

2012 Covenant Awards

Nomination Guidelines



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

The Covenant Foundation

Board of Directors

Steven Ain
Harlene Winnick Appelman
Susan Crown
Dr. Arnold M. Eisen
Eli N. Evans
Cheryl R. Finkel
Ari L. Goldman
Dr. Betsy Dolgin Katz
Barbara Goodman Manilow
Martha Minow
Dr. Steven B. Nasatir
Dr. Jonathan S. Woocher

Harlene Winnick Appelman
Executive Director

Joni Blinderman
Associate Director

Jane Glaubman
*Director of Communications
and Information Management*

Adam Pollack
Program Officer

Annette Pollack
Director of Operations

Sonny Turski
Grants Administrator

The Covenant Foundation
1270 Avenue of the Americas
Suite 304
New York, NY 10020-1702
phone: 212-245-3500
fax: 212-245-0619
e-mail: info@covenantfn.org
web: www.covenantfn.org

September 2011

Dear Colleague:

This year, The Covenant Foundation honors three extraordinary Jewish educators with Covenant Awards: Rabbi Eve Ben-Ora, Ms. Amy Skopp Cooper, and Rabbi Shai Held. 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.

2011 marks the twenty-first time The Covenant Foundation has acknowledged the extraordinary talent found in Jewish education. Sixty-three professionals have received this honor. We are looking to you to help continue this crucial tradition.

The 2012 Covenant Award recipients will come from your communities—please help us identify them! 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.

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.

2012 Covenant Awards for Exceptional Jewish Educators

The Covenant Foundation announces the twenty-second annual Covenant Awards and invites new nominations of extraordinary educators to be considered for these 2012 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 twenty-one years, sixty-three 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 used to mark the conclusion of a career. Educators working in any setting in North America are eligible to receive a Covenant Award, with the exception of those educators teaching primarily in a college, seminary, or university setting for credit.

Previous Nominees

Educators whose dossiers were first considered for the 2010 or 2011 Awards will automatically be reconsidered for the 2012 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 2009 Awards or earlier (nominated in or before 2008). 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 2009 Awards or earlier.** Candidates may contact the Covenant Foundation if they have any questions about their status.

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 1/2" 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 10, 2011. 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 (home/work)
 - 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 1/2" 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, November 22, 2011. The nominator is responsible for ensuring that the Award candidate knows that he or she 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 November 22, 2011. 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 November 22, 2011. 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 1/2" 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 educational 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 November 22, 2011. 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 (home/work)
 - 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 1,000 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 1,000 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:
 2012 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 2012. 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 2011 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 10, 2011.
- 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, November 22, 2011.
- 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, November 22, 2011.

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, November 22, 2011.

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, November 22, 2011. 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:
2012 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 2012 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 2012 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, November 22, 2011. 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 1,000 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 1,000 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 November 22, 2011, 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.)

Rabbi Eve Ben-Ora

Jewish Educator

Jewish Community Center of San Francisco

San Francisco, California



2011 Covenant Award Recipient

“Because I am a rabbi, one question I often get is, ‘Which congregation are you with?’ The answer to this question is found in the meaning of the word ‘rabbi’: teacher. This is who I am, and this is what I do. I do not need a congregation to teach, only people willing to engage in the conversation so that we can learn together.”

Since 2006, Rabbi Eve Ben-Ora has been the Jewish Educator at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF), where she has worked to make Jewish education a thriving and accessible piece of the organizational landscape and the JCCSF a Jewish home for a pluralistic community.

As the lead Jewish educator at one of the Bay Area’s centerpiece Jewish institutions—one that serves a diverse population of 17,000 members and thousands more non-members—she has infused the organization with a Jewish educational mindset. Not only does she work closely with staff and teachers to foster a deeper understanding of the theory and application of Jewish values and knowledge in educational settings, she has expressed these, quite literally, on the walls of the building itself, visible to all who work or visit there.

From an interactive digital Omer calendar that occupies the JCC’s public space to the “Sukkot Outside In” project that transformed the atrium of the JCC building into an indoor sukkah and offered visitors and staff digital and programmatic points of entry into greater teachings and lessons of the holiday, she has brought Jewish education into non-traditional venues. Among her best loved projects is the annual Staff Seminar to Israel, which she designs and leads.

“I love being a part of the ‘ah-ha’ moment when someone has a new insight. I relish being in a community that brings people of all backgrounds together, where Judaism makes lives more meaningful. My quest is to bring wonder to others by constantly seeking new ways to inspire people.”

Prior to joining the JCCSF, Eve served for ten years as Director of Jewish Education at the JCC in Houston. During that time, she built and nurtured the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School in Houston, and she was selected from a national field to be honored as FMAMS Distinguished Director in 1999. She also received the Yavneh Award for Excellence in Jewish Educational Leadership from Houston’s Bureau of Jewish Education. Eve began her rabbinate as the Director of Education and Programs at Congregation Emanuel in Denver, Colorado, where she created a Rocky Mountain Rosh Hashanah family retreat that continues to this day.

Eve holds degrees from the University of Arizona and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where she was ordained in 1986 and received an honorary doctorate in 2011. She and her husband, Avi Schulman, have three children.

“I believe that I have a role to play in helping keep the Jewish chain of tradition alive and vibrant for future generations. Capable teachers have great power to nurture and shape the future. I have been the beneficiary of the devotion and commitment of those who came before, and I have tried to do all that I can to maintain the vibrancy of Jewish life. There is great responsibility in this task, and there is great joy, too.”

From Her Letters of Nomination and Support:

“Eve’s modesty, dignity, and grace touch everything we do. She is a constant presence and reminder for each of us to work at being our best selves. I have seen her capacity to transform lives and foster a sense of Jewish values in the people she touches.”

Carole R. Zawatsky, Chief Program Officer,
Arts, Culture, and Jewish Life
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco

“Eve *ensouled* her classes at the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School in Houston with a combination of erudition and joy at learning that made all of her students learn with ease and probe further. Her knowledge was deep and her classes were exciting.”

Jane S. Shapiro, Founder
Jane Shapiro Associates

Amy Skopp Cooper

Assistant Director, *National Ramah Commission*

Director, *Ramah Day Camp in Nyack*

New York, New York



2011 Covenant Award Recipient

“Every summer, new Jewish stories unfold on our *migrash* at Ramah Nyack. My job is to construct a setting that warmly welcomes these tales. I relish the spontaneous Jewish learning and teaching moments that abound and welcome them with blessing.

“Each camp morning, the *migrash* comes to life with over 700 children and 400 staff members pounding its grass, waving Israeli flags and dancing joyfully to Israeli music. I remain there throughout the day, participating in *tefillot*, celebrations, classes, barbeques, social action projects, meetings, play rehearsals, ceremonies, and other camp gatherings. I tie shoelaces, wipe tears, and give *Shabbat Shalom* hugs. When campers depart each afternoon, the *migrash* is transformed into a home for our 225 residential staff members. It is here that young adults become architects of Jewish experiences and assume the awesome responsibility of transmitting their knowledge and enthusiasm to an even younger generation.”

As Assistant Director of the National Ramah Commission, Amy Skopp Cooper lends her vision to Ramah’s entire network of eight overnight camps, three day camps, and camping programs in Israel. Deeply committed to nurturing the next generation of Jewish leaders, Amy spends much of her time creating and running staff leadership development initiatives in North America and Israel and has led Ramah staff missions to Masorti communities in Buenos Aires and Berlin. She oversees the Ramah Service Corps, a new initiative that aims to bring Ramah’s unique educational style to children and families in synagogue communities during the school year, and coordinates training programs for the 200 *sh’lichim* (Israeli counselors) who work throughout the Ramah network each summer.

Concurrently, Amy serves as Director of Camp Ramah Nyack, a position she has held since 1997. Under her leadership, Ramah Nyack has seen a significant increase in campers from across the spectrum of Jewish life. In addition to managing the day camp program for children, Amy oversees a rich and varied program of learning and social action for hundreds of young adults on staff, whom she nurtures, educates, and builds into a community of Jewish leaders. Under her direction, the camp has become a national model for Jewish leadership development.

Prior to coming to Ramah, Amy was Director of Education at Congregation B’nai Israel in Millburn, New Jersey and Assistant Director of the high school division at Hebrew College in Boston. A graduate of Brandeis University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Amy is married to Rabbi Mark Cooper and lives in South Orange, New Jersey with their five sons.

“For countless Jewish educators, rabbis, communal workers, and lay leaders, their decision to become Jewish leaders was born at camp. There has been nothing more personally and professionally gratifying for me than being part of these incredible voyages. My own Jewish narrative continues to be written on the *migrash*. It is where my heart and soul flourish, the place that continues to inspire me to live as a Jew and to be a Jewish teacher. I am passionate about my work and what I create at Ramah. It has been and will continue to be a labor of love, with few regrets and enduring joy.”

From Her Letters of Nomination and Support:

“Through her personal drive and exceptional commitment to Jewish education, Amy inspires hundreds of young Jewish educators to create a safe and joyful Jewish environment for young children. A true innovator and creative thinker, she is constantly seeking ways to keep the Ramah camping movement dynamic and cutting-edge.”

Rabbi Mitchell Cohen, Director
National Ramah Commission
Amiel Hersh, Assistant Director
Ramah Day Camp in Nyack

“Amy has unlimited energy combined with superior intelligence, wonderful social skills, and a commitment to doing things the right way. From the start, she brought an energy and enthusiasm to Ramah Nyack that transformed it.”

Skip Vichness
Chair, *Foundation for Jewish Camp*

Rabbi Shai Held

Co-Founder, Rosh Yeshiva, and Chair in Jewish Thought

Mechon Hadar

New York, New York



2011 Covenant Award Recipient

“Cultures and communities are ultimately transformed one individual at a time. We have no other option than to start by nurturing, cultivating, and listening to the infinitely precious human beings who stand before us.

“My aspiration for *Yeshivat Hadar*, and for my own teaching, is that we teach a *Torat Hesed*, a Torah of love and kindness, a Torah that reminds us that every step we take towards God is a step towards—not away from—the world. As I often remind students, if being present in the face of others’ pain were easy, Torah wouldn’t describe it as the culmination of the religious life.”

Rabbi Shai Held is co-founder, Dean, and Chair in Jewish Thought at *Mechon Hadar*, a young institution committed to serious, passionate, open-minded Jewish education in an egalitarian setting. Previously, he served for six years as Scholar-in-Residence at *Kehilat Hadar* in New York City, the flagship *minyan* of the independent *minyan* movement, and taught theology and *Halakha* at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He also served as Director of Education at Harvard Hillel, where, together with Dr. Bernie Steinberg, he built the *Netivot* Fellowships program and became known on campus both as a pastor and a pedagogue. A renowned lecturer and educator, Shai has taught for institutions such as *Drisha*, *Me’ah*, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, and the Rabbinic Training Institute. He currently serves on the faculty of the Wexner Heritage program and is regularly invited to teach at synagogues and communal institutions across the United States.

Shai is known for his ability to make complex ideas come alive in ways that are accessible without being diluted, as well as for his skill in opening up the world of Jewish texts to people of all backgrounds. He is committed to bringing text learning and personal growth into intimate conversation, and is an impassioned advocate of seeing the worlds of Jewish education and public service as inextricably linked: This why all students at *Yeshivat Hadar* visit the elderly and infirm as part of their commitment to Jewish life. *Newsweek* recently named Shai one of America’s 50 most influential rabbis.

Shai holds a doctorate in religion from Harvard University, where he wrote a dissertation on the religious worldview of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. His main academic interests are in modern Jewish and Christian thought and in the history of Zionism. Shai lives in Manhattan with his wife Rachel, a clinical psychologist, and his son Lev, who is 18 months old and explores the world for a living.

“At *Yeshivat Hadar*, I want my students to know that Torah is a language, the language of the Jewish people, the language in which God and we give voice to our deepest yearnings and aspirations, as well as our most fundamental and far-reaching obligations and commitments. Torah is not a hobby, but a birthright. The work of *Yeshivat Hadar* is to help another generation of Jews receive and discover that most precious gift which is already theirs, and ours.”

From His Letters of Nomination and Support:

“Rabbi Held could easily have a career as a professor at Harvard or Yale, but has chosen instead to live his life ‘in the trenches,’ helping a generation of Jews take hold of their birthright and find ways to make Judaism meaningful, compelling, and sustaining in the twenty-first century.”

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.
President and I.H. and Anna Grancell Professor of Jewish Religious Thought
Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion

“Shai is a remarkable pedagogue who brings his entire self to his teaching. He is a sensitive soul, the rare teacher who can speak to a room full of people and still make each person feel like he or she is the only one in the room.”

Rabbi Elie Kaunfer
Co-founder, *Rosh Yeshiva*, and Executive Director
Rabbi Ethan Tucker
Co-founder and *Rosh Yeshiva*
Mechon Hadar

The Covenant Awards Recipients & Their Nominators

	<i>Award Recipient</i>	<i>Nominator</i>			
1991	Harlene Winnick Appelman Ateret Cohn ארת'ר 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	Dvorah S. Heckelman Danny Siegel Rabbi Berel Wein	Ronnie Sims Louise Cohen Emanuel Schwartz	2007	Tobie Brandriss Dr. Bruce Powell Rabbi Philip Warmflash	Blu Greenberg Howard M. Farber Dr. Sheldon Dorph
1994	Rabbi Amnon Haramati Rabbi Richard N. Levy Dr. Linda Rabinowitch Thal	Rabbi Emanuel Rackman Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein Rabbi William Cutter	2008	Diana Ganger Rabbi Yakov Horowitz Susan Werk	Cantor Mark Horowitz Yossi Prager Rabbi Alan Silverstein
1995	Misha Gabriel Avramoff Rabbi Martin Schloss Peninnah Schram	Peter A. Geffen Dr. Don Well Gerald Fierst	2009	Dr. Erica Brown Rabbi Stuart Seltzer Nili Simhai	Dr. Misha Galperin Lee Meyerhoff Hendler Jordan Dale
1996	Debbie Friedman Ellie Bach Gellman Fred Rosenbaum	Randee Friedman Agi Romer-Segal Dr. Jehon Grist	2010	Jan Darsa Beth Huppin Dr. Bernard Steinberg	Margot Stern Strom Debra Butler Daniel Libenson
1997	Rabbi Yaakov Bender Michael Brooks Henia Lewin	Richard Altabe Rabbi Judd Kruger Levingston Joe Greenwald	2011	Rabbi Eve Ben-Ora Amy Skopp Cooper Rabbi Shai Held	Carole Zawatsky Rabbi Mitch Cohen & Ami Hersch Rabbi David Ellenson
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 Sid 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			

The Covenant Foundation

1270 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 304
New York, NY 10020-1702

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, NY
Permit No. 4141