The Covenant Foundation
GRANT IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2000-2007
Sustainability is the capacity to endure. In ecology, the word describes how biological systems remain diverse and productive over time. So it is with educational initiatives. Have they remained exactly as planned or have they changed along the way, keeping to the spirit if not the letter of a proposed project or educational endeavor?

The Covenant Foundation's *Grant Impact and Sustainability Report* is a description of Covenant Foundation grants from 2000 to 2007 and an analysis of those that have grown, those that were valiant attempts but are no longer active, and the lessons we have gleaned from these results. The work was conducted by Rosov Consulting, LLC and written by Dr. Tobin Belzer. It was edited by Dr. Meredith Woocher. Dr. Woocher introduced the Lead Impact Categories in order to encourage the reader to examine these projects through diverse lenses.

The *Grant Impact and Sustainability Report* reflects a long held notion of the Foundation: Waiting and revisiting educational initiatives to determine if they have thrived is a responsible way to measure investment. The knowledge gained from this type of analysis will be valuable to the field and everyone will have learned from experience.

This publication will be available online by subscription (at no charge) and distributed beginning in January. Our plan is to distribute the publication in installments and invite commentary and response.

Harlene Winnick Appelman
Executive Director
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Introduction

For two decades, The Covenant Foundation has been changing the landscape of North American Jewish Education through grants that have literally spanned the continent, reached tens of thousands of Jewish learners throughout their lifespan, and impacted organizations ranging from scrappy start-ups to pillars of Jewish communal life. While it is relatively easy to categorize Covenant’s 235 Signature and Ignition grants from 1991-2012 by such metrics as host organization (synagogue, JCC, Central Agency, independent organization, etc.); target population (families, teens, young adults, educators, etc.); and primary educational focus (early childhood, supplemental school, day school, camping, technology, etc.), a greater challenge is analyzing and understanding the actual impact that these grants have had, both individually and as a collective force in the field.

This report represents the first such endeavor, focusing on Signature grants given from 2000-2007 – a period recent enough that many of the grants are still thriving entities, but far enough in the past to assess longer-term impacts beyond the initial grant years. Interviews were conducted with former Project Directors to create brief summary documents for each grant (with expanded reports for a select group of “spotlight grants.”) These documents were then coded into seven “impact categories.” These categories are not mutually exclusive; in fact, most of the grants fall into more than one category. In addition to being placed within a lead impact category, each grant is labeled with “tags” that convey the multiple dimensions of its accomplishments. While not every grant achieved the same level of impact or sustainability over time, even those that were smaller in scope or shorter in duration achieved successes that changed the Jewish world for the better. The impact categories are as follows:

1. **Portals to Jewish Life and Learning:** Creating new venues and opportunities for engaging often underserved populations in Jewish life.

   Examples: Creation of a program to welcome families with newborns into the Jewish community; enabling groups of pre-teen and teen girls to use a Jewish lens to navigate the challenges (and joys) of adolescence.

2. **Professional Development:** Growing and enhancing the skills of today’s and tomorrow’s Jewish educators.

   Examples: Development of a Master’s program for Jewish educators to enable them to learn how to integrate cutting-edge technology into their teaching, thus launching many of them on new professional paths; development of a mentoring program in day schools that enhances the experience of novice teachers and increases the percentage that remain in the field.

3. **New Directions for the Field:** Seeding the field with new visions, experiences, or resources that have a far-reaching impact.

   Examples: Establishment of Hebrew Language Immersion as a leading approach for preschool Hebrew instruction; reinventing *mikveh* immersion as a key contemporary Jewish ritual for marking significant life events.

4. **Organizational Change and Capacity Building:** Helping organizations significantly expand their ability to achieve their goals, or find a new direction for their work.

   Examples: Expansion of an innovative new model of after-school Jewish education to a second site enabling further adaptation around the country; creation of a second cohort of a nationally
recognized congregational education change initiative.

5. **Creating Community and Connections:** Bringing people and ideas together for networking, sharing, and generating the future.

Examples: Establishment of a unique Jewish camp experience for families of children with autism; development of a Community of Practice (CoP) for Jewish professionals seeking to recreate the CoP experience in their own organizations and communities.

6. **New Jewish “Texts:”** Creating new works – film, art, dance, performance, etc. – that embody and express the contemporary Jewish experience and offer new ways to express one’s Jewish identity.

Examples: Development of a partnership between a dance company and an educational institution to encourage audiences to reflect on their responses to genocide through a ground-breaking dance performance commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials; exploration of personal Jewish identity and what it means to be Jewish in America today through teen-created original films.

7. **Resources for the Field:** Developing new, enhanced, or expanded Jewish educational tools with the potential for widespread distribution and use.

Examples: Creation of over 5,000 pages of curricular materials for supplemental schools in small Southern communities, providing tailored teaching resources as well as the guidance of specially trained Educational Fellows; creation and dissemination of a curriculum using the unique approach of linking the study of the Holocaust to study of classic Jewish Biblical, Rabbinic, and contemporary texts.

In addition to overall impact, the report also looks at the sustainability of each grant by assessing its current status as either active, inactive but with ongoing meaningful impacts (e.g. offshoot programs, impacts on organizational structure or mission, leadership in the field from former staff or participants, etc.), or inactive (without meaningful impacts). Of the 59 grants profiled here, 29 (49%) are currently active, 19 (32%) are inactive with ongoing impacts, and 11 (19%) are inactive. Therefore, 81% of the grants from this period are either still active or inactive but have achieved meaningful impacts on the sponsoring organizations and/or the field as a whole.

Moving forward, this type of impact and sustainability analysis is intended to be an ongoing aspect of the Foundation’s work with grantees. As this analysis shows, long-term communication and engagement is critical for understanding the true impact of a grant, which often cannot be determined until years afterwards when the ideas generated during initial phases come to fruition. Ultimately, the hope is that the impact categories explored here (and others that will emerge through ongoing research) will offer a valuable lens for assessing the potential impact of future grantees, thus enabling the Foundation to further strengthen its role as a leading change agent for the American Jewish community.
Sustainability Analysis

This Sustainability Study was designed to enable The Covenant Foundation to reflect on the question: “What factors support or hinder the success and sustainability of existing programs and innovations in Jewish education?” Through the research process, a number of factors were identified that contribute to the sustainability of existing programs, including: adaptability, engagement in reflective processes, ability to make and utilize connections, employment of varied approaches, and achievement of financial stability.

As the mini-case studies illustrate, enduring projects have the ability to adapt to changing social trends. In the past decade, the use of technology among projects funded has been transformed: what was once exceptional has become mainstream. Now, projects are creatively and effectively using technology, both within and outside of the learning environment, as well as in efforts to train and develop educators. With the ever-increasing use of listserves, social networking sites, and online meetings, technology is now commonly used as a mode of networking and as a communication device.

A significant number of educational tools, events, and products were created as a result of The Covenant Foundation funding, many of which incorporated the use of emerging technologies. These include: 32 curricula; 22 museum and gallery shows; 18 books, workbooks, and manuals; 11 study guides; 16 newsletters; 10 websites; 14 conferences and events; 16 performances; and two CDs.

Programs benefited from the ability to learn from challenges. Foundation-sponsored external evaluation helped many grantees learn valuable lessons that contributed to projects’ improvement and development: some projects have now incorporated evaluation into their broader organizational culture.

Many projects have thrived in part because of dynamic connections made with a wide range of individuals and organizations. Numerous synergies among Covenant Foundation grantees were fostered as a result of participation in the annual Project Directors’ Meeting, and through connections made by Covenant Foundation program officers.

Some projects funded by the Foundation were in the initial start-up phase of efforts that emerged as groundbreaking for their innovative content and approach. In some cases, the Foundation was the first major funder to support projects focusing on issues that have since garnered significant communal attention. As a result of recognition and support from The Covenant Foundation, numerous populations that were previously on the margins have gained visibility, which has contributed to projects’ viability.

The Foundation has funded multiple projects that use different means to address a similar goal. For example, a significant number of projects funded by the Foundation have focused on teacher training. Variety in terms of methods and target population emerged as a key to successfully supporting Jewish educators. National and local efforts have focused on training educators across the field, including: early childhood, day school, camp counselors, and synagogue schools, as well as training for avocational and substitute teachers. Efforts include: mentoring programs, communities of practice, professional development, and Master’s degree programs.

Financial sustainability is an essential factor in the process of adapting and disseminating successful programs. Although funding from The Covenant Foundation enabled many Project Directors to secure additional funding, there was significant variability especially for those Project Directors who had never before received a major foundation grant. In addition, the Foundation observed that many grantees were unacquainted with the funding relationship in general and were unsure of how to best utilize the Foundation as a resource. Finally,
the economic climate also contributed to the challenge of fiscal stability across projects, and many grantees had limited success replacing the grant revenue they received from The Covenant Foundation.

In response to these and other observations, the Foundation began convening an annual three day conference bringing together current Project Directors in order to encourage their own learning and networking. These Projects Directors’ convenings provide hands-on opportunities for professional development, enabling current grantees to discuss issues related to project sustainability and communications. An environment is created that allows grantees to appreciate the importance and potential of big ideas while learning how to develop the necessary capacity to make those ideas a reality. The meeting format motivates those present to take risks and embrace change. The meetings continue to serve as an incubator where participants’ conversations generate ideas that have resulted in programmatic collaborations across regions and institutions. Educators from every stage of professional life benefit from interactions with colleagues as well as with noted experts in a range of aligned disciplines. The dynamic of engaging the Project Directors in meaningful conversation with accomplished thought leaders inevitably results in personal growth and valuable professional development.

In addition to providing an opportunity to begin to speak to some of the Foundation's learning interests, the findings of the current study corroborated findings from the 2002 study. The Foundation has consistently recognized, nurtured, and provided critical early support for incipient innovations and trends in Jewish education. The Foundation has continued to effectively identify promising educators and organizations, support the development of skills and programs, and fund projects that have demonstrably improved the quality of Jewish education. Finally, the Foundation’s work continues to contribute to the process of professionalizing the field and giving Jewish education greater prominence within the larger Jewish community.
When we created *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!*, we were really struck by what was happening with girls in adolescence and the challenges girls were going through. We asked ourselves, “Why shouldn’t we as a Jewish community use Judaism to address those challenges proactively?” The program has given girls the sense that Judaism has relevance and can bring meaning to their lives. They understand that they have choices about how to compose their own identity as Jewish women. There are a variety of options open to them, and they have a sense of power in selecting the paths they wish to pursue.

Many girls have talked about the excitement of realizing that there are different ways to practice Judaism and experience Jewish life, both because of the content of the curricular materials and also because they’re often in groups which are cross-denominational. They get a sense of the wide range of possibility in Jewish life. And because their *Rosh Hodesh* group is a safe space for them, the girls develop a sense that the Jewish community is there for them in a very real, personal way.

In this experience of building community, the girls learn how to take responsibility for their groups. Many of the girls, when they go on to college, create their own groups. We’ve also heard that many of these young women have gone on to pursue careers in Jewish communal life. One of our Board Members, who also sits on the HUC admissions committee, told us that half of the female applicants have been part of “It’s a Girl Thing,” either as leaders or participants. So it’s a very engaging experience that has a powerful impact on these girls.

I think that the importance of seeing teenage girls as young women and helping them move forward through their teen years has really been felt in the institutions that participate in this *Rosh Hodesh* program. Bringing girls’ issues to the agenda and bringing an approach which applies Jewish wisdom and ritual to the secular content of teens’ lives – friendship, academic stress, competition, aggression, intimacy – has gotten the attention of a number of leaders and organizations.

When we saw the positive impact this program has had on girls and began to hear about how Jewish institutions were having trouble attracting and keeping boys, it quickly became clear what our next project would be. We now have 70 “*Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*” groups that will be meeting in the fall. Both the girls’ and boys’ groups share an understanding of gender as being key to effective work with teens, as well as a way to keep teens connected to Jewish life. The men who are facilitating and the boys who have participated in *Shevet Achim* have been very, very positive about the program.

We are incredibly excited and very heartened by the fact that over 1,200 educators and nearly 10,000 girls have done the *Rosh Hodesh* program at this point. There are so many more girls and boys to be reached; I hope the Jewish community will keep investing in these types of emerging programs and that we can continue to grow, because I believe that we have only scratched the surface.
Apples and Honey/Shalom Baby*

Organization: Robert E. Loup JCC Denver
Grant Year: 2002
Project Director: Caron Blanke
Type of Grant: Dissemination
Grant Amount: $25,000
Website: http://www.mazeltot.org/
Tags: Portals to Jewish Life and Learning • Resources for the Field

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2002, when the Robert E. Loup JCC in Denver received a Covenant Grant to replicate its Shalom Baby program in neighboring Boulder and to disseminate the “Apples and Honey” newsletter, no one could have foreseen that in less than a decade more than 90 similar efforts to engage new parents would emerge across the country. Both initiatives aim to expose young families to the value and richness of Jewish tradition and community by viewing the birth of a child as a key transitional moment that facilitates outreach to unaffiliated and marginally-affiliated Jews.

Shalom Baby welcomes families with newborns to the community, offering information and classes on child development and parenting skills, as well as support from volunteers, professionals, and other new parents. Classes have included: infant massage, boot camp for dads, music, Jewish Baby University (a childbirth education class), baby sign language, and sibling preparation. Additionally, Shalom Baby includes events for every Jewish holiday. Participating parents receive baskets containing a Jewish lullaby tape, Jewish parenting book, tote bag, bib, sippy cup, Bible board book, and information about local family programs. Families are also offered a free one-year membership to the JCC. In Denver, Shalom Baby is marketed in libraries, maternity and children’s clothing stores, and in all the local synagogues. The local Jewish hospital also distributes a Shalom Baby brochure in the packet of information given to every woman who comes in for obstetric care.

“Apples and Honey” is a complementary publication that provides guidance for expectant and new parents on how to create a Jewish home. There are thirteen regular issues and three holiday issues of “Apples and Honey” per year. Each issue has information about children’s developmental stages, Jewish traditions and customs, ideas for celebrating holidays, and hands-on activities. The issues are designed to be “evergreen,” remaining relevant over time. Sales of the newsletter bring in approximately $1,000 of revenue each year (at $3.25 per issue before bulk discounts).

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The replication of Denver’s Shalom Baby program in Boulder was successful: the program was oversubscribed for a number of years, and operation of the program has since been taken over by the JCC in Boulder. Today, the newsletter is one of the numerous programmatic offerings for new families offered by the JCC in Denver.

• The process of replication led to the recognition that the Shalom Baby program could be replicated on a national scale. The Covenant Foundation’s imprimatur and reputation afforded national visibility to the expansion effort and led the JCC to trademark Shalom Baby and to develop both a curriculum complete with marketing materials and an implementation plan for communities seeking to create a similar program. Though replication of Shalom Baby has not been financially lucrative for the JCC, programs bearing that name now operate in more than 90 cities throughout the United States.

• The “Apples and Honey” newsletter was the catalyst for the Rose Community Foundation’s continued substantial support of early childhood programs. In 2009, the Rose Foundation funded MazelTot.org, based on the Shalom Baby model. MazelTot is an Internet portal that provides new parents with information on and discounts for local activities offered by 32 organizations in greater Denver and Boulder. Like Shalom Baby,
MazelTot.org aims to engage new parents by offering multiple points of entry for Jewish involvement. Subvention from the Rose Community Foundation provides discounts on more than 700 events, classes, preschools, camps, retreats, and other programs. Discounts totaling more than $110,000 have been used so far and more than 1,000 families from throughout the Denver and Boulder areas have registered on the site. The site gets an average of 1,700 visitors per month.

LEADERSHIP

Lisa Farber Miller spearheaded the “Apples and Honey” program when she worked as a consultant to the JCC. Funded by a 1994 Covenant Foundation Signature Grant, Farber Miller developed a series of monthly newsletters for new parents. In the process, she had a “transformational experience as an adult Jewish learner.” Her work with the JCC – her first exposure to Jewish communal service – also transformed her career. Farber Miller’s early career experience engaging new parents continues to inform her work as a Senior Program Officer at the Rose Community Foundation. She attributes the Rose Community Foundation’s understanding of the importance of high quality, early childhood education to the lessons learned through “Apples and Honey.” In addition, she contributed a chapter to *Jewish Family and Life: Traditions, Holidays, and Values for Today’s Parents* based on her experience with “Apples and Honey.”

Under the leadership of Caron Blanke, the *Shalom* Baby program has nearly tripled in size and has emerged as a national model for outreach to families with young children. In 2004, the first systematic study of Jewish communal efforts to engage new parents was conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, bringing national attention to the importance of engaging members of that population. The report, “Raising Jewish Babies: Community-Based Programs for New Jewish Parents,” provides examples of model programs and includes descriptions of Denver’s offerings for new parents. The study focused national attention on the community’s innovative offerings. By 2008, a study focused on engaging Jewish young adults in metro Denver/Boulder found that among existing programming for members of that population, the *Shalom* Baby and *Shalom* family programs “seem to attract by far the most participants.”

Currently, Blanke oversees all of the early childhood programs at the Robert E. Loup JCC in Denver, and is the acting director of the Early Childhood Center. She has spoken at a number of national conferences about how communities can implement programs to engage new parents.

FUNDING

Since it is primarily an outreach effort, some aspects of the *Shalom* Baby program are offered without a fee, and the majority of aspects are offered for a nominal price. A significant amount of the program’s budget is spent on marketing. Additionally, the program has two full-time staff members who coordinate the numerous classes offered.

Funding from The Covenant Foundation for both “Apples and Honey” and *Shalom* Baby, which came during the early stages of development, helped the programs establish credibility and begin to build a national identity. Another of the first grants was given by the Rose Community Foundation to support *Shalom* Baby; this Foundation continues to be the program’s main source of funding. The Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI), Jewish Family Services of Colorado, Colorado Bright Beginnings, Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council, Rose Medical Center, and the Jewish Early Childhood Educators Council have also supported the program with small grants. Finally, a small portion of the budget comes from client revenue.
**Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!**

**Organization:** Moving Traditions (formerly Kolot)

**Grant Year:** 2002

**Project Director:** Deborah Meyer

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $150,000

**Website:** [http://movingtraditions.org/](http://movingtraditions.org/)

**Tags:** Portals to Jewish Life and Learning • Organizational Change and Capacity Building • Creating Community and Connection

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Since it launched nationally in 2002, *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* has helped almost 10,000 pre-teen and adolescent girls across the country navigate the challenges of adolescence in their secular and Jewish lives. Through discussion, arts and crafts, and drama, the program integrates Jewish values with contemporary issues that resonate for girls, and encourages them to explore such issues (including body image, relationships, intimacy, and social justice) in the context of supportive peer groups. A national advisory committee of specialists in Jewish and women’s studies, Jewish education, and developmental psychology helped shape the program curriculum.

*Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* is intended to be a multi-year experience that begins in grade six and continues throughout middle school and high school. Monthly gatherings take place in the homes of group leaders, Jewish Community Centers, synagogues, and schools, or rotate monthly in participants’ homes. Based on a franchise model, *Rosh Hodesh* groups are operated by institutional partners that pay a program fee to join. Partners are given lifetime rights to curriculum and must agree to send every group leader to a two-day training session.

Grant dollars funded the training, mentoring, and on-going support of group leaders. *Rosh Hodesh* group leaders – the majority of whom are Jewish educators and youth group leaders, along with a few social workers and other interested lay people – are provided with the Sourcebooks for Leaders, which include the following: a script for each of the 28 monthly meetings, handouts for participants, activities and projects, advice about recruiting girls, and information for parents, as well as additional resources on Judaism, girls, and group administration. Training and ongoing support are also provided to group leaders, who participate in a two-day facilitator training program and monthly follow-up conference calls. Finally, group leaders receive individual support from Moving Traditions staff and have access to resources on a password-protected website.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* has had a broad reach, engaging almost 10,000 girls, training more than 1,000 educators, including supervisors and clergy, and partnering with more than 320 Jewish institutions. The success of the program for girls prompted the current development of the Campaign for Boys to help the Jewish community more effectively engage male teenagers. [The Covenant Foundation is currently supporting this initiative as well.] Moving Traditions is in
The process of launching *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*, a new eight-session program for boys in 8th and 9th grades.

- Commitment to continual improvement has become a hallmark of Moving Traditions. Over the course of the 10 years since the *Rosh Hodesh* program was initiated, new sessions have been added to the curriculum, a new track has been created for supervisors, and new technology has been incorporated to facilitate more effective communication. The administrators of the program actively collect feedback about their programs and make adjustments based on what they learn. For example, participants in the *Rosh Hodesh* groups expressed an interest in running their own groups. In response, a leadership training stage of the program was created: additional materials were developed and facilitators were trained to help empower girls to take over their own groups.

- Today, in addition to participating in *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* locally, girls also become part of a national movement with thousands of other girls in middle and high school. Each *Rosh Hodesh* girl who joins receives a membership gift, membership card, and a certificate.

- Further evidence of the impact of the program is emerging as participants age out of *Rosh Hodesh* and continue their involvement in Jewish communal life. For example, among current applicants to Hebrew Union College in New York, at least half of the women had participated in *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* as girls.

**Leadership**

*Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* was founded in 2002 through *Kolot*: Center for Jewish Women’s and Gender Studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Deborah Meyer, who was then the managing director of *Kolot*, played a major role in the development and launch of the program, along with her co-director Lori Lefkowitz. Mindy Shapiro, a seasoned Jewish communal professional, was the founding director of *Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!* Working closely with Deborah Meyer, Shapiro was primarily responsible for creating the training materials and facilitating the group leader trainings.

In 2004, Meyer, along with *Rosh Hodesh* board chair Sally Gottesman, established a new educational organization: Moving Traditions. The organization was officially launched in 2005. Meyer is the founding Executive Director of Moving Traditions, which uses gender as the framework to inspire women and men, boys and girls to engage more deeply with Judaism. The Covenant Foundation agreed to transfer the funding for *Rosh Hodesh* to Moving Traditions, and *Kolot* gave the new organization the intellectual property rights to the program.

At Moving Traditions, the *Rosh Hodesh* staff was expanded to include a part-time administrator and training consultants. Additionally, four women were hired to further develop materials and run the first four groups of girls. When *Rosh Hodesh* was awarded additional funds from The Covenant Foundation to extend the curriculum, additional staff was hired. Today, Deborah Meyer continues as the program’s Executive Director, along with four additional national staff members. Seven others currently make up the program staff.

**Funding**

The Hadassah Foundation was the program’s first funder, supporting its initial creation and implementation. The Covenant Foundation, the Natan Fund, and The Picower Foundation also supported the development of the program. Fifteen additional foundations and funds have provided support for the *Rosh Hodesh* program since its inception.

In 2002, The Covenant Foundation provided the initial funds for the program to expand to additional sites across the country. In 2006, Moving Traditions created training materials and programs to empower girls to run the groups themselves. The evaluation-oriented nature of The Covenant Foundation approach challenged the leaders of *Rosh Hodesh* to articulate their organizational vision and strategy. As a result, the program includes a robust training program that incorporates ongoing evaluation and fine-tuning. Additionally, funding from The Covenant Foundation provided validation and legitimacy to the program in the eyes of both individuals and organizations, which helped to leverage additional funds.
A Designer Education Program for New Millennium Jewish Teens

**Organization:** Coalition for Jewish Learning  
**Grant Year:** 2007  
**Project Director:** Joanne Gaudynski  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** Originally $145,200; Revised to $92,400  
**Website:** [http://www.cjlmilwaukee.org/](http://www.cjlmilwaukee.org/)  
**Tags:** New Jewish Texts • Resources for the Field

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant supported new efforts by the Milwaukee-based Coalition for Jewish Learning (CJL) to engage local Jewish teenagers. Originally, the proposed project was comprised of boutique programming in filmmaking, journalism, activism, blogging, and Hebrew, as well as an immersive Israel trip.

During the course of the grant, the project changed dramatically. As it became clear that the offerings were not resonating with a large enough number of local teens, The Covenant Foundation helped broker a partnership between CJL and another 2007 Signature grantee, The Jewish Lens (TJL), a national photography-based organization geared toward middle and high school students in Jewish educational settings with accompanying curricula and training programs for educators.

This new alliance allowed TJL to experiment with working on the ground in Jewish communities via local partnerships, and gave CJL an opportunity to bring a successful international youth initiative to Milwaukee. CJL led the implementation of TJL in Milwaukee for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 academic years.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Participants were Jewish youth, in eighth through twelfth grades, including those who were not actively involved in Jewish life.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Seventeen teens created two films with the help of graduate students from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; five students researched, wrote, and presented a play based on the letters of immigrants to Milwaukee; and eighteen teenagers in the journalism program wrote and produced supplements to the local Jewish newspaper (including pieces by approximately 60 local young writers).

- The Hebrew language program attracted six students, five of whom participated in the Israel trip in summer 2009, for which TJL created a curriculum and guide. Upon their return, participants used the guide to create a unique multimedia show about the trip.

- Ten young students signed up for a BBYO Panim Institute trip to Washington, D.C. that focused on service, advocacy, and philanthropy in a Jewish context. The participants volunteered in Milwaukee, and also traveled to New Orleans to volunteer on an Alternative Spring Break trip through Young Judaea.

TJL came to Milwaukee with funding – through a separate Covenant grant – to hire a local coordinator, and CJL helped identify and bring on board nine local school and congregational schools and youth organizations in 2009-10, and six in 2010-11. The TJL photography curriculum reached approximately 250 teens during its two years in Milwaukee. An evaluation by JESNA’s Berman Center reports that “TJL gave the students a new, tangible, hands-on way to experience Jewish texts and values,” and that the culminating community-wide exhibition opened students’ eyes to the diversity of and similarities among Milwaukee Jews.
CURRENT STATUS

CJL has been unable to secure local funding to coordinate implementation of T JL citywide. However, it estimates that one-third to one-half of the participating schools are continuing to use the T JL curriculum on their own, some in preparation for, and/or during, school-sponsored Israel trips. Without central oversight, CJL says that teacher and leadership turnover is limiting the long-term sustainability of T JL.
Adult Learning for Small Jewish Communities

Organization: The Florence Melton Adult Mini-School
Grant Year: 2007
Project Director: Judy Mars Kupchan
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $153,500
Website: http://meltonschool.org
Tags: Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant supported the establishment, over three years, of Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools, interactive, pluralistic, text-based Jewish adult learning programs, in eight communities with Jewish populations of 10,000 or fewer. The funding covered Melton franchise fees for the four-course, two-year program for these communities, in order to catalyze their participation. In addition, it gave the communities access to an online resource center, consulting support from Melton staff, and annual conferences for the school directors. The participating communities were Southern Maine; Springfield, Massachusetts; Greensboro, North Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; Louisville, Kentucky; Hamilton, Ontario; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The goal of the initiative—beyond seeding Melton in eight new communities—was to develop a sustainable small-community model for the Melton program, which requires local funding, an on-site director, sufficient qualified faculty, an advisory board, and a dedicated student body.

PARTICIPANTS

The Melton program is intended for Jewish adults interested in ongoing, high-level, pluralistic Jewish learning and in being part of a community of learners. Most of the participants are synagogue-affiliated, female, and between the ages of 40 and 75.

In some of the participating communities, Melton also offered Foundations of Jewish Family Living, a new course that targets parents and which is attracting participants in their 30s and 40s.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The grant enabled Melton to involve 800 people in classes in the eight underserved communities over the three-year period, 2008 – 2011.

• Project Director Judy Kupchan attributes huge attitudinal and practical changes at Melton to the grant from The Covenant Foundation, saying that it inspired Melton to find new ways to reach out to audiences that cannot afford the program. Over the course of the grant period, Melton transitioned to a different fee structure, categorizing smaller communities as “micro-sites” and adjusting the fee accordingly.

• The Project Director also believes that Melton is doing a better job of addressing needs of individual communities by allowing modifications in the two-year curriculum and opening graduate classes to the entire community, not just Melton graduates. Most recently, Melton created Melton Online, an adapted online curriculum available at a lower fee to students in any community, whether or not it has a local Melton school.

CURRENT STATUS

Melton continues to offer programs in Southern Maine, Springfield, Greensboro, and Charlotte; in three of these communities the sponsoring institution is the Federation, while in the fourth it is a consortium of two synagogues. The program is on hiatus in Louisville and Hamilton, with concrete plans to reopen in Louisville. Salt Lake City and Ann Arbor have discontinued the program, due to limited financial resources and staffing issues.
**Havruta: An Old/New Model of Learning**

**Organization:** University of Michigan Hillel  
**Grant Year:** 2004  
**Project Director:** Michael Brooks  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $120,000  
**Website:** [http://www.umhillel.org](http://www.umhillel.org)  
**Tags:** Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Grant dollars originally supported the development and implementation of a one-semester course featuring the use of havruta-style pedagogy at the University of Michigan, in which student pairs met with one another to learn about, discuss, and debate a shared text. The method replaces the more typical format of teaching-assistant-led discussions/seminars.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Twenty-five students at the University of Michigan were enrolled in the first course. Hundreds more have participated in subsequent years.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- In an evaluation conducted by the University Center for Research on Teaching and Learning, students gave the course the highest possible ranking for the quality of the learning.

- With funding from The Covenant Foundation, the Detroit JCC partnered with the professors running the project and created a havruta program in conjunction with a talk by Elie Wiesel which was attended by approximately 2,000 people.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The project is still up and running. It was so popular that the one-semester course was expanded to four semesters.
Jewish Adulthood Education on Campus: The Jethro Initiative

Organization: The Newberger Hillel Center at the University of Chicago
Grant Year: 2007
Project Director: Daniel Libenson
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $150,000
Website: http://www.hillelatuchicago.org/newberger/default.aspx

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded an experimental approach to Jewish engagement and education on campus that brings together small groups of students with “adjunct educators,” artists, and scholars who are topic-area specialists and not regular Hillel staff. From 2008-11, a total of six such groups convened, covering the following topics: food and gender, poetry and creative writing, music and music production, yoga, cooking and improv comedy, and social justice and service. Each group integrated discussion of Jewish topics into the group activities. This approach is intended to offer Jewish students entry points into the Jewish community through their most significant interests. In addition, by connecting students with non-Hillel adults, the program provides the students an authentic segue to their Jewish adult life. The pilot was the first part of a larger effort aimed at motivating and enabling post-college Jewish specialists to seek out and contribute their creativity and energy to Jewish communal life.

PARTICIPANTS

The program, open to all students at the University of Chicago, primarily targeted the 800-850 Jewish undergraduate students, whether or not they were already engaged with Hillel.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• This grant, requiring outreach beyond Hillel’s most engaged students, motivated Hillel to experiment with new recruitment methodologies. These methodologies included the following: working with the Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative, a Hillel-affiliated organization that employs a one-on-one engagement approach; making use of an internal referral mechanism targeting Birthright alumni; and identifying potential participants via a Hillel database for tracking student involvement.

• Although initially envisioned as single year-long small group experiences, the yoga-oriented small group that began in 2009-10 grew in popularity and continued for two additional years, one year beyond the end of the Signature Grant period. It had regular weekly attendance of a core group of 25 students, as well as sporadic involvement of approximately 15 additional students; students provided positive feedback on the experience.

• Despite Hillel’s best efforts, the number of students reached through the initiative was disappointing. From The Covenant Foundation’s perspective, the results were not commensurate with the grant size.

CURRENT STATUS

The program was discontinued at the Newberger Hillel within a year after the grant ended. According to Anna Levin-Rosen, Director of Jewish Life, like many other Hillels, Newberger Hillel continues to encourage students to gather together around their unique areas of interest. However, programs are rarely led by adjunct educators; they are difficult to find and recruit both because of the time commitment required and the need to have the ability and skills to cultivate Jewish identity. In fact, just one artist-educator, the yoga instructor, with significant background in Jewish education, truly thrived in the role. Although the Hillel still offers a yoga class for Jewish students, it is now led by a student and does not have Jewish content.

Levin-Rosen says that the program did increase
awareness of the importance of integrating staff talents and passions into programming, in order to enable adult mentoring and build relationships between students and staff members. For example, a staff member with experience in philanthropy will facilitate a group around charitable giving, and the Hillel’s program director, who has a theater background, is actively looking for ways to engage students who share her interests.
**MATAN: The Gift of Jewish Learning for Every Child**

**Organization:** MATAN: The Gift of Jewish Learning for Every Child  
**Grant Year:** 2001  
**Project Director:** Meredith Englander  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $135,000  
**Website:** http://www.matankids.org  
**Tags:** Portals to Jewish Life and Learning • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant supported MATAN, an organization working to make Jewish education more accessible to children with special needs. The goal was to help congregational schools in New York City to evaluate how they were educating their students and to understand why they weren’t successfully reaching students with learning differences. Where institutional deficiencies were observed, MATAN worked with the schools to identify the underlying issues and to help increase educational accessibility.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Children with special needs, educators, and education directors within congregational schools in New York City.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

MATAN helped the schools to develop and implement accessibility strategies and, in selected cases, to develop self-contained programs specifically for children with special needs.

**CURRENT STATUS**

MATAN has been running for over a decade and has decided to make some changes intended to increase its impact. The organization is now moving away from direct service to focus on training rabbis, educators, education directors, rabbinical students, and graduate students to expand the Jewish community’s capacity to effectively educate children with special needs. Plans to create a conference and/or workshops to train educators are underway. Another significant change has been the implementation of a three-year exit strategy for school-based interventions. Previously, MATAN would support a school year-after-year; at this time, however, three-year engagement agreements are being created. At the end of the three years, the school is expected to have reached the point of hiring a special educator or to have accessibility ingrained in its organizational culture. MATAN has also expanded its online presence to become a hub for Jewish special education resources. The organization recently launched the first searchable online database for special needs programs in the United States.
Our Jewish Home

Organization: Central Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) in St. Louis
Grant Year: 2002
Project Director: Joan Wolchansky
Type of Grant: Dissemination
Grant Amount: $25,000 to the Central Agency for Jewish Education in St. Louis and $20,000 to the Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties
Website: http://www.jewishinstlouis.org/OurJewishHome.aspx
Tags: Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the dissemination of Our Jewish Home into the San Francisco Bay Area community. Our Jewish Home promotes Jewish home practices and aims to foster participants’ sense of connection to the Jewish community. The program consists of a series of four home visits, focused on a Jewish theme — Shabbat, mitzvot, Tishrei holidays, and Pesach — that are implemented by trained educators.

PARTICIPANTS

Jewish families in the San Francisco Bay Area (10-15 families), trained educators.

RESULTS/IMPACT

- The grant was well received by participants.
- Some families were inspired to join congregations or to send their children to day schools.

CURRENT STATUS

- Despite the success of the program, it was not a funding priority for the San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education. In the face of budget cuts, it was discontinued in San Francisco. However, Our Jewish Home continues today in both St. Louis and Philadelphia.
There’s No Place Like Home

Organization: Society for the Advancement of Judaism
Grant Year: 2006
Project Director: Michael Strassfeld
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $10,300
Website: http://www.thesaj.org
Tags: Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded a one-year experiment to use webcasting to offer an adult education class to an audience that was unable to attend that class in the synagogue. By offering it online, participants were able to take the course from their home. Two courses were offered: a walkthrough of Friday night rituals, and how to be a mensch. Each course consisted of one live webcast a week for three to four weeks.

PARTICIPANTS

While the target population was Hebrew school parents who could not easily attend an evening synagogue class, the project ultimately reached a more diverse audience. The target population was comprised of only 25% of class enrollment.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Many challenges emerged. The technology was more difficult than expected, leading to technical problems each week.

• The course was well-received by those who attended, but overall attendance was low, with only four or five individuals taking part each week.

CURRENT STATUS

Although the courses were well liked by those who took part, the program was not successful enough to justify its continuation.
As far as I know, DeLeT is the only graduate level program in Jewish education that both has learning to teach at its heart and that has a year-long mentored internship in schools. The mentors in DeLeT have been trained to help novices learn to teach, to induct them into the practice of teaching, and to help them learn how to work with children in productive ways. I think the program has had a huge impact on the Jewish journeys, lives, and careers of the individual teachers who completed it. There’s now a growing cadre of teacher-leaders who have had serious preparation that combines Jewish studies, professional studies, and clinical studies in an integrated way. They have like-minded colleagues, a shared vision of good teaching, and a shared language for talking about teaching.

In addition, DeLeT has become a model for the field that is not just a program of initial preparation, it is also a program that connects initial preparation with beginning teacher support in the early years of teaching, a lively alumni network, and ongoing professional learning opportunities. That continuum of teacher learning at all stages of one’s career is a big idea that we’ve tried to pioneer in Jewish education.

At Brandeis, DeLeT has been an important laboratory for research in Jewish teacher education: its groundbreaking exploration of text study and hevruta has produced a model of transformative hevruta learning, a theory and pedagogical resources, and a longitudinal study of DeLeT alumni from both HUC and Brandeis. It has provided an opportunity to learn more about who is going into day school teaching, what kind of background they bring, how well prepared they feel, what are the working conditions for day school teachers, and what makes it more or less likely that those teachers will stay in the field. So it’s not only an intervention in the lives of the teachers, but it’s also a laboratory for important research in the field.

The schools that are placement sites have taken that role quite seriously; over time, the program has brought both new ideas about teaching and learning and new ways of talking about teaching and learning to these schools. We’ve had a big influence on how school leaders think about what it means to help novices learn to teach, and what it means to create a professional culture in which all teachers are studying and growing. In terms of the field, we’ve worked to share some of these big ideas about what it means to prepare people to teach, what it means to support their learning over time, and to meet their learning needs at different career stages.

Working with and learning about teachers in day schools has been extremely exciting and gratifying. We had to create this program from scratch – there was not a single existing course at Brandeis we could build on. Over the years, we have built a fabulous, coherent faculty of wonderful educators, so DeLeT has had a tremendous impact on Brandeis as well. I feel very privileged to have had the chance to create this program. It’s great to see how well institutionalized the program is now, and what wonderful hands it is in. It’s very gratifying that this little jewel of a program has taken root.
Educational Technology Fellowship Program*

Organization: BJENY (now Jewish Education Project)
Grant Year: 2000
Project Director: Martin Schloss
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $160,000
Website: www.jewisheducationproject.org
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2000, the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York (BJENY) partnered with the New York Institute of Technology – a recognized leader in the field of technology-based learning systems – to develop a Master’s degree program in educational technology. The Educational Technology Fellowship Program was designed to train exceptional Jewish educators from a variety of disciplines to combine their Jewish and pedagogical expertise with technological knowledge. It aimed to equip participants to create robust, technologically-oriented educational environments in their home schools and to model these techniques for their colleagues. In doing so, participating educators could begin to create systemic change by transforming the educational culture from within.

The curriculum was specifically customized to address issues unique to the Jewish educational field. The coursework fulfilled university and state requirements, while being sensitive to the needs of the student body, which included participants with diverse religious beliefs and practices. The strength of the program was the combination of the courses and the inclusion of speakers who offered diverse perspectives, along with the significant group cohesion that was created among participants.

A cohort of 12 seasoned educators from various disciplines within general studies and Judaic studies was recruited from the BJENY’s network of schools in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Participants were teachers of elementary schools, high schools, adult education, and special education, and they came to the program with a range of experience in working with technology. Students paid a fee for tuition (which proved to be prohibitive); loans were provided to several students and one participant was offered a scholarship. Upon graduating, participants created a presentation that illustrated their intensive learning process and reflected their transformation.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Although the graduate program is no longer running, its impact has lasted as participants have continued to develop their careers as educators. Group cohesion remained strong even after the participants graduated. The online space created in 2001 to facilitate communication among participants continues today.

• All of the graduates continue to work in the field of Jewish education, as either full-time educators or consultants. One graduate of the program developed curricular units for students attending congregational schools as a part of her Master’s degree. She developed materials on teaching Jewish holidays that incorporate International Society for Technology in Education’s standards for technology literacy. This project is featured in The Ultimate Jewish Teacher’s Handbook (Behrman House, Inc., 2003), a collection of essays by leaders in the field of Jewish education that was edited by Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz.

• Two graduates are now co-teaching a college course in instructional technology. One is the technology director of a school with approximately 2,500 students and the other is the curriculum coordinator for a day school, a role that includes ensuring that technology is integrated across the curriculum.

• One graduate was promoted from being a
science teacher to being the chair of the science department. Another is now the director of a prominent Modern Orthodox day school that prides itself on being on the cutting edge of technology. Still another is an educational technology consultant to a number of schools.

• The program was at the forefront of a field that has continued to develop. For example, the AVI CHAI Foundation currently has a blog on the topic, and has provided seed funding in the form of Educational Technology Experimentation Grants for projects “with the ultimate goal of learning about, and identifying, promising educational technology initiatives for Jewish education.”

• With support from The Covenant Foundation, the program staff created and disseminated a white paper on the importance of instructional technology.

LEADERSHIP

The project was developed through the BJENY (now called the Jewish Education Project) and was led by Sara Seligson and Martin Schloss, leaders in the field of Jewish education. Schloss, who was awarded the Covenant Award in 1995, is a strong proponent of “understanding technology as a significant element of the educational process.” Today, both educators continue their work at the Jewish Education Project, where Schloss is the Director of Government Relations and General Studies in the Day School and Yeshivot Department and Seligson is the Associate Director of the Day School and Yeshivot Department. Additionally, Seligson has served on the New York Technology Policy and Planning Council, a group of 25 individuals from across the state who study the use of technology in education.

Stan Silverman, professor of instructional technology at the New York Institute of Technology’s School of Education, acted as a consultant to the program. Most instructors in the program were professors at the New York Institute of Technology. Martin Schloss also taught one course.

FUNDING

Support from The Covenant Foundation funded the administrative costs of the program, as well as the technology for the students. The students paid tuition, which totaled $7,200. While no stipend for tuition was provided, students were offered loans through the BJENY. One student received a scholarship. The prohibitive cost of tuition likely contributed to the Program’s inability to continue.
Annual Summer Seminar in Jewish Family Education

**Organization:** Consortium for the Jewish Family, the Dorothy K. and Myer S. Kripke Institute for Jewish Family Literacy (*SHEVET*)

**Grant Year:** 2006

**Project Director:** Esther Netter

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $50,000

**Website:** www.shevet-jfee.org/

**Tags:** Professional Development • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded a three-day pre-conference planning retreat and a four-day summer conference which took place at the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education (CAJE) and focused on family education.

**PARTICIPANTS**

CAJE participants and other Jewish educators who specifically attended the CAJE conference in order to participate in the Consortium’s Family Education Conference.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The funding helped sustain the organization’s capacity [as a consortium of faculty and other experts] to consult, advise, and collaborate with other institutions involved in Jewish family education.

- The Foundation subsequently funded a 2010 grant to enable the Consortium for the Jewish Family to re-imagine its role in the field of family education for a new age, through a series of faculty think tanks, regional training conferences, and online trainings and discussions.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The Consortium is now known as *SHEVET*: the Jewish Family Education Exchange [which recently received funding from the Foundation]. *SHEVET* serves as a central resource in the field of Jewish family education, sponsoring both regional and national conferences, as well as other gatherings of Jewish family education professionals.
Aseh Lecha Rav: Training Camp Staff as Jewish Educational Role Models

Organization: Foundation for Jewish Camp
Grant Year: 2001
Project Director: Naomi Less
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $158,000
Website: http://www.jewishcamp.org/how-we-help/developing-professionals/cornerstone-fellowship
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the development of a training program for bunk counselors at Jewish sleep-away camps. The training helps counselors to identify “camp moments” that they can transform into “informed Jewish moments,” and equips them with the content knowledge they need to create “Jewish teachable moments.”

PARTICIPANTS

Nearly 400 camp staff members and 17 camp directors.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The program has been renamed Jewish Teachable Moments.

• The curriculum has been widely disseminated to Jewish camps, in addition, the phrase “Jewish Teachable Moments” has become common nomenclature in the field.

• A specific training for camp directors was held at the American Camping Association Conference.

CURRENT STATUS

The curriculum is now part of a larger counselor training program called the Cornerstone Fellowship, which has served 55 camps and trained 1,500 fellows.
**AVODAH: A Model for Jewish Service Education**

**Organization:** AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps  
**Grant Year:** 2007  
**Project Director:** Stephanie Ruskay  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $150,000  
**Website:** [http://www.avodah.net/](http://www.avodah.net/)  
**Tags:** Resources for the Field • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The funding for A Model for Jewish Service Education enabled AVODAH to create 1) a prototype for a comprehensive year-long training for AVODAH corps members; 2) resources and training modules for Jewish organizations developing programs that combine service and informal education; and 3) resources and training programs for AVODAH staff, corps members, and alumni so that they, in turn, could pass knowledge and experience on to others.

**PARTICIPANTS**

A Model for Jewish Service Education is intended for the following three groups: AVODAH corps members, individuals in their 20s from across the United States who spend a year working on urban poverty issues full-time at local nonprofit organizations; AVODAH alumni, staff; and individuals working at other organizations interested in Jewish social justice.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The Covenant grant made it possible for AVODAH to enhance and systematize the training program for all AVODAH corps members. The new curriculum, which strives to root participants’ service work in Jewish values, encourages discussion about the underlying causes of poverty and introduces approaches to social change. The guides for each of the 44 sessions over the course of the year include clear goals, outcomes, templates, and procedures.

- Other aspects of the project were more outward focused. A curriculum was written for Pursue, a program and community for alumni and friends of AVODAH and American Jewish World Service. The program of study for Pursue engaged small communities of learners in exploration of issues of social justice in a Jewish framework. Traditional Jewish texts were used only to launch and conclude the series; most of the curriculum consisted of texts written by Jews whose Jewish identities influenced their worldviews. During Pursue’s six years of operation (it closed in 2012), 5,000 individuals participated through online events and in-person gatherings in Washington, D.C., New York, and the Bay Area.

- As part of this initiative, in addition to crafting these two curricula, Project Director Stephanie Ruskay taught other AVODAH staff members how to infuse Jewish tradition into their own trainings and lesson plans. She also consulted with and provided sample content and lesson plans on the intersection of Jewish life and social change to alumni, corps members, and...
staff so they could teach the material to others. Finally, other Jewish social justice organizations, including Tivnu and Urban Adamah, have asked **AVODAH** for guidance in developing their own internal training programs.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The year-long curriculum for corps members is still in place at **AVODAH**, as are the various efforts to reach out to alumni and others outside the **AVODAH** circle who connect to their Judaism through social justice work. Although her role at **AVODAH** has shifted somewhat, Stephanie Ruskay remains the primary Jewish educational resource at the organization. In addition, she still uses the materials created through the Covenant grant to help prepare alumni and others to take on leadership roles, both lay and professional, within the Jewish community.

Both **AVODAH** and the American Jewish World Service continue to have access to the Pursue curriculum and accompanying resources to use with their constituents. Stephanie Ruskay says that this curriculum remains a significant educational resource for **AVODAH** and that she expects to continue to draw from these materials for years to come.

She also continues to provide staff, corps members, and alumni with ongoing support, consultation, and education in order to facilitate their own teaching and speaking using the resources and guidelines created for this purpose.

Stephanie Ruskay is clear about the lasting impact that this project had on **AVODAH**: “The Jewish educational components that were developed . . . are found in all aspects of **AVODAH**’s programmatic and educational work. Each year, **AVODAH** welcomes a new cohort of young adults into the yearlong program, and these participants all benefit from the rich, complex, and deeply Jewish curricular focus developed thanks to the funding provided by The Covenant Foundation.”
Day School Induction and Retention Program

Organization: Brandeis University  
Grant Year: 2005  
Project Directors: Sharon Feiman-Nemser, Vivian Troen, and Pearl Mattenson  
Type of Grant: Signature  
Grant Amount: $150,000  
Website: [http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/inductionpartnership.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/inductionpartnership.html)  
Tags: Professional Development

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded an initiative to research and design an effective induction and retention program for new teachers in Jewish day schools. Grant dollars allowed a coach to visit participating schools for two to three days per month. Each school also had a staff person serve as an “induction leader,” a primary point of contact for the program.

**PARTICIPANTS**

New teachers and “induction leaders” at Jewish day schools. Three schools participated in the program launch and another three schools joined the cohort later on. (Five schools were kindergarten-8th grade, while one was a high school.)

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The program developed guiding principles and criteria for what constitutes good induction.

- The schools that participated in the program now have new teacher induction standards, teacher-to-teacher mentoring programs, and teacher evaluation standards.

- All schools made strides toward embracing the concept of “collaborative responsibility” – seeing the whole community as responsible for the success of each of its members.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Individual “induction leaders” from the schools continue to meet on their own in a group-directed learning circle. Induction leaders continue to present at workshops designed for the second cohort. Programming is designed to be less staff intensive. Changes include the incorporation of online resource modules, limiting the amount of coaching, and putting more responsibility on the induction leaders and on the site itself. The second stage of work is being supported by an additional Covenant grant.
DeLeT Pilot Program

Organization: DeLeT
Grant Year: 2001
Project Director: Jane West Walsh
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $250,000
Website: http://www.DeLeT.org
Tags: Professional Development • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the training and subsequent support of Jewish day school educators. DeLeT, the Hebrew word for “door,” was designed to open the door to a career in day school education. The program formally began in 2002 at two academic sites—Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) and Brandeis—as a thirteen month post-BA program encompassing two summers of study on campus, a yearlong mentored internship in a local day school, and the creation of individual teaching portfolios. The program took shape during an initial five-year pilot phase and is now an established component of each institution’s educational offerings.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately one-third of the 18 participants were recent college graduates, while approximately two-thirds were “career changers.”

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The program produced a professional community of highly trained Jewish day school educators.

• Development rubrics and handbooks were created on the topic of training Jewish day school educators.

• DeLeT has institutionalized into a Master’s-degree-granting program at Brandeis and Hebrew Union College. In the degree-granting program, participants must take part in ongoing assessments throughout the program as well as pass a final assessment. They must also carry out classroom research and present it at a research conference before graduation.

• An ongoing, longitudinal survey of DeLeT alumni was launched to inform Jewish education researchers and practitioners, as well as policy makers, about issues concerning teacher preparation, careers, and teacher quality. The first report on the survey, available at www.bjp.org, describes the background, preparation, working conditions, and career aspirations of DeLeT Alumni (cohorts 1-4) who graduated from the DeLeT program between 2003 and 2006.

CURRENT STATUS

DeLeT is now a mature and unique program. The alumni network consists of approximately 70 individuals.
Gateways for Learning: Professional Advancement in Jewish Education

**Organization:** Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)

**Grant Year:** 2001

**Project Director:** Jo Kay

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $180,000

**Website:** http://huc.edu/ny/gateways/

**Tags:** Professional Development

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the creation of a program that enabled students to pursue an M.A. in Jewish education at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) without having to enroll in the full-time three-year standard M.A.E.D. program. Students were able to do so by taking advantage of part-time, evening, and summer course options. The program hoped to motivate people who either could not or would not become full-time students to become Jewish educational professionals.

**PARTICIPANTS**

While the target audience was students who traditionally might not enroll in a full-time program, the majority of participants were indeed full-time students at HUC-JIR.

**RESULTS/IMPACTS**

- While the goal originally was to bring in new types of students, the actual effect increased the number of full-time students using the additional options to better manage their course load by spreading classes over a longer academic year.

- The program’s flexible schedule enabled rabbinical students to earn a concurrent degree in education as they completed their ordination studies.

- The college has increased its overall scheduling options and is exploring an array of new ideas for recruiting additional M.A. students to the New York School of Education.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The program as originally developed through the grant no longer exists because HUC-JIR has incorporated more flexible scheduling options for coursework into its overall structure.
**Hamorim of MetroWest**

**Organization:** Jewish Education Association of MetroWest  
**Grant Year:** 2001  
**Project Director:** Mark Silk  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $74,922  
**Website:** [http://www.newteachercenter.org/jntp](http://www.newteachercenter.org/jntp)  
**Tags:** Professional Development

**Project Description**

The grant funded the training of master (mentor) teachers in synagogue schools to support new (mentee) teachers. The mentors and mentees gathered once a month for two hours, were in touch between sessions, and attended two dinners each year to get to know one another. The mentees identified issues they wanted to work on and then addressed them with their mentors one by one.

**Participants**

Included 11 master teachers and 13 novice teachers.

**Results/Impact**

- An internal handbook was produced based on mentoring materials adapted for the synagogue school context.

- **Hamorim** directly influenced the creation and development of the Jewish New Teacher Project (JNTP). Mark Silk, the Project Director, credited the program with giving him a conceptual framework for upwards of 95% of his work with the JNTP.

- As a result of the program, there has been a culture shift within the community of school administrators. They now see the value of the mentoring relationships to new teachers. School administrators are now willing to pay several hundred dollars to enroll new teachers in the program.

**Current Status**

The program’s goals have remained the same but the reduced number of mentors has diminished its ability to create a professional community of experienced educators. There is no current funding to train new mentors but four of those who have already been trained are still serving in that role.
Institute for Jewish Spirituality
Educators Program

**Organization:** Institute for Jewish Spirituality  
**Grant Year:** 2003  
**Project Director:** Nancy Flam  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $150,000  
**Website:** www.ijs-online.org  
**Tags:** Professional Development

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the creation of an 18-month program to train educators of Jewish teens in Jewish spiritual practice and the social, psychological, and spiritual development of adolescents. The training program consisted of several five-day retreats, as well as interim weekly study sessions. Topical affinity groups were created for program participants based on specific issues in their work lives.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Included 30 educators of Jewish teens from around the country.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The Educators Program produced a curriculum and trained all participants in skills such as mindfulness meditation.

- Rachel Kessler, an external trainer with expertise in adolescent spiritual development, was especially well received and became a major influence on the program. After the program’s conclusion, three alumni collaborated with Rachel to revise the curriculum.

- Another outgrowth of the program, specifically of the affinity groups, was an initiative to create a more spiritually integrated Bar and Bat Mitzvah curriculum. A training retreat was held on the west coast (with both program alumni and non-alumni).

- At least 80% of alumni are still in the field of Jewish education. Two became rabbis. Many of them are still in close contact with each other and/or Institute staff.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Although the Institute received sufficient interest from potential participants to justify a second cohort, the organization was unable to secure the necessary funding and the program was discontinued. Program alumni have developed an enduring informal support network through which they actively engage on both personal and professional levels.
Laboratory Communities for Jewish Educator Recruitment and Retention

**Organization:** Central Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE St. Louis)

**Grant Year:** 2005

**Project Director:** Jeff Lasday

**Type of Grant:** Signature Grant

**Grant Amount:** $215,065

**Websites:**
- www.jewishlearningventure.org (Philadelphia)
- www.jewishlearningworks.org (San Francisco)
- www.cajestl.org (St. Louis)
- http://cjetoronto.com/ (Toronto)

**Tags:** Professional Development

### Project Description

The grant funded Jewish Educator Recruitment and Retention Initiative (JERRI), a collaborative initiative among central agencies in four North American communities to develop significant new models for agency-supported professional development of Jewish educators. Each of the participating communities had a different focus:

- **Philadelphia:** improving professional development for day school educators
- **San Francisco:** piloting an induction-period coaching program to support Jewish education directors and reduce turnover
- **St. Louis:** implementing a community-wide advocacy campaign to support teachers in congregational schools
- **Toronto:** training a cohort of veteran teachers to mentor less-experienced supplementary school teachers

### Participants

Jewish central agencies and Jewish educators in Philadelphia, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Toronto. Each community had other participants as well, according to the focus of the local JERRI endeavor.

### Results/Impact

- All four projects were implemented and engaged Jewish educators in the four cities:
  - St. Louis reached almost all (about 125) of its congregational educators; San Francisco provided 12 new educational leaders with executive coaches; and the other two initiatives each reached about 20 Jewish educators.
  - In San Francisco, the feedback from educational leaders was extremely positive and the organization determined that executive coaching provided a high return on investment. Bureau of Jewish Education’s (BJE’s) synagogue educator development program was subsequently designed with coaching as a key component.
  - The grant was originally made to CAJE St. Louis, but was transferred to CAJE national when the Project Director took a new position there.

### Current Status

The JERRI project is defunct, as are the local initiatives following the conclusion of the grant. All four central agencies were severely affected by the financial downturn and the Toronto central agency no longer exists.
Learning Together: Educating Teachers, Parents, and Children in the New Millennium

**Organization**: Beth El Congregation of the South Hills  
**Grant Year**: 2001  
**Project Director**: Avi Baron Munro  
**Type of Grant**: Signature  
**Grant Amount**: $27,000  
**Website**: http://www.bethelcong.org  
**Tags**: Professional Development

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded a training program for avocational and substitute school teachers who had no prior training. The program allowed the teachers to gain basic skills in classroom management, reflective practice, and lesson plan writing. Training sessions included a two-day summer seminar and several other sessions throughout the school year.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Twenty avocational and substitute teachers.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The funding enabled a cohort of teachers to receive training and supervision.

- The program faced many challenges, including insufficient buy-in from congregations, changes in synagogue leadership, and a general lack of interest in prioritizing teacher training among lay and professional leaders.

**CURRENT STATUS**

As soon as the funding ended, the program ended. No work continues on the project. None of the 20 participants are currently teaching in the congregation.
M&M: Melamdim u’Manhigim (Teachers and Learners)

Organization: Agency for Jewish Learning, Pittsburgh
Grant Year: 2006
Project Director: Zipora Gur
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $113,000
Website: http://urj.org/learning/my/journeys
Tags: Professional Development • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded a two-track program of adult learning for professional staff and lay leaders from two Reform and one Conservative congregation in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. M&M aimed to position Jewish learning at the center of congregational agendas by offering intensive professional development coupled with community development. The program was a unique local/national partnership between Pittsburgh’s Agency for Jewish Learning (AJL) and the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). A curriculum called “Reaching Higher” – focused on both content knowledge about the history and principles of Reform Judaism and pedagogical training – was developed for educating religious school teachers. During the first two years, participants met weekly to acquire greater competency in these areas. In the third year, the meetings shifted to a monthly schedule. The educational experience for lay leadership consisted of quarterly workshops led by educators from the URJ. These efforts were modified because of low participation rates and more individualized engagement strategies were attempted.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the M&M program included synagogue educators, congregants, and synagogue lay leaders. Over the three-year grant period, participants in the Reaching Higher course included 15-to-20 educators and six-to-eight lay leaders. The Reaching Higher curriculum was reviewed by a Curriculum Advisory Group composed of education faculty members from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, four educational leaders from Reform Movement congregational schools, and one local rabbi.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• A cadre of Jewish educators emerged from the program with significant training and an expanded professional network.

• The program helped to create communities of learners and increased the amount of experiential education being incorporated in some teachers’ classrooms.

• In one synagogue, M&M led to programming that increased youth engagement in Shabbat services and other group activities.

CURRENT STATUS

The M&M curriculum was modified and renamed The Adult Jewish Living and Learning Journeys Project. Meetings are now held twice monthly. In addition, rather than having an educator facilitate quarterly meetings with congregants, the modified program has a member of the synagogue staff facilitate the trainings. Living and Learning’s lesson plans and materials for teaching adults in Reform congregations are available on the URJ website. Additional modules are expected to be available in the future.
MAP: The Mentor and Protégé Program

Organization: Suffolk Association for Jewish Educational Services
Grant Year: 2001
Project Director: Suri Jacknis
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $75,000
website: www.thejewisheducationproject.org
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant supported the creation of an intensive mentoring program for educators in five congregational schools in Suffolk County, New York. With the grant’s support, experienced educators were trained to be mentors and offered ongoing support as they mentored novice teachers.

PARTICIPANTS

Ten experienced and 20 to 30 novice teachers in Suffolk County.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Professional and community cultures in support of Jewish education were created.

• The novice educators improved their teaching practice. The program improved the quality of teacher preparation and student learning in Suffolk County.

• An internal book documenting mentor and mentee wisdom was produced.

CURRENT STATUS

MAP ended at the conclusion of the grant for financial reasons. However, many mentors and mentees who participated in the program report continued benefits in terms of improved career paths and opportunities for leadership positions in Jewish education.
Migdal Or

Organization: Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE)-Miami
Grant Year: 2000
Project Directors: Margie Zeskind, Sheila Silverberg, and Shira Ackerman Simchovitch
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $187,500
Website: www.caje-miami.org
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant enabled four schools in Florida to improve the educational programming of their Early Childhood Centers (ECC) through high quality, cost effective professional development for their Early Childhood Educators (ECE). The state of Florida does not require ECC educators to have advanced degrees. Grant dollars allowed the project to send consultants into the four schools to tailor site-specific professional development programs for educators based on the needs of each school. Educators were engaged in Judaic studies, early childhood education theory and practice, the restructuring of learning environments, reflective practices, experimentation, documentation, and evaluation. Grant dollars also allowed for on-site team meetings as well as all-site retreats, overnights, and dinners.

PARTICIPANTS

Educators in the Early Childhood Centers of four schools in Florida.

RESULTS/IMPACT

- The program sparked a shift in the organizational cultures of the participating ECCs and helped puncture the myth that ECCs were equivalent to day care facilities.

- Teachers became more knowledgeable and standards shifted. All lead teachers were expected to have higher education degrees, educator roles were professionalized, and educators’ communities became communities of learners.

CURRENT STATUS

The program ended because of a lack of funding and changes in school policies regarding professional development.
ORT/JeCC Partnership for Technology in Education: Cleveland Day School Project

Organization: Jewish Education Center of Cleveland
Grant Year: 2001
Project Directors: Maury Greenberg, Yossi Israeli
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $175,000
Website: http://www.jecc.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/ORT_ClevelandDaySchools.htm
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded a two-year seminar that trained selected teachers in Jewish day schools in Cleveland to use educational technologies in their classrooms. The hope was that those teachers would later be able to serve as peer mentors for colleagues in their schools. The program helped to develop technology plans, train teachers, upgrade computers and networks, develop long distance telecommunication projects, evaluate and purchase new software, and integrate educational technology into the schools’ curricula.

PARTICIPANTS

Seven teachers were selected to serve as peer mentors from four Jewish Day Schools in Cleveland: Agnon School, Fuchs Mizrachi School, Gross Schechter Day School, and the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The program was able to train selected educators in the four schools to be peer mentors and educational technology advocates.

• Due to the training, some of the educators became key trendsetters in terms of technology in their schools.

• The program increased the use of educational technologies in the four schools.

CURRENT STATUS

When the funding ended, so did the program. A second cohort was never trained and the program has not been replicated or adapted for schools other than the original four. While no new teachers have been trained, some of the teachers from the first cohort continue to mentor. Each school has at least one or two people who continue to push the educational technology agenda forward in their schools.
Project *Yad*: A Hands-On Day School Initiative

**Organization:** Storahtelling  
**Grant Year:** 2002  
**Project Director:** Amichai Lau-Lavie  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $17,500  
**Website:** [http://www.storahtelling.org/programs.jsp?link=programs](http://www.storahtelling.org/programs.jsp?link=programs)  
**Tags:** Professional Development • New Jewish “Texts”

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant helped fund the design and educator-training process for a curriculum that helps students to reclaim Jewish text through sacred storytelling using the “Maven Method” – an interactive and contemporary pedagogy for translating and interpreting texts. Colorado day school teachers learned the Maven Method during a four-day training session in Denver; they then returned to their communities for six-to-eight months of pedagogical application. At the end of that period, the teachers were reconvened for three days to share and showcase the techniques they had developed. The grant also funded the evaluation of this first generation project.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Seven Jewish day school teachers and, by extension, their 200 students.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- A curriculum, training manual, and teachers’ guide was created for the “Maven Method” of teaching the Torah.

- The Covenant evaluation helped the organization see that, to broaden its reach, it should focus on congregational schools rather than day schools. The organization also realized that teachers are more transient than both education directors and rabbis (who have stronger ties to their institutions).

**CURRENT STATUS**

The program is still active but has made changes since receiving the results of the evaluation. Instead of training day school teachers, Storahtelling now trains congregational school teachers, education directors, and rabbis. Since that change in strategy, retention has increased and trainees are better equipped to implement the curriculum in their classrooms. There are currently 18 trained educators and rabbis in Colorado. In addition, small groups have been trained in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.
Seminar in Jewish Educational Effectiveness

Organization: Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University
Grant Year: 2004
Project Director: Joseph Reimer
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $148,349
Website: http://www.brandeis.edu/ije/projects/jel.html
Tags: Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the creation of the Seminar in Jewish Educational Effectiveness [later renamed JEL, the Seminar in Jewish Experiential Learning]. The goal of this initiative was to train veteran educators in the techniques of experiential Jewish education and to encourage them to act as researchers in their own institutions so as to become more reflective practitioners. The participants met four times over a two-year period from October 2005 to March 2007. Each participant chose a topic in some area of experiential Jewish education to explore and research in his or her own setting. At the end of the program, the participants presented their findings to others in the field at a two-day conference held at Brandeis University.

PARTICIPANTS

The program selected 14 innovative, veteran educators in the realm of informal Jewish education from a range of institutional settings across the United States. Twelve of 14 participants completed the program. Approximately 100 researchers and practitioners attended the concluding consultation.

RESULTS/IMPACT

- The conference at Brandeis brought together, for the first time, practitioners and researchers in the field of Jewish informal education, and laid the groundwork for subsequent collaboration. Eight JEL educators made presentations at the conference.

- A resulting monograph, *How Jewish Experiential Learning Works: An Anthology*, was produced and distributed in 2008. Four of the JEL participants turned their presentations into articles for the volume, which was edited by Joseph Reimer and Susanne A. Shavelson. Each article was written for a primary audience of other Jewish educators and a secondary audience of lay partners interested in promoting high quality Jewish learning.

- Three members of the JEL faculty and alumni are currently collaborating on another project to bring the same approach to community Jewish high schools across the United States.

- Four JEL participants are now involved in a project using this approach in the Boston area.

- JEL furthered the careers of a number of participants: one runs summer programs at Brandeis University, one completed a doctorate in Jewish education, one is a senior educator at a national Jewish umbrella organization, and one is active in the field of music and Jewish education.

CURRENT STATUS

JEL ended at the conclusion of the grant period.
Teacher Training for V’khol Banayikh: Jewish Education for All

**Organization:** Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning  
**Grant Year:** 2004  
**Project Director:** Sara Rubinow Simon  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $18,000  
**Website:** [www.torahura.com/item_Jewish_Educations_for_All.aspx](http://www.torahura.com/item_Jewish_Educations_for_All.aspx)  
**Tags:** Professional Development • Resources for the Field

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the development and dissemination of a Jewish special needs resource guide. The grant was also intended to support the creation of a national teacher training program to introduce the resource guide. The resource guide, *V’Khol Banayikh*, teaches how to build a congregation community from early childhood through adulthood that is fully inclusive of those with special needs.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Jewish special needs educators, parents, and community planners from Jewish organizations in Washington.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Torah Aura published *V’Khol Banayikh*, the resource guide.
- Covenant funding covered the travel and attendance costs for several conferences where the Project Director (who is also one of the authors) conducted training and consultations around the country.

**CURRENT STATUS**

- Due to changes in staffing, the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning is no longer working on similar projects or sending representatives of the resource guide to conferences.
- The resource guide is still being used in at least 25 communities.
The Covenant funding that came in to Mayyim Hayyim was transformative. What we got it for specifically was to create the role of volunteer Mikveh Guide, which remains one of the most vital parts of our mission and why we have created the change that we have.

We have 135 people who have gone through the training here in Boston; we have done a national training; we’ve done regional trainings; our materials have been adapted in Israel for the mikveh attendants who work at the regular state-run mikveh – it has had an amazing, amazing impact. Lay people are given an opportunity to facilitate a sacred experience for another lay person, which is enormously empowering. It also means the person walking in the door is greeted by seeing another community person there, same gender usually, often same ethnicity, which means they feel at home and safe. It is a model that works for everybody.

One of the things we’re noticing now as we consult to communities all over is that they are in such a different starting place because of our existence. When people say their first words about mikveh, rather than thinking “foreign and mysterious” they can say “spiritual and empowering” and use positive language. So part of the impact that we’ve had is by working not only with the people who want to immerse but also the tremendous investment in education with kids, older and younger adults, youth groups, women’s groups, and summer camps, so that the ritual itself becomes demystified and normalized and integrated into Jewish life. And the power that comes with that, the idea that you can come in and have a Jewish experience that meets your needs – it’s not you meeting the needs of the community, it’s the community responding to your needs. I think those were somewhat revolutionary ideas.

We’ve pushed the boundaries as far as possible in terms of accessibility and openness to this particular ritual. The fact that we did that by anticipating the needs of people coming in, I think was also transformative. So when someone walks in or even sees our resources online, they can tell that we were thinking about them. We happened to be growing and becoming more successful at the same time that the Jewish community was waking up to the diversity and celebrating it rather than being afraid of it.

We have consulted with over 60 communities. And consulting is a huge range. So sometimes it means really hands-on helping them identify a site and build a place; sometimes it means participating in training, and sometimes it means helping them engage with new stakeholders in the community. There are also people taking our resources and finding a mikveh where they can make it work, or finding a natural body of water. I get such a thrill from seeing other people around the country transform the way their communities are thinking about this ritual and opening it up to them. We’ve been asked to do a training session for New York and New Jersey area rabbis who were here in Boston for the CCAR conference, were introduced to Mayyim Hayyim for the first time, and now realize that mikveh can be something different. I’ve wanted for years for Mayyim Hayyim to be seen as a source of “best practices” in the field and now that’s really happening.
Healing Waters Initiative: Inventing a New Kind of Adult Educator*

Organization: *Mayyim Hayyim: Living Waters Community Mikveh* and Education Center, Inc.
Project Director: Aliza Kline
Grant Year: 2003
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $182,275
Website: http://mayyimhayyim.org
Tags: New Directions for the Field • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

*Mayyim Hayyim* Living Waters Community *Mikveh* and the Paula Brody & Family Education Center were founded in Newton, Massachusetts, in 2004 with the goal of reclaiming and reinventing one of Judaism’s most ancient rituals: immersion in the *mikveh*. The organization has broadened the use and meaning of this traditional religious practice, making it accessible to Jews of all ages, affiliations, and backgrounds. People come to *Mayyim Hayyim* to signify transformation and healing, to observe both traditional milestones (such as weddings, *b*’nei *mitzvah*, and conversions), and to mark contemporary life events (such as immersion upon the finalization of a divorce or before a surgery). In less than a decade, *Mayyim Hayyim* has become a nationally recognized site for spiritual discovery, creativity, and practice. In addition, the organization provides volunteer opportunities, national consultation services, and gallery space for art exhibits, as well as educational resources and programs.

A Signature Grant from The Covenant Foundation supported the creation of a comprehensive curriculum for *mikveh* guides, a pilot volunteer training program for an initial 36 volunteers, and the development of ritual and ceremonial resources for visitors. Becoming a guide includes a rigorous selection process, extensive training, and ongoing evaluation. The training program was developed and refined through intensive collaboration with clergy from various denominations and healthcare professionals from the greater Boston area. Through the trainings, volunteers learn to provide guidance, ensure privacy, offer support, and answer questions in order to facilitate personal, meaningful Jewish ritual experiences for visitors. Today, *mikveh* guides are an integral part of *Mayyim Hayyim’s* operations, facilitating 1,400 immersions and nearly 90 educational programs each year.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- A total of 118 volunteers (including 13 men) have now been trained in six cohorts. Three current staff members at *Mayyim Hayyim* were among the first group of trainees.

- Guide training has become an integral part of the organization’s operations. Trainings have been conducted nationally, regionally, and locally. The *mikveh* guide curriculum has been refined and expanded. Twenty guides have completed a supplementary training to become *mikveh* educators, and they now lead large *mikveh* learning groups.

- With the help of volunteers and professionals (such as social workers, clergy, and nurses), the organization has developed resources, ceremonies, and meditations that visitors to the *mikveh* can draw upon.
Mayyim Hayyim has numerous community partners, including local Jewish Community Centers, Keshet, the Jewish Cemetery Association, the Jewish Chaplain Association, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, the Jewish Domestic Violence Coalition, the Jewish Women’s Coalition on Breast Cancer, and the Wellness Community. The regional offices of the Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative movements are also partners. Additionally, the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute are community partners. Individuals at these partnering organizations have helped develop resources, promote Mayyim Hayyim, select guides, and even collaborate to facilitate guide trainings.

Mayyim Hayyim has attracted local, national, and international attention: thousands of people from around the United States and Israel routinely visit to tour, learn, and immerse. Slingshot, a resource guide for Jewish innovation, has named Mayyim Hayyim as one of the nation’s 50 most innovative Jewish nonprofits.

Hundreds of individuals have participated in Mayyim Hayyim’s educational offerings. Trainings have been conducted around the United States at the behest of foundations and community organizations. Nineteen volunteers representing 13 communities from across the United States took part in a national Mikveh Guide Training Seminar. More than 275 participants [including approximately 70 presenters] from 22 states and Israel participated in a conference called: “Gathering the Waters: Ancient Rituals, Open Access, New Meaning.” Four communities – Portland, Maine, Chicago, Illinois, San Diego, California, and Raleigh, North Carolina – have now adapted the curriculum and many others have expressed interest. In addition, in collaboration with organizational partners, Jewish Milestones and The Jewish Welcome Network, a regional cohort of mikveh guides was created in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Leadership**

Author Anita Diamant spearheaded the founding of Mayyim Hayyim, along with a small group of board members, including Rabbi Barbara Penzner, Roz Garber, Judy Greene, and Dr. Paula Brody. Aliza Kline was hired as the Executive Director before construction of the mikveh was even completed. She has led the organization through its initial stages to maturity, overseeing fundraising, staffing, volunteer recruitment, publicity, and board development. In 2009, Kline was awarded an AVI CHAI Fellowship in recognition of her accomplishments, creativity, and commitment to the Jewish people.

When the organization was launched, Kline supervised a part-time Program Director whose position was entirely funded by a Covenant Foundation Signature Grant. Mayyim Hayyim now employs four full-time staff, including an Executive Director, Director of the Paula Brody & Family Education Center, a National Programs Director and an Administrative Director.

**Funding**

Mayyim Hayyim began with a $25,000 planning grant from the Nathan Cummings Foundation. Funding from The Covenant Foundation enabled the organization to move from planning to action. The multi-year nature of the Signature Grant enabled the nascent organization to hire staff, initiate programming, and undertake extensive curricular collaboration. The Covenant Foundation grant also helped secure additional funding from the Boston Jewish Community Women’s Fund: support that continues today. The organization also received an anonymous gift of $100,000 from a Boston-area donor.

Mayyim Hayyim has further leveraged The Covenant Foundation’s early investment by expanding its advisory and consulting services to communities around the country. A grant from The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, along with additional funding from The Covenant Foundation, enabled the creation and training of a regional cohort of mikveh guides in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization has also received funding from Natan and the Slingshot Fund. Additionally, Kline used the money awarded to her through the AVI CHAI Fellowship to strengthen the organizational capacity of Mayyim Hayyim.

A small amount of the organization’s income is generated through its consulting services. Visitors to the mikveh are asked to make a donation based on a sliding scale. Proceeds from purchases made through Mayyim Hayyim’s online store also benefit the organization.
Early Childhood Hebrew Language Immersion Network

**Project Description**

The grant funded the creation of a Hebrew immersion program designed for pre-school age children. The project was based on the theory that children who reach a foundational level of proficiency at an early age are better equipped to master modern Hebrew, Jewish texts, and the siddur when they get older. The grant supported teacher training in the immersion approach through a series of workshops and the creation of a Community of Practice. The program adapted teachers’ existing curricula based on the program’s methods. The project was originally focused on 13 schools in New York City and later expanded to schools in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles.

**Participants**

Approximately 50 teachers in congregational and day schools.

**Results/Impact**

- Prior to the project, few Jewish day or synagogue schools were using a Hebrew immersion approach. By the end of the grant period, 26 schools were employing the Hebrew immersion approach to educate 1,040 children in pre-schools and lower grades.

- While the program was initially targeted to synagogue schools, the Hebrew immersion approach was adopted more readily by day schools.

- The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary created *Ma’alah: Early Childhood Hebrew Immersion Network*, which offered curriculum for immersive Hebrew instruction to schools across denominations.

**Current Status**

Though the program no longer exists, schools around the United States continue to employ the Hebrew immersion method of language instruction.
Gender and Orthodoxy Curriculum

Organization: Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance [JOFA]
Grant Year: 2002
Project Director: Janet Dolgin
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $138,000
Website: http://www.jofa.org/
Tags: New Directions for the Field • Resources for the Field

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Grant dollars supported the development of a first-ever, gender-sensitive curriculum for Orthodox day schools. The curriculum integrates feminism and halakhic Judaism to address the often dichotomous representation of women's roles in Jewish tradition and contemporary Jewish life.

PARTICIPANTS

The direct participants in the project were teachers and students at the three Orthodox day schools that piloted the curriculum.

RESULTS/IMPACTS

• A gender-sensitive curriculum was created, and well over 100 copies were distributed.

• After the initial programming, a mentoring program was added to support the curriculum. The mentoring program was an apparent success but it ended after funds ran out.

• The work influenced the creation of materials, including a handbook of Pesach Seder activities.

CURRENT STATUS

The project still exists under a different name, Bereishit.
Partners in Prevention

Organization: Beit T’Shuvah
Grant Year: 2006
Project Director: Kathy Marks
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $100,000
Website: http://www.beittshuvah.org/Prevention
Tags: New Directions for the Field

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant supported the national growth of Partners in Prevention, a Jewish education program using Judaism to teach students how to avoid and prevent addictive and destructive behaviors. The program uses a six-module curriculum that includes workbooks for students, a parents’ journal, and a facilitator’s guide. The program is designed to help students articulate values, identify healthy relationships, and have accountability for their actions, all within a Jewish context. Prevention staff members (including Jewish educators, mental health professionals, and recovering addicts) take students through workbooks and interactive exercises designed to encourage honest discussion about life’s pressures and cultural standards.

PARTICIPANTS

Students from 6th through 12th grades from day schools and synagogues.

RESULTS/IMPACT

- The program has now worked with more than 35 organizations in Southern California and around the country.

- The grant gave the organization credibility and national attention, enabling the expansion of the program to schools and synagogues outside of California. The grant also subsidized travel for Prevention staff to run the program in other communities.

- The increased visibility of the program raised awareness about the issue of addiction among Jews and brought the issue onto the radar of mainstream Jewish organizations.

CURRENT STATUS

The program has expanded and evolved. While it has the same goal and same general structure, it has been fine-tuned over time. For example, new exercises have been added and the organization is beginning to run some facilitator trainings in the form of webinars.
Proficiency Approach to Hebrew Language Teaching: Empowering Teachers Enabling Students

Organization: Jewish Community Day School of Greater Boston
Grant Year: 2003
Project Director: Sharona Givol
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $250,000
Websites: http://www.jcdsboston.org/jewish-life/hebrew-throughout-the-day
www.hebrewatthecenter.org
Tags: New Directions for the Field • Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the pilot of a Modern Hebrew teaching program in the Jewish Community Day School of Greater Boston (JCDS) which introduced the proficiency approach to foreign language education. The proficiency approach is a proven, cutting-edge model for teaching language acquisition. The grant inspired the creation of an organization dedicated to Hebrew learning and the proficiency approach, and led to the launch of a national initiative to transform teaching and learning Hebrew.

PARTICIPANTS

Hebrew language teachers for grades K-8 at the Jewish Community Day School of Greater Boston.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Tools were created to assess the current status of Hebrew teachers and Hebrew programs. The proficiency assessment tool from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language was adapted for Hebrew to give baseline measures of the status of the schools’ Hebrew programs. Schools were then able to make transition plans based on that assessment.

• An assessment rubric for teacher skills was developed to identify individual areas for professional development.

• At the conclusion of the grant period, a national initiative was launched to transform the teaching and learning of Hebrew and to invest in developing a field of Hebrew language teachers through professional development workshops to prepare educators.

• Hebrew at the Center (HATC) emerged as an organization dedicated to expanding and developing the field of Hebrew language education. The Center is now working with schools in Atlanta, New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., and with National Ramah Commission.

• The program has transformed multiple schools, including JCDS, Solomon Schechter Day School of Great Boston, and schools in Florida and Brooklyn.

CURRENT STATUS

The project has continued. An evaluation of the pilot program at JCDS has been completed. Nationally, the program is now focusing on building a cadre of Hebrew language teachers who are adept in the proficiency approach method. One large factor holding back the spread of the program is the high cost of the training necessary to transform the schools. HATC is currently exploring the development of an online teacher-training platform that could potentially reduce training costs.
The *Darim* Online Learning Network for Congregational Educators (Social Media Boot Camp for Educators)*

**Organization:** *Darim Online*  
**Grant Year:** 2007  
**Project Director:** Lisa Colton  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $163,584 (2007); $150,910 (2010)  
**Website:** http://darimonline.org/  
**Tags:** Professional Development • Resources for the Field • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

### Project Description

*Darim* Online provides training, coaching, and consulting services to help Jewish organizations use technology more skillfully. The Covenant Foundation grants enabled *Darim* Online to launch, refine, and expand a social media training program for Jewish educators.

With the first grant, the organization launched the *Darim* Online Learning Network for Educators—modeled on a network it had developed for synagogues—in 2008. The knowledge-sharing program offered webinars, individualized coaching, and live online events that targeted Jewish congregational educators at the middle and high school levels. Covenant funding supported coaching for three cohorts of Fellows (two six-month cohorts and one year-long cohort), and the extension of some of the program’s offerings to the broader *Darim* Online community.

In fall 2009, the organization changed the program name to the Social Media Boot Camp for Jewish Educators, reflecting its newly intensive focus on social media, and began offering its webinars to the general public. Program “Fellows” were selected based upon leadership potential and ability to effect change and growth in their host organizations. In addition, the Fellows were encouraged to invite colleagues to participate in the Boot Camp and, as a group, to design and implement new social media projects in their organization.

In 2010, The Covenant Foundation awarded *Darim* Online a second, three-year Signature Grant. The funds were used to add two additional year-long cohorts and to develop online resources and capacity in order to broaden the Boot Camp’s reach to non-participating Jewish organizations.

On July 1, 2013, *Darim* Online merged with See3 Communications, a company that provides strategic web design and online communication services to nonprofits. *Darim* Online itself will remain a functional nonprofit at least through summer 2014. In addition, See3 has a “sister” nonprofit, The Kindling Group. Under this for-profit/nonprofit hybrid arrangement, *Darim* Online can continue to receive grants and may also accept fee-for-service contracts, giving it more options for expansion. In the future, See3 may adopt the Boot Camp for use in other contexts.

### Results/Impact

- The Boot Camp has hosted six cohorts over five years. In 2008, the program’s inaugural year, there were thirteen Fellows. In its second year, 2009-10, a total of nine teams participated. In the past three years, 2010–13, an additional 30 organizations, each represented by a three- to five-person team, have participated in the Boot Camp. In total, 55 organizations and 150 individuals have taken part in the program.

- The Boot Camp has succeeded in attracting a diverse group of Jewish organizations, thus bringing the *Darim* Online ‘ideology’ to a wide swath of the Jewish world. The 55 participating organizations include denominational movements, early childhood programs, day...
schools, congregational schools, after school programs, Central Agencies for Jewish Education, Jewish education start-ups, and universities.

• By opening the webinars to the public and broadly defining Jewish education, the Boot Camp has been able to reach Jewish leaders beyond traditional modes of education. To further increase its reach, the Boot Camp also collaborates with local Central Agencies to work with multiple day schools in a single locality.

• Over and above individuals from participating organizations, the program estimates it has reached 300 to 500 individuals through webinars and online events. Indeed, a 2010 evaluation by the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation at JESNA described Darim Online as “investing in the future of the Jewish communal sector” – not just Jewish education.

• The webinars and live events have set a high bar for training in Jewish education. Curriculum for these events is tailored to the interests and backgrounds of participants and draws from best practices in the field. The events also showcase the work of the Fellows through case studies.

• Without many peer organizations, Darim Online has established itself as the go-to group for online communication in the Jewish world. According to Lisa Colton, Darim Online’s Founder and President and Signature Grant Project Director, as word has traveled about the Boot Camp and as the need for social media training and knowledge increases, Darim Online is focusing less on recruiting and more on responding to the ever-changing needs of participating organizations and their constituents.

• Darim’s new affiliate, See3, already has clients in the Jewish community, and Colton expects the merger to bring expanded access to social media resources and expertise to the Jewish community.

LEADERSHIP

Lisa Colton has extensive experience in Jewish education, communal development, and social media design. She is the recipient of the Hillel “Exemplar of Excellence” Award, the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America’s “Young Professionals” Award, and the Nonprofit Technology Network’s NTEN-y Award.

Before the merger with See3, Colton managed a small East Coast staff and a team of coaches and consultants. Colton now serves as the Chief Learning Officer of See3 Communications and President of Darim Online.

FUNDING

Darim Online has received funding from the AVI CHAI Foundation, augmented by grants from local partners, to expand the Boot Camp to Jewish day schools through the Jewish Day School Social Media Academy. A prerequisite of this grant is transition, in the third year, to a model requiring organizations to pay 50% of the costs of participation. In addition, a Boot Camp for early childhood educators in Detroit, funded by the Hermelin Davidson Center for Congregational Excellence, will kick off in Fall 2013.

With fees from day schools — and potentially other organizations — on the horizon, as well as participation fees from the Boot Camp webinars (for individuals from organizations not participating in the program), an increasing portion of the Darim Online budget will be covered by fees, making for a sustainable business model.
In the years prior to the grant, we at Kesher had very much wanted to expand our work, to stabilize and grow the Cambridge, Massachusetts site, and to respond to the constant stream of requests from people who wanted to learn about us. We didn’t have the capacity to accommodate a large number of visitors. We didn’t have brochures or even the resources to have conversations about replication.

There were a group of lay people in Newton, Massachusetts who were really energetic and smart who wouldn’t take no for an answer. We used the grant funding—and the process of applying and documenting—to explore what replication with this new group would really entail. We knew the process of creating a new site had to be lengthy and relational. The funding provided critical support to Newton as they were scrambling to meet their daily needs and at the same time planning for their long-term growth and development. The funding also enabled us to have the time to work with and guide them and still keep the “mother ship” running.

After that first year and a half, Kesher Newton really stabilized and then grew dramatically. The program went from two days a week with 20 students, to four days a week with over 100 students. Newton was able to become a player in larger communal conversations in the neighborhood because of the large Jewish community there. Kesher became a partner in the communal conversation. This had not been true before the Newton site became so successful. I like to say that we were a “productive threat,” a little friendly competition. There were some places that were losing families to us, and it pushed them to take a harder look at their own programs. As a result we now have strong and symbiotic relationships with camps and day schools in the area.

It’s still an open question as to what our impact will be nationally. I think we are a very well established part of the national conversation now, in large part because of the adaptation of Kesher in Newton. Kesher is constantly referenced, even in Los Angeles where I am now. And maybe that’s supposed to be our national impact—the ideas we’ve put out there.

I can’t overstate the impact Kesher had on me personally and professionally, in the way I now think about innovative Jewish educational models. The fact that I had the chance to consult on the adaptation and then become the Director was a huge professional leap for me. This is unquestionably what kept me in the field and made me see it as a field that was exciting and dynamic. As Kesher became hooked into the national scene, it launched many of us among the staff in exciting directions. It really shaped how we think about what serious Jewish education can be.
Kesher Community Hebrew School After School*

Organization: Kesher
Grant Year: 2002
Project Director: Linda Echt
Type of Grant: Dissemination
Grant Amount: $25,000
Websites: Kesher Cambridge: www.kesherweb.org
Kesher Newton: http://keshernewton.org
JCP Hebrew School Project: http://jcpdowntown.org/after-school-k-12/hebrew-school-project/
Tags: Organizational Change and Capacity Building • New Directions for the Field • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Kesher Community Hebrew School After School was founded as a response to growing dissatisfaction with supplementary Jewish education. The educational model offers an alternative approach designed to radically change the way children learn in religious school. Kesher is a licensed after school care program that aims to create a nurturing “camp-like” atmosphere that fosters Jewish commitment, joy of learning, and community participation. Children [grades K-9] learn about Jewish culture, art, history, and religion, as well as Hebrew language, in a pluralistic, informal setting. Modern Hebrew is taught based on the proficiency approach, with a focus on speaking, comprehension, and relevance to the learner. The Kesher model has a strong focus on employing high quality educators and providing teacher training and professional development. Staff members work 24 hours per week, including nine planning hours.

When it was established in 1992, Kesher served Cambridge, Massachusetts, a community without many Jewish organizations and few Jewish educational opportunities. In 2003, a small group of motivated parents learned about Kesher in Cambridge and decided to adapt the model in their Boston suburb. The Covenant grant supported capacity building for program dissemination that enabled the establishment of Kesher Newton, which was launched in a West Newton church with approximately 25 students. It has since grown to 100 students from 60 families, increased from two days per week to four, and expanded the staff from two-and-a-half to eight faculty members.

Kesher’s inclusive policy has attracted a diverse population, including families with various approaches to religious observance and affiliation. Many participating families are affiliated with area congregations. Students attend public, private, and charter schools. The school is currently overseen by a group of 13 community volunteers, 11 of whom have children enrolled in the program. The first year that no founding members served on the board was 2011.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Kesher Newton is an established resource in the landscape of Jewish education in the area. The school now has 30% more students than Kesher Cambridge, including some students who also attend Jewish day schools. Because demand currently exceeds capacity, there is a waiting list for some grades.

• Kesher has emerged as a nationally-recognized model of excellence in supplementary Jewish education. The school has been profiled in a number of publications highlighting innovation and best practices in Jewish education. In addition, the model was profiled in Jack Wertheimer’s 2009 AVI CHAI Foundation report, Schools That Work: What We Can Learn from Good Jewish Supplementary Schools. Kesher was also mentioned in “Mapping Jewish education: The National Picture,” a 2006 report on the field of Jewish education that was conducted by the
LEADERSHIP

Veteran educator Linda Echt was the founding director of Kesher Cambridge. Kesher Newton was co-founded by two parents, with the help of Echt and the support of a core group of local parents. Lauren Applebaum, who is currently the Associate Dean of the Fingerhut School of Education at the American Jewish University, was Kesher Newton’s Executive Director for four years. Dan Bros gol followed Applebaum as Executive Director and served through June 2011. Bros gol grew the student population, expanded the staff, and initiated a number of new curricular elements, including gender-specific programming, special education, and technology. Bros gol has since become the director of Prozdor High School of Hebrew College. Rabbi Gary Mazo is the current Executive Director of Kesher Newton.

FUNDING

The Covenant Foundation funded the creation of Kesher with a 1996 Signature Grant that supported the development and testing of the four-year curriculum grounded in Hebrew language and teacher training. A 2002 dissemination grant from The Covenant Foundation supported capacity building for program dissemination that enabled the establishment of Kesher Newton. Along with supporting the logistics of the replication, funding from The Covenant Foundation enabled the founders to standardize the curriculum and prepare to bring it to scale more broadly.

In 2008, the Partnership for Effective Learning and Innovative Education (PELIE), funded the expansion of Kesher to two sites in New York. One of the two New York sites is no longer operating. The remaining site in New York is administered through the Jewish Community Project Downtown (JCP), which delivers the curriculum two days a week as one of two tracks in the JCP Hebrew School Project.

Kesher is funded primarily by tuition. Approximately 85% of funding for the program in Newton is secured through tuition, while the remaining 15% comes from small grants and private donations. There are also internal fundraising efforts, like an annual appeal, an annual dinner, and an online auction.
**Lilmod u’Lelamed (Project Gesher)**

**Organization:** Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations (COJECO)

**Grant Year:** 2004

**Project Director:** Alec Brook-Krasny

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $157,500

**Website:** [http://cojeco.org/projects/project-gesher](http://cojeco.org/projects/project-gesher)

**Tags:** Organizational Change and Capacity Building • Professional Development • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Project Gesher (originally called Lilmod u’Lelamed) is a program of the Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations (COJECO), a central coordinating body for the Russian Jewish community of New York with 43 member organizations. Project Gesher was created in 2005 to serve as an entry point into Jewish identity and culture by providing meaningful secular Jewish educational experiences that are sensitive to the specific needs and experiences of the Russian-speaking Jewish American population. The Project directly engages two very different populations within the Russian Jewish community – émigré children ages 3-5 and unaffiliated Russian-speaking college students with little knowledge of Judaism – bringing them together through Jewish education. Project Gesher trains college students to provide informal education at day care centers that are largely attended by Russian Jewish émigré children, thus providing young children with the fundamentals of Jewish history and culture, and cultivating a new generation of Russian-speaking Jewish educators.

The college student faculty members participate in a day-long intensive training, along with monthly follow-up training sessions. They simultaneously learn Jewish content (Jewish values, Shabbat, Jewish holidays, and Israel), and are trained to teach what they learn. In the process, they develop leadership skills and reflect on their own Jewish identities. The college students have also had the opportunity to participate in a professional development seminar in Israel. The Project Director and on-site coordinators are bilingual Russian immigrants who have experience working with this community. Throughout the year, they actively consult with the college student faculty members.

Faculty members run weekly, hour-long classes in day care centers for groups of 10 to 12 children. They employ multiple teaching and engagement techniques, such as storytelling, drama, games, creative art projects, music, movement, and dance. Project Gesher also includes a family education component that aims to reinforce learning beyond the classroom and provide families of both college students and young children with basic information about Judaism. A family educator at each site plans holiday celebrations for families (including Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover), coordinates trips to local Jewish cultural institutions, facilitates Shabbatonim, and develops take-home materials.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Project Gesher has had a broad reach in both of its target populations, serving more than 1,350 children and educating and employing more than 150 college students as program faculty.

- The program has grown every year since 2004, first expanding to Staten Island, followed by expansion to Northern New Jersey in 2010 and Boston in 2011. The program has since attracted additional funders and renewed support from The Covenant Foundation.

- COJECO created an original year-round, interactive educational curriculum guide, “Teaching Jewish Holidays, Israel, and Jewish Values for Early Childhood,” designed to be used in the Russian-speaking Jewish community. COJECO has also created an extensive Resource Center, which includes educational materials for early childhood informal Jewish education, such as DVDs, CDs, books with art project ideas, picture books, storybooks, Jewish holiday
books, materials for making art, and educational curricula.

- An independent evaluation commissioned by The Covenant Foundation in 2006 found that the project had a profound effect on both the participating college students and the children. Preschoolers exhibited a measurable increase in their Jewish knowledge. The majority of current and past faculty members reported that they have enhanced their Jewish knowledge as a result of their participation in Project Gesher. An informal network has emerged among the college students, who have developed friendships with members of their cohort.

- Because Project Gesher engages college students at an early stage in their academic or professional careers, the experience has the potential to influence their career trajectories. Several faculty members have begun working and volunteering in local mainstream Jewish organizations since their work with Project Gesher. All three Project Gesher staff members are former faculty. One staff member is also a part-time Hillel employee pursuing a career in the Jewish communal sector.

- The project has contributed to COJECO’s reputation as a cutting-edge organization in both the Russian-speaking Jewish community and the mainstream Jewish community. COJECO has been nominated multiple times as one of the 50 most creative and effective organizations and leaders across the country by “Slingshot, A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation.”

LEADERSHIP

Under the leadership of COJECO’s founding Executive Director, Alec Brook-Krasny, the organization launched Lilmod u’Lelamed. (Brook-Krasny has since left COJECO to successfully run for New York State Assembly.) COJECO’s Director of Education, Lyudmila Yakhnina, a bilingual, bicultural Jewish educator, leads Project Gesher in Boston. For the expansion to Boston, COJECO has established a collaborative relationship with Irene Belozersky, a clinical social worker and Senior Planning Associate for the Combined Jewish Philanthropies. There are currently five additional staff members working at Project Gesher Boston, including a Project Director, a Family Educator, and three Student Teachers. All of the members of the project’s leadership team are culturally Russian. The New York staff consists of a Jewish Educator/Project Director, a Coordinator, and 20 Student Teachers.

FUNDING

The Covenant Foundation was the first funder of Project Gesher. The 2004 Signature Grant enabled the program to launch. That funding was also instrumental in attracting additional funders. The project’s initial funding was closely followed by support from UJA-Federation of New York. Support for the project has also been provided by: the Prins Foundation, Genesis Philanthropy Group, Department of Youth and Community Development, New York State Office of Family and Children Services, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, The Russell Berrie Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

The Covenant Foundation invested in Project Gesher again in 2010, with a Signature Grant that enabled the project to expand from New York to Boston.
A Community Commendation Program for Congregational and Other Supplementary Schools

**Organization:** Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning  
**Grant Year:** 2003  
**Project Director:** Barry Krasner  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $55,350  
**Website:** http://pjll.org/ce21  
**Tags:** Organizational Change and Capacity Building • Professional Development

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant allowed congregational and other supplementary schools to take a deep look at their programs and to determine whether the outcomes of those programs were in concert with their school goals. The program empowered the schools to self-assess their student-learning outcomes at the classroom and grade levels through a year-long process of examining goals, gathering data, and consulting with the cohort’s Education Directors. The grant supported the creation of a detailed guidebook designed to lead the schools through the process. In addition, grant dollars supported a team of educators who visited the schools to examine the data and make observations. At year’s end, schools that completed the process were eligible for commendations consisting of public recognition and a $3,000 grant for a related project.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Educational Directors, teachers, and students in eight congregational and other supplementary schools in the greater Washington, D.C. area.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The program recruited a total of 24 schools over three cohorts; 18 finished the process and while the remaining six either dropped out or did not achieve results sufficient for commendation.

- Every participating school made innovations in its program, such as developing mission statements and requiring lesson plans.

- To qualify for an additional $3,000 improvement award, each school was required to create its own Improvement Plan. All 18 schools that finished the process created plans and, after review by a panel of expert judges, received commendations.

- Lessons learned from the Commendation Project informed the ongoing work of the Partnership with congregational schools in the greater Washington area.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Where the participating Education Director is still at the same school, elements of the program continue in the school culture or operations. In other cases, the Education Directors have gone on to effect changes at other schools. In some ways, and with exceptions, the program ended up being more about professional development for the Education Directors than about impact on a particular school. For the last five years, the Project Director has hosted a quarterly meeting of the Education Directors who have gone through the program.
HowDoYouJew?

Organization: Fiedler Hillel at Northwestern University
Grant Year: 2007
Project Director: Josh Feigelson
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $101,500
Website: www.nuhillel.org
Tags: Resources for the Field

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded “HowDoYouJew?,” an effort to engage students by establishing a robust social networking tool via Facebook, complete with a paid student blogger. However, due to lower interest than expected in blogging, the project evolved over time into “What’s Your Story?,” which focused broadly on using digital media to more effectively reach both students and young alumni. The grant enabled the Hillel to redesign its website, hire consultants to advise on the development of e-marketing and social media strategies, introduce a blog entitled “What’s Your Story?,” and forge a partnership with New Voices Magazine.

PARTICIPANTS

The project targeted Jewish undergraduate students at Northwestern University, as well as Jewish alumni of the university.

RESULTS/IMPACT

A trial of the original project concept yielded both disappointing outcomes and important learnings; as a result, the Hillel staff members were forced to reevaluate some of their assumptions including:

- Postings on students’ Facebook pages would automatically lead to significant new web traffic and that hiring students with experience in relationship-based engagement would be ideal.

- Hillel staff members attribute general disinterest in the blog posts to both a lacking public discourse culture at Northwestern and writing/blogging inexperience on the part of the student bloggers.

- Hiring a professional journalist to supervise the bloggers remotely did not prove to be cost-effective.

- Paying the bloggers was problematic since other campus publications don’t pay their writers.

- The partnership with New Voices Magazine and a new focus on web development and e-marketing were welcome changes to the initiative.

- Despite the rocky start to the project, Fiedler Hillel is extremely pleased with its ultimate outcomes. Current Project Director Michael Simon says that the top-quality website developed as a result of the grant has been good for Fiedler Hillel’s reputation as a cutting-edge organization. He believes that the website’s look and content have attracted new and different students to Hillel. In addition, the website has attracted attention from other Hillel’s that are aspiring to upgrade their digital media. The Fiedler Hillel team has consulted with other Hillel directors on their websites, and some Hillel’s have used Fiedler Hillel’s site as a model for their own sites.

- The e-marketing consultation also enabled Hillel staff to be more intentional about the content placed on the website, and to tell their story better. Although “What’s Your Story?” wasn’t intended as a fundraising tool, it has in fact been central to the Hillel’s efforts to attract and speak with potential funders.

- Fiedler Hillel also cites the two-year partnership with New Voices Magazine as an unexpected and extremely positive product of the grant and the relationship with The Covenant Foundation, which brought the two organizations — both Covenant grantees — together. New Voices, an online Jewish student publication, cross-posted
the “What’s Your Story?” blog on its platform, enabling broader access and publicity for Fiedler Hillel.

CURRENT STATUS

The e-marketing and social media strategies created during the grant period continue to impact the Hillel, impressively outlasting leadership changes. The website remains up-to-date and is a point of pride for the Hillel; and a Development associate regularly employs the e-campaign model developed as a result of the grant.

When the New Voices relationship ended in mid-2012 (New Voices Magazine discontinued all partnerships with individual schools), Northwestern students negotiated a merger of “What’s Your Story!” with Schmooze Magazine, an online Jewish student magazine at Northwestern. Although the blog is now dormant due to a student leadership transition in winter 2012-13, the Project Director is optimistic that the blog will be revived in Fall 2013. The blog may wax and wane depending on student interest, but the platform for it remains, and Hillel staff will continue to encourage students to take up the mantle.
NESS: Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools II

Organization: Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education
Grant Year: 2006
Project Director: Fredi Cooper
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $100,000
Website: http://www.bjesf.org/schools_ness.htm
Tags: Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the second cohort of the Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools (NESS) pilot program. The organization had noticed an alarming dropout rate in many religious schools and wanted to help change the attitudes of students to keep them connected to their schools and synagogues. The pilot program was perceived as having successfully impacted the attitudes of students, parents, and leadership to improve student retention. Covenant funded the second cohort to see if the results were anomalous or if they could be repeated. The program alters attitudes through systemic change, specifically the alignment of each individual school's mission, goals, and programming.

PARTICIPANTS

Six religious schools participated in the program. One of those schools later left the program, stating that it had already achieved its objectives for participating.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• In general, the NESS II cohort had significantly more turnover among participating synagogue staff. All but one of the original Education Directors departed, as did several rabbis.

• Despite the ongoing challenge of staff turnover at cohort schools, the program was able to initiate and shepherd sustainable-change processes that continue today.

• The NESS process stimulated a larger reassessment of how the synagogues operated in general.

• NESS enhanced the educational experiences of the children in cohort schools and supported improvements in creating child-centered, meaning-centered learning. In some cases, changes aimed at specific grade levels were then carried upward as those students got older and carried raised expectations (about being involved in their own learning) along with them.

• NESS II saw the production of an extensive, seven-volume internal handbook containing case studies and curricular contributions from all NESS consultants and trainers.

CURRENT STATUS

There are now a total of 11 NESS schools (cohorts 1 and 2). The schools from the first cohort are now members of the NESS graduate program and receive fee-based technical assistance to continue the NESS process. Some of the NESS II schools are in the graduate program as well. NESS is not currently training further cohorts. However, another organization has adapted the NESS process in San Francisco (currently finishing year three) with the help of Philadelphia NESS II school staff.
Renewing the New Orleans Jewish Day School

Organization: Community Day School (formerly New Orleans Jewish Day School)  
Grant Year: 2007  
Project Director: Robert Berk  
Type of Grant: Signature  
Grant Amount: $138,000  
Website: http://www.communitynola.org/  
Tags: Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant supported the renewal and reorganization of the Hebrew and Judaic Studies program at Community Day School, which has struggled to re-establish itself in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Covenant funding was originally intended to be used to hire a Director of Judaic Studies, but the school, in conversation with The Covenant Foundation, decided that hiring two full-time Hebrew and Judaic Studies educators would better serve the school’s needs. The overall goal of the effort was to increase the quality of the Jewish Studies curriculum in order to attract more students, which, in turn, would help sustain and grow the school.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 50 Community Day School students (girls and boys; pre-K through fifth grade), 60-70% of whom are Jewish, divided about evenly across the denominations.

RESULTS/IMPACT

In light of hurricane-related Jewish demographic shifts, Community Day School has had to reinvent itself in order to remain viable. School officials report that the Covenant grant allowed the school to enhance the quality of its Jewish Studies program and, at the same time, to allocate operating funds to essential marketing and recruitment efforts.

- The two educators hired with Covenant funds overhauled the Jewish Studies curricula, introduced new course books, restructured Hebrew classes around competency levels, and developed related social action and experiential learning opportunities for students. The educators taught Modern Hebrew and Torah study classes and led daily worship and holiday celebrations.
- Due to innovations made possible by the grant, time that students spent on Jewish Studies doubled. School staff members proudly report that about 30% of the school day is now devoted to its core mission as a day school—Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Robert Berk, former head of school, commented: “If you look at the speeches our kids gave at graduation, early on not a single one mentioned anything Jewish. After this grant, they all talk about things they learned on the Jewish side of our program. We attribute this shift not just to an increase in the classroom time spent on Judaic Studies but also to an identifiable increase in the quality of the curriculum.”

CURRENT STATUS

Community Day School retained the two teachers of Hebrew and Judaic Studies even after the Covenant grant ended, and all of the innovations supported by the Covenant grant remain in place. Robert Berk says that there is still room for growth, but he is clear that the Covenant grant had a very significant impact on the direction of the school.

In 2010, The Covenant Foundation funded a pilot at Community Day School that employs internet-based learning programs and measurement tools in partnership with Global Kids, a nonprofit educational organization that runs online leadership programming. School administrators credit the program with helping the school to compete with other schools for students and “to reestablish it as an anchor of the Jewish community.”

A new head of school with significant day school leadership experience began work in July 2013.
Creating Community and Connections
Reflections by Susan Tecktiel on Camp Yofi: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism

We just finished our eighth year and our tenth session, and it’s really amazing to see how the program has grown. The families have formed this very tight-knit community where they get together over the year, and they have a Google group. When one family is having some kind of an issue, the support that pours out is really incredible. When all the parents were introducing themselves in the first session this year, one of them said, “Life exists between Yofi.”

We have kids from all over the spectrum of autism, and families from all over the spectrum religiously. So you can have a woman in a shetel and long sleeves sitting next to a woman in a tank top who has not been in a synagogue in five years, yet they are so connected because they both have children with autism and they both know what it is like. You look at those two women talking and you know that had it not been for Yofi, their paths would not have crossed. And these connections form so quickly.

The other thing Camp Yofi has done is that it has helped families become more connected to Judaism, because they had a positive experience at Yofi and it renewed them. They find a piece to take home with them.

Something new we did this year was to have a video conference with new families and returning families before camp started. It was so great watching the kids get on and wave to each other, and new parents could ask other families, “What can I expect?” We’re now working out the logistics of doing a call once a month or so. We want to do different things with it, such as have a call at Hanukkah time with our song leader where everyone sings and lights candles together, just to continue the support and connection through the year. We want to do this because we’re able to make this huge impact, but then some of the families go home to communities where they’re not included and they don’t have a place. So we want to find ways to continue the connection, and this might be a way to do it.

For the siblings, to be in a room with other kids who understand them and are Jewish is so powerful. We give the siblings a special lunch where they can talk about what they like about having a sibling with autism and what’s hard, and share strategies with each other. Just giving them that formal forum to talk is so powerful, just to let them know that they’re not alone. I often say that while obviously Yofi is for the kids with autism – they get to do things there that they wouldn’t do anywhere else – really I think it’s for the parents and the siblings. Because the support they get, the respite, the family time – to be able to take your family on a boat because you have a counselor with you – it’s so freeing. It allows them to do things and to have opportunities that they wouldn’t be able to do in a Jewish way anywhere else. At the end of the summer, I really feel as though I’ve helped to create a sacred community, that I’ve facilitated these friendships and relationships that would never have occurred otherwise. It’s such a short program – just five days - but the impact is incredible.
Camp Yofi: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism*

**Organization:** Camp Ramah Dorom  
**Grant Year:** 2005  
**Project Director:** Loren Sykes  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $142,300  
**Website:** www.ramahdarom.org  
**Tags:** Creating Community and Connections • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

When Camp *Yofi* was founded in 2005 with the goal of welcoming children with autism and their families into the Jewish community, it filled a unique role. Housed at Camp Ramah Darom in the Georgia mountains, Camp Yofi was the first institution to provide a positive Jewish camping experience for children with autism and their families, which in turn increased the families’ sense of inclusion in Jewish life.

Modeled after the Ramah family camp, but with increased staff support, the camp experience includes Jewish educational programs, curricula, and spiritual nourishment through programming for each family member — parents, siblings, and children with autism — as well as facilitated activities for families as a whole. Children with autism are each paired with a *chaver* (buddy) who accompanies them throughout their time at camp. Sibling activities enable brothers and sisters of children with special needs to connect both informally and through facilitated discussions. Activities for parents focus on community building, Jewish learning, autism support, and enabling time for much needed respite.

Approximately 120 families have attended Camp Yofi since it began. Between 15 and 20 families attend each year. Participant families spanned (and continue to span) a range of religious identifications, from very secular to very religious.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Affirmation of the widespread need for such a program was swift: even before the first session, Camp Yofi received inquiries from across the United States, as well as from South Africa and Israel. The camp was completely full within two weeks of announcing the program. A waiting list was created because interest from potential participants exceeded the camp’s capacity, which was limited to 20 families.

- A strong sense of community has been created among the participants, many of whom return year after year. One summer, six families joined together to support their children with autism in having a *b’nai mitzvah* ceremony at camp. The sense of community extends beyond the five days: outside of camp, parents provide emotional support for one another and share their knowledge of special needs resources.

- The impact of Camp Yofi has been felt beyond the camp community. Families who previously felt excluded are now part of a vibrant Jewish community. Participants have returned to their home communities empowered to get involved. Some families have advocated for their increased integration into existing congregations and organizations. Others have founded synagogues in their home communities.

- The experience of Camp Yofi has also deeply affected the staff. In 2011, there were a total of 60 staff members. Some senior staff members are staff and graduate students from Nova Southeastern University and others work as special education teachers during the school year. Many of the *chaverim* have little or no experience working with children with special needs, but are trained by the autism experts on the staff. They, too, feel a strong sense of community as a result of their participation. A number of staff members...
have pursued careers in the special education field as a result of their work at Camp Yofi.

- Camp Yofi has served as a model for similar programs. Over the years, the Director has received many inquiries from individuals seeking advice about how to start camp programs for children with special needs. In response, camp leaders secured funding from The Marcus Foundation to create a step-by-step manual based on the experience of developing the program. A conference – attended by representatives from 30 Jewish and non-Jewish camps - was held in conjunction with the release of the manual. The Camp Yofi program has now been adapted for use at Camp Ramah in the Poconos and in Ojai, with both camps serving populations of families who have children with special needs more broadly.

- The leadership of Camp Yofi remains committed to learning through documentation and evaluation. The evaluation and self-reporting that were facilitated by The Covenant Foundation grants process have been important to the development of the program. Camp leaders have continued the reflective process by completing an annual internal evaluation that includes feedback from the staff, parents, and siblings.

**LEADERSHIP**

Camp Yofi was created based on a series of synergies among individuals connected to Camp Ramah Darom. The Executive Director of Camp Ramah Darom, Rabbi Loren Sykes, first recognized the need for a program that would serve members of this population when a family with several autistic children partici-

pated in the annual family camp. Rabbi Sykes worked with Susan Tecktiel, a veteran Jewish day school teacher, to create the program for Camp Yofi. Tecktiel has served as Yofi’s Director since it was founded. A Camp Ramah Darom board member was responsible for facilitating a partnership between Camp Yofi and Nova Southeastern University, an institution well respected for its programs and expertise in the field of autism. Dr. Susan Kabot, the director of Clinical Services at the Mailman Segal Institute of Nova Southeastern University in Florida, was brought in to help develop the program and to serve as the camp's special needs coordinator. Today, Susan Tecktiel and Dr. Susan Kabot continue to run the program together. Rabbi Loren Sykes (who was awarded the 2006 Covenant Award) has since made aliya with his family and is the CEO of The Shirley & Jacob Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center for Conservative Judaism of USCJ.

**FUNDING**

The Barry and Judy Silverman Foundation and the Foundation for Jewish Camping initially funded Camp Yofi. After the camp's first year, The Covenant Foundation awarded Camp Yofi a three-year Signature Grant. With additional funding from the Marcus Foundation, spring sessions were added in 2007 and 2008 to accommodate an additional 25 families who had been wait-listed.

The Covenant Foundation was at the forefront of recognizing the need for communal outreach to members of the Jewish special needs population. Without the support of The Covenant Foundation, the camp could not have continued beyond its first year. The funding paid for scholarships and enabled participants’ costs to be heavily subsidized. Both Camp Yofi and Ramah Darom benefited from the prestige of the grant: “Darom is the newest Ramah camp, and the grant put us on the map and identified us as special,” the Director explained.

Despite the communal recognition of the ongoing importance of the program, the current funding does not meet the financial needs of the target families and therefore attendance has declined since 2010 when only 14 families attended. The camp’s capacity is 20 families. According to the director, the location of Camp Yofi poses a significant logistical and financial barrier to participation. Every family must either drive a long distance or fly to camp, both of which can be cost prohibitive and also challenging for families with autistic children.
Jewish in America: A Conversation

Organization: Jewish Week
Grant Year: 2003
Project Director: Gary Rosenblatt
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $25,000
Website: http://the-conversation.org/
Tags: Creating Community and Connections

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the development of a national retreat, known as “The Conversation,” centered on discussion of what it means to be Jewish in America today and connected issues. The two-day retreat has no planned outcomes, agenda, or panelists, but instead is facilitated through “Open Space Technology.” Using the Open Space Technology facilitation method allows people to plan their own programming by choosing discussion topics and then breaking off into groups depending on personal interests. Members of each group take notes on what they discuss and share their notes so that everyone knows what was discussed in every group.

PARTICIPANTS

A varied cross section of leaders in the American Jewish Community. Ninety attendees were expected in the first year but 15 were unable to attend due to extreme weather conditions.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• More than 400 people have participated since the first cohort.

• The summaries of all of the discussions have been collected in an archive.

• The participants offer high evaluations of the program with 80-90 percent calling it “excellent.”

• “The Conversation” has been credited with influencing the creation of a number of external projects, including the Repair the World organization, The Great Schlep (Sarah Silverman’s viral video campaign in support of Obama ’08), and a Jewish music festival.

• A network of leaders has been created. Many of the past participants continue to keep in touch as well as to work together on various projects.

• The Open Space Technology method has also been incorporated into elements of other Jewish conferences and gatherings.

• “The Conversation” has been held each year since 2005 at the Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisertown, Maryland. In 2011, UJA-Federation of New York supported an additional Conversation of New Yorkers also held at Pearlstone.

CURRENT STATUS

“The Conversation” continues annually and is now in its seventh year. It has been scaled back to approximately 50 participants each year to ensure that everyone in attendance is able to meet and talk with one another. Since 2010 an annual reunion has been organized for all past participants.
**Kehilliyot Da’at: A CoP Meta Community for Jewish Professionals**

**Organization:** Knowledge Communities

**Grant Year:** 2006

**Project Director:** Naava Frank

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $195,000

**Website:** [http://kehilliyotwelcome.wikispaces.com/](http://kehilliyotwelcome.wikispaces.com/)

**Tags:** Creating Community and Connections • Professional Development

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the training of Jewish educators and communal professionals to facilitate their own communities of practice in the national Jewish umbrella organizations where they are already serving in key roles.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Jewish educators and communal professionals.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- *Kehilliyot Da’at* successfully trained a cohort of participants to facilitate and grow communities of practice in their own communities or institutions.

- Many of the technology tools and facilitation methods that *Kehilliyot Da’at* used for remote meetings have filtered into the participants’ organizations.

- *Kehilliyot Da’at* helped to popularize communities of practice within the larger field. For example, its influence can be seen in the *Darim* Online Boot Camp, a meta-community at Yeshiva University, and the Jim Joseph Foundation Fellows Program.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The project is not currently running but the community stays in touch through a private Google group and wiki.
Unity Program: *Shma/Istima’a Program*

**Organization:** Abraham’s Vision  
**Grant Year:** 2005  
**Project Directors:** Aaron Tapper and Dov Lerea  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $67,000  
**Website:** [http://www.abrahamsvision.org/programs/unity-program.html](http://www.abrahamsvision.org/programs/unity-program.html)  
**Tags:** Creating Community and Connections • Resources for the Field

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the creation of a program that brought Jewish and Muslim students together to explore and learn about their individual and group identities. The two-semester course was taught at one Muslim and one Jewish private high school in New York City. Grant dollars supported the creation of a curriculum that included guest speakers, field trips, and inter-school meetings. The class met three days a week in each school and was co-taught by one Muslim and one Jewish teacher.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Jewish and Muslim students at two private high schools in New York City.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The course ran for three years.
- The curriculum has been honed and now includes 115 lessons in 10 chapters.
- Since the program started in 2005, 210 students have been involved.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The *Shma/Istima’a* curriculum is now being used primarily in Jewish and Muslim supplementary schools and with a slightly younger target audience. Abraham’s Vision sought to replicate the model in the San Francisco Bay Area but was unable to find funding and/or school partners.
Ziv Partners in Tzedakah Program

Organization: Ziv Tzedakah Fund, Inc.
Grant Year: 2000
Project Director: Naomi Eisenberger
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $65,000
Websites: http://www.goodpeoplefund.org
http://www.mitzvahheroesfund.org
Tags: Creating Community and Connections

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the production of a series of two-day conferences that helped build “mitzvah-oriented communities” by facilitating personal interactions with “Mitzvah Heroes” (ordinary people who saw problems in the world and were dedicated to solving those problems). The goal was to inspire community members to brainstorm about how to make similar work happen in their own communities. Grant dollars supported conferences in three small Jewish communities (including Raleigh, North Carolina, and Providence, Rhode Island). Speakers included Danny Siegel, the founder of the organization, as well as other Mitzvah Heroes, who spoke about programs they created in the fields of eldercare, hunger, and social services. Community leaders were urged to discuss how they could adopt similar programs.

PARTICIPANTS

The target audiences for the conferences were the general public, rabbis, Jewish educators, directors of synagogue schools, lay leaders, funders, and students 5th grade and older.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The conference introduced funders to the idea of giving to small grassroots programs.

• Some funders who attended the conference subsequently funded small programs as a result of their participation.

CURRENT STATUS

When the founder left, the organization closed. The lone staff person, Naomi Eisenberger, went on to create The Good People Fund, which has the same mission and model as Ziv Partners. Another organization, Mitzvah Heroes Fund, Inc., was established by a number of Hasidei Ziv, students of Danny Siegel and followers of and contributors to the Ziv Tzedakah Fund.
think [creating new Jewish texts] is a really good description of what we’re trying to do. These days we’re increasingly creating products that are intended to be shared on the web. We’ve felt and continue to feel that this medium, and virtual communication as a whole, is being under-tapped for its possibilities for making art. And that’s one of the main things we’ve tried to accomplish in working with young people—try and figure out how they are using online tools to communicate and try and harness those tools to create coherent artistic expressions in a form that feels authentic and native to the maker. This is supported by all kinds of data showing that most people who view and consume media on the internet also create, and that’s most true for this age group of 18-29. So it has been really exciting to see what kinds of forms people in this age group can come up with. Obviously, Jews are not unique to this phenomenon. However, one of the things that we’ve been interested in doing lately is collaborating with scholars to ask, “What can be Jewish about the way these tools are used?”

One scholar shared a theory with me that the printing press created all of these revolutions in Jewish thought and the way that Jews looked at textual analysis. And what’s happening now is analogous in some ways. The technology is forcing people to look at questions of ownership and questions of cultural transmission, to think of ways that we look at texts and share texts and learn from texts. And texts can be brought into multimedia through video and photo stills and images. Increasingly, we’ve got these phenomenal archival resources available to us to organize and remix and communicate with. And that’s very exciting in the Jewish world, and also underutilized. There’s been a lot of expenditure of money and energy in digitizing the Jewish record from genealogy to literature to photos, and increasingly film. Now, we’re at this moment when we can unlock all of that and remix it and make it relevant.

On the NJFP.org website, we have a project called “Half-Remembered Stories.” One is a “choose your own adventure” story, like what we read as kids. The maker of the project researched her own family story, so visitors navigate through history as her great-grandmother. But only one thread is what actually happened, and there’s a video at the end that shows the factual history. The other threads are ones that the filmmaker researched about decisions Jews were faced with during the 20th century and how they responded to those decisions. So it’s an amazing combination of deep historical research and personal expression. And the third benefit is that it’s very sharable: it’s a game you can play, so this is an example of documentary gaming, which is a completely new form.

Instead of thinking about filmmaking as one person communicating with many people, it really becomes a joint community endeavor. You’re constantly thinking about questions of collaboration and questions of education, such as, “How do I research and what’s my responsibility as a researcher in terms of factual accuracy?” You think about all of these questions of individual roles vs. community responsibility and community sharing. Covenant has been uniquely forward thinking in embracing art as a way to explore these kinds of questions, and I’m very grateful for that.
**New Jewish Filmmaker Project**

**Organization:** San Francisco Jewish Film Festival  
**Grant Year:** 2002  
**Project Director:** Samuel Ball  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $60,000  
**Website:** [http://njfp.wordpress.com](http://njfp.wordpress.com)  
**Tags:** New Jewish “Texts” • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The New Jewish Filmmaking Project (NJFP), produced by a non-profit production company Citizen Film, has been at the forefront of efforts to engage the next generation of Jews through the teen-friendly medium of film. NJFP uses films and filmmaking to inspire teens to explore their Jewish identities, engage increasing numbers of teens in Jewish communal life, and catalyze an intergenerational dialogue about what it means to be Jewish in America. Since NJFP was founded in 2002, more than 50 emerging Jewish storytellers/filmmakers ages 15 to 25 have collaborated with a team of documentarians to create short films based on their personal stories. During the year-long program, 8-12 participants become a part of a collective filmmaking experience, working with a community of independent filmmakers to reflect on the meaning and relevance of their Jewish identities and transform their understanding into cinematic art. NJFP provides participants with training and mentoring from experts in the documentary field, enabling young filmmakers to experience the entire filmmaking process, including writing, producing, shooting, directing, editing, promoting, and showing their work. The program has purposefully engaged participants with diverse backgrounds, such as Jews of color, recent Russian émigrés, first generation Americans, Israelis, and many participants who have a non-Jewish parent.

The program has adapted to the changing ways in which people consume media, embracing new storytelling technologies. Film screenings were once the most significant form of publicity for the program. Today, audiences are much broader. In addition to screenings, participants promote their projects using online storytelling techniques such as multimedia exhibitions, blogging, and social networks. Similarly, when the project was founded, training the participants in filmmaking technology was a primary aspect of the curriculum. With advances in technology, filmmaking has become increasingly accessible, and participants are entering the program with extensive familiarity with the medium. As a result, a larger percentage of the project is now dedicated to exploring participants’ identities with the help of an academic advisor whose scholarship focuses on Jewish culture.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- More than 50 films have been created and curriculum guides were created for 11 of those films.
- The project has had local, national, and international exposure. Through a partnership with the local public television affiliate, approximately 40,000 viewers have been exposed
to the young filmmakers’ work. Their films have also been screened at more than 1,000 high schools across the country. An independent theater in Sacramento recently organized an event with a screening of an NJFP film and a post-screening gathering. Similar events regularly occur around the country, with screenings at Jewish and secular film festivals, Jewish museums, public libraries, colleges, public high schools, Jewish summer camps, community centers, and online. NJFP films have appeared on local television in the San Francisco Bay Area through PBS and a CBS affiliate.

- The project has reached secular audiences at film festivals such as the San Francisco International Film Festival and the Vail Valley Film Festival. NJFP has received positive reviews and garnered attention at international forums such as the 2008 Saint-Petersburg International Youth Film Festival in Russia and the International Public Television Conference. In 2010, the Warsaw Cinematheque hosted a two hour retrospective of NJFP shorts and a similar retrospective took place at the JCC of Mexico City.

- In 2010, NJFP launched an online, interactive multimedia presentation on the theme “Half-Remembered Stories,” including 50 short films and 11 interactive digital documentaries. Online dissemination has resulted in some unexpectedly broad exposure. For example, a young filmmaker, who is of mixed Chinese American and Jewish American heritage, created a film about her Jewish grandmother’s teenage years in a small town in the Czech Republic. In the process of researching a travel story, a reporter from the largest Czech national newspaper Googled the small town and came across the filmmaker’s video. Information about the film was published in a Czech newspaper article and the young filmmaker found herself in email dialogue with people in the Czech Republic who are interested in learning about the hidden Jewish history of their town. This is “an example of the quality of the storytelling meeting the power of the technology to connect people,” Samuel Ball, the Project Director, explained.

- Ball has had ample opportunities to share what he has learned. He regularly receives queries from people who are interested in starting similar programs, and has consulted with BIMA, Brandeis University’s summer arts institute for high school students.

- The influence of the experiences has reverberated in participants’ lives. Some have gone on to careers as filmmakers. Several alumni earned undergraduate degrees in film and a number of alumni have returned to work in a professional capacity for Citizen Film. One alumna has since become a rabbi. This is particularly significant because, before the experience of self-reflection facilitated by NJFP, that alumna was not at all connected to her Jewish identity.

LEADERSHIP

Documentary filmmaker Sam Ball founded NJFP when he was the Associate Director of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. Initial funding was secured through the Joshua Venture Fellowship for Young Jewish Social Entrepreneurs, which provided funding to launch NJFP and professional development for the project’s founder.

Today, Ball continues to direct NJFP, which is produced by his production company, Citizen Film. Sophie Constantinou, co-founder of Citizen Film, co-directs NJFP with Ball. Kate Stilley Steiner, who heads the editorial arm of Citizen Film, is the supervising editor of NJFP.

Since 2009, an academic advisor, Dr. Jeremy Dauber, has been brought in to enrich NJFP’s Jewish educational content. Dauber is the Director of the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies at Columbia University and the Atran Associate Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture in the Department of Germanic Languages at Columbia University. With Dauber’s guidance, participants are better able to research their family histories within the context of Jewish history, drawing on more sophisticated Jewish historical and literary sources.

FUNDING

Because the project relies primarily on short-term grants, fundraising remains an ongoing challenge. Much of the Directors’ time is spent fundraising. Since it was founded, NJFP has raised over one million dollars. Along with the initial funding from the Joshua Venture Fellowship, The Covenant Foundation was one of NJFP’s earliest supporters, awarding the project a Signature Grant in 2002.
More recently, the program received an additional grant from The Covenant Foundation to create digital platforms to deliver films and curriculum guides, enabling teachers to use films as educational tools.

The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties has been an ongoing source of support to the project. The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund and the Natan Fund have also supported the project over the years. In 2009, the Jim Joseph Foundation provided funding to establish an NJFP alumni program: the New Media Alumni Initiative.

The early funding from national Jewish foundations gave the project credibility within the Jewish philanthropic world. Funding from The Covenant Foundation also gave the project legitimacy as a Jewish educational endeavor. The Covenant Foundation’s willingness to invest in the project in its early stages enabled NJFP to refine its goals and to strategize about how to best evaluate its work. Influenced by The Covenant Foundation's evaluation process, NJFP works with an independent evaluator each year to qualitatively assess the program’s impact, on both the participants and the audiences. Additionally, online views and in-person audience numbers are collected.

The Covenant Foundation has proven to be a valuable resource for networking for the project. NJFP is currently working on a project with the Foundation for Jewish Culture as a result of a connection made through the Foundation.
View from the Balcony*  

Organization: Eldridge Street Project  
Grant Year: 2002  
Project Director: Hana Iverson  
Type of Grant: Signature  
Grant Amount: $15,000  
Website: http://www.eldridgestreet.org/  
Tags: New Jewish “Texts” • Resources for the Field

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

View from the Balcony was a multimedia installation at the Eldridge Street Synagogue in New York City. The synagogue was the first great house of worship built in America by Jews from Eastern Europe in 1887; it now acts as a historical site and museum. Using the theme of memory, the installation, exhibited from June 2000 through December 2003, incorporated writings and photographs inspired by the synagogue. The installation was envisioned as a way to link the Lower East Side to Eastern Europe, reconnecting the diaspora back to its roots, using oral storytelling, artifacts, photographs, short video segments, and maps. Public programs were organized in conjunction with the exhibition, including a poetry slam and several storytelling events at which participants’ stories and memories were collected and subsequently integrated into the View from the Balcony website.

The Project’s title – “View from the Balcony” – refers to the gender-segregated seating arrangements of the Orthodox synagogue in which women were seated in the balcony, separated from the men in the sanctuary below. This motif serves as a metaphor for the geographic dispersion of the Jewish people who were immigrants in America, separated from their countries of origin.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The Project was viewed by more than 30,000 visitors to the Museum at Eldridge Street.

• Based on her work on View from the Balcony, Iverson was recruited to be the Director of the New Media Interdisciplinary Concentration in the School of Communications and Theater at Temple University. During her three-year appointment, Iverson created an educational initiative called Neighborhood Narratives, which she developed based on her experience creating View from the Balcony. Neighborhood Narratives helps people to reflect on their ideas about place, and draws upon innovative ways to integrate technology with public art. Like View from the Balcony, Neighborhood Narratives uses multimedia to illustrate the ways in which individuals understand their identities as both locally and globally mediated.

• Iverson subsequently took the Neighborhood Narratives curriculum to the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Neighborhood Narratives is now an international, networked learning environment connecting students in the United States with students in Rome, London, and Tokyo. Using cell phones, GPS, mobile recording devices, and social network games, students virtually explore neighborhoods around the world by creating walking audio tours, capturing videos and photographs, producing podcasts, and crafting public art installations. To date, 350 students have participated in the Neighborhood Narratives program.

• Another of Iverson’s works also draws upon ideas she developed while creating View from the Balcony. “Cross/Walks: Weaving Fabric Row” is an art installation and project that constructs a portrait of South Philadelphia’s Fabric Row using multimedia to “capture the subtle connections and diverse histories of the families, friends, patrons, and visitors.”

• Iverson has been invited to speak about her work on numerous occasions. For example, she was one of 26 speakers invited from 11 countries to the MediaCity conference at Bauhaus-University, Weimar. Based on that talk, Iverson published a
In the many talks Iverson has given, she frequently discusses the theoretical foundations of her work, and shows video from View from the Balcony to illustrate the development of her thinking.

**LEADERSHIP**

The Project was conceived of and executed by Hana Iverson, a multimedia artist with a background in performance, photography, and experimental video. Iverson is currently the Visiting Scholar with the Institute for Women and Art, and on the faculty of the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

**FUNDING**

In addition to receiving funding from The Covenant Foundation, Iverson was awarded a fellowship from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. She also received a grant as a New York Foundation Artist-in-the-Schools in 2003. A small amount of additional funding came from private donations.
**Avoda: Objects of the Spirit**

**Organization:** University of Southern California, School of Fine Arts, and the USC Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life

**Grant Year:** 2000

**Project Director:** Carol Brennglass Spinner

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $180,000


**Tags:** New Jewish “Texts” • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the creation of a program combining the exhibition of a teaching artist (Toby Kahn) with workshops for teens and young adults in nontraditional locations. The goal of the program was to use ritual objects to help deepen Jewish understanding and practice. Participants were asked to make ritual objects that had meaning to them. The exhibition and workshops were designed on the premise that Jewish learning is at its best when grounded in and connected to personal experience.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The original target audience was college-age students. As the project progressed, however, opportunities emerged to reach middle school and high school-age students, as well as older adults.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Nearly 50,000 individuals attended either the exhibition and/or the workshops. One million more people were exposed to the project through media coverage (television interviews, newspaper articles, and radio segments).

- The project produced 22 museum or gallery shows in 19 American cities, created an associated series of 12 object-centered Discovery Cards, helped to build the capacity of host institutions across the country, and outlined a curriculum now known as Ritual Arts.

- *Avoda* co-published *Objects of the Spirit: Ritual and the Art of Toby Kahn*. The book led to the curation of two major museum shows.

- *Avoda* has trained a whole cadre of educators and students in arts-based learning.

- After 9/11, UJA-Federation of New York invited *Avoda* to develop an innovative arts-based wellness program [based on the Objects of the Spirit workshops] for young people from high schools in lower Manhattan.

- NYU asked *Avoda* to organize its Jewish film festival, leading to the creation of the Reel Learnings program, combining the best student films with Jewish educational curriculum.

- Since 2006, *Avoda* has expanded into the educational marketplace with a number of arts-based learning products. In addition, *Avoda* has expanded into training teachers, administrators, and organizations on how to integrate the arts into their schools and classrooms.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The program continued past the original grant period, but eventually ended. While the program itself is no longer running, programmatic offshoots and inspirations continue on.
Embodying Witness: Art and Learning in Response to Genocide

Organization: Liz Lerman Dance Exchange  
Grant Year: 2006  
Project Director: Jon Borstel  
Type of Grant: Signature  
Grant Amount: $250,000  
Website: http://www.danceexchange.org/projects/small-dances-about-big-ideas  
Tags: New Jewish “Texts”

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded the development of an educational engagement program for Liz Lerman’s *Small Dances About Big Ideas*. The original production of *Small Dances About Big Ideas* was developed in partnership with Harvard Law School and Facing History and Ourselves. It was commissioned to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials, and focused on the capacity of the legal system to pass judgment in the aftermath of genocide. By adding the educational engagement component including Facing History and Ourselves’ study guide *Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention*, the project provided explicit opportunities for audiences to reflect on their role as citizens in a world where atrocities still occur. Educator trainings took place in six cities: New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Burlington, and Ann Arbor.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Participants included audiences of diverse ages and backgrounds, along with educators of middle and high school students.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- From 2006-2011, approximately 500 teachers participated in workshops conducted by both the Dance Exchange and Facing History and Ourselves
- Facing History and Ourselves continues to use the *Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention* study guide in its regional and national workshops.

**CURRENT STATUS**

The project no longer exists. The nature of the organization is to create and perform theatrical works that have a limited lifespan of two to six years. This particular piece continues to be performed in venues across the country.
Living Museum Project

Organization: Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust
Grant Year: 2005
Project Director: Ivy Barsky
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $139,530
Website: http://www.mjhnyc.org/findex.html
Tags: New Jewish “Texts” • Resources for the Field • Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the expansion of the Living Museum Project in which Jewish 5th and 6th grade students learn about their personal histories by uncovering and examining family heirlooms. After identifying their own artifacts and conducting interviews with family members, students create a group exhibition (physical, or physical and online) to showcase the artifacts and explain their significance. Grant dollars supported a series of two- to three-day Living Museum professional development seminars for Jewish educators to learn how to implement the program in their own classrooms. The grant also supported the creation of the Living Museum website.

PARTICIPANTS

Students (primarily 5th and 6th grade) and educators from schools across the spectrum of Jewish denominations.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Since 2006, Living Museum has trained an estimated 150-200 educators from across the United States and Canada.

• The Living Museum website currently hosts 44 online exhibits representing the contributions of 44 classes or student groups.

• The grant also supported a robust online Teachers’ Guide and project management dashboard, as well as materials for students and parents. That technology investment allows anyone to participate to this day.

CURRENT STATUS

No in-person trainings are currently being held. People are still taking part in the program through the website and the online training and teaching resources. The technology platform is a potential resource for other ‘virtual museum’ projects but it has only been used for this particular project to-date.
The Jewish Lens: Exploring Jewish Values and Community through Photography (2007); Mid-West Regional Expansion (2010-11)*

Organization: The Jewish Lens  
Grant Year: 2007  
Project Director: Zion Ozeri  
Type of Grant: Signature, Expansion  
Grant Amount: $120,000 (Signature, 2007), $25,000 (Mid-West Regional Expansion, 2010-2011)  
Website: http://www.jewishlens.com/  
Tags: New Directions for the Field • Resources for the Field • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Jewish Lens (TJL) was established in 2004 as a photography-based curriculum for middle and high school students in Jewish educational settings. It includes accompanying training programs for the educators implementing the TJL curriculum. TJL seeks to make Judaism meaningful to young people by using images – including ones the students create – as a vehicle for learning about the Jewish community, values, and identity. One of the program’s signature elements is a concluding exhibition of the students’ photographic work.

With Covenant Signature funding, TJL piloted the “Community-Wide Initiative” to partner with entire communities — as opposed to individual organizations — through local Central Agencies for Jewish Education. The Covenant Expansion funding helped TJL extend this approach to Milwaukee/Madison in 2010 and to Minneapolis/St. Paul and St. Louis in 2011.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• Over the past decade, TJL has grown from a basic curriculum offered to individual schools to what Founder and Creative Director Zion Ozeri calls a “methodology” that is a “hands-on, empowering, reflective, emotional learning experience.” Ozeri credits The Covenant Foundation grants, consulting, and connections with providing the strong base and replicable models of experiential learning that have enabled TJL to reach new audiences.

• Critical innovations that have enhanced and expanded the TJL model include the following: a decentralized professional structure for the Community-Wide initiative involving TJL-trained local staff; the incorporation of the TJL approach into Israel trips; and an emphasis on evaluation which facilitated learnings for TJL about how to navigate the challenges faced by a national organization working on the local level. In addition, TJL broadened its reach by making its curriculum, teacher training program, and resources available through its website, which serves as a low-cost hub for posting photographs, conveying learning management tools, and providing training to educators.

• TJL recently announced its partnership with The Center for Educational Technology (CET) in Israel which will provide TJL with a new online, interactive platform for teacher training and professional development. This partnership will enable TJL’s curriculum to be used by both Israeli and U.S. Schools.

• TJL is also adapting its curriculum for use in other Jewish contexts around the world, creating new cross-cultural opportunities. Participating students from Hungary who traveled to Israel have been invited to exhibit their projects at New York University, and a group of students from Uzbekistan is planning to come to the United States to work with TJL and exhibit their own photos and texts.
• As part of its larger vision, The Jewish Lens is looking to expand beyond the middle and high school years – and even beyond the Jewish world. This expansion currently includes the following: TJL is being integrated into adult educational programs at the Park Avenue Synagogue; six public schools in New York City are now using “The Diversity Lens;” and the program has been adapted to the college setting and implemented at the University of Miami, where Zion Ozeri will be teaching a mini-semester college credit course which will also be offered online.

• Since its inception, TJL has been integrated into the curricula at nearly 250 schools in the United States – one-third of which are day schools and two-thirds supplementary schools—reaching an estimated 10,000 students. In Milwaukee and Madison, 16 institutions have participated and approximately 225 students were impacted. In Minneapolis/St. Paul, 265 students have participated from seven schools; and four schools with 107 students have taken part in the program in St. Louis. Another 42 Israeli students have participated through a St. Louis school partnership.

• In Israel, TJL has been implemented in 50 schools and has reached approximately 20,000 Israeli students.

LEADERSHIP

The Jewish Lens was founded by current Chair of the Board of the UJA-Federation of New York Alisa Doctoroff and Zion Ozeri, an accomplished photographer who has exhibited throughout the world. Ozeri now serves as a Board Member and the TJL’s Artistic Director (on a volunteer basis). Ozeri was one of three recipients of the 2013 Covenant Award, among the highest honors in the field of Jewish education, for his innovation in and impact on Jewish education. The Jewish Lens has a 10 member Board of Directors and an advisory board comprised of professors, rabbis, and other professionals in Jewish education.

FUNDING

Throughout its existence, TJL has received additional funding from individual donors, the Board of Directors, and the UJA-Federation of New York, which most recently helped the organization to connect select Israeli schools to North American institutions.

Keren Karev, the Israeli wing of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, supported TJL’s Israel expansion by funding program operations and a portion of teachers’ salaries, and by translating lesson plans into Hebrew. The Karev Program for Educational Involvement took the Israeli model a step further, publicizing and implementing TJL in schools, and providing some of its own teachers to lead classes.

In North America, TJL receives revenue from the sale of curricular materials to schools and from fees for trainings; it also benefits from the subsidies provided by central agencies to participating organizations in their communities.
Welcome to the *Talmud!* (A Musical Tale)

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<td>Grant Year:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Director:</td>
<td>Judith Z. Abrams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tags:</td>
<td>New Jewish “Texts” • Resources for the Field</td>
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant supported the completion of a musical theater production that aimed to communicate that the *Talmud* can be easily accessible and enjoyable. The plot centered on a young girl, Rachel, who struggles to motivate herself for her *Bat Mitzvah* until the magical intervention of a great Medieval *Talmud* commentator helps her discover the *Talmud’s* relevance to her own life.

**PARTICIPANTS**

Members of the larger Jewish community of learners (including day schools) and a cast of 20.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- The show was staged four times in Houston to diverse, standing-room-only crowds that included individuals from across the spectrum of Jewish life.

- Accompanying educational materials were produced to be used either as a curriculum or to aid performers’ character development.

- The script of “Welcome to the *Talmud! (A Musical Tale)*” was performed in an off-Broadway reading.

- The libretto for “Welcome to the *Talmud! (A Musical Tale)*” was published.

- Hundreds of DVD recordings of the show have been distributed.

- Sample songs from the production are available for free download on the website, as is the script; DVDs are available for order and there’s a CD of the show’s instrumental music designed for performances.

- *A Talmud Tale: A Musical from Rabbi Judith Abrams* was published by Ben Yehuda Press in 2010.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Despite the show’s positive reception, the piece is not currently being performed because the producer lacks funding and is unsure how to market it.
The Covenant funded us at what was a critical time of moving from the vision to implementing the vision and getting moving with it. This program is part of our attempt to create a larger impact on Jewish life. My goal was never to run a national organization, but rather to create a new model for how the Jewish community would understand itself. Because every congregation sees itself as its own entity – it’s like the Tower of Babel, with every synagogue and every movement creating its own curriculum and doing its own thing.

So we got tired of not addressing this root problem and we created this model of the itinerant educator. I locked a group of trans-denominational educators in a room for a year and said don’t come out until you can agree on what every Jewish child needs to know in every grade. By the end of two years, we had a 5,000-page lesson plan by lesson plan curriculum. It has been through a number of evaluations and has been tweaked, but the core is very solid. We now have over 3,000 kids in 13 states who are studying together on the same page every Sunday morning.

We started with two Fellows and 12 congregations in four states, and now we have nine Fellows in 77 congregations: one third are Conservative; 60% are Reform; and a few are either from other denominations or are independent. We were trying to break down the barriers and prove that Conservative and Reform are able to work together. But we had to get through a lot of barriers and boundaries put up by professionals and lay people who say, “Our congregation is the best, our school is the best, join us.” But we’ve started to break through that. One of our congregations is the biggest Conservative congregation in Houston. And when people asked that rabbi, “Why would you use this curriculum when you have so many resources of your own?” he told them, “Because we have the same problems as the small congregations, only magnified. We have to hire even more teachers, people willing to give that time. And if we can relieve them of the burden of creating their own curriculum, which is not something they’re trained to do, then that person can spend more time on being a great teacher.”

So our system has proven itself to be a winner, but my biggest frustration is that we haven’t been able to get leaders, lay and professional, in other parts of the country to recognize that it’s not because we’re in the South that it’s working so well; it’s because it’s a good system. Beyond the curriculum, we also have an arts and culture piece, an itinerant rabbi, a museum division, and a community engagement and social justice department. We’ve brought Israeli artists and musicians to the congregations we work with, which has been enormously successful. So kids in these small towns are getting access to the same experiences they would have in a large congregation. We say we’ve created a 13-state congregation, with a rabbi and an education department and opportunities for social action in their communities. We’ve created a system where communities have access to opportunities that they could never access on their own. We’re reversing the mentality of “if you want it, find it yourself,” to say “if you want it, tell us, and we’ll come bring it to you.”
Sunday in the South: The Itinerate Education Program*

Organization: Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life
Grant Year: 2004
Project Director: Macy B. Hart
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $163,623
Website: http://www.isjl.org/education/index.html
Tags: Resources for the Field • Professional Development • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sunday in the South, the pilot educational program of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL), is a multifaceted approach to increasing Jewish literacy and improving congregational education in small, geographically isolated Jewish communities. In small Southern Jewish communities, volunteers (often parents or other lay people) frequently staff congregational schools. Volunteer teachers often work without any professional support and, in many cases, with limited Judaic backgrounds and pedagogical training. Sunday in the South gives these teachers the pedagogical tools and knowledge base to create meaningful Jewish educational experiences for their students. Participating communities are provided with a curriculum, ongoing support from ISJL's Educational Fellows (the itinerant educators), and the opportunity for teachers to attend an annual educational conference.

The five-year pilot program of Sunday in the South began with 10 communities in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi ranging in size from one to 640 students, and comprised of Reform, Conservative, and unaffiliated families. The curriculum was created in partnership with the Community Foundation for Jewish Education of Metropolitan Chicago and CAJE's Early Childhood Education Department. Representatives from Gratz College and the Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, as well as practitioners in the field, consulted on the creation of the curriculum. The curriculum consists of 30, two-hour lessons for each grade, including Hebrew instruction. Developmentally appropriate lesson plans have been developed for students from early childhood to high school. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning activities are provided for each lesson, which focus on 10 key content areas, as follows: community, culture, and symbols; God; Hebrew and prayer; Israel; Jewish history; holidays; lifecycle events; mitzvot; Jewish values; and Tanach.

Covenant grant dollars helped to increase the number of Educational Fellows, who spend two weekends a month traveling throughout the region, visiting participating communities to facilitate teacher training workshops, lead Shabbat and holiday services, and provide cultural and communal programming. Fellows also organize the annual education conference and recruit new communities. Communities that wish to participate are required to attend the educational training institute. In addition to orienting volunteers to the curriculum, the training also builds community among the Fellows.
RESULTS/IMPACT

- The pilot of Sunday in the South proved extremely successful and has since developed into the ISJL’s flagship educational program. Now in its seventh year, the program has grown to include 77 congregations in 13 states. There are currently more than 600 teachers using the ISJL curriculum to educate 3,036 students.

- More than 5,000 pages of curriculum and supplemental materials have now been developed for early childhood through 10th grade, along with a high school supplement. The curriculum contains information regarding the scope and sequence of the program, teacher training, and materials for each grade level. As a result of the success of the program, ISJL’s Education Department has developed into the largest division of the organization, with a budget of $2.3 million, representing slightly less than 50% of ISJL’s overall budget.

- The program is continuing to flourish and expand. It was described as “a mobile, Jewish version of Teach for America” in The Forward. ISJL was recognized as one of North America’s most innovative non-profit organizations by Slingshot, a resource guide for Jewish innovation.

LEADERSHIP

Macy B. Hart is ISJL’s founding director and served as the Project Director of the pilot educational program. For more than a decade, Hart has worked to improve cultural, educational, and religious opportunities for Jews in the South. Hart was awarded the Covenant Award in 1999.

Rachel Stern currently heads ISJL’s Education Department with the assistance of another full-time educator. The Education Fellowship program currently has nine Fellows.

FUNDING

The program is funded through ISJL’s general operating budget. In addition to funding from The Covenant Foundation, ISJL has been supported by hundreds of individual donors and numerous Jewish and secular foundations and organizations, including the following: Goldring Family Foundation, Woldenberg Foundation, The Jim Joseph Foundation, Legacy Heritage Fund Limited, The Marcus Foundation, Inc., Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Samuel Bronfman Foundation, BellSouth, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Natan, Slingshot Fund, and the Righteous Persons Foundation.

The communities that participate in the program are charged a flat fee of $800, plus an additional $36 per student. This income represents less than 15% of the program’s budget.
American History Jewish Curriculum Project

Organization: Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Center for American Jewish History
Grant Year: 2003
Project Director: Nancy Isserman
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $145,100
Website: http://www.challengeandchange.temple.edu/
Tags: Resources for the Field • Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the creation of a website, CD, and teacher trainings related to the middle school American Jewish History curriculum project. An additional grant secured by the Feinstein Center during this time funded the creation of a companion textbook. Covenant-funded teacher trainings focused on enabling middle school teachers to gain familiarity with the curriculum and to learn how to utilize the CD, website, and textbook to support their teaching. Trainings were held at the Center for American Jewish History in Philadelphia. This was the first American Jewish History curriculum to include wrap-around multimedia, teacher training, and trainee listserv supports.

PARTICIPANTS

Students (particularly, but not limited to, middle-school age), teachers, day schools, and adult education classes.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The CD was distributed nationally and became a particularly useful resource to classrooms without internet access.

• After receiving additional funding, the Center took the workshops on the road to several other cities, including St. Louis and Detroit.

• Covenant funding was leveraged to secure an additional $15,000 in support from a private donor.

• A stockpile of extra CDs (from a pool of 2,000) was distributed to Philadelphia-area educational institutions, to alumni of previous teacher trainings, and to Jewish and supplementary schools without previous exposure to the curriculum. Additional copies were donated to the Lower Merion School District in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and to the docent program at the Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Center for American Jewish History.

CURRENT STATUS

The project’s goal was to create the curricular resources. Since that goal has been achieved, the project is now inactive. The resources themselves continue to be used. CD use cannot be tracked, but there is ongoing use of the website in the range of 100-200 hits per month.
Facing History and Ourselves
Jewish Text Project

Organization: Facing History and Ourselves
Grant Year: 2006
Project Director: Jan Darsa
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $75,225
Website: http://www.facinghistory.org/jewished
Tags: Resources for the Field • Professional Development • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the creation of the Facing History and Ourselves Jewish Text Project (JTP). Building on the internationally recognized strategies and resources of Facing History and Ourselves this initiative aims to integrate Jewish studies and general studies through the creation and dissemination of curricular materials linking the study of Jewish text (Biblical, Rabbinic, and contemporary) to the study of the Holocaust. Grant dollars supported the creation and distribution of this classroom resource as well as workshops and seminars for Jewish educators. Curricular units were created, then piloted and fine-tuned by educators involved with the program. All Facing History curricula go through a formal review and approval process. The JTP curriculum, Sacred Texts, Modern Questions: Connecting Ethics and History Through a Jewish Lens, was published and distributed to Facing History’s network of Jewish educators during the fall of 2012.

PARTICIPANTS

Jewish education professionals of middle and high school-age students [from both formal and informal settings].

RESULTS/IMPACT

• To date, more than 1,000 Jewish education professionals have attended workshops and seminars.

• Facing History has produced eight JTP units, each with extensive supporting materials. The units were piloted in classrooms, summer sessions, and teacher professional development workshops around the country.

• JTP has substantially enriched the Jewish Education Program’s curricular resources and has allowed the program to integrate Judaic and general studies.

• JTP has influenced other Facing History programs, particularly one for Catholic educators, and has stimulated Facing History teachers to produce their own supplementary materials.

• Sacred Texts, Modern Questions: Connecting Ethics and History Through a Jewish Lens continues to be available on the Facing History and Ourselves website.

CURRENT STATUS

JTP is now a permanent part of Facing History’s Jewish Education Program and its resources are infused throughout.
Mainstream: The Mikveh Outreach Initiative

**Organization:** Mayyim Hayyim  
**Grant Year:** 2007  
**Project Director:** Aliza Kline  
**Type of Grant:** Signature  
**Grant Amount:** $150,000  
**Website:** http://www.mayyimhayyim.org/  
**Tags:** Organizational Change and Capacity Building

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The grant funded a variety of efforts for Mayyim Hayyim to engage with the over 40 communities across North America that have requested support to establish or enhance mikvaot (the Hebrew plural for mikveh, a Jewish ritual bath) and make them accessible and meaningful for the Jewish community at large. To further its interest in adapting its successful pluralistic community mikveh program and to increase collaboration among pluralistic mikvaot, Mayyim Hayyim did the following: revised its guides to mikveh training and immersion ceremonies; produced a new middle school mikveh curriculum; built a social media presence; led one large and two smaller conferences; and developed a community consultation practice for the strategic development of its unique model.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The program is intended for Jewish community leaders, both professionals and volunteers, who wish to expand access to Jewish ritual by establishing pluralistic mikvaot in their communities.

**RESULTS/IMPACT**

According to Mayyim Hayyim’s staff members, this grant solidified the organization’s reputation as a pioneer in the reinvention of the mikveh as a Jewish ritual with great potential for contemporary spiritual use. Staff members also report that each of the grant activities enabled Mayyim Hayyim to extend its reach as envisioned.

- The mikveh guides and middle school curriculum are currently in use by Mayyim Hayyim and its partner communities. The two small conferences and one large national conference, with over 275 participants, helped to secure Mayyim Hayyim’s reputation as a national leader. In addition, since the completion of the grant period, Mayyim Hayyim has sponsored other small conferences, and it plans to convene another large conference when it has the staff capacity.

- The media innovations funded by the grant have made Mayyim Hayyim accessible to all interested individuals and communities – even those that don’t have the capacity or will to purchase Mayyim Hayyim materials or consultations. These include a redesigned website, a blog entitled “The Mikveh Lady Has Left The Building,” a documentary and a short film, a YouTube channel, and educational webinars.

- Mayyim Hayyim’s newly established consultation practice clearly met a need: during the grant period, Mayyim Hayyim worked directly with 14 North American communities; six of these consultations lasted one to six months, and the rest extended to between six and 24 months. Mayyim Hayyim has also had requests for guidance and materials from Israel, France, and England. As a natural extension of this work, the organization is developing a national network of future mikveh leaders, which includes former Mayyim Hayyim interns and staff.

- The connection to The Covenant Foundation benefited Mayyim Hayyim in other ways as well. For example, staff members credit the Covenant grant, which stresses internal and external evaluation, with the integration of evaluation into Mayyim Hayyim’s organizational culture. Also of benefit is the attention that Mayyim Hayyim has garnered from other national and national organizations.
local funders, due directly to the activities resulting from the grant. Finally, the extensive Covenant Foundation networks have had a direct impact on Mayyim Hayyim; during the course of the grant, Mayyim Hayyim was introduced to nearly a dozen new community partners through Covenant connections.

CURRENT STATUS

Mayyim Hayyim was able to leverage this grant to secure funding from other foundations. For example, in 2011, the Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles provided $50,000 to help the organization with its continued outreach to interested communities.

Mayyim Hayyim continues to seek out ways to make its national education efforts more sustainable. It regularly updates its website and blog and participates in audio and video production opportunities. Consultations with interested communities continue. However, after the completion of the grant, Mayyim Hayyim increased the fees charged for materials and services. Encouraged by Mayyim Hayyim, some communities – so far, New York and Atlanta – are currently applying for funding to cover Mayyim Hayyim consultations. In addition, Mayyim Hayyim is piloting an education consultation model that couples its publications with limited consulting hours on implementation of the materials.

Finally, Anita Diamant, Founding President, continues to be invited to speak at a wide range of gatherings and conferences across the world about what mikveh can be and lessons learned from Mayyim Hayyim.
Making Connections

Organization: ACAJE/Jewish Outreach Partnership [Now Jewish Learning Venture]
Grant Year: 2002
Project Director: Philip Warmflash
Type of Grant: Dissemination
GrantAmount: $25,000
Website: http://www.jewishlearningventure.org
Tags: Resources for the Field • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The grant funded the dissemination of a “kit” containing resources to help families explore Jewish topics and holidays in their own homes. Each kit contains approximately six pages of information and articles consisting of hands-on family activities and coupons for products, events, and services in the local Jewish community. Some of the grant funds were earmarked for working with local synagogues around recruitment and retention of their members.

PARTICIPANTS
The program originally targeted an audience of families in the Philadelphia area that were not synagogue members. That target was eventually expanded to all families in the area in search of a stronger connection to the Jewish community. Five synagogues participated in recruitment and retention trainings during the grant period.

RESULTS/IMPACT
• The work with synagogues around the topic of recruitment and retention has now grown into a program called Reshet. Reshet is currently in three communities and is funded by Covenant.

• Making Connections resources are in the process of being updated to reflect changes in the Jewish community and new methods for reaching out (e.g. social media).

CURRENT STATUS
The program is operational in an altered form. It was originally a stand-alone project but is now incorporated into the organization’s overall programming.
Project Open Book: *Kolel* Resource Library

**Organization:** *Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning*

**Grant Year:** 2006

**Project Director:** Elyse Goldstein

**Type of Grant:** Signature

**Grant Amount:** $110,000

**Website:** [http://openbook.kolel.org/](http://openbook.kolel.org/)

**Tags:** Resources for the Field • Portals to Jewish Life and Learning

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

*Kolel’s* main goal as an organization is to provide adult education. The grant allowed the organization to update and formalize its educational materials as well as to publish the materials in digital format. *Kolel* was originally a Toronto-based education center but decided to target a larger audience when it realized that people from all over the world were subscribing to the organization’s weekly emails. The grant funding allowed the material to be formatted into online classes.

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**PARTICIPANTS**

The primary target population was individuals in other countries who were living in communities without rabbis or access to Jewish education. Secondary audiences and visitors to the website included Jewish educators and rabbis in small communities, non-Jews curious about learning about Judaism, and other Jewish internet users looking for credible information.

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**RESULTS/IMPACT**

- Classes were created that could either be taken online by an individual or used as a teaching tool in a physical classroom.

- The classes cover four major themes: the *Torah*, Jewish life, family, and women. Each theme contains several sets of classes.

- The material currently online corresponds to over 15 years of curricula collected or created by *Kolel*.

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**CURRENT STATUS**

The project website is “static” (online but unstaffed/monitored). While the number of visitors has tapered off, the website is still regularly accessed by people around the world.
Sulam: The Center for Jewish Service Learning

Organization: Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Los Angeles
Grant Year: 2004
Project Director: Phil Liff-Grieff
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $171,300
Website: http://www.sulamcenter.org/
Tags: Resources for the Field • Professional Development

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the creation of a website for Jewish teens and Jewish teen educators to increase and enhance the use of service learning in formal and informal Jewish educational venues. The site has a student side containing information regarding service learning opportunities and an educator side that focuses on service-learning pedagogy and facilitation. Other features include a volunteerism and service-learning resource library and an online consultation service designed to match teens with service opportunities. Grant funding also supported a Community of Practice for educators facilitating Jewish service-learning experiences for teenagers.

PARTICIPANTS

Site participants included and continue to include teenagers who are interested in service learning, as well as teachers who recommend service learning and the website to their students.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• The program helped to change institutional culture: from approaching volunteering as something that is in-and-of-itself educational to seeing it as an experience that is educationally enhanced through reflection and discussion.

• Students and educators interested in service learning are now able to access necessary resources.

CURRENT STATUS

The Community of Practice was discontinued due to budget cuts, but the website is widely used. In 2010, the website was visited by 20,440 visitors. Resources were downloaded by 5,754 of those visitors.
Tuv Ha’Aretz: Hazon’s Jewish Food Project

Organization: Hazon
Grant Year: 2007
Project Director: Judith Belasco
Type of Grant: Signature
Grant Amount: $150,000
Website: http://www.hazon.org/programs/csa/
Tags: Portals to Jewish Life and Learning • Organizational Change and Capacity Building

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The grant funded the expansion, over three years, of Hazon’s Tuv Ha’Aretz programs. This expansion included the following: creation of the Jewish Food Education Network (JFEN) to empower educators and others to teach about food, health, and sustainability through a Jewish lens; revision of the Min Ha’Aretz curriculum for middle school students and expansion to the entire JFEN membership base; marketing of its community-supported agriculture (CSA) program in order to increase membership; establishment of partnerships in order to enhance the reach of its blog, The Jew and the Carrot; and optimization of the location, season, and activities of its food conferences in order to make them more accessible and thus increase participation.

PARTICIPANTS

Hazon appeals to Jewish individuals, families, and students from diverse Jewish backgrounds who wish to learn about environmental issues, organic food, and local agriculture in a Jewish context.

RESULTS/IMPACT

• By the end of the grant period, JFEN, the newly created education program, had been adopted by over 80 educators and had reached thousands of students. Min Ha’Aretz, Hazon’s food curriculum, began in five pilot day schools, expanded to synagogue schools, and eventually was implemented in all 80 JFEN member-organizations.

• During the grant period, attendance at the annual four-day Hazon Food Conference and two regional one-day food festivals increased from 248 to approximately 650, with participants coming from 26 states and six countries.

• The grant also impacted volunteering at Hazon and overall participation in Hazon activities. The expanded Tuv Ha’Aretz programs attracted approximately 250 new volunteers, many of whom subsequently became involved in other Hazon programs including its bike rides, retreats, and Israel trips.

CURRENT STATUS

Hazon staff members report overall financial security resulting from foundation grants, individual donations, board member gifts, and support from participants in the Hazon Jewish Environmental Bike Ride. The organization receives additional income from curriculum sales revenues and event participation fees. As a result, in the post-grant period, Hazon has been able to continue and even expand all components of Tuv Ha’Aretz.

Today, Hazon has 70 CSA sites across the United States and Canada. It created an online CSA networking hub and also posts its JFEN resources on its website. The Hazon Food Conference is
currently in its ninth year, along with the regional festivals, it continues to report sell-out crowds of about 200 each.

The Covenant Foundation provided *Hazon* with an additional grant to adapt the *Min Ha’Arez* curriculum for use with its Home for Dinner initiative, a synagogue-based program that encourages families to eat together. This funding, along with revenue from the sale of the curriculum to an average of 20 institutions each year, provides ongoing support for *Min Ha’Arez*. 
Covenant Signature Grants Included in Sustainability Study by Impact Category

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (28)**
- A Community Commendation Program for Congregational and Other Supplementary Schools
- American History Jewish Curriculum Project
- Annual Summer Seminar in Jewish Family Education
- *Aseh Lecha Rav*: Training Camp Staff as Jewish Educational Role Models
- Day School Induction and Retention Program
- DeLeT Pilot Program
- Early Childhood Hebrew Language Immersion Network
- Educational Technology Fellowship Program
- Facing History and Ourselves Jewish Text Project
- Gateways for Learning: Professional Advancement in Jewish Education
- *HaMORIM* of MetroWest
- Institute for Jewish Spirituality Educators Program
- *Kehilliyot Da’at*: A CoP Meta Community for Jewish Professionals
- Laboratory Communities for Jewish Educator Recruitment and Retention
- Learning Together: Educating Teachers, Parents, and Children in the New Millennium
- *Lilmod u’Lelamed* [Project Gesher]
- Living Museum Project
- M&M: *Melamdim u’Manhigim* [Teachers and Learners]
- MAP: The Mentor and Protégé Program
- *Migdal Or*
- ORT/JECC Partnership for Technology in Education: Cleveland Day School Project
- Proficiency Approach to Hebrew Language Teaching: Empowering Teachers Enabling Students
- Project *Yad*: A Hands-On Day School Initiative
- Seminar in Jewish Educational Effectiveness
- *Salam*: The Center for Jewish Service Learning
- Sunday in the South: The Itinerate Education Program
- Teacher Training for *V’khol Banayikh*: Jewish Education for All
- The Darim Online Learning Network for Congregational Educators

**PORTALS TO JEWISH LIFE AND LEARNING (17)**
- Apples and Honey/Shalom Baby
- *Avoda*: Objects of the Spirit
- Camp *Yofi*: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism
- *Havruta*: An Old/New Model of Learning
- Kesher Community Hebrew School After School
- *Lilmod u’Lelamed* [Project Gesher]
- M&M: *Melamdim u’Manhigim* [Teachers and Learners]
- Making Connections
- *MATAN*: The Gift of Jewish Learning for Every Child
- New Jewish Filmmaker Project
- Our Jewish Home
- Project Open Book: *Kolel* Resource Library
- Renewing the New Orleans Jewish Day School
- *Rosh Hodesh*: It’s a Girl Thing!
- Sunday in the South: The Itinerate Education Program
- There’s No Place Like Home
- *Tuv Ha’Aretz*: Hazon’s Jewish Food Project

**RESOURCES FOR THE FIELD (19)**
- A Designer Education Program for New Millennium Jewish Teens
- American History Jewish Curriculum Project
- Apples and Honey/Shalom Baby
- *AVODAH*: A Model for Jewish Service Education
- Early Childhood Hebrew Language Immersion Network
- Facing History and Ourselves Jewish Text Project
- Gender and Orthodoxy Curriculum
- HowDoYouJew?
• Living Museum Project
• Making Connections
• Project Open Book: Kolel Resource Library
• Sulam: The Center for Jewish Service Learning
• Sunday in the South: The Itinerate Education Program
• Teacher Training for V’khol Banayikh: Jewish Education for All
• The Darim Online Learning Network for Congregational Educators
• The Jewish Lens: Exploring Values and Community through Photography
• Unity Program: Shma/Istima’a Program
• View from the Balcony
• Welcome to the Talmud! [A Musical Tale]

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING (17)
• A Community Commendation Program for Congregational and Other Supplementary Schools
• Adult Learning for Small Jewish Communities
• Annual Summer Seminar in Jewish Family Education
• AVODAH: A Model for Jewish Service Education
• Camp Yofi: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism
• DeLeT Pilot Program
• Facing History and Ourselves Jewish Text Project
• Healing Waters Initiative: Inventing a New Kind of Adult Educator
• Kesher Community Hebrew School After School
• Lilmod u’Lelamed [Project Gesher]
• Mainstream: The Mikveh Outreach Initiative
• MATAN: The Gift of Jewish Learning for Every Child
• NESS: Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools II
• Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!
• The Darim Online Learning Network for Congregational Educators
• The Jewish Lens: Exploring Values and Community through Photography
• Tuv Ha’aretz: Hazon’s Jewish Food Project

NEW JEWISH “TEXTS” (8)
• A Designer Education Program for New Millennium Jewish Teens
• Avoda: Objects of the Spirit
• Embodying Witness: Art and Learning in Response to Genocide
• Living Museum Project
• New Jewish Filmmaker Project
• Project Yad: A Hands-On Day School Initiative
• View from the Balcony
• Welcome to the Talmud! [A Musical Tale]

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE FIELD (7)
• Early Childhood Hebrew Language Immersion Network
• Gender and Orthodoxy Curriculum
• Healing Waters Initiative: Inventing a New Kind of Adult Educator
• Kesher Community Hebrew School After School
• Partners in Prevention
• Proficiency Approach to Hebrew Language Teaching: Empowering Teachers Enabling Students
• The Jewish Lens: Exploring Values and Community through Photography

CREATING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS (6)
• Camp Yofi: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism
• Jewish in America: A Conversation
• Kehilliyot Da’at: A CoP Meta Community for Jewish Professionals
• Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing!
• Unity Program: Shma/Istima’a Program
• Ziv Partners in Tzedakah Program
## Covenant Signature Grants by Year

### 2000
- An Integrated Model for Music and Jewish Education
- *Avoda*: Objects of the Spirit
- Educational Technology Fellowship Program
- *Migdal Or*
- Teacher Recruitment Initiative
- *Ziv* Partners in Tzedakah Program

### 2001
- *Aseh Lecha Rav*: Training Camp Staff as Jewish Educational Role Models
- DeLeT Pilot Program
- Gateways for Learning: Professional Advancement in Jewish Education
- HaMORIM of MetroWest
- Learning Together: Educating Teachers, Parents and Children in the New Millennium
- MAP: The Mentor and Protégé Program
- *MATAN*: The Gift of Jewish Learning for Every Child
- ORT/JECC Partnership for Technology in Education: Cleveland Day School Project
- Teaching Diligently: A Program to Train Jewish Teachers for the Future

### 2003
- A Community Commendation Program for Congregational and Other Supplementary Schools
- American History Jewish Curriculum Project
- DVD Guide to Jewish Life
- Healing Waters Initiative: Inventing a New Kind of Adult Educator
- Institute for Jewish Spirituality Educators Program
- Jewish in America: A Conversation
- Proficiency Approach to Hebrew Language Teaching: Empowering Teachers Enabling Students
- Project *Kavod*: Improving the Culture of Employment in Jewish Education

### 2004
- *Havruta*: An Old/New Model of Learning
- *jbop*
- *Lilmod u’LeLamed* (Project *Gesher*)
- Seminar in Jewish Educational Effectiveness
- *Sulam*: The Center for Jewish Service Learning
- Sunday in the South: The Itinerate Education Program
- Teacher Training for *V’khol Banayikh*: Jewish Education for All

### 2005
- Camp *Yofi*: Family Camp for Jewish Families with Children with Autism
- Day School Induction and Retention Program
- Laboratory Communities for Jewish Educator Recruitment and Retention
- Living Museum Project
- *Menschlekeit* Matters
- StorahLAB
- Unity Program: *Shma/Istima’a* Program

### 2006
- Annual Summer Seminar in Jewish Family Education
- Embodying Witness: Art and Learning in
Response to Genocide

- Facing History and Ourselves Jewish Text Project
- JECEI Fellows
- Kehilliyot Da’at: A CoP Meta Community for Jewish Professionals
- M&M: Melamdim u’Manhigim (Teachers and Learners)
- NESS: Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools II
- New Jewish Filmmaker Project: National Dissemination and Outreach Initiative
- Partners in Prevention
- Project Kavod II: Creating Sustainable Community Support for Quality Early Childhood Jewish Education
- Project Open Book: Kolel Resource Library
- Rosh Hodesh: It’s a Girl Thing! Building Leadership for Adults and Girls
- There’s No Place Like Home
- Transformation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Year

2007

- A Designer Education Program for New Millennium Jewish Teens
- Adult Learning for Small Jewish Communities
- AVODAH: A Model for Jewish Service Education
- HowDoYouJew?
- Jewish Adulthood Education on the Campus: The Jethro Initiative
- Mainstream: The Mikveh Outreach Initiative
- Renewing The New Orleans Jewish Day School
- The Darim Online Learning Network for Congregational Educators
- The Jewish Lens: Exploring Values and Community through Photography
- Tuv Ha Aretz: Hazon’s Jewish Food Project
Grant Statistics

CURRENT PROJECT STATUS OF COVENANT SIGNATURE GRANTS INCLUDED IN THE SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

- **Active**: 29
- **Inactive, Ongoing Impacts**: 19
- **Inactive**: 11

Legend:
- Red: Active
- Dark Brown: Inactive, Ongoing Impacts
- Gray: Inactive