

Making Jewish Education Work:

Jewish Service Learning



REPORT
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Publications and Dissemination Project (PDP):

The PDP, an initiative of JESNA's Learnings and Consultation Center (LCC), aims to improve the delivery of Jewish education in North America by bringing the expert procedural and content knowledge that resides within JESNA to practitioners and policymakers in the field. JESNA's research and evaluation functions — performed primarily by the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education — have generated valuable lessons and useable data, which have been collected over the years through our work with communities. Intellectual capital is one of the primary resources JESNA contributes in order to lead the field of Jewish education toward consistent excellence. The role of the PDP is to leverage this intellectual capital by bringing it to the public arena using multiple media.

The PDP:

- Produces print and electronic publications on topics of importance to the Jewish education field based on the coupling of Berman Center evaluation studies and research projects with secondary sources.
- Distributes utilizable research and evaluation-based knowledge about Jewish education to those in the field through written, electronic, and face-to-face media.
- Publicizes lessons learned at academic and communal conferences and convenes thematic consultations and colloquia.

Methodological Preface:

The Publications and Dissemination Project (PDP), an initiative of JESNA's Learnings and Consultation Center (LCC), brings JESNA's knowledge and expertise to practitioners and policymakers in the field by means of print and online media.

Each report of the PDP focuses on lessons learned about an aspect of Jewish education based on research and evaluations (performed primarily by JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education), as well as on-the-ground knowledge (primarily gleaned from JESNA's LCC staff who work directly with Jewish educators in the field). The PDP reports are vehicles through which JESNA interprets and Disseminates lessons learned in the various modes of our practice as a way to enhance Jewish education delivery systems.

This issue of *Making Jewish Education Work* considers Jewish Service Learning. Learnings are derived from three sources:

- Evaluation reports developed by JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation
- Literature about, and reports from the fields of Service Learning and Jewish Service Learning
- Anecdotal feedback from practitioners in the field of Jewish Service Learning

It should be noted that the Berman Center evaluations referenced in this report deal with Jewish Service Learning programs with varied contexts, formats and target audiences.

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Other publications in the “Making Jewish Education Work” series:

- *Making Jewish Education Work: Community Hebrew High Schools*
- *Making Jewish Education Work: Mentoring Jewish Educational Professionals*
- *Making Jewish Education Work: Complementary School Change Initiatives*
- *Making Jewish Education Work: Professional Development for Educators*



“ Jewish Service Learning opportunities are designed to engage young Jews in social and communal issues, while nurturing their Jewish identities, sensibilities, and knowledge base. ”

Making Jewish Education Work: Jewish Service Learning



What is Service Learning?

What we now call “Service Learning” has its roots in a rich history of community service and civic engagement that has been documented in the United States as far back as the 1800s. In the 1960s, during the Civil Rights Movement, and in tandem with the formation of the Peace Corps, there was a rise in service learning programs’ popularity on U.S. college and university campuses, particularly among fraternities, sororities, and campus faith-based groups.

In 1964, an organization called Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) began to engage young people by combining service to a community and learning both about civic responsibility and the specific community being served.¹ In 1969, those involved in these early efforts met to discuss whether and how to implement service learning programs in American colleges and universities. It was decided that students should be encouraged to participate in such programs, provided that academic learning was an integral component, and that academic credit should be provided for these experiences. Also, it was recommended that funding should be provided (by private organizations and by all levels of the government) to enable student participation in service-learning.

In the 1980s, there was a renewed interest in service learning, and national efforts were initiated. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 authorized grants to support school-coordinated service learning and demonstration projects for national service programs coordinated and facilitated by youth groups, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities. It also created Serve America to “distribute grants in support of service-learning in order to simultaneously enrich the education of young people, demonstrate the value of youth as assets to their communities, and stimulate service-learning as a strategy to meet unmet community needs.”²

In more recent years, efforts in the field have described service learning as “a teaching and learning strategy... that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”³ It is a dynamic process which invests in the development of both the participants and the communities where they learn and serve. “Experience enhances understanding; understanding leads to more effective action.”⁴ While each organization that facilitates such experiences has its own unique interpretation of service learning, there are three primary common characteristics of such programs: an experiential component of **service**, some “formal” **learning**, and personal **reflection** (see Figure 1 on page 2).

Service Learning is
“a dynamic process
which invests in the
development of both
the participants and
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¹ Information retrieved on May 12, 2010 from http://www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/history.

² Ibid.

³ Information retrieved on May 12, 2010 from http://www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/characteristics.

⁴ J. Eyler and D. E. Giles. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service Learning?* Indianapolis: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

FIGURE 1 — COMPONENTS OF SERVICE LEARNING



With the synthesis of these three experiences, service learning becomes much greater than the sum of its individual parts.

The **service** component of service learning engages participants in important tasks that have identifiable goals, and “significant consequences.” They address complex problems in complex settings rather than simplified problems in isolation. Service components are designed to engage participants in:

- “Real” projects, as opposed to those that have been “manufactured” for the purpose of the program.
- Cooperative rather than competitive experiences that promote skills associated with teamwork and community involvement.
- Tasks that challenge them cognitively and developmentally.
- Projects that are not “one-sided” benefiting *only* participants or *only* the community.

The **learning** component of service learning programs sets clear educational goals “that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines, and the construction of one’s own knowledge.” Service learning “teaches the skills of civic participation and develops an ethic of service and civic responsibility; it is often categorized as “experiential” education.

The **reflection** component is the most individualized in a service learning program. Ideally, reflection takes place during all stages of the work (before, during, and after the service is completed), uses different pedagogies to elicit critical thinking, and is a core component of the service learning program’s curriculum.⁶ Some examples of reflective activities include: journaling or writing; creating art; open discussions about students’ expectations and exploring whether or not they were realized; gauging the impact participants were able to make; asking students to consider what they learned and/or how the service activity affected them; conferring in pairs or in larger groups about what felt different as a result of the service and/or the learning, and identifying possible post-service learning opportunities.

⁵ Information retrieved on May 12, 2010 from <http://www.education.jhu.edu/newhorizons/strategies/topics/service-learning>.

⁶ Ibid.



“Providers of Jewish Service Learning opportunities explain that Jewish values are central to their programs.”

Generally, there are two types of service learning opportunities. **Immersive** experiences usually engage participants in full-time direct service for at least seven days. Most often, participants leave their regular routines and travel to another community to learn and to serve. Other opportunities could be called **intermittent** and include a range of experiences, such as intensive full-day service projects and episodic volunteering. Regardless of the duration, service learning programs often maximize student participation in all aspects of the project, from preparation and design through implementation and assessment. According to one Berman Center evaluated program, participants shared that the opportunity to be involved from the outset of the service learning experience was critical to their overall experiences.

What is Jewish Service Learning?

Though some would suggest that Jewish Service Learning programs have existed for decades, others posit that they are a more recent phenomenon of the late 1990s. Jewish Service Learning opportunities are designed to engage young Jews in social and communal issues, while nurturing their Jewish identities, sensibilities, and knowledge base. Jewish Service Learning builds on the core components of service learning with two related additions. First, the service, learning, and reflection components are all contextualized within and informed by Jewish values. Second, the experiences of the participants are intentionally infused with Jewish texts and traditions.

Providers of Jewish Service Learning opportunities explain that Jewish values such as *tikkun olam* (repairing or bettering the world), volunteering, study, *gemilut chesed* (acts of loving kindness), and *tzedek* (justice) are central to their programs. They express their hope that program alumni will use the Jewish learnings from their experiences as a lens through which to view other aspects of their lives; to “recognize Judaism’s relevance.”⁷

Examples of some of the goals of Jewish Service Learning programs include:

1. To deepen the commitment to the Judaic imperative for civic and social responsibility and to the Jewish community’s role in American public life and in world affairs;
2. To provide a greater appreciation for the enduring wisdom of Jewish texts and values through the examination of their relevance to a variety of social and political issues;
3. To stimulate leadership, activism, and advocacy on social issues that challenge our communities, our nation, and the world so that program alumni can become agents for positive change in society; and
4. To foster a heightened sense of civic awareness and responsibility among students; to further their commitment to fully participate in the American public arena and in the institutions that work on behalf of the Jewish people and the state of Israel; and to help them see this commitment as a natural outgrowth of their Jewish learning.

Currently, there are no universally accepted standards of quality for Jewish Service Learning programs, though many program providers agree that this is a pressing need.⁸

⁷ Information retrieved on May 12, 2010 from <http://www.justaction.org/about/index.htm>.

⁸ Repair the World led a process which included dozens of practitioners and resulted in the publishing of Interim Standards of Practice in October, 2010 (see Appendix B).

There are, however, a collection of process-oriented (rather than outcome-oriented) indicators of quality commonly identified by program providers. These are:

- Motivated participants who join the program because they are committed to fulfill all of its components;
- Educated participants — especially about issues being addressed through their service and the roots of those issues;
- Experienced educators and trip leaders who serve as role models;
- Authentic service that is meaningful both to the community being served and to participants, characterized by effective partnerships between participants and the community;
- A strong Jewish context for the service work, including structured Jewish learning;
- Adequate time that is well-structured, during which participants reflect on their experiences and discuss their service and its impact; and
- Post-service follow-up and activities that provide participants continuity related to their service.⁹

Who Participates in Jewish Service Learning?

According to a recent study, participants in Jewish Service Learning programs are usually between 11-19 years of age, with most participants being 15- or 16- years-old; a smaller cohort is older than 19.¹⁰ Jewish Service Learning program providers estimate that in the United States, more than 8,000 teens participate in single-day Jewish Service Learning projects, and another 3,500 Jewish young adults participate in immersive Jewish Service Learning programs annually. These figures seem relatively substantial until one compares them with participation in Birthright Israel, which plans to take almost 10,000 young adults (ages 18-26) to Israel in Winter 2010-2011 alone, and which received more than 23,600 applications for those spots in just seven days.¹¹

Jewish Service Learning participants often are recruited from other Jewish youth service organizations serving tweens and teens, including denominationally affiliated and other youth groups, and campus-based organizations (e.g., Hillels). Over the past 18 years, JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation has evaluated nearly 20 Jewish Service Learning programs with teen participants (i.e., intermittent and not immersive programs). The vast majority of participants in these programs (between 50 and 90%) had connections with other Jewish community agencies or organizations, and most already had “a strong grounding in Jewish education” and “a strong Jewish identity.” These data are consistent with anecdotal feedback from Jewish Service Learning program professionals.

Feedback from alumni of Berman Center-evaluated Jewish Service Learning programs provides insight into their motivations to participate in the programs. Across the studies, the most frequently cited reason for participation was the opportunity to “give back,” either to their own or to another community. Another common explanation was “to be part of an elite leadership group.”

⁹ BTW Consultants, Inc. (May 2008). *Jewish Service Learning — What Is and What Could Be: A Summary of an Analysis of the Jewish Service Learning Landscape*. Berkeley: BTW Consultants, Inc.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Who Provides Professional Support for Jewish Service Learning Programs?

In many ways, Jewish Service Learning programs that target teens are similar to other Jewish teen programs. In fact, experts and practitioners in the field have observed that Jewish Service Learning program staff are often rabbinical students, rabbis, and Jewish summer camp professionals. Jewish Service Learning programs and participants benefit most from staff who are supported by well-informed advocates (both within their organization and within their geographic community) and who participate in ongoing professional development. The most effective professional leaders are capable, charismatic, and stable in their positions. Like staff of any effective Jewish teen programming, Jewish Service Learning professionals must demonstrate certain skill sets and knowledge domains, including, but not limited to:

- Adolescent development
- The socialization of teens
- Group dynamics
- Judaic knowledge
- Pedagogy
- Program and organizational management and administration
- Marketing and advertising
- Evaluation

Conducting Jewish Service Learning programs presents unique challenges. Staff from select Berman Center-evaluated programs reported that they encounter “significant logistical and philosophical challenges” in the planning and implementation of the community service component of their programs. These include scheduling difficulties, identifying appropriate and sustainable service projects, and balancing their other responsibilities with the unique time demands of the service learning project. Philosophical challenges include defining responsibilities for the staff and for the participants, and determining when to step in if/when difficulties arise.

Professionals interviewed for relevant Berman Center evaluations indicated that where local networks (or Communities of Practice) existed, they were valued highly; where they did not, they were missed. Some professionals expressed a desire to convene with colleagues to advance program coordination and enhancement, and to take advantage of networking and professional development opportunities.

Accomplishments of Jewish Service Learning Programs

While many Jewish Service Learning programs have conducted formal program evaluations (including the 11 referenced in this report that were conducted by the Berman Center),¹² few (if any) have undertaken ongoing or longitudinal studies to assess their longer-term impact on participants and/or the communities they served. Nevertheless, we can distil important learnings from the data and experiences.



“Participants in Jewish Service Learning programs seek opportunities to “give back,” either to their own or to another community.”

¹² See Appendix A for descriptions of the referenced Berman Center evaluated programs.

Generally, **Jewish Service Learning programs seem to have a greater effect on participants' attitudes and knowledge/understanding about Jewish values, learning and service than on their behaviors following their completion of the programs.** One Jewish Service Learning program alumnus summed up his/her experience by saying: "It was an early and unique influence, understanding that going out and passing out a meal has more impact than reading about homeless people. I think [Jewish Service Learning program] made me feel that it was important to make a positive contribution; that it isn't about making money in this world. Your legacy is about what kind of impression you leave and how many people's lives you help to improve."

Jewish Service Learning program alumni surveyed and interviewed by the Berman Center across a number of program evaluations indicated that their participation in the programs affirmed their understandings that:

- **Jews have obligations to contribute both to their "general" communities and society, as well as to the Jewish community and the Jewish people.** In the words of one program alumnus: "As a Jew, it is my duty to pursue social justice not just for the Jewish people, but all the people of the world."
- **Community service is an extension of the Jewish commitment to *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and the relationship between the ideals of American democracy and social justice. Further, human rights are an extension and application of Jewish values.** Another alumnus said: "As a Jew, I am responsible to work to improve the whole world around me."
- **Being Jewish is an important part of participants' identity.** Program alumni indicated that the Jewish Service Learning programs were helpful in reconciling their multiple identities. "Instead of continuing to have a 'Jewish life' and a 'secular life,' I learned how to live my life through a Jewish lens."

Further, Berman Center evaluations of several Jewish Service Learning programs that have political foci noted that **the programs provided participants with knowledge about and insight into the political system, alongside strategies to express Jewish values through activism.** As one alumnus said, "It is an awesome thing to be able to have an effect on the laws and legislation that affect us in our lives. And I can!"

In terms of changes in the behaviors of Jewish Service Learning program alumni (i.e., what they actually do differently after completing the programs), feedback from program providers and alumni is mixed. On the one hand, **most alumni indicated that as a result of their participation, they both knew how to access political systems and influence policies in their own communities and felt empowered to do so.** They said that their participation in Jewish Service Learning programs "positively influenced their propensity toward social activism." As an example, findings from one Berman Center evaluation showed that more than 25% of the program's alumni reported increases in specific behaviors (e.g., following current events relating to the Jewish community and public policy issues).

Along those same lines, **regardless of their prior involvement in Jewish activities, nearly one-third of all teens reported increased involvement in Jewish activities after they participated in a Jewish Service Learning program.** Teens indicated that they were volunteering more, both within and outside of the Jewish community; they also stated that they increased their financial contributions to general causes.

On the other hand, not all Jewish Service Learning programs consistently produce positive outcomes. A number of the Berman Center evaluations found that **some Jewish Service Learning programs experience mixed success, with several alumni indicating that their participation neither deepened nor influenced connections between Jewish values and activism.** Parents of alumni of select Jewish Service Learning programs that the Berman Center evaluated indicated that they did not perceive changes and/or attribute changes in their children's social activism to their participation in the program. It is possible that some programs simply did not stimulate change on the part of their alumni, but it is also possible that since so many participants were strongly identified and heavily involved in the Jewish community prior to their participation in the Jewish Service Learning programs, the programs may not have had additional impact. As one Jewish Service Learning program alumnus explained, "I'm already involved in a community service program at my school, so regardless of what I learned and did through [the Jewish Service Learning program], I would still be involved." Another possibility might be that because the Jewish Service Learning program evaluations were designed to measure short-term impact, the full effect of the program could not be realized at the time of the evaluation.

Program duration may also have a differential impact on participants and beneficiaries. It has been posited that **"short-term programs have greater impact on the server [i.e., the participant] but more limited effect on the community served, while longer-term programs achieve more measurable benefit for both the community served and the server."**¹³



"While many Jewish Service Learning programs have conducted formal program evaluations... few (if any) have undertaken ongoing or longitudinal studies to assess their longer-term impact on participants and/or the communities they served."

¹³ BTW Consultants, Inc. (May 2008). *Jewish Service Learning — What Is and What Could Be: A Summary of an Analysis of the Jewish Service Learning Landscape*. Berkeley: BTW Consultants, Inc.

Avenues for Exploration

To maximize the reach and impact of Jewish Service Learning programs, it will be necessary to address the following issues.

ENSURE THAT JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS ARE STAFFED BY THE HIGHEST CALIBER PROFESSIONALS:

Provide staff of Jewish Service Learning programs with high-quality, ongoing professional development opportunities.

- This should include initial training and should extend throughout their tenure. The focus should be on developing and enhancing the knowledge and skills that are unique to Jewish Service Learning programs and on those that are relevant across teen and young adult program efforts.

ACTUALIZE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS AS EDUCATIONAL AND LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES:

Develop and publish standards of quality for Jewish Service Learning programs.

- These standards should relate to all three main program components: service, learning (both Jewish and general), and personal reflection.
- This process should include a study of secular service learning organizations and programs that have done this well, and also a process through which benchmarks would be identified to both assure program quality and demonstrate program impact.

Generate measurable outcomes for Jewish Service Learning programs. Such outcomes might include:

- For the participants:
 - Fluency with Jewish values and texts relevant to the project.
 - Maintaining a connection with other participants, professionals, and/or community members.
 - Continued engagement in Jewish learning.
 - Ongoing participation in community service opportunities.
- For the professionals:
 - Enhanced skills related to the facilitation of the project and all of its facets, including logistical skills, mastery of the Jewish texts being explored, engendering inter-personal connections (between and among the various constituents — participants, professionals, the community).
 - Serving as a positive Jewish and civic-minded role model for participants and the community.
- For the constituency being served:
 - Resolution (full or partial) to the issues/problems being addressed through the service.
 - Deeper feelings of connection with the Jewish community, specifically the sponsoring organization and its participants.

ENGAGE JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING ALUMNI FOLLOWING THEIR COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM:

Jewish Service Learning programs should facilitate connections between participants who successfully complete their programs and Jewish communal and activist organizations to allow for a seamless continuation of activism.

STREAMLINE THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING THE “RIGHT” JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS:

Explore the benefits of developing field-wide resources.

Such resources could include:

- A vision statement
- A marketing strategy
- An evaluation plan

ESTABLISH WHETHER EXISTING JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS ARE MEETING THE NEEDS OF PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS:

Determine the scope of need for programs of different durations, different areas of emphasis/subject matter, and different aged participants. If outstanding needs are demonstrated:

- Identify any shortfalls affecting the field, such as:
 - The number of motivated and qualified participant
 - The number of qualified professionals
 - Formal training and certification programs for professionals
 - Professional development opportunities to promote continued growth and learning
 - Networking opportunities for lay and professional program leaders
- Design and pilot new models

FACILITATE THE EXPLORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW INITIATIVES:

Secure additional financial resources.

- These might include grants to specific Jewish Service Learning programs and/or their participants or fundraising to bolster all such programs and/or their participants.

Stimulate collaborations to advance the field.

- Collaborations might include secular Service Learning programs or service organizations, in addition to those under the umbrella of the Jewish community.

IDENTIFY ADVOCATES AND CHAMPIONS OF JEWISH SERVICE LEARNING:

Utilize them to advance the field.

- Current and potential funders should be used to leverage support — human AND financial — through existing structures and including Federations and other Jewish communal service organizations.

Conclusion

The Babylonian Talmud offers the following story: “Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nitza’s house in Lydda when this question was brought to them: Which is greater, study or action? Rabbi Tarfon answered: Action is greater. Rabbi Akiva answered: Study is greater. Then they all answered: study is greater because study leads to action.”¹⁴

Today’s Jewish youth live in a world of constant distraction and immediate gratification that often encourages individual interests over collective responsibility. However, their world also is filled with opportunities for their engagement, through both general and specifically Jewish organizations and programs. Jewish Service Learning programs offer unique opportunities to teach and learn, while simultaneously experiencing Jewish values and Jewish texts. Communal institutions would benefit from supporting efforts to develop a coalition of leaders to advance the field and increase the impact of Jewish Service Learning on participants, professionals, and the communities they serve.

¹⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin, 40b.

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“ Jewish Service Learning programs offer unique opportunities to teach and learn, while simultaneously experiencing Jewish values and Jewish texts. ”



Appendix A: Referenced Programs Evaluated by JESNA's Berman Center

Diller Teen Fellowship

The Diller Teen Fellowship is a national initiative that promotes Jewish teen leadership. The national Fellowship program is modeled after the program of the same name which was first developed in San Francisco in 1997-1998.

The Diller Teen Fellowship Program is a selective ten-month program for cohorts of twenty 11th graders, focusing on leadership training, community service, Israel education, and Jewish ethics and identity-building. During eight Sunday workshops and three intensive weekend retreats, Fellows participate in Jewish educational training and create and implement social service projects. The program culminates in a three-to-four-week summer seminar in Israel, includes a *mifgash* — an encounter with Israeli peers in San Francisco prior to the Israel trip — and in some years has also included reunion meetings/programming.

Jewish Civics Initiative

The Jewish Civics Initiative is a program for 10th, 11th and 12th grade high school students that teaches participants to apply Jewish values to public policy and social justice issues. The program is comprised of three parts:

1. Jewish Civics: A Tikkun Olam World Repair Manual, a year-long curriculum on public policy issues and Jewish values
2. The JCI Retreat, a Washington seminar on social issues, Jewish values, community service and political advocacy

3. Community Service Learning, a community-based service project with local agencies devoted to social change or direct service

Co-sponsored by The Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values (now the PANIM Institute of BBYO) and JESNA, the Jewish Civics Initiative was in its fifth year of operation at the time of the Berman Center evaluation (and in 2010, JCI is in its 15th year). Staff of the Washington Institute (now the PANIM Institute) has had primary responsibility for creating and revising the curriculum, providing professional development and consultation to teachers and local program administrators, and planning, administering and conducting the Washington Retreat. JESNA staff have recruited communities for participation, provided consultation about community-based program development, and evaluated aspects of the program.

The Day School Jewish Civics Initiative

The Day School Jewish Civics Initiative, sponsored by The Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, was launched in 1998 (and is now the PANIM Institute of BBYO). The program was designed:

- To foster a heightened sense of civic awareness and responsibility among students in Orthodox Jewish day schools and yeshivot; to further their commitment to fully participate in the American public arena and in the institutions that work on behalf of the Jewish people and the state of Israel; to help them see this commitment as a natural outgrowth of their Jewish learning
- To provide Jewish day school students with greater appreciation for the enduring wisdom of Torah texts and values through examination of their relevance to a variety of contemporary social and political issues

- To facilitate the involvement of Jewish day school students in community service activities of benefit of the general and/or Jewish community

Like its original counterpart, the Day School Jewish Civics Initiative is comprised of the course using the curriculum, the Washington retreat, and community service projects.

Four day schools, Yeshiva of Flatbush (Brooklyn, NY), Ma'ayanot (Teaneck, NJ), Columbus Torah Academy (Columbus, OH) and Yeshiva University High School (New York, NY) served as pilot sites for the initiative during the academic year 1998-1999.

L'Taken Teen Social Justice Program

The L'Taken Teen Social Justice Program (L'Taken Seminar) series is one of many programs sponsored by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (the RAC). The RAC's programming reflects their commitment to the concept, "L'taken olam b'malchut Shaddai: repair of the world under the realm of the Eternal" through the three focal areas of the Reform Movement: Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Chasadim.

The RAC's conference and seminar programs focus on developing skills among students, professional and lay leaders to help them become agents of social action in their local communities, equipped to address larger social justice issues and public policy concerns.

According to RAC staff, the concept for the L'Taken Seminars evolved more than 30 years ago when congregations brought student groups to Washington and requested visits with the RAC. At that time, RAC staff worked to create weekend programs referred to as "Political Action Seminars" for these student groups. The number of attendees and the structure of the programs continued to grow over time. In 1994, the RAC hired its first conference coordinator. By 1996, the RAC offered four seminars per year with each seminar drawing between 300 and 400 students. In the 2001-2002 program year, the seminar schedule expanded to offer six seminars. Each seminar was limited to 250 students per seminar yielding 1,500 participants per year. (As of 2010, each seminar is limited to 325 students per seminar, yielding 1,950 participants per year.)

The RAC is committed to providing quality programming and to understanding the breadth and depth of the impact of their efforts. For this reason, the RAC engaged JESNA's Berman Center to conduct a formal evaluation of the L'Taken Seminars.

Panim el Panim

Panim el Panim is one of several programs designed to introduce young Jews to U.S. politics. In 1988, PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values (formerly The Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, now the PANIM Institute of BBYO) established the Panim el Panim program for Jewish high school students. Panim el Panim is one of several PANIM programs designed to "bring Jewish high school students from across the Jewish religious and educational spectrum to Washington, D.C. to learn about political activism and civic engagement in the context of Jewish values and principles."

During the four-day seminars which take place throughout the school year, participants explore current social issues through interactive discussions, through problem solving scenarios and through studying applicable Jewish texts. Participants meet with political experts and advocates who represent a variety of viewpoints on each of the issues covered. Since 1988, 12,500 teenagers have participated in the Panim el Panim program.

PANIM maintains the following goals for the Panim el Panim program:

- To deepen the commitment to the Judaic imperative for civic and social responsibility and to the Jewish community's role in American public life and in world affairs
- To provide a greater appreciation for the enduring wisdom of Jewish texts and values through the examination of their relevance to a variety of social and political issues
- To stimulate leadership, activism, and advocacy on social issues, which challenge our communities, our nation, and the world so that program alumni can become agents for positive change in society

Spark: The Center for Jewish Service Learning at the Jewish Funds for Justice

Spark: The Center for Jewish Service Learning at the Jewish Funds for Justice (“The Spark Center”) seeks to inspire a commitment to service and activism as an expression of Jewish identity and an ongoing component of an individual’s life. The program works with organizations, families, students, and schools to develop and deliver meaningful Jewish service learning programs in local communities in two ways. First, Sustained Service Programs (HeartAction and LiteracyAction) deepen Jewish engagement through weekly or bi-weekly community service, education about issues, reflection, text study, and personal encounters. For these programs, the Spark Center supplies the necessary Jewish service learning resources (curricula, Jewish text, service opportunities, etc.), training, and ongoing coaching and consultation to practitioners in the field. Second, Service and Learning Travel Programs (in Baltimore, the Gulf Region, and Los Angeles) are intensive, short-term opportunities for teams of teens, college students, families, and adults to meet existing community needs while gaining important skills and learning about/reflecting on relevant historical, social, and political issues through the lens of Jewish ethics and values. The Spark Center develops these projects in partnership with local organizations including grantees, community development institutions, and partner organizations.

The Spark Center launched the Bay Area Jewish Service Learning Project (BAJSLP) in January, 2005, to provide leadership in the community and to support field practitioners in the creation and implementation of high-quality Jewish service learning activities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area among Jewish youth of all ages in a variety of formal and informal settings. The BAJSLP is a program of the Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (BJE) and is funded by the Jewish Funds for Justice, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, and through a dedicated portion of the teen allocation the BJE received from the Jewish

Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

As of 2010, the Service Learning program at Jewish Funds for Justice takes about 450 participants a year on immersive Jewish service learning travel programs. As in the past, these participants include college students, teens, and young adults, as well as families through a newly launched B’nai Mitzvah initiative. Jewish Funds for Justice no longer runs sustained service programs, but continues to make the HeartAction and LiteracyAction curricula and resources available to service learning educators.

Sulam: The Center for Jewish Service Learning

The BJE of Greater Los Angeles launched Sulam: The Center for Jewish Service Learning in 2006 to help Jewish teens deepen their connection to Jewish tradition through their active service to others. The architects of Sulam posit that while community service activities for Jewish youth have proliferated in recent years, these programs lack opportunities for the concurrent Jewish study and personal reflection necessary to produce genuine impact on learners. Sulam’s service learning program is based in an experience/reflection or learning/action model of education. Sulam’s mission is to share and teach its vision and understanding of its three-pronged approach to Jewish service learning: Jewish learning, acts of service to others, and personal reflection. The organization provides multiple resources to teens, parents, educators, and other youth professionals in the community through in-person and online resources, including the following three principal program components:

- The Sulam website (www.sulamcenter.org) offers service opportunities, Jewish learning and a wide range of pedagogic resources designed for formal and informal educators.
- The Resource Library is a valuable trove of books, videos, curricular units, lesson plans, and related materials relevant to Jewish service learning.
- Consultative Services provided by Sulam’s director help individuals, schools, and organizations to

introduce service learning approaches into Jewish classroom settings and youth group programs.

According to Sulam, there is evidence that teens perceive service to others not only as a requirement of their schools and other organizations, but also as a personally meaningful activity. Sulam's leadership also asserts that while educational institutions in Los Angeles currently encourage youth participation in social action and volunteerism, more work needs to be done to ensure the use of the service learning model. Working with the Jewish community, Sulam's programs and resources are intended to help students, parents, and educators/youth professionals make the explicit link between community service experiences and Jewish learning and reflection.

The Teen Initiative: A Collaborative Project of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties

It was not by chance that Staff Development was listed as the first imperative in the three-year plan that was the mandate and framework for The Teen Initiative. From its inception, the Task Force on Programs and Services for Teenagers understood the pivotal role of youth workers in creating "a vibrant Jewish teenage community," as well the challenges of recruiting and retaining charismatic, knowledgeable adult leaders to do this work. For this reason, significant resources have been allocated for building "a community of committed, intellectually engaged, creative, diverse, caring, and vibrant youth professionals who know each other, learn from each other, and work together on community-wide programs."

The three primary objectives in the area of staff development are to:

- Increase the number of knowledgeable and skilled Jewish youth professionals;
- Increase the number of Jewish youth professionals engaged in continuing education;
- Expand and publicize consultation services provided by the Teen Resource and Program Consultant.

An array of programs is developing and being supported through the Teen Initiative to help achieve these objectives. They include:

- *Networking and In-Service Education*: Monthly meetings of program providers and youth advisors to share organizational information, engage in cooperative or collaborative projects, learn from experts and build a supportive community.
- *Continuing Education/LAATID*: Stipends for completion of 16 units of participation in professional development opportunities including workshops, seminars, conferences and network gatherings offered for Jewish educators in the greater San Francisco area.
- *Professional Development Subsidies*: Scholarships to subsidize participation in conferences and workshops others than those offered through LAATID.
- *Professional Development Support and Consultation*: Ongoing consultation by the Teen Resource and Program Consultant including on-site visits, curriculum development, liaison to local educational specialists, support in creating or changing organizational structure, facilitating inter-group coordination and collaboration, and assisting with placement.
- *Centralized Resources*: Publication of a resource guide for Jewish youth professionals and youth leaders which details local resources including retreat sites, leadership curricula, local educators on various topics, relevant websites and a database of regional youth professionals.
- *Israel Experience for Youth Professionals*: Israel program and four workshops for 10 professionals designed to increase their knowledge and deepen their relationship to Israel. In return for a generous subsidy, participants committed to 1-2 years of work in the field of Jewish youth work, taking active roles in Israel education in their particular youth organizations and in community-wide Israel events, and working with the Israel Experience to promote youth trips to Israel.

- *Professional Training to Incorporate Youth on Governing Boards:* A community-wide training session for youth, youth professionals, lay people and funders, facilitated by a nationally recognized organization, to explore the benefits and barriers to youth governance, to develop skills and steps for including youth on governing boards, and to design action plans specific to the structures and characteristics of each participating organization.
- *JEWbilation Celebration:* Participation in collaborative planning and implementation of the annual day-long community teen conference emphasizing the positive aspects of Judaism. (Moved to Imperative 2: Teen Leadership Development for 1998-99).

In 2004, the JCF conducted a strategic assessment which led to the creation of the Jewish Teen Alliance (JTA) as an independent entity under the auspices of the Federation. Based on mutual recognition by the Federation and the leadership of the JTA, the JTA came under the direction of the BJE during the 2006-2007 fiscal year in order to bolster the group's effectiveness. The primary goal of the JTA is to map and connect Jewish teen programs and to raise awareness among teens about the range of Jewish programmatic choices available to them.

JTA UPDATED DESCRIPTION (2010):

JTA's vision is to ensure that San Francisco Bay Area Jewish teens view Judaism as an ally and resource as they navigate adolescence, and are informed of and inspired to engage in Jewish life. JTA works to achieve this outcome in three ways. First, JTA actively connects with parents, educators and teens via a website, online community calendar, and other social media. Second, JTA works region-by-region to design and implement community-based local initiatives to strengthen or enhance teen programming. For example, JTA launched the Jewish Teen Coalition (JTC), a student-led alliance of fosters a sense of unity among all Jewish youth in the South Peninsula; created a robust countywide teen program in Sonoma County; and is spearheading the launch of a uniquely designed outreach program in San Francisco. Third, JTA leads the Bureau of Jewish Education's Network

of Jewish Teen Educators. This community meets five times yearly and keeps educators connected to each other to share best practices and current trends in teen education in the SF Bay Area and at large. A weekly e-newsletter goes out to all Network members with job openings, opportunities for teens and other resources for professional development. As a result of JTA's work, teens are empowered to create programming they care about; parents are learning new ways to support their teens in a Jewish framework; teen educators are attending seminars in youth empowerment, managing change, adolescent development, and self-care, and local communities are successfully implementing initiatives to strengthen and deepen teen engagement in Jewish life.

Bay Area JCC Jewish Teen Programming

The San Francisco Jewish community has a long-standing commitment to providing formal and informal educational opportunities for its teens. In recent years, the San Francisco Federation has engaged in a series of efforts to coordinate and support programming for Jewish teens in order to maximize teen participation and to enhance the effectiveness of the programs. Many Jewish community leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area have considered JCCs and Havurot High programs compelling modes of engagement and/or gateways to teen involvement in the wider Jewish community. The JCC's Jewish teen programs encourage Jewish tweens and teens to engage with the Jewish world and to extend this involvement in college and beyond. However, they face stiff competition for a limited number of highly affiliated Jewish teens already involved in one or more excellent programs. Some of the venues currently providing formal and informal programming for Jewish teens in the area include two new community Jewish day high schools, denomination-based programs (e.g., synagogues, their denominational movements, Zionist organizations), elite teen leadership programs (e.g., Diller Teen Fellowship, Jewish Community Teen Foundations), sports organizations (e.g., Maccabi), and social justice/social action organizations.

Teen Engagement in Havurot: Peninsula Havurah High

The school is the Bureau of Jewish Education's Peninsula Havurah High (PHH), a two-semester per year supplementary Jewish education program for 9th through 12th graders in the South Peninsula. PHH creates an opportunity for students to form their own Jewish identities while providing formal and informal educational opportunities that expose participants to the variety and richness of Jewish life.

Every Wednesday evening, PHH students are exposed to cross-denominational learning with the goal of increasing their ability to identify themselves within the context of the larger Jewish world. By participating in community projects and leadership opportunities, teens learn the importance of being positive role models and how their actions are able to make positive changes in the world. The students welcome the informal atmosphere and appreciate the teen community that is naturally created through social interaction and the development of new friendships. The result is more connected, solidly grounded teens that often continue to be involved with the Jewish world while in college and beyond.

San Francisco Havurah

The school is the Bureau of Jewish Education's San Francisco Havurah (SFH), a two-semester per year supplementary Jewish education program for 9th through 12th graders in San Francisco. SFH creates an opportunity for students to form their own Jewish identities while providing formal and informal educational opportunities that expose participants to the variety and richness of Jewish life.

Every Wednesday evening, SFH students are exposed to cross-denominational learning with the goal of increasing their ability to identify themselves within the context of the larger Jewish world. By participating in community projects and leadership opportunities, teens learn the importance of being positive role models and how their actions are able to make positive changes in the world. The students welcome the informal atmosphere and appreciate the teen community that is naturally created through social interaction and the development of new friendships. The result is more connected, solidly grounded teens that often continue to be involved with the Jewish world while in college and beyond.

Appendix B: Interim Standards of Practice for Immersive Jewish Service-Learning Programs — Developed by Repair the World

Introduction

Repair the World has developed interim standards of practice for immersive Jewish service-learning (IJSL) programs¹ to identify best practices in program design and implementation. These standards were developed using precursor documents and with significant input from practitioners and other stakeholders. Precursor documents include:

- “K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice” developed by the National Youth Leadership Council
- “Educational Goals and Standards for Jewish Service Trips” developed by Rabbi David Rosenn for UJA-Federation of New York’s Break New Ground initiative
- “Standards of Practice for Short-Term Service Programs” developed by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and supplemented by the Universal Jewish Service Vision developed for the May 2007 conference, From the Ground Up, Advancing Jewish Service
- Break Away’s “The Eight Components of a Quality Alternative Break.”

Adopted in October 2010, the interim standards for this young and diverse program field have some inherent limitations: First, because of the program field’s diversity, full consensus on elements included

in these standards is not yet possible. Second, many programs hold themselves to additional standards that they believe are very important but that do not reflect current practice across a broad range of programs. Both of these limiting factors mean that some programs will feel that some standards are too stringent and others are not stringent enough. Despite these limitations, we believe that the interim standards of practice will help to further develop a more clearly defined and unified program field in which programs are consistently of high quality and have significant positive impacts.

Repair the World anticipates that these standards will serve as a communication and assessment tool in several ways, including:

- As a criterion to inform Repair the World’s IJSL grant-making, as will be reflected in grantmaking materials
- As a resource for IJSL programs to share with participants, community-based partners, funders and other stakeholders
- As a reference for Repair the World in its communication with current and emerging IJSL providers, secular service-learning providers, funders and other stakeholders.

These are interim standards that will be informed in an ongoing way by the experiences of IJSL programs and of Repair the World and by work led by Repair the World across the programmatic field to evaluate program design and outcomes.

Standards of Practice

1. **Authentic Service:** Participants engage in service that addresses genuine and unmet community needs.

Indicators:

- The program works in collaboration with community partners to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs
- Service has demonstrable positive impact on

¹ Repair the World currently supports immersive programs that are at least one week and as long as one year. Some organizations that run IJSL programs define immersive differently.

communities and/or individuals served

- Service outcomes are valued by those being served
- Service is appropriate for participants' skills
- Sufficient service work is available to involve all participants throughout the program.

2. Program Design: Program is intentionally designed to achieve well-articulated outcomes for participants and service recipients.

Indicators:

- Service is the central activity of programs of all lengths and short-term programs include at least 25 hours of service per week
- The program has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified participant outcomes
- The program's educational framework directly relates to the program's intended participant outcomes
- Service is directly related to the program's intended outcomes for participants and for the community being served.

3. Integrated Jewish Learning, Contextual Learning and Reflection: The program has an educational framework that includes activities that (1) root the service that takes place during the program in Jewish learning and (2) deepen participants' understanding about the social, economic and historical context in which the service occurs.

Indicators:

- The educational framework is articulated in writing
- The program combines reflection and learning in a way that is appropriate to the program model and service context
- The program incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself, one's Jewish identity and one's relationship and responsibilities to the Jewish community and to society.

4. Diversity: The program strives to promote understanding of diversity and mutual respect among and between participants and community members.

Indicators:

- Service and learning activities encourage

participants to identify and analyze different points of view

- Participants are actively encouraged to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service
- The program fosters cultural understanding through explicit cross-cultural training or another comparable approach.

5. Progress Monitoring: The program assesses the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting goals and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Indicators:

- The program collects evidence of the quality of service-learning from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience
- The program uses the evidence to improve the service-learning experience in the future.

6. Recruitment, Orientation and Reorientation

Indicators:

- Methods for participant recruitment and selection ensure that program requirements are clear to prospective participants and that their motivations for applying to the program are aligned with the program's design and objectives
- Before the service experience begins, participants are oriented to the mission and objectives of the program and the host agency or organization with which they will be working
- Participants engage in activities to broaden the impact of their experience on themselves, their peers and their communities. For short-term programs this will typically take place after the immersion experience.

7. Facilitator Training: Educators/program leaders have adequate training to succeed in their roles.

Indicators:

- Educators/program leaders are formally trained in relevant program areas such as facilitation of service projects; integrating Jewish learning, contextual learning and reflection; group dynamics and health and safety
- Program uses methods for evaluating and providing feedback for educators/program leaders.



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