

2010 Covenant Awards

Nomination Guidelines



A Program of the Crown Family Foundation
and the Jewish Education Service of North America

The Covenant Foundation

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September 2009

Dear Colleague:

This year, the Covenant Foundation honors three extraordinary Jewish educators with the nineteenth annual Covenant Awards. They are Dr. Erica Brown, Rabbi Stuart Seltzer, and Ms. Nili Simhai. We have enclosed descriptions of these remarkable educators. Each Award carries with it a \$36,000 prize for the recipient and a \$5,000 prize for the organization that employs the Award winner.

I am now writing to ask for your help in identifying the 2010 Covenant Award recipients. The Foundation seeks nominations of extraordinary educators who have been overlooked, as well as outstanding educators in areas of Jewish education that have received too little attention. We continue to recognize the need to identify remarkable classroom teachers whose groundbreaking work can serve as a model to the community. Please help us to find and honor the next recipients of the Covenant Award.

In the following guidelines, you will find everything you need to nominate a Jewish educator for the Award. Please read all the instructions with care and take note of the nominator's various responsibilities. The deadlines indicated on the materials are firm; the Foundation cannot accept materials that arrive after the deadline. For further information about the Covenant Foundation, please refer to our website at www.covenantfn.org/awards.

For your information, please note that those educators whose dossiers were first considered for the 2008 or 2009 Awards will automatically be considered for the 2010 Awards. Nominees with complete, still eligible dossiers who do not wish to be considered should notify the Foundation as soon as possible. The Foundation also allows the renomination of Award nominees who were considered for the 2007 Awards or earlier (nominated in or before 2006). However, all new materials are required for those nominees, as the *Foundation has disposed of all dossiers submitted for the 2007 Awards or earlier*. Candidates may contact the Covenant Foundation if they have any questions about their status.

Warmly,



Harlene Winnick Appelman
www.covenantfn.org

*This is My Covenant with you . . .
the words which I have put into your mouth
shall not depart from you . . .
nor from your children,
nor from your children's children
henceforth and forever.*

–Isaiah 59:21

ואני זאת בריתי... דברי
לא ימוש... מפי זרעך...
מעתה ועד-עולם.

Cultivating Excellence, Effectiveness, and Creativity in Jewish Education

The Covenant Foundation was established in 1990 by the Crown Family Foundation in partnership with the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA). The Foundation honors outstanding Jewish educators and supports creative approaches to programming while building on existing strengths within the field of Jewish education. The Covenant Foundation strengthens educational endeavors that perpetuate the identity and heritage of the Jewish people across all denominations and in all settings. The Covenant Foundation supports early childhood, youth, family, and adult Jewish education, primarily through Grants and Awards. Covenant Awards recognize the achievements of exceptional Jewish educators who have distinguished themselves through their creativity, commitment, and talent. Covenant Grants provide funding to enable creative Jewish educators to develop and implement significant, replicable, cost-effective programming in schools, agencies, community organizations, and other non-profit institutions.

2010 Covenant Awards for Exceptional Jewish Educators

The Covenant Foundation announces the twentieth annual Covenant Awards and invites new nominations of extraordinary educators to be considered for these 2010 Awards. Designed to honor, thank, and celebrate outstanding educators, Covenant Awards are presented to three individuals each year. Each Award carries with it a prize of \$36,000 for the educator and an additional \$5,000 for the educator's home institution.

Over the past nineteen years, fifty-seven remarkable educators have received Covenant Awards. These individuals represent the creativity, commitment, and talent in a field that is increasingly being recognized and supported by the community. Recipients have distinguished themselves in a myriad of ways in Jewish education, including classroom teaching, family education, dance, music, adult education, *tzedakah*, storytelling, Hillel work, curriculum design, leadership, and professional development.

The responsibilities of the Award nominator, Letter of Support writers, and Award nominee are clearly delineated in this brochure. **Note that the role of the nominator is crucial.** The process requires the oversight of the nominator from

beginning to end; it is the nominator's responsibility to ensure that all parties are aware of all requirements and deadlines. The deadlines are firm; no exceptions will be made.

Eligibility

Educators at any stage of their careers with significant achievements in the field of Jewish education are eligible to be nominated for a Covenant Award. Please note, however, that the Award is only given to people currently active in the field and is not typically used to mark the conclusion of a career. Educators working in any setting in North America are eligible to receive a Covenant Award, including those working in day schools, congregational schools, camps, informal education, Hillel programs, family and adult programs, and other kinds of educational endeavors. Educators teaching primarily in a college, seminary, or university setting for credit are not eligible.

Previous Nominees

Educators whose dossiers were first considered for the 2008 or 2009 Awards will automatically be reconsidered for the 2010 Awards. All new materials are required to renominate a candidate who was considered for the 2007 Awards or earlier (nominated in or before 2006). These materials should include a new Statement of Nomination, new Biographical Information, new Statements of Motivation and Purpose, and new Letters of Support. **The Foundation has disposed of all dossiers considered for the 2007 Awards or earlier.** Nominees with completed, still eligible dossiers who do not wish to be considered should notify the Foundation as soon as possible. Candidates may contact the Covenant Foundation if they have any questions about their eligibility.

Selection Criteria

To be considered for a Covenant Award, a completed Award dossier must demonstrate that the candidate

- is an exceptional Jewish educator who has had a significant impact on others,
- has contributed creatively to advancing the transmission of Jewish knowledge, values, and identity, and
- is a positive role model.

Nominations

Anyone concerned with Jewish education in North America is welcome to submit a nomination for the Covenant Awards. We encourage nominations from community members and professionals of all religious denominations

and from all institutional frameworks. No one may nominate more than one person for a Covenant Award in any one year. We will not consider any candidates who are self-nominated or nominated by an immediate family member.

Formatting Requirements

The documents required for nomination must be prepared according to the following guidelines. All nomination materials should be prepared as single-sided, double-spaced 8 ½" x 11" documents, using a 12-point font. All pages must be numbered.

HOW TO NOMINATE AN EDUCATOR

Part I. Responsibilities of the Nominator

Those who wish to nominate an educator for a Covenant Award have the following three responsibilities:

- I. Submit a Statement of Nomination via post and e-mail to be received by the Covenant Foundation no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Thursday, November 19, 2009. The e-mail must be sent to awards@covenantfn.org, and the subject line must read "Nomination of (first and last name of nominee)." The Statement of Nomination must include the following three parts:
 - a. **Cover Page** on a single sheet of paper:
 - i. Information about the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - Name
 - Organization
 - Professional title
 - Street address (home/work)
 - City, State, Zip
 - Telephone number (day/work)
 - Telephone number (evening)
 - E-mail address
 - Current professional affiliation(s)
 - Years of service in Jewish education

Please note that the address you provide on this cover page will be used by the Foundation for all future correspondence. Please ensure that it is correct and indicate whether it is the nominee's work or home address.
 - ii. Information about the nominator (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - Name
 - Organization
 - Professional title
 - Street address
 - City, State, Zip
 - Telephone number (day/work)
 - Telephone number (evening)
 - E-mail address
 - Current professional affiliation(s), if applicable
 - Professional relationship to the nominee (e.g., student, teacher, colleague, community member, congregant, etc.)

Please indicate whether the address provided is your work or home address.
 - b. A **Written Statement** from the nominator describing the nominee's exceptional contributions to the field of Jewish education and explaining why these contributions merit a Covenant Award. This

statement must be limited to two 8 ½" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. The statement may not exceed 700 words.

2. **Send the Notice of Nomination letter, which can be found in the back of this brochure, or at www.covenantfn.org/awards, to the nominee.** The Notice of Nomination letter notifies the nominee that he or she is being considered for a Covenant Award and provides detailed information about how to complete his or her dossier. All of the nominee's materials must be submitted via post and e-mail and must be received by the Covenant Foundation no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. The nominator is responsible for ensuring that the Award candidate knows that she or he has been nominated and is aware of all relevant deadlines. (Also see Nominee's Responsibilities below.)
3. Invite three people to write Letters of Support. Send each one the pre-written invitation found on the Covenant Foundation website at www.covenantfn.org/awards. This invitation notifies the writer that he or she is being asked to write a Letter of Support on behalf of the nominee and provides detailed information about how to complete the letter. These letters should be written by colleagues, former or current students, or community members who have worked directly with the nominee. Letters should be solicited from people who know the nominee from different contexts. (Also see Responsibilities of the Letter of Support Writer for complete instructions.)

An important part of the nominator's responsibility is to ensure that the writers of the Letters of Support complete their letters to the specifications outlined in the following section and are informed of the submission deadline, which is 5:00 p.m. EST on December 1, 2009. If all three letters are not received by the Covenant Foundation via post and e-mail by this deadline, the candidate will not be eligible for consideration this year. The nominator may wish to consider collecting these Letters of Support and submitting all of them at one time via post and e-mail. Please do not send more than three letters. Note that extra, unsolicited materials will not be considered in the Awards process.

Part II. Responsibilities of the Letter of Support Writer

Each Letter of Support writer is responsible for submitting the following information via post and e-mail to be received by the Covenant Foundation no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on December 1, 2009. No exceptions will be made. The e-mail must be sent to awards@covenantfn.org, and the subject line must read "Letter of support for (first and last name of nominee)." The letter must include both a cover page and a written statement. The latter must not exceed two 8 ½" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. The statement may not exceed 700 words.

- I. **Cover Page** containing contact information (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - Name of Covenant Award nominee
 - Name of Letter of Support writer
 - Professional title and affiliation of Letter of Support writer

- Address of Letter of Support writer, including street, city, state, and zip
- Telephone number (day/work)
- Telephone number (evening)
- E-mail address of Letter of Support writer
- Professional relationship of Letter of Support writer to the nominee

2. **Written Statement**

The statement should comment on the nominee's effectiveness, his or her impact on students both in and out of the classroom, contributions as an educator in the transmission of Jewish knowledge, values, and identity, pioneering education activities, if any, and special approaches to education.

Part III. Nominee's Responsibilities

The nominee is responsible for submitting the following information via post and e-mail to be received by the Covenant Foundation no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on December 1, 2009. The e-mail must be sent to awards@covenantfn.org, and the subject line must contain the first and last name of the nominee.

1. **Biographical Information**

Please do not substitute a resume in place of this information. The biographical information must include the following parts:

- Information about the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - Name
 - Organization
 - Professional title
 - Street address (work/home)
 - City, State, Zip
 - Telephone number (day/work)
 - Telephone number (evening)
 - E-mail address
 - Date submitted
- Training information about the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - All training and post-secondary general education
 - Dates attended the programs
 - All degrees awarded, including areas of concentration
- Professional positions held by the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - List positions chronologically, with the most recent position listed first.
 - List up to four positions in Jewish education held by the nominee, including the institution's name and full address, professional title, duties, and most significant achievements.
- Teaching and leadership positions held by the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - Other related teaching and leadership positions held by the nominee, including sponsoring institution and dates participated
- Honors and awards received by the nominee (each entry should be on a separate line):
 - The most significant honors and awards received by the nominee (up to five)
 - The nature of the award, the organization that made the award, and the date it was received.

- Publications, if applicable.
 - If the nominee has more than ten publications, please include only the ten most recent or relevant.

2. **Statement of Motivation**

The Statement of Motivation must not exceed three 8 1/2" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. It may not exceed 1000 words. The statement should highlight the formative experiences that compelled the candidate to become a Jewish educator. It may include a description of educational programs or life experiences that have formed the basis of the educator's commitment to transmitting Judaism.

3. **Statement of Purpose**

The Statement of Purpose must not exceed three 8 1/2" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. It may not exceed 1000 words. The statement should describe what the nominee hopes to achieve in his or her career in Jewish education, the most meaningful aspects of that involvement, and what aspirations the nominee holds for his or her future work.

Note that extra, unsolicited materials will not be considered in the Awards process.

All requested materials must be sent to:
 2010 Awards Selection Committee
 The Covenant Foundation
 1270 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 304
 New York, NY 10020-1702

Electronic copies of all materials must also be submitted as e-mail attachments. E-mail should be sent to awards@covenantfn.org, and the first and last name of the nominee must appear in the subject line.

Note: All nomination materials can be downloaded online. Visit www.covenantfn.org/awards for instructions.

Selection Procedures and Notification of Covenant Award Recipients

All completed nominations will undergo a process of peer review. They will be read by the Covenant Foundation staff and the Awards Selection Committee. During the selection process, Covenant Foundation staff may request additional information from candidates. The Executive Director of the Covenant Foundation will advise all nominators, nominees, and Award recipients of the final determinations in May 2010. No information will be provided over the telephone regarding Award status.

Please contact the Covenant Foundation with any questions you may have regarding the nomination process:
 phone: 212-245-3500
 fax: 212-245-0619
 e-mail: info@covenantfn.org

Important Deadlines

For your convenience, below is a list of all deadlines and items needed for the nomination of a candidate. All digital communication should be addressed to awards@covenantfn.org.

Please be sure to complete all of the items listed below. *Dossiers that are not completed by the following deadlines will not be considered for the 2010 Covenant Awards.*

For Nominators

- Statement of Nomination.** The Covenant Foundation must receive completed statements of nomination, via post and e-mail, no later than 5 p.m. EST on Thursday, November 19, 2009.
- Notice of Nomination Letter.** The nominator must mail the notice to the nominee, alerting him or her to submit completed materials via post and e-mail. The Covenant Foundation must receive all completed nominee materials, via post and e-mail, no later than 5 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009.
- Invitation for Letters of Support.** The nominator must invite three appropriate persons who agree to write Letters of Support. The Covenant Foundation must receive completed support materials, via post and e-mail, by 5 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

For Letters of Support Writers

- Letters of Support.** The Covenant Foundation must receive completed Letters of Support, via post and e-mail, no later than 5 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009.

For Nominees

- Biographical Information
- Statement of Motivation
- Statement of Purpose

The Covenant Foundation must receive all three items, via post and e-mail, no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Nominee materials sent by post should arrive in a single packet.

If further information is required, the Covenant Foundation will contact the nominee.

All materials should be sent to:
2010 Awards Selection Committee
The Covenant Foundation
1270 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 304
New York, NY 10020-1702

Note: All nomination materials can be downloaded online.
Visit www.covenantfn.org/awards for instructions.

Please contact the Covenant Foundation with any questions:
phone: 212-245-3500
fax: 212-245-0619
e-mail: info@covenantfn.org

Notice of Nomination Letter

Dear: _____

(Nominator: Please write name of nominee here.)

You have been nominated for a 2010 Covenant Award as an outstanding Jewish educator. The Award carries with it a prize to the winner of \$36,000 and an additional \$5,000 to the winner's home institution. Up to three Awards will be made this year.

If you wish to accept this nomination, please send the following information in a single packet to the 2010 Awards Selection Committee, The Covenant Foundation, 1270 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 304, New York, NY, 10020-1702. All materials must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Electronic copies of these documents must also be submitted as e-mail attachments. The e-mail must be sent to awards@covenantfn.org, and the subject line must contain your first and last name.

1. **Biographical Information.** Please do not substitute a resume in place of this information. The Biographical Information must include the following parts:

- a. Information about yourself (each entry should be on a separate line): Name; organization; professional title; street address; city, state, zip; telephone number (day/work); telephone number (evening); e-mail address; and date submitted. Please note that the Foundation will use this address for all future correspondence. Please ensure that it is correct and indicate whether it is your work or home address.
- b. Training information (each entry should be on a separate line): List all training and post-secondary general education, dates attended, and all degrees awarded, including areas of concentration.
- c. Professional positions held (each entry should be on a separate line): List the positions chronologically, with the most recent listed first. List up to four positions you have held in Jewish education, including the institution's name and full address, your professional title, duties, and most significant achievements.
- d. Teaching and leadership positions held (each entry should be on a separate line): List other related teaching and leadership positions you have held, including sponsoring institution and dates participated.
- e. Honors and awards received (each entry should be on a separate line): List the most significant honors and awards you have received (up to five). Please indicate the nature of the award, the organization that made the award, and the date it was received.
- f. Publications, if applicable. If you have more than ten publications, please include only the ten most recent or relevant.

2. **Statement of Motivation.** The Statement of Motivation must not exceed three 8 1/2" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. It may not exceed 1000 words. The statement should highlight the formative experiences that compelled you to become a Jewish educator. It may include a description of educational programs or life experiences that have formed the basis of your commitment to transmitting Judaism.

3. **Statement of Purpose.** The Statement of Purpose must not exceed three 8 1/2" x 11" double-spaced, single-sided pages, using 12-point font. It may not exceed 1000 words. The statement should describe what you hope to achieve in your career in Jewish education, the most meaningful aspects of that involvement, and what aspirations you hold for your future work.

Unsolicited materials will not be considered in the Awards process and cannot be returned.

Materials not received by the December 1, 2009, deadline will not be considered.

Please note that all nomination materials can also be downloaded online. Visit www.covenantfn.org/awards for instructions.

Best wishes,

(Nominator: Please sign your name here.)

Erica Brown

Scholar-in-Residence and Managing Director for Leadership and Education
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington
Rockville, Maryland



2009 Covenant Award Winner

“Teaching, for me, is not a profession. It is both a calling and a daily commitment to optimism. William James observed that when people feel ‘deeply and intensively active and alive,’ there is a ‘voice inside which speaks and says, *This is the real me.*’ That is the voice I hear when I am in the classroom, the one that is most active and alive in me. I love being part of the magic hermeneutic process of texts informing lives and lives informing texts. I have fun when I teach, and it is clear to my students that I am enjoying myself.”

Erica Brown directs adult education for the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning and consults with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington to expand the accessibility of adult learning and is constantly exploring new methods to reach people through education. From 1996-2000, before coming to Washington, she held a similar position as community-wide Scholar-in-Residence at the Combined Jewish Philanthropies in Boston.

“I want a teaching experience to feel relevant, deeply immersive, thrilling in its newness, uncomfortable in its provocation,” she writes. “It should offer a place of friendship, community, and self-awareness. I want each class to feel like a work of art: carefully composed, with points of light and shadow, and highly structured yet fluid enough to incorporate multiple voices and different directions. I want a class to be a thing of beauty.”

Scholarship has played a central role in Erica’s life and career. She was a Jerusalem Fellow at the Mandel Leadership Institute from 2000-2002, and she has been a member of the Wexner Heritage Program faculty since 1995. In April of 2009, she was named to the second-ever cohort of AVI CHAI Fellows. She holds a Ph.D. from Baltimore Hebrew University, an M.A. from Harvard University, and an M.A. from the University of London, all in Judaic Studies. She also has an M.A. from the University of London in Religious Studies and a B.A. in General Philosophy and Judaic Studies from Yeshiva University. She has published three books: *Inspired Jewish Leadership*, *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood* (co-authored with Misha Galperin), and *Spiritual Boredom*.

In her Statement of Purpose, Erica wrote: “Education has its greatest impact in the context of a teaching relationship grown over time. I aspire to build connections and to spend as much time with those who have passed through our doors already as with those who have just entered. Teachers have to encourage adult learners to form new social and spiritual bonds while generating a widening sense of responsibility to the Jewish community. Jewish adult education must be part of a strategic reach to create belonging and a network of support for Jewish institutions.”

From her Letters of Nomination and Support:

“Erica’s unique gift lies in her ability to take adult learners out of their comfort zones and to put them on a larger stage, to inspire them, and to compel them to act. Her decision to make her career at the communal level speaks volumes about her desire to reach a very broad cross section of Jews and to deeply influence the culture of a major Jewish community.”

Dr. Misha Galperin, Chief Executive Officer
The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

“My first ongoing work with Dr. Brown was during the years that she was a Fellow in the Mandel Jerusalem Fellows program. In a group of unusually talented educators from around the world, Erica stood out. She combined creativity and intellect, seriousness of purpose with intellectual openness and personal warmth, and a commitment to theory with a deep well of practical experience.”

Daniel Gordis, Director
Mandel Leadership Institute, Jerusalem

Rabbi Stuart Seltzer

Dean of Judaic Studies
Shoshana S. Cardin School
Baltimore, Maryland



2009 Covenant Award Winner

“As a Jewish educator, my roles are varied, but my goal is always the same: to discover and cultivate creative ways to help each individual student, class, and teacher find a personally meaningful and lasting relationship with Judaism. That is the journey and the covenant. That is the goal, the promised land of a deeply personal and lifelong relationship with our tradition.”

One day, when Stuart Seltzer was 16 years old, the rabbi of his local synagogue stopped him in the hallway of the school. The 5th grade teacher was ill, Rabbi Berkun told him. “Would you please go and teach his class? They’re waiting for you.” Stuart has been teaching ever since.

Stuart attended Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary as an undergraduate and was ordained at JTS in 1988.

Upon ordination, he accepted an invitation from Rabbi Joel H. Zaiman to become the Director of the Religious School at Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore. He would remain there for 19 years, teaching in all of the congregation’s five schools, from early childhood through adult programming. His unique teaching style and his passion for Jewish education helped him pioneer new approaches to family programming, the arts in Jewish education, family services, and teen educational experiences. His award-winning programs have served as models for communities throughout North America.

Rabbi Seltzer’s home is an extended classroom, always open for Shabbat and holiday meals and informal study sessions. He has a particular interest in theatrical arts and has completed five summer sessions with the Lincoln Center Institute for Aesthetic Education. As a result of his dedication and creativity, Rabbi Seltzer has secured many grants for distinctive projects at the institutions where he has taught. For the past eight years, he has also created and taught curriculum at the New Directors Institute of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

In 2007, Stuart accepted the post of Dean of Judaic Studies at the Shoshana S. Cardin High School, Baltimore’s only pluralistic Day School. As supervisor and teacher of Judaic Studies, school rabbi, and supervisor of the Hebrew language program, Stuart continues to introduce creative new approaches to prayer and learning.

“I am a storyteller,” Stuart writes. “That was my job at Chizuk Congregation, and it is my job now at the Shoshana S. Cardin School. It is my job to help create, through imaginative and rigorous Jewish education, a powerful positive story about what Jewish education can be, about where we might go and what it will take to get there. This is what the future holds for me, to imagine and dream this ongoing story and put it into practice every day.”

From His Letters of Nomination and Support:

“I don’t think I’ve ever met a Jewish educator who so fully embodies the craft. University professors, students attending some of the finest prep schools and colleges in the country, and nationally acclaimed communal leaders consistently cite Stuart as the most talented Jewish educator they have ever known. He is the epitome of what the Covenant Award represents: a Jewish educator, at the peak of his career, who lives for excellence and whose signature programs and leadership have made an indelible impact on teachers, students, parents, funders, and colleagues alike.”

Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, Trustee
Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds

“For his entire career as a synagogue educator, Rabbi Stuart Seltzer has been the standard bearer for academic excellence in synagogue schools. His career has been devoted to creating, through word and deed, a positive narrative of synagogue school education that should be shouted from the rooftops.”

Serene Victor, Faculty Leader, *DeLeT MAT Program*
Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, Brandeis University

Nili Simhai

Director, Teva Learning Center
New York, NY



2009 Covenant Award Winner

“Twelve years ago, when I started as a Teva educator, we used to sit down and say, ‘Here’s a list of Jewish concepts and quotes that will support our cause.’ Now, we ask questions like, ‘What does it mean to be co-creators with God? How did God design the world (or the *mishkan*, or *Shabbat*) and what can we learn about creating (or building, or resting) in a similar way? How can we honor the principals of *shmitta* in a modern economy? Can we deepen our relationship with God by being closer to the rest of God’s Creation?’

“In ecology, there is a concept called the ‘edge effect.’ It refers to the fact that the area where habitats meet (where a forest meets a meadow, for instance) is the area of greatest diversity and fecundity. At Teva, we have our own edge effect. It is the place where the kids, the educators, and the land all meet. This interface, between student and teacher and Creation, is where we are discovering new Torah and rediscovering ancient Torah.”

Nili Simhai joined the Teva Learning Center as an educator in 1997, a few years after receiving her B.S. in Wildlife Management from Ohio State University. Just two years later, she was promoted to Director. In the ten years since, the Teva Learning Center has gone from serving 1,500 to 6,000 students annually. Nili has pioneered Jewish experiential environmental education. She is proud of her role in creating Teva’s *Achdoot*, *Yitziah*, and “Bringing It Back to Our Schools” programs, as well as of her contribution to the development of several Teva curricula. Each year, she looks forward to teaching at the Teva Seminar on Jewish Environmental Education, a professional development conference for Jewish educators, rabbis, counselors, and lay leaders.

Nili believes that being tapped by a mentor at an early age gave her a thirst for more teaching and led to a string of congregational education positions throughout her early career. Today, mentorship of other educators is one of Nili’s greatest passions. She has personally trained over 100 Teva Educators, many of whom have gone on to careers in Jewish education and some of whom have founded other Jewish Environmental organizations.

“I didn’t plan a career in Jewish education. But over time, I heard a calling. I think about this when I see how many young people are attracted to Teva for reasons that have nothing to do with Jewish education. I see so much potential in them.”

From Her Letters of Nomination and Support:

“A diminutive bundle of energy, Nili infuses the field with deep learning, a warm and optimistic spirit, an ability to attract, motivate, and support incredible talent, and a phenomenal sense of personal commitment. In all of Nili’s programs and teachings, there is a remarkable sense of hope in the face of sobering challenges, as well as a call for people not just to learn, but to take action, both individually and institutionally. When educators anywhere in the country need advice and direction regarding Judaism and the environment, they inevitably end up on the phone with Nili.”

Jordan Dale, Executive Director
Surprise Lake Camp

“Over the past decade, Nili has grown a small program, serving several hundred Jewish Day School students, into a nationally-recognized center for Jewish learning and the environment that reaches thousands of students each year. Through Teva, Nili has developed the premier Jewish environmental educator training program. Her commitment to thoughtful pedagogy is evident in everything she does.”

Adam Berman, Executive Director
Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center

The Covenant Awards Recipients & Their Nominators

	<i>Award Recipient</i>	<i>Nominator</i>			
1991	Harlene Winnick Appelman Ateret Cohn ל"ת Dr. Sara Rubinow Simon	Joel Lurie Grishaver Rabbi David Brusin Chaim Lauer	2005	Rabbi Elyse Goldstein Jody Hirsh Stephanie Rotsky	Dr. Seymour Epstein Dr. Steven Baruch Shlomit Lipton
1992	Rabbi Israel David Eliach Marcia Lapidus Kaunfer Tova Shimon	Sora F. Bulka Cindy Kaplan Dr. Elaine R.S. Cohen	2006	Jane Taubenfeld Cohen Dr. Marc N. Kramer Rabbi Loren A. Sykes	Sandi Morgan and Harry Bloom Lynn W. Raviv Naomi Less
1993	Danny Siegel Dvorah S. Heckelman Rabbi Berel Wein	Louise Cohen Ronnie Sims Emanuel Schwartz	2007	Tobie Brandriss Dr. Bruce Powell Rabbi Philip Warmflash	Blu Greenberg Howard M. Farber Dr. Sheldon Dorph
1994	Linda Rabinowitch Thal Rabbi Amnon Haramati Rabbi Richard N. Levy	Rabbi William Cutter Rabbi Emanuel Rackman Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein	2008	Diana Ganger Rabbi Yakov Horowitz Susan Werk	Cantor Mark Horowitz Yossi Prager Rabbi Alan Silverstein
1995	Misha Avramoff Dr. Peninnah Schram Rabbi Martin Schloss	Peter A. Geffen Gerald Fierst Dr. Don Well	2009	Dr. Erica Brown Rabbi Stuart Seltzer Nili Simhai	Dr. Misha Galperin Lee Meyerhoff Hendlor Jordan Dale
1996	Debbie Friedman Ellie Bach Gellman Fred Rosenbaum	Randee Friedman Agi Romer-Segal Dr. Jehon Grist			
1997	Rabbi Yaakov Bender Michael Brooks Henia Lewin	Richard Altabe Rabbi Judd Kruger Levingston Joe Greenwald			
1998	Joel Lurie Grishaver Rabbi Elana Kanter Dr. Anne M. Lidsky	Debi M. Rowe Richard Friedman Amy Landau			
1999	Rabbi Judith Z. Abrams Cheryl R. Finkel Macy B. Hart	Shirley Barish Sol Singer Karen S. Franklin			
2000	Rabbi Yosi Gordon Dr. Karen Shawn Rabbi David Silber	Roberta Louis Goodman Deborah Nahshon Kathleen Peratis			
2001	Lorraine Posner Arcus Jo Kay Rabbi Daniel Landau Lehmann	Marilyn Cohen Rabbi Aaron D. Panken Jonathan D. Sarna			
2002	Rivy Poupko Kletenik Rabbi Sidney Schwarz Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan	Michele Rosen Dr. Shulamith Reich Elster Dr. Isa Aron			
2003	Rabbi William C. Berk Vicky Kelman Zipora Schorr	Dr. Lois J. Zachary Robert Sherman Dr. Chaim Y. Botwinick			
2004	Yosef I. Abramowitz Dr. Ruth Pinkenson Feldman Barbara Ellison Rosenblit	Martin Kaminer Leonard Rubin Dr. Gail Twersky Reimer			