as an example of what community life in a post-denominational world can be.



Something old has suddenly become something new. In the course of the past year, one of the world's oldest and largest Jewish youth movements has renewed itself with strength and purpose. New leadership, organizational independence and a commitment to Jewish values have marked the sudden transformation of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO) into an organization that is poised to meet the needs of Jewish teens in North America and abroad.

The reestablishment of BBYO as a premier enterprise in informal Jewish education could not have been timelier. Recent studies have pointed to a sharp decline in Jewish affiliation among teenagers. The vast majority of Jewish youth between grades 7 and 12 have no ongoing connection to Jewish life. They are not enrolled in Jewish schools and do not attend Jewish camps, travel to Israel or actively participate in synagogue life. One cannot help but assume that a Jewish teenager with a minimal connection to Jewish life and community is unlikely to be drawn to Judaism in college or beyond.

Over the last two years a group of leading philanthropists and community activists has set out to address this gaping hole in

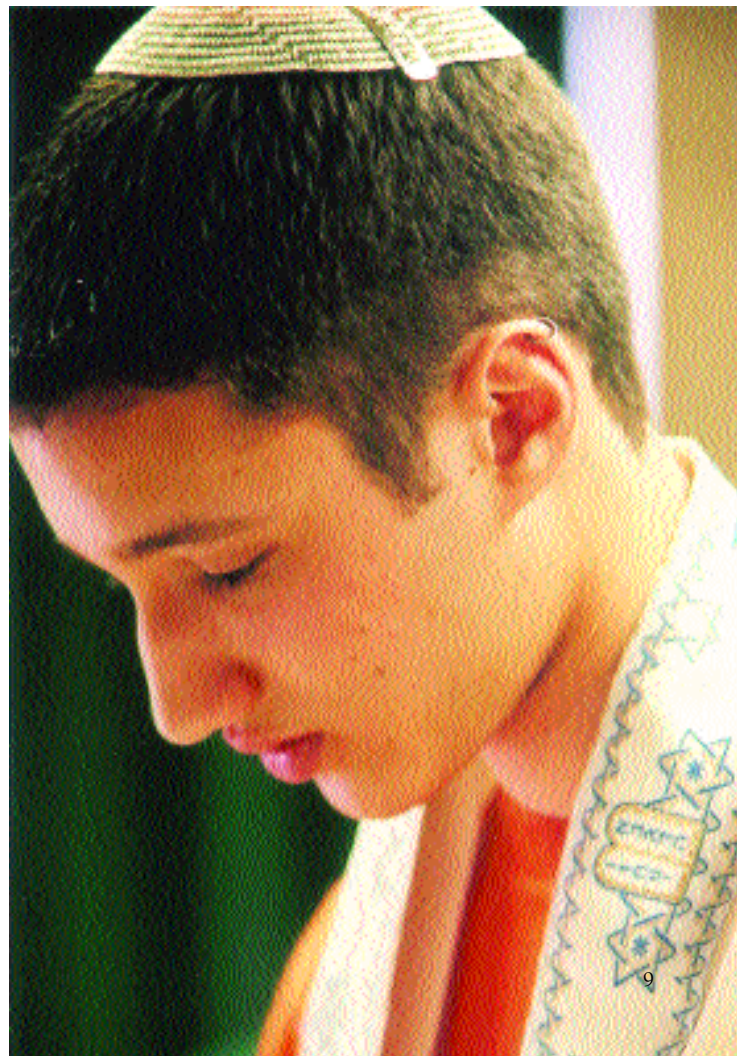
community programming. Led by distinguished figures such as Newton Becker of Los Angeles, Edgar Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt of New York, and Lynn Schusterman of Tulsa, BBYO has established itself as an independent, self-governing organization, ready to meet the teen program challenge. With the continued support of B'nai B'rith International, and in partnership with Jewish Federations and Jewish Community Centers across North America, a new day for Jewish youth has arrived.

The new BBYO remains a product of its proud heritage. For over 75 years, chapters have been meeting in community centers, synagogues and private homes. Thousands of volunteer advisors provide guidance to teenage members as they develop their programs and shape their own chapter communities. The BBYO experience, enjoyed by an estimated one million participants in over 200 communities, has fostered the development of generations of community leaders, Jewish professionals and political activists. The challenge today is to build on the success of the past in developing a program that will meet the needs of a new generation.

The dynamic and visionary professional and lay leadership

A NEW Day for Jewish YOUTH

by BRIAN GREENE



Brian Greene is International Director of BBYO.

that has gathered in support of the new BBYO has proceeded with several key assumptions:

1. We are one people. One of the great strengths of the BBYO program over the years has been that it has drawn youth together from different segments of the community. Young people instinctively understand that denomination-ism in a youth program is divisive. They see the BBYO experience as an example of what community life in a post-denominational world can be.

2. Israel is central to Jewish identification. BBYO is committed to providing quality Israel experiences for its members and, through its chapters

in Israel, building bridges between North American and Israeli teenagers. BBYO is committed to Israel and Zionism in the strongest possible way. A personal relationship with Israel and its people must be a core element of a fully developed Jewish identity.

3. Community Service is a Jewish activity. New international programs, in partnership with the innovative service organization *spark*: Partnership for Service, have been designed to create youth initiatives involved in hands-on community service. Jewish youth are ready to be challenged and inspired by service experiences. BBYO looks forward to a time when thousands of Jewish

youth will devote significant time during summer vacations to feeding the hungry and building homes for the homeless. The work of *tikkun olam* can be a powerful Jewish experience and inspire a lifelong commitment to Jewish values.

4. There is a need for gender-specific programming. The division of the core program into BBG chapters for girls and AZA chapters for boys has always been one of BBYO's greatest program strengths. The sense that BBYO is a warm and safe place for teenagers grows out of the communal bonding that develops in its chapters. It is also true that great numbers of young men and women met their future wives or husbands

at BBYO dances and events. The social aspects of the BBYO experience remain vibrant and important.

It is not enough to simply be a youth group for Jews. Informal Jewish educators must be as conscientious about their educational objectives as their colleagues in the world of formal education.

5. Content for Jewish programming must be planned and intentional. The elements of Jewish experiential programming that youth groups and camps have always seen as their strength must be deliberately planned and carefully executed. It is not enough to simply be a youth group for Jews. Informal Jewish educators must be as conscientious about their educational objectives as their colleagues in the world of formal education.

6. Leadership is taught by leading. Where will the next generation of Jewish community leaders come from? Decades of experience indicate that community leadership is developed in youth movements like BBYO where youth have an opportunity to lead. The self-governing structure of BBYO, and the numerous opportunities for youth members to be planners, facilitators, mediators and coordinators, provides a training ground for future leaders.

Something old has indeed become something new. BBYO is now uniquely positioned to engage thousands of marginally connected Jewish teens and to confirm their commitment to Judaism during their formative adolescent years. The new BBYO looks forward to growing in strength and to playing a major role in the renaissance of Jewish communal life. ✿

JOIN THE TRIBE

JVibe

by YOSEF I. ABRAMOWITZ

Increasingly, Jewish teens have at least one leg in the digital world. This represents a unique opportunity for creating a culture shift in

affiliation among young Jews. The programmatic implications extend far beyond the computer screen, challenging normative approaches Jewish organizations have taken toward reaching teens.

The Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Covenant Foundation and the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies funded the development of JVibe.com, a web magazine community devoted to Jewish teens. Launched in 1999, with departments on pop culture, relationships and social action, the site is intended not to mirror the way Jewish organizations would like teens to think, but instead to provide, in a Jewish context, information and entertainment that appeals to them.

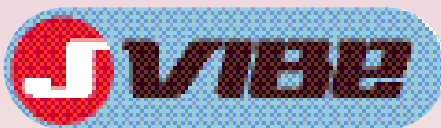
Eighty percent of the articles are produced by Jewish teens, including regular dispatches from teens in Israel.

Several months into production, our teen advisory board insisted that a sex and sexuality department be created. We worked with teens to design a department, JVIbrations, that incorporated Jewish perspectives on a wide range of sexual issues. Later, the

Hadassah Foundation and the Boston Jewish Women's Community Fund underwrote a special section, MzVibe.com, devoted to the interests and concerns of Jewish girls.

In 2000, the Bronfman Philanthropies commissioned an outside evaluation to determine JVibe.com's impact. The study showed three significant findings. First, 10 percent of Jewish teens were aware of the program after three years. Second, Jewish teens spent, on average, 30 minutes per visit, an incredibly high figure. Third, even though Jewish teens were using the site — up to 50,000 times a month at its height — the teens were not more likely to be involved in Jewish organizations or rituals after participating. However, and most significantly, the study demonstrated that Jewish teen users felt more connected to the Jewish people because of their connection to JVibe.com.

We are now embarking with the Goldman Fund on Phase Two of creating a far-reaching JVibe program that will test in Bay Area synagogues and BBYO focus groups. The goal is to create an integrated program to increase the affiliation of post-Bar and Bat Mitzvah students from 20 percent to 50 percent. Based in part on the successful AVI CHAI-sponsored BabagaNewz program for middle school kids, which captured nearly 40 percent of the non-Orthodox market in just two years, the new JVibe program combines a print pop-culture Jewish magazine with an upgraded website that includes localization, a music club, informal education guides and teen e-philanthropy options. Considering that 80 percent of Jewish 12- and 13-year-olds have B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies, we are testing ways to interest them in maintaining a connection to the Jewish people through high school. Results will be available in the Fall.



Yosef I. Abramowitz serves as CEO of Jewish Family & Life!, the leading multimedia educational provider in Jewish life. He can be reached at CEO@JFLmedia.com.

JEWISH CAMP

for Adults- In-Training

by RAMIE ARIAN

Ask 17-year-old Becky about her plans for the summer, and she doesn't hesitate for a second. "I'm going back to camp," she gushes with typical energy and enthusiasm. "I'm counting the days until I can finally be on Machon." Machon, the counselor-in-training (CIT) program at Becky's camp, has space for only 36 teens, so admission is selective. Only teenagers who have been campers for several years are eligible, and only those who are judged to have good potential as future counselors are accepted.

Across North America, CIT programs at Jewish overnight camps provide a continuing

Jewish connection for thousands of teenagers like Rebecca. Most have been campers since the age of 10 or 11, and continue as



campers as long as they can — typically through age 15. The following summer, most of these 16-year-olds join travel programs run by their camps or their sponsoring movements — most go to Israel, but some go to the American West, or to Europe or elsewhere. Then, at age 17, they return to camp as CITs.

The details of CIT programs vary somewhat from camp to camp, but there is much they share in common. Typically, participating teens spend part of each day learning about leadership and working with inspiring mentors to learn how to become role models for the children who will soon be in their charge. Supervised by the camp's top leadership, they engage in extensive programs of role play and simulation to practice their newly-acquired skills. For part of each summer, the CITs have the opportunity to work directly with chil-



dren, always under the direct supervision of a senior counselor. They may help to teach a specialty such as swimming, tennis or crafts, or they may assume general bunk responsibilities for the children's health, safety and supervision as they move from activity to activity. Often, CITs get to try their hand at leading different aspects of camp life.

In most camps, the CITs are technically still campers. Their parents pay a fee for them to attend, but the camp pays the CITs a modest stipend in consideration of the work functions they perform.

The ultimate reward for the CITs' work is the promise of future jobs as counselors. CITs who perform successfully are virtually guaranteed placement the following summer at their own camps, and often have an advantage over others who lack CIT experience, even if they choose to change camps.

For the Jewish community, CIT programs serve as a powerful incentive to keep large numbers of teenagers connected to Jewish life. Camp is one of the most powerful ways to build Jewish identity and commitment in young people. This holds true not only for the campers, but for CITs and staff as well.

How does camp build Jewish identity so powerfully? At camp, children live in a totally Jewish society. They need not worry how their Jewish activities will appear to their non-Jewish friends. Jewish practice is natural, and it is joyous.

Totally enveloped in the atmosphere of camp fun, children celebrate Shabbat with special clothing, joyous singing and special blessings. They experience warm, embracing community in a completely Jewish environment. They meet Israeli counselors, and sometimes Israeli campers. They hear Hebrew spoken, and they learn a few words themselves, since buildings, activities and people are often given Hebrew names. They learn to sing Hebrew songs and, without the least amount of self-consciousness, they join in Israeli folk dance. They participate joyously in peer-led prayer experiences. They talk about Jewish val-

ues as they arise naturally in daily camp life. As a living laboratory for Jewish life, there is nothing to equal an experience at camp.

For the Jewish CIT, the camping experience is invaluable not only as a springboard towards future work as a counselor, but as a method of maintaining Jewish connections during a period of intense personal transition. Most CITs are about to enter their senior year of high school, where they are likely to embark on a process of personal discovery as they make decisions on higher education and, for many, their first long-term separation from family. The CIT experience gives many Jewish teens their first experience in leadership based on Jewish values — experience that proves important as they begin to make their first decisions as adults. It also solidifies Jewish identity at a time when many Jewish teens are preparing to separate not only from their families, but from family-bound connections to Jewish tradition.

There are 120 not-for-profit Jewish overnight camps in North America. Sponsored by religious movements (Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist), JCCs, Zionist movements, B'nai B'rith and others, the Jewish community's summer



campers touch the lives of some 50,000 children — and reach another 10,000 who serve as their staff — each summer. At least 25,000 teenagers are involved in Jewish overnight camps, and more participate in camp-sponsored travel programs for 16-year-olds. CIT programs — which directly accommodate about 5,000 young people — are the "carrot" that keeps many of these adolescents coming back for more Jewish connections, year after year, at the summer camps they love. 🌸

Rabbi Ramie Arian is Executive Director of the New York based Foundation for Jewish Camping. For more information, please go to www.jewishcamping.org.



TIFERET

A Camp Program for Jewish Arts

by JERRY KAYE

Some campers,
truly gifted, come
to understand how
their soulful art
demonstrates the
deepest of Jewish
values.

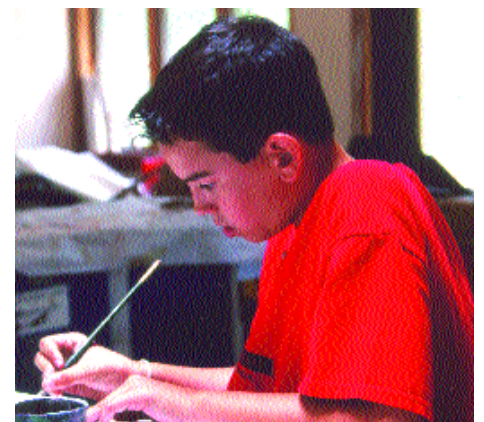


Jewish camping has emerged as a remarkably potent instrument for Jewish learning and identity. The sociologist Sam Heilman advanced the notion that Jewish feeling and Jewish “doing” are the key to unlocking Jewish identity. Professor Bill Cutter of Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles has spoken about the impact of summer camps on confluent education, in which cognition and affect come together to cement a sense of Jewishness. Rabbi Allan “Smitty” Smith, the immediate past director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) Youth Division, has looked to the affirmation of Jewish memory as the tipping point of Jewish identity best fostered in a camp setting.

While these ideas have undoubtedly been realized in Jewish camps across the country, some children have not found their way to merging important parts of their lives into one unified experience. This was the premise underlying the creation of the Tiferet program at Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI), the UAHC camp in Wisconsin. While camps are known for their Jewish content, sports and water activities, the arts have often been a neglected stepchild of Jewish camping, just as they have been in Jewish and secular education everywhere.

Ohad Sha’altiel, a talented artist who had served as a teacher on our staff for several seasons, continuously urged greater arts involvement. Ohad noticed that each year, many children did not sign up for camp because they prefer to spend summers in pursuit of the arts. So we decided to create a Jewish camping experience that centered around explorations of the arts.

Through the generosity of the Olin and Sang families, we built a wonderful Arts Center that incorporated visual arts, dance, photography and media under a single roof. Not long afterwards, we converted a former barn into our theater. One of our earliest projects was a 24-hour “marathon,” in which a group of junior high campers interpreted passages from the Torah into pieces of contemporary outdoor sculpture. These kids had no particular bent for the arts, but were excited about their ability to translate from their heads to their hands.



There is an old aphorism, “Art and religion are the only two human pursuits that bypass the intellect and speak directly to the soul.” With this in mind, we decided to engage Torah with the arts and vice-versa. We asked ourselves, what would it take to create an arts camp in the midst of our other camping programs? Just as important, we asked, would our community be responsive?

The structure of OSRUI seemed perfectly suited for arts explorations. Olin-

Jerry Kaye is Director of Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. For more information on Tiferet, please call 847-509-0990 x14, or email OSRUI@aol.com.

Sang-Ruby Union Institute seeks to be a Jewish learning environment that engages campers throughout the day. Whether kids are at the waterfront, the high ropes course or the ball field, there are always Torah lessons that can be shared. Certainly the arts lend themselves even more so. Generally, though, we think of Jewish history as relatively devoid of art. We know nothing of the dance identified in the Psalms, or the music that David composed. Theater for us is the Bimah on Rosh Hashanah, but no scripts that we can draw upon.

How, then, to merge Jewish learning and art? We turned to our greatest asset — the OSRUI faculty and specialists. Here we found a group of rabbis, educators, cantors and artists who could be encouraged to intertwine their skills and knowledge into the same lesson plans with campers. Each session at OSRUI has a theme, a rabbinic or educational faculty member and a part of the day given over to specific learning. We decided that the Tiferet program should be no different.

Activity schedules were developed in order to respond to the differing needs of younger campers with some interest but not necessarily a lot of talent, and middle and high school campers with real interest and demonstrated ability. For younger campers, about three hours of the day are given over to arts time. In the second and older session, closer to six hours are devoted to arts. Rabbi and dancer, artist, drama specialist and musician intertwine their work with one another. Session themes easily lend themselves to artistic interpretation, the most obvious being *Shir haShirim*, the Song of Songs.

Evening programs provide a wonderful opportunity to engage campers in artistic pursuits that are not included in the daytime agenda. Photography, media and puppetry come alive during time that most see as just plain fun. Collaboration is the key idea in the entire program. The fundamental goals of Tiferet are exemplified when we bring together artists studying Torah with rabbis learning to paint.

In summary performances at the end of the summer, parents are invited to Camp to see all that their children have done. Although the quality of the work is often astounding, the stress is always on process rather than product. Many children

see their talent emerge over the course of a four-week session in ways they could never have imagined. And some campers, truly gifted, come to understand how their soulful art demonstrates the deepest of Jewish values in ways that they could not have comprehended prior to their Tiferet experience.

Counselors in the unit choose to be here because they share a propensity toward the arts and love the kids. They have the wonderful chance to learn while living in the cabins with these youngsters.

Perhaps the most important way to understand the focus of Tiferet is to know that OSRUI does not have Arts and Crafts. Rather, the best forms of art and Torah merge within campers so that they can express themselves, learn and grow.

This program can be replicated virtually anywhere. The hard part is finding committed and talented staff, faculty and rabbis who are willing to set aside their assumptions and reach for a new level of Jewish interpretation. ✿



We know nothing of the dance identified in the Psalms, or the music that David composed.

REEL TEENS

Teenagers are the largest movie-going demographic in America. Recognizing this, the New Jewish Filmmaker Project (NJFP) emerged as part of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival to engage Jewish teenagers in the world of independent Jewish film.

The recipient of a 2001 Joshua Venture Fellowship, the NJFP is designed to provide talented storytellers, aged 15 through 19, with the training and resources to be independent Jewish filmmakers, scholars and advocates. With the assistance of expert mentors and advisors, the young filmmakers in the NJFP experience the full cycle of independent Jewish cinema, including critical viewing, writing, producing, directing, shooting, editing, promoting and exhibiting their work.

Teenagers spend a year working with a community of professional, independent filmmakers and challenging one another to consider the meaning and relevance of Jewish identity in their own lives. They turn the camera on themselves and on their schools, homes and hangouts to take the viewer on an intimate journey through their cultural landscapes. Diversity is a hallmark of the program. Of the five boys and five girls in the class of 2003, two are recent Russian émigrés, one describes herself as a Latina Jew, one describes herself as an African Jew, and a majority have a non-Jewish parent.

The first class of NJFP successfully completed its film, *Not Another Jewish Movie*, which pre-



miered on Closing Night of the 2002 Jewish Film Festival to an enthusiastic audience of over 1,400 viewers. This was followed by an extended audience dialogue with the teen filmmakers. To date, nearly 6,000 young people have seen *Not Another Jewish Movie* at a wide range of venues, including a national creativity conference at Hampshire College, public high schools, Jewish summer camps and community centers. The film will also be screened at international film festivals including the Toronto Teen Festival with an expected audience of 10,000.

American teens are arguably better versed in the vernacular of movies than they are in any other medium. The NJFP uses film to engage and inspire Jewish teens to explore their identity and experience, to deepen the involvement of young people in the Jewish community, and to catalyze an inter-generational dialogue on what it means to be Jewish in America.

For more information on the New Jewish Filmmaker Project, contact Sam Ball at 415-206-1880 or go to www.sjfff.org/project.

JET } Involving TEENS In the PROCESS

by TRACY KIMBALL NEWMAN

All of us who work in the Jewish community face a challenge: How can we insure that every teen in our community remains connected and engaged in Jewish life? Do we have the creativity, time, personnel and financial resources?

In 1998, after an in-depth planning process, The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington constructed Jewish Experiences for Teens (JET) as a think tank and an incubator of new initiatives that would meet this challenge. Five years later, we have a lay-board of 35, a staff of 7, and we work with 50 area synagogues, 8 regional youth groups, 3 JCCs, several camps and other agencies that serve youth. Together, we seek to identify the needs of today's teens and to advocate for these needs. Our various projects include awarding financial incentives for Israel trips, providing leadership training and development for teens and youth professionals, granting funds for innovative outreach programs, and serving as the community resource for teens and for informal Jewish education. We are constantly considering: How can we really care for *all* of our high school teens?

Through our experiences, we've learned three vital lessons for working with teens:

- Teen involvement requires engaging parents
- Contexts of Jewish experience should be positive
- Staff makes relationships happen, and relationships build Jewish connections

In our first five years, our primary focus has been on a project of outreach and culture change involving the last two lessons. *Livnot Keshet* (Building Connections), sponsored by the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Awards Committee, sought to test Hillel's engagement model on teenagers. We believed that through one-on-one conversations and intensive relationship development, we could match teenagers to existing community programs, work with them to create new programs, and keep teens involved in Jewish activities throughout their high school years.

The first step was to discover why teenagers do not participate in Jewish activities beyond B'nai Mitzvah. We found that within organizations, there was a lack of programming that met teen interests and needs, a lack of investment (staff and resources) in the teen population, and a prioritization of other age groups and target populations over the teen cohort.

Tracy Kimball Newman is Director of Jewish Experiences for Teens (JET), the teen planning arm of The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. For more information about JET, please go to www.jetonline.org.

Team Approach & Organizational Change

Livnot Keshet required each pilot synagogue to create a team comprised of lay leadership, teenagers and professionals (including the Rabbi, Education Director and Youth Director). They met regularly to evaluate the current status of their synagogue's teen involvement, review and analyze data collected from interviews, and plan creative initiatives aimed at engaging teens in Jewish life. This holistic approach allowed the discovery of unique angles, various opinions and multiple strategies.

JET has challenged our community to define success with teenagers differently. For example, after reviewing the data gathered through personal interviews of teens and parents no longer involved with synagogue activities, a congregation in Potomac, MD transformed its Eighth Grade curriculum. As a result, the recent graduating class had a 95 percent retention rate for the following year.

The Campbell's Soup Model

Contrary to popular belief, the results from our interviews show that teens are not ditching Jewish life. They are simply not fitting into the established norm. Take Campbell's Soup as an example of engagement. Campbell's goal is to have everyone eat chicken soup. They have created what appears to be competition within themselves, because they know not everyone eats the same kind of chicken soup. They developed chunky and creamy, and added vegetables, noodles or rice, in order to appeal to as broad a market as possible.

They were not afraid of losing customers. In fact, they knew they would add many more chicken soup eaters if they offered the soup based on a wide range of consumer interests.

We can add many more to our customer base as well, simply by expanding the way we think about involvement in Jewish life. JET has sought to create a shift in synagogue mentality to concentrate not only on the number of teens involved, but to reach out to all of its past and present teen members and connect them somehow to Judaism. A temple in Rockville, MD hosts an annual youth fair showcasing community programs for Jewish teens in sports, theater arts, community service and leadership development. Their goal is to make teens aware of other opportunities in which they can become involved.

Diverse Programming Leads to More Involved Teens

We've dared to encourage teens to become involved Jewishly — however *they* define that — and they have. Through JET and *Livnot Keshet* grants, synagogues have begun new projects that complement existing youth programming. Grant projects involve teens in the planning process, empowering them to plan and implement activities based on their interests. Through internship opportunities, by assisting teachers in religious school, through a variety show in a weekly supper club, or even by creating a teen band, they have connected and reconnected to Judaism. Our teens spoke, and synagogues responded by attempting to meet kids where they are.

The ways in which synagogues operate have also begun to change. The youth director at a synagogue in Washington DC recognized that local teens have a hard time traveling to synagogue. He decided to bring his office to the teens for shmooze time by spending part of a day each week at a coffee shop near a private school in which many of his teens are enrolled.



Teen Engagement

Most important is the need to involve teens in the process. JET models this behavior through the use of teen interns who volunteer for 10 hours per week as part of their high school curriculum. They are a constant sounding board, helping to keep the adult professionals focused on the realities of teen life and trends.

We have found that the key to success is not searching for a single perfect program, group, activity or event that will turn teens on to "doing Jewish." Rather, success will be found by creating a variety of experiences while engaging teens in the process. Success with teens involves building a community and reaching them one by one, until we do connect to 100 percent of our youth, offering them opportunities to build their Jewish identity and our collective Jewish future. 🌸



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

The past ten years have seen the emergence of an impressive array of Jewish teen programs, often funded through independent family foundations. Many of these initiatives focus on Jewish values, community development and the arts. Below is a partial sampling that provides a glimpse into a broad range of programmatic content, style and approach.

Areyvut

Founded in September 2002, Areyvut seeks to formally integrate the values of chesed, tzedakah and tikkun olam into the world of Jewish education. Areyvut trains educators throughout the United States, providing them with resources and expertise to incorporate these ideals and practices into their core curricula. Areyvut's goal is to strengthen Jewish values, ensure the transmission of these values to the community at large, and revitalize the commitment by children and adults to perform acts of chesed, tzedakah and tikkun olam as part of their daily lives. For more information, please see www.aryvut.org.

Dorot

DOROT mobilizes thousands of volunteers to provide services to close to 10,000 frail and homebound elderly living in New York City, and to help older people live independently at home. DOROT offers teen volunteers rich learning experiences through personal connections, exposure to new ideas, time for reflection and meaningful encounters with Jewish tradition and texts. DOROT volunteer projects include *Door 2 Door* – teens shop and deliver groceries to frail seniors; *Birthday Corps* – teens deliver birthday cakes and handmade gifts, and celebrate with the seniors; *Friendly Visitors* – teens make weekly one-hour visits; and *Holiday Package Deliveries, Phone Pals* and *E-GrandPals*. For more information, call 212-769-2850 or email youth@dorotusa.org.

Lenox Hill Bikur Cholim Teen Leadership Program

Lenox Hill Bikur Cholim (LHBC) organizes individual teen visits to patients at Lenox Hill Hospital and to elderly residents living in facilities located on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Holiday and group programs provide additional opportunities for teen participation. LHBC's unique methodology of training, supervising and nurturing ensures that teens are equipped to provide companionship, comfort and practical assistance to the ill and the aged, while Jewish values and a sense of accomplishment permeate the entire volunteer experience. For more information, please call 212-434-2488.

B'nai Tzedek

A program of The Harold Grinspoon Foundation and the Jewish Endowment of Western Massachusetts, B'nai Tzedek was started in 1996 to teach teens about the value and rewards of philanthropy. On the occasion of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, teens contribute \$125 of their gift money to a B'nai Tzedek fund. The investment is matched by the supporting Foundations to create an initial endowment of \$500. Each year for 20 years, the teen may donate five percent of the fund's current income to a Jewish charity. B'nai Tzedek has already spawned similar programs throughout North America. For more information, please call 413-736-2552 or go to www.hgf.org.

Genesis

Started in 1997, Genesis at Brandeis University is a four-week summer enrichment program for high school students involving Jewish Studies, the Arts, Humanities and Social Action. Established with initial funding from Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation, Genesis integrates Jewish studies, secular subjects and arts workshops. Genesis focuses on diversity and pluralism, encouraging participants to create their own Shabbat experiences each week, and placing special emphasis on exploring and understanding the concept of community. For more information, please call 781-736-8416 or go to www.brandeis.edu/genesis.

Meyerhoff Teen Initiative

In response to the finding that 75 percent of Baltimore's Jewish teens were not engaged in organized Jewish life after Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Meyerhoff Teen Initiative was formed in 2000 as the first major project of The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Awards Committee. MTI provides teen professional salary enhancements and incentives, supplementary program funds, and mechanisms for evaluation to help the Jewish community become more effective in engaging Jewish teens. One of the major programs of MTI is the website www.18below.com, a comprehensive online community for Jewish teens in the Baltimore area. For more information, see www.meyerhoffteeninitiative.com.

The Curriculum Initiative

The Curriculum Initiative (TCI) was founded in 1996 to provide resources on Judaism to Jewish students in boarding and college-preparatory schools. TCI is a national organization supported by the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, and the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Fund. TCI brings Judaism to students through the Ezra Fellows, a corps of dynamic young educators who help foster Jewish life on campus. TCI also organizes regional conferences in which students from many schools come together to celebrate their Jewish identity. For more information, please see www.thecurriculum.org.

HeartAction

Inspired by the traditional Jewish values of visiting the sick and honoring the elderly, **spark**: Partnership for service developed HeartAction, an innovative Jewish service learning program bringing teens and the elderly together through service. The HeartAction Resource Guide assists synagogues, schools, community centers, youth programs or other organizations in implementing a vibrant and engaging Jewish service learning program involving weekly visits, reflection sessions, text studies, guided journal activities and personal encounters. For more information, please contact **spark** at 410-366-4151 or info@sparkpfs.org, or go to www.sparkpfs.org.

SummerArts at The Jewish Museum

Funded through a grant by the Winnick Family Foundation, SummerArts is an intensive, five-week studio arts program for emerging high school artists interested in exploring art and Jewish identity in a creative atmosphere. Located at The Jewish Museum in New York, SummerArts students work closely with Jewish artists to learn innovative approaches to mixed media, painting, videography and ceremonial arts. The program culminates in a student-curated exhibition of SummerArts work at The Jewish Museum. For more information, please call 212-423-3289.



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we promote service as a preeminent Jewish value, teens will see service as a Jewish way of being. They will see service through a Jewish lens and indeed see that there *is* a Jewish lens, that there are thoughts, leaders, role models and teachers within their own community who actively engage the world in addressing societal problems. They will discover entirely new dimensions to their Jewish experience.

— MAGGI GAINES