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Jewish Education As Counter-Cultural Education

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Jewish Education as Counter-Cultural Education is the sixth volume of the York University Centre for Jewish Studies Annual. Each volume in this series reflects one or more of the Centre's scholarly concerns.

The first volume was titled Canadian Jewry: Past, Present, and Future; it consists of the opening lecture of the Centre's J. Richard Shiff Chair for the Study of Canadian Jewry. The second in the series was Teaching Teachers; its issue marked the inauguration of the Koschitzky Family Chair for Jewish Teacher Education. The third booklet was Facing In and Facing Out: Relations With Gentiles in the Eyes of Jewish Traditionalists. Facing the Past and the Future was the fourth volume in the series; it inaugurated our Silber Family Chair in Holocaust and Eastern European Jewish Studies. Last year's volume was Biblical Studies in the Twenty-First Century.

This year our publication combines our Centre's interests in Canadian Jewish Studies and in Jewish Education. Both of the articles in this volume analyze a fascinating phenomenon — a new Jewish day school in downtown Toronto that differs in many ways from older models of Jewish education.

There is much to comment on concerning the very fact that significant numbers of Jews, mostly baby boomers, are returning to live in downtown Toronto, an area that is generally considered beyond the boundaries of the standard established community. People might be tempted to think that Jews moving there are not particularly interested in their Jewish identities; that is clearly not the case. The establishment of a day school shows significant identification with Jewish values. This day school is, however, as the articles point out, a very different kind of educational institution. It remains to be seen whether this new model of an unabashedly non-denominational pluralistic school will become even more popular in the future, or whether the phenomenon will turn out to be a passing curiosity.

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Martin I. Lockshin, Editor

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Parents Under the Influence: Thinking Differently About the Relationships Between Parents and their Children's Schools

Alex Pomson

DISCOVERING PARENTS IN SCHOOL

Nearly two years ago, I received a grant to launch a pilot study of a small Toronto Jewish day school. I knew the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School (DJDS) as a creative and nurturing environment that had been especially hospitable to the teacher candidates I supervise. I planned, therefore, to spend part of a sabbatical leave there in order to explore the extent to which the contemporary Jewish day school is capable of realizing a genuinely alternative vision of education from that provided by the public school system.

From what I knew of it, DJDS seemed well-suited to these concerns. In demographic terms, it is representative of an increasing number of religiously pluralistic Jewish day schools which attract families of diverse socio-economic means, few formal Jewish connections, and a wide variety of denominational orientations. According to the school's mission statement, it seeks to build a pluralistic community through "integrating Jewish and secular studies while encouraging artistic expression as a tool of learning." It has a reputation for pedagogic creativity which has made it a model for others seeking to connect to diverse student populations.

Although my interest when launching this project was in the school's curriculum broadly conceived, my attention was quickly distracted by an aspect of school life that came repeatedly to occupy my field of view. I was not prepared for the extent to which the data I collected was full of references to the presence of parents in classrooms, corridors and committees. It seemed that almost every time I visited the school I witnessed an episode or event in which parents were active and, on occasion, the only participants.

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Educational researchers have tended to view the presence of parents in schools in relation to a number of concerns, mostly how parents contribute to the performance of children and how their contribution can be enhanced. This focus isn't surprising. Schools were originally devised so as to prepare *children* for life within particular religious, social or occupational communities, and, in more recent times, to ready them as productive citizens in the broader industrialized society. Parents, it is usually assumed, have already been to school themselves.

In schools, therefore, they are of interest only to the extent that their presence or absence shapes the quality of their children's education.³

The pervasive presence of parents in the daily life of DJDS led my interests in a different direction. I wondered what was happening to the parents as a consequence of their intense involvement in their children's education. Was it possible that they were active in the school as much because of what it offered them as adults as because of what it promised their children? Were they, putting it colloquially, no less than their offspring, "under the influence" of their children's schools?

In this paper I want to share some preliminary answers to these questions since these may provoke a re-examination of some deeply-rooted assumptions about the relationships between parents and schools. I aim to open a window on a system of schools in which today more than a quarter of a million North American children are educated. I hope also that this case, although drawn from a narrow slice of North American society, will prove indicative of generalized patterns of adult learning and life that until now have been little noted.

GROUNDS FOR THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT PARENTS

If the line of inquiry I've suggested seems peculiarly inverted (in looking at the influence of schools on parents rather than vice versa), it is worth noting that it draws on some well-established intellectual trends. First, there is a growing appreciation of the dialectical relationship between parents and their children's schools that derives, in large part, from burgeoning interest in charter schools, education vouchers and school choice. In this climate, researchers are paying increased attention to the ways in which school choice serves as a marker or facet of parents' identities. Recognizing that for some parents the selection of a school for their child can be a moment of profound self-definition — perhaps one of the weightiest of their adult lives — there has been increasing recognition that parents not only play a role in their children's schools, but that their children's schools play some role in their lives.

More generally, this view of schools shaping adult existences is grounded in an increasingly commonplace conception of identity as being constantly made, unmade and remade. Calling into question any notion of a stable self, this post-structural view of identity informs an expectation that selves are apprehended in the positions people adopt (or are forced to adopt) at different times and places, and that people's performances are what make them momentarily who they are. From this perspective, parents are necessarily influenced by their involvements in their children's schools. For if our performances not only express who we are, but also change us, then how we involve ourselves in our children's education (at home and at school, in parent committees, in meetings with teachers, and when talking about school with our children) will have some effect on who we are.

THE RANGE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

My interest in researching DJDS as an arena for parental involvement was sparked by these ideas but it was fuelled by the intensity and scope of parental involvement I witnessed. Like other cash-strapped "alternative" schools, DJDS calls on the intense participation of parent "volunteers" to share a wide range of responsibilities. Formally, parents are invited to join some of the 11 committees struck by the school's board and the 13 committees operated by the school's parent association. They are also encouraged to volunteer in a variety of less formal ways, such as by helping in the classroom with Sabbath eve celebrations, facilitating Scholastic book orders, and reading aloud to small groups. They also offer unsolicited (and sometimes less helpful) input to teachers and administrators over matters including security arrangements, classroom activities and food policies.

These will be not surprising expressions of adult involvement for those familiar with the operation of private schools, places where parents often participate in aspects of school administration, funding and programming. What I found striking at DJDS was the range and intensity of parental participation. There are probably not many schools where parents volunteer as many as 15 hours a week, as appeared to be the case for a small number of adults here. The scope of their involvement also seemed unusual. During the four months of my connection to the school I noted that parents were prominent participants in a variety of special events. These included the annual book fair, the open-house for prospective parents, and curriculum night. They led a number of regularly programmed activities (such as lunch time clubs, after-school arrangements and school choir) which, in other schools, would probably be the responsibility of paid professionals. They also participated in a range of social and educational events which are more typical of school parent association programs.

THE SCHOOL'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR PARENTS

No doubt the intensity and scope of parental involvement at DJDS derive in part from factors related to the school's faith-based orientation, its geographic location and its recent origins. (When I started my research, it had been in existence for only 4 years and included only 70 students, although it was growing by grade level each year.) However, my review of the research data leads me to propose a deeper significance behind parent involvement. Drawing on largely ethnographic material, I want to point to four ways in which the school occupies a place of significance in the lives of parents, all of which have important implications for the relationships between schools and families in other communities.

1. A site for adult learning

There is a widespread assumption that adults only learn in schools when instruction is programmed in family or adult-education events. At DJDS, I found that adults also engaged in learning in many unpredictable and informal ways. In the course of conducting business at a variety of school committees, parents worked hard to extend their understanding of a range of Jewish and contemporary issues so that they could make informed decisions about, for example, how to market the school or who to invite as classroom visitors. I discovered, also, that aspects of the school's curriculum (which in its first years of existence ran only up to Grade 4) often provoked parents to come in to talk with the school's educators about theological and philosophical issues. The curriculum not only enabled them to learn how to perform unfamiliar Jewish practices (such as welcoming the Sabbath in their homes or building a *Sukkah*); it also provoked them to reconsider deeply rooted and previously unchallenged assumptions about Judaism and life.

2. The school as a haven

As a religiously pluralistic day school, DJDS is more inclusive than most other institutions in the local Jewish community, especially in relation to those who either fall outside familiar denominational categories or are members of interfaith or single-sex families. One parent, writing to a school committee, explained that her family "had suffered immeasurably when they left [their egalitarian] synagogue after finding [that their lesbian union] didn't qualify as a 'family'." In contrast, she emphasized, DJDS had made no such judgments about her life.

For others, it isn't so much that they feel threatened outside the school, but that they don't feel alienated within it. Thus, for one couple it was important that there were other parents at the school who also had children late in life. For another, it was that they could be with families who shared their values and who dressed like them. For these parents, and for others like them, the school is not only a place where they and their children can learn, it is somewhere they can belong. In these terms, as one parent put it, "the school is a haven" not only for children but also for the adult members of their families.

3. Offering parents a second chance at school

Most parents have of course already been to school as children, and many are thankful not to return. But, for some of those I met at DJDS, the decision to send a child to a Jewish day school represents what one called "a second chance" after having a miserable experience with Jewish education "the first time." Sending a child to the school not only constitutes an opportunity to reconnect with the Jewish community, it also offers another chance to receive a Jewish education. For one father this was why he became active in the school even

before his children were of school age. For another, it was why, despite what he called his own atheism, he was willing to try a Jewish day school for his own child in case he (the father) was wrong about God. This father wanted the best education for his child, but in choosing a Jewish day school, he was creating an opportunity to revisit some of his own beliefs and commitments.

4. A setting in which to experience communitas

A vein of utopianism runs through the way many parents talk about DJDS. They frequently speak, with disregard for factors such as staff turnover and budgetary constraints, as if the school is possessed of unlimited potential. Perhaps this is typical of how people imagine newly launched schools. But it may also indicate that at DJDS, an institution which was explicitly founded as an "alternative" school, many parents experience a sense of, what Victor Turner calls, communitas—"a special feeling of connectedness and potentiality that arises when the structures and hierarchies of everyday life are temporarily suspended."

For Turner, communitas is a liminal condition; it exists in a "kind of institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future social developments, of societal change." In his terms, it is usually a temporary state which calls for and provides a deep sense of investment and a heightened sense of belonging. It is a condition usually associated with revolutionary movements or utopian projects, and it is a quality I found in the behaviours and talk of DJDS parents who had invested themselves in a model of education which differs significantly from the local norm.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

Few parents experience the sense of "pure potentiality" associated with the early years of a newly created school that seem such an important source of meaning for the adults at DJDS. One suspects, nevertheless, that even for many adults whose children attend what Turner might call less "charismatic" institutions, there are liminal moments when they experience a flickering hope of creating a different future for their children and themselves. This hope is at the core of what schools promise society, even if it is often disappointed. I want to suggest that this hopefulness, no matter how thin, can provide the ground on which to build relationships of significance between parents and schools.

The value of the DJDS case is that it displays in acute fashion what some of these relationships might look like. It shows how parents hope to (and can) learn new skills and knowledge from involvement in their children's schools. It indicates how (small) schoolhouses promise protection to adults as well as children. And although the language used is often religious, it reveals that many parents expect to improve upon their own past experiences of schooling when their children start school.

The DJDS case is also important for one further reason. For years, Jewish educators have looked to general education for inspiration and understanding. This case constitutes a modest opportunity for Jewish education to return the favour by opening a window on the often-overlooked ways in which all schools might occupy a place of influence in the lives of parents.

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Over the last two years, since I first joined DJDS as a participant researcher, I have been fortunate not only in the generosity shown me by parents and professionals at the school but also in receiving a grant from the Canadian federal government to extend the scope of my research. This additional funding has made it possible to recruit a research team whose members can explore at greater depth and over greater time the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of different members of the school community. Randal Schnoor, a post-doctoral researcher, has interviewed almost all of the families who joined DJDS over the last twelve months. He has investigated their motivations for choosing the school, and, by examining the contours of their connections to the Jewish community, he has established a base-line against which to research the school's long-term impact on families. In order to bring a comparative dimension to our investigation, Randal has also interviewed samples of "older" parents in the school as well as new parents in two other Toronto day schools. Dafna Ross, a doctoral candidate at York, has become a regular visitor to the school so as to observe the interactions and experiences of children. She has started the difficult work of interviewing children in the interest of hearing their voices, views, and interpretations of the messages they receive from the school. She aims to follow the children's process of making sense of their school experiences, including their views on parental involvement and the school's influence on their parents. Finally, in an effort to triangulate our data, I have focused my work on researching the goals, expectations and experiences of teachers and administrators.

The picture we are developing has been further sharpened by comparison with data we've gathered from the families and educators associated with a sample of four Jewish day schools in a mid-west American city. Taken together, our findings (although at a preliminary stage) deepen but modify the thesis advanced above: day schools, we are convinced, influence the lives of Jewish families. To put this in more cautious sociological terms, they introduce disequilibrium into the lives of families. When, for example, children become more proficient than their parents in Hebrew, when children learn and enjoy Jewish rituals that their parents don't know or practice, and when children bring Jewish songs and ideas into their homes, this can have a powerful impact on parents with previously ambivalent or attenuated Jewish commitments. When the disequilibrium thus created is embraced by families it often leads to an intensified adult Jewish engagement which is especially centred on the school when it does not displace

previously-existing adult Jewish involvements. In this way, we believe, day schools are not only significant to children, that is, to future generations of adult Jews, they also exercise an important but often ignored influence on many of today's Jewish adults.

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¹ Mattingly, Doreen, et al., "Evaluating Evaluations: The Case of Parental Involvement of Programs," Review of Educational Research, vol. 72, no. 4, 2002, pp. 549-576.

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- ⁴ Lagemann, Ellen, "For the Record: Parents a New Key Word in Education," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 94, no. 4, 1993, pp. 677-681.
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The Jewish Day School as Community: **Challenges and Changes**

Rachel Schlesinger

Day schools are attracting a larger number of students each year in Toronto, notwithstanding the high costs associated with sending a child to a private school. Over the years new day schools have been established, and these represent a measure of social, community and individual change.

I have begun a pilot study investigating one of the newest and most unique day schools, The Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School (DJDS). I hope to study its origins and the process of its formation. Over time, the scope of my study will broaden as I look at other school models in Toronto.

Toronto has a large Jewish population, according to recent figures prepared by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (Shahar and Rosenberg, November, 2003). From the 2001 census, the total Jewish population of Toronto was 179,100. This is 3.9% of the total Toronto population. In terms of Jewish education, the potential school population of children and youth aged 6-18 is 32,795:

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E This & Of the age group of Jewish children aged 6-13 (not including preschool), 7,050 (or 36%) attend elementary Jewish day school. Nineteen per cent of those aged 14-18 (2,257) attend a Jewish high school. In total, 9,307 (or 29%) of Jewish children aged 6-18 attend a Jewish day school. To complete the picture, 5,074 or 16% of children in this age group attend a supplemental Jewish school. In total, 44% of the Jewish children of Toronto are attending some form of Jewish schooling.

FOCUS ON THE DOWNTOWN JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

The Downtown Jewish Day School was established in 1998. This school is located in the Jewish Community Centre at the corner of Bloor and Spadina Streets. The school attracts families who live in the downtown core. Historically this area had a vibrant Jewish community, but for a period of some 30 years, beginning around 1955 or 1960, there was very little organized Jewish life there. Jews are now returning to the area. The families who send their children to this school represent a unique group. They selected a neighbourhood in which to live, and they see themselves as part of a close community.

PROCESS

I have interviewed parents who began this school, as well as key informants who could relate the early development of this school. Since the major theme of my

research deals with community and social change, I studied the change factors that influenced the start of this new school. To get a sense of the process I spoke with parents, teachers and consultants. I met with two Directors of the Board of Jewish Education, past and present, as well as individuals who work to promote a special vision for schools. Finally, I put the experiences of these organizers into the larger picture of changes in Toronto day schools.

OTHER NEW DAY SCHOOLS

As opposed to the earliest day schools in Toronto, which followed clear denominational lines, in some descriptions of newer Jewish day schools larger social and community as well as individualistic values are stressed. The "Jewish" component is there as well, but not exclusively. For example, the description of the Leo Baeck school states: "Our dual curriculum is enriched with music, art, drama and technology so that our graduates are prepared as knowledgeable, practicing Liberal Jews and Canadian citizens."

I spoke with a founder of the Toronto Heschel School, Baruch Rand. He adopted his understanding of the Heschel program from an established Heschel School in the United States. He imported the ideas and convinced others to join him in this school, now well established in Toronto. The school is described as "a multisensory, integrative, arts-based Jewish day school. . . . It is based on the principle that students can learn only in a supportive and validating atmosphere. . . . Small classes . . . to ensure high academic achievement within a positive, joyful relaxed atmosphere." In other words, many of these new schools put modern educational approaches, not Jewish content, as their central statement of purpose.

Even older, established day schools are beginning to highlight the individualistic component. The United Synagogue Day School (USDS) for example, indicates that the school is part of the Conservative Jewish movement, and then adds that the school provides "programs integrating computers, creative arts, music, physical education, family education... teaching students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills."

CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY

Community denotes common unity, yet in the area of day school education there are often diverse views and non-traditional people who challenge concepts of being Jewish and Jewish education. The very fact of diversity and the desire to be inclusive may be a strength, an important way to keep children and adults connected as Jews in our large metropolitan centres.

In our discussion of the founding of day schools in Toronto, it is crucial to understand the role of the community and even the place of teacher education in this process. York University is unique in that an Education student can qualify for teaching credentials for Ontario, and at the same time qualify as a teacher for our Jewish educational system. The Jewish Teacher Education program at York, a great achievement in teacher education, took many years and hard work to get established. Professor Sydney Eisen was instrumental in forming this program, together with other faculty from the Centre for Jewish Studies at York, the unversity administration and the Jewish community.

The many years that it took to get this program started and its great success today reflect community changes, willingness to work together, and support from many factions in the Jewish community. Many people doubted whether a non-denominational university-based program could produce teachers for the wide array of day schools in Toronto, many of them with a strong denominational identity. But the program has succeeded in placing graduates as teachers in all affiliated day schools of the Board of Jewish Education. This clearly demonstrates that the concept of community has changed considerably in Toronto's Jewish Education world.

CASE STUDY

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A major part of my pilot study deals with the background of the families of the school founders and their decision-making process in establishing a new Jewish day school. The families can be classified as non-traditional in terms of religious observances, family forms, and backgrounds. I hope that this pilot study will broaden the ways in which we understand the role of school and community, providing options for Jewish involvement for the entire family.

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When I sent my children to a day school years ago, I made a selection based on the few choices that existed. Parents today have more options and also create even more options when they establish new schools.

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My research will also look at reasons why parents select a "private" school, over a public school. This public/private school issue is a topic of concern in the general Canadian community.

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My visits to the Downtown Jewish Day School began in late 2002. The students at that time lived as far east as the Beaches, as far west as High Park, as far north as Woburn and Bathurst and as far south as College and Spadina. One third of the families lived in the Danforth area. Readers who know Toronto will recognize that this represents families who live outside of the standard boundaries of the mostly suburban Jewish community. The school is aptly named the Downtown Jewish Day School.

How were new parents convinced to try this school without a track record for their child?

The principal told me how she would sell the school. She would say that it has an extensive arts focus, small classes, mixed backgrounds, open to all Jews across the spectrum, downtown location, great teachers, and small classes. She would also highlight its innovative curriculum.

The parents often treat the school as if it is their own private school. Indeed many parents who decide to send their children base their decision not on the criteria found in other Jewish day schools, but on a desire for a private school education for their children. At the time we met with the founding parents in 2002 they were still working on a direction for their school. Those parents who founded the school articulated two main goals: they wanted small classes for a child-centred facility and they wanted a curriculum that would be arts based.

These interests might reflect and correspond to the environment of the nursery school at the JCC, where their children had thrived. Essentially, the model for this school was taken from the world of alternative schools, not from the world of Jewish institutions. When one of the founding parents withdrew, for personal reasons, he became instrumental in founding another school, the Jewish Montessori School.

The relationship between the founders and the educational professionals is an ambivalent one. It seems that the founders were initially unable to appoint people who fully mirrored parental visions and goals. This may be, in part, because the goals were neither clear nor agreed upon.

It became clear that founders of a school soon have to share their visions with newer parents. This brings about all kinds of challenges concerning openness to new ideas. It is not clear how much of a Jewish dimension there was for the founders, beyond the value of pluralism. There is, however, little doubt that their Jewish lives have been changed by the school. One parent gave an example of this. The family went out for a meal at a Chinese restaurant. As they began to order, their child, a student in the school, asked, "But isn't this Shabbat? Why are we here?" The parent added that some changes are now being made, including dinner at home on Friday night.

Ritual questions for the school were debated. Should every child wear a *kippah*? Should *kippot* be worn only during prayers, or all day long? How should *kashrut* be dealt with during lunch time?

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School parents continue to function as a community. They use the email list to contact each other to gripe, to praise. Everything is done in public.

At a meeting for new parents, each couple was assigned a mentor parent and they discussed why they are sending their child. Many didn't necessarily want a day school, but this one was a good fit for them. Parents are often single, lone parents, divorced, gay, intermarried, all combinations. Many of the parents who came to the meeting represent young professionals, attracted to the idea of an arts-based program and Jewish diversity.

We found that the parents valued academic accomplishment, competition and individualization. They wanted these values reflected in the school, but these values may be counterproductive to schools as caring communities. It remains to be seen how they can manoeuvre around these contrasting values.

What does the community look like to the students? Are they part of a community of learners, of inquiry? Do they feel they are part of a collective "we" of shared values, norms and beliefs, or are they a community of difference? This question, too, is often discussed. They also ponder such questions as "How can teachers really know the students, without being intrusive?"

A new marketing brochure came out in the fall of 2003. This colorful flyer promotes the vision of the school under headings of "academic excellence," "arts and culture," "Heritage," "Responsibility," "Commitment" and "Community." Heritage is explained as "school philosophy rooted in a strong commitment to Jewish values. . . . We welcome children from a broad spectrum of Jewish backgrounds." Hebrew is taught as a "living language" and love, appreciation and knowledge of Israel is mentioned. Again the brochure stresses that DJDS is a community "of students, staff, parents, extended families, the Board of Directors and the members of the local neighbourhood and the larger Jewish community." The vision is there, and in many ways this is translated into programs and curriculum.

DISCUSSION

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Schools get benefits from the community but they also help develop a community and a neighbourhood. The DJDS, already located within the JCC, was already positioned within a geographic and value-based community. When we talk about changes within the community we note that the school is not a bureaucracy, but a "Gemeinschaft" of social groupings embedded in the community experience. There is evidence of this in all the ways that parents and teachers interact in the DJDS. There are open links for communication; the KESHER newsletter is an example of this.

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The founders of this school wanted to look outside the school doors to the community in general, to learn and to bond. This evokes the concept of

"Gesellschaft," of participation in the larger non-Jewish community as well as the inner city Jewish links. The fact seems to be that these groups are not distinct but rather they merge together. Is a trip to Kensington Market a trip to an old Jewish site of commerce, or the current place to shop for "ethnic" foods?

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COMMUNITY

In many ways, this school is embedded in the community, where the social capital becomes the relationships, reciprocity, credit slips, the flow of information in networks and social relations. This dimension of social capital contributes to the public good. Ideally, interpersonal, instructional, and organizational strategies support a positive direction to this effort of building a new school

In reality, this school has to find a way to deal with diverse opinions, goals, lifestyles, students, and teachers. In the various committees there are power issues and very real concerns that arise from the diversity. For example, can a parent who is not Jewishly educated be the chair of the *Halakhah* committee? Other questions relate to the place of this school within the larger Jewish community. Where will students be accepted when they graduate from Grade 6 if they wish to continue in the day school system? Will they want to?

Community plays a large role in all our schools. Furman (2002) lists several aspects of schools as community that can be considered in our discussion. She agrees that school communities are embedded in the ecology of the surrounding multiple communities (home, neighbourhood). The community of the school develops social networks and aspects of collaboration.

In schools that strive to be a community, leadership is shared, not top down. The community aspect can be a goal in and of itself, a means, as Emile Durkheim would note, of belonging to a specific group. Finally the community is not stagnant, but always in the process of becoming, and it is about diversity. Furman notes that to further a school as a community one needs to follow specific practices:

- Knowing, understanding and valuing each member of this community.
- Building relationships through communication and collaboration, tending to diversity, and involving a strong sense of commitment.

In initial discussions with the founding parents of the DJDS most of these factors were acknowledged. The growth and development of this school may be an important lesson in community building and may produce innovative options for connections to the greater Jewish community in our changing world.

We return to the basic observations undertaken in this pilot study. We note that Jewish education in this community is vital to the maintenance of the community. We explored the various ways of looking at a community: a group that displays "common-unity," as well as one that allows for greater diversity. The DJDS is an example of a very different Jewish school, one founded by parents pursuing a goal of a community located in a specific area. They constitute a group of Jews who chose to identify, some of whom are intermarried, others who are same-sex parents or single parents. Some of these parents attended day schools themselves; many had little Jewish education. They wanted to create a place where diversity was celebrated, where there would be small classes and an emphasis on arts-based curriculum. Jewish studies were to be integrated, and issues of halakhah would be dealt with as they arose. They began with a few students and now are growing, with parents registering children several years in advance. New parents entering the school bring their own ideas, and the concept of the school community is undergoing constant change.

Throughout the Jewish community there is a need to educate our children to affiliate with the larger community. One outcome of this innovative educational venture might be to strengthen the community, through the acceptance of diversity.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

We have become aware of the dimensions of change in Jewish education. Zelden (1984: p. 182) builds on a model to explain educational change. He states that the model is based on "research, development and diffusion." This model has several steps, including innovation and evaluation. It all begins, however, with the awareness of the need for change. Changes can have an impact on areas of Jewish education and, in this study, we note some of these in Toronto. The goals or philosophy of a school may change, new methods of teaching can be introduced, and the target population of the school can be expanded.

Our schools function within a changing Canadian society. There are vast changes in the Jewish community. We are a diverse group, living and working in a large geographic area. There are changes in family forms. Students live in families of intermarriage, divorce and remarriage, gay families and extended families. Change is part of our values regarding education in a Jewish school. Hebrew, Yiddish, English, arts-based, integration, Zionism, ecology, *tikkun olam* — all these and more feature in our schools' curricula.

Hillel said: "Do not set yourself apart from the community... and do not say 'When I shall have leisure I shall study,' for you may never have leisure" (Pirke

Avot 2:4). Perhaps we can maintain our community when we acknowledge that diversity and change and innovative Jewish education can support a strong Jewish identity.

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