



Investing in promising Jewish education grant initiatives

The Jim Joseph Foundation partners with effective organizations that seek to inspire young people to discover the joy of living vibrant Jewish lives.

Table of Contents

Our Vision	2
Fulfilling Our Mission	4
<i>Increase the Number and Quality of Jewish Educators p. 5</i>	
<i>Expand Effective Jewish Learning for Youth and Young Adults p. 11</i>	
<i>Build a Strong Field of Jewish Education p. 24</i>	
Grant Listings	34
Financials	38
Board and Staff	44

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Dear Colleagues,

Young Jews engaging in ongoing Jewish learning and choosing to live vibrant Jewish lives

For seven years, the Jim Joseph Foundation has partnered with effective, forward thinking organizations to realize this vision.

Our work is guided by a mission that is simultaneously characterized by simplicity and challenge: To foster compelling, effective Jewish learning experiences for young Jews in the United States. This mission speaks to the values and strong Jewish identity of the Foundation's founder, Jim Joseph, who passed away in 2003.

In this report, we share stories of grantee successes from 2008 to 2012. The stories showcase grantees' achievements, anticipate future accomplishments, and reflect the Foundation's strategically-driven grantmaking process. Each initiative or program is developed and implemented with explicit short-term and long-term goals and accompanied by evaluation.

This report also tells a larger story about where we are as a Foundation and our evolution over the last seven years. Having granted more than \$270 million, we are now in a position of great responsibility. Lessons learned guide our grantmaking. Equally as important is sharing these lessons with other funders and those in the field. Facilitating this sharing through multiple vehicles is now core to the Foundation's enterprise.

In the following pages, a snapshot of the Foundation emerges and shows where future resources may be allocated. Strategies proven successful may be adapted for other communities. Pilot projects that worked may receive funding for expansion. Through this continued evolution, we strive to be transparent in our grantmaking, in evaluation of grantee initiatives, and in past and future financial commitments.

The Foundation's story is one that our grantees have helped to write. It is their determined work that has increased the numbers of highly trained Jewish educators entering the field, inspired more young Jews to engage in meaningful Jewish learning experiences, and better positioned the field of Jewish education to nurture Jewish life for young Jews.

Together, the Foundation and its grantees are fostering compelling, effective Jewish learning experiences for young Jews in the United States.

Alvin T. Levitt
President

Chip Edelsberg, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Our Vision

In collaboration with grantees and other funders, the Jim Joseph Foundation cultivates more young Jews engaged in ongoing Jewish learning who choose to live vibrant Jewish lives. This has been the Foundation's vision since its establishment in 2006. The Foundation strives to select grantees that foster compelling, effective learning experiences for young Jews. Moreover, the Foundation believes that Jewish learning occurs in a variety of settings and ways—in camps, at school, in youth groups, at homes, while travelling, and in other arenas.



Our Strategic Priorities

The Foundation enriches the field of Jewish education by supporting organizations whose work engages, educates, and inspires young Jewish minds. The Foundation's grantmaking is focused on these strategic priorities designed to:

- **Increase the Number and Quality of Jewish Educators**
Grow the number of high-quality professional and peer Jewish educators in positions where they can provide effective and compelling learning experiences for young Jews
- **Expand Effective Jewish Learning for Youth and Young Adults**
Increase the numbers of youth and young adults who are engaged in relevant and meaningful Jewish learning and creating and sustaining Jewish peer networks
- **Build a Strong Field of Jewish Education**
Support the field of Jewish education and the organizations working within that field to be better aligned and more successful in promoting Jewish life and learning for Jewish youth and young adults

Values

Jewish values inform our grantmaking process

- Torah and the practice of its core teachings
- Importance of Jewish learning
- Recognition that Judaism is dynamic
- A strong commitment to the State of Israel

Where We Are Today

While our vision and strategic priorities remain steadfast, the Foundation's grantmaking strategies have evolved since 2006. Due in part to evaluation and trial and error, we now have a better understanding about the strategies that are most likely to achieve desired outcomes. We also continue to learn how to play an effective role in the Jewish education philanthropic world.

The Foundation now focuses primarily on organizations that serve youth, teens, and young adults ages 13-30. We help established organizations, such as Hillel, achieve even greater successes, and assist newer organizations, such as Moishe House, expand to have greater engagement capabilities.



Evaluation

We believe that grants provide a learning opportunity for the Foundation and its grantees, as well as for the entire field of Jewish education. For major Foundation grants, between six to eight percent of the total grant award is typically budgeted for purposes of external evaluation. We work with third-party evaluators who utilize selective research methodologies to document, describe, measure, interpret, and analyze how well a particular set of initiatives succeeds. The evaluation process helps to build mutual understanding between the grantee and Foundation and to ensure that information is shared throughout the grant period to assist the grantee. Documenting programs and organizations through evaluation also helps attract other funders for capacity building, scaling, and related organizational sustainability funding.

New strategic guidelines adopted in 2011, which were partly a result of evaluation and lessons learned, guide our grantmaking and inform the work of our grantees. For example, as evaluation demonstrated the value of leveraging peer-to-peer relationships to create meaningful Jewish experiences, a grant with BBYO was adapted to better utilize this methodology.

The Foundation values both quantitative and qualitative project outcomes. Our program of evaluation continues to evolve in our effort to find the most effective ways to measure the success of initiatives.

As we complete our sixth year of grantmaking, the Foundation begins a new era. Several of our major, multi-year grants will soon expire. Evaluations of these grants will help to guide our decision-making process moving forward.

Sharing Lessons with Grantees and the Field

In complementing grant awards made, the Foundation strives routinely to share lessons learned in our efforts to inform the field about effective grantmaking strategies. The Foundation approaches grantees as partners. We collaborate with them throughout a grant's development, implementation, and evaluation. Sharing what we learn helps others achieve desired outcomes as well.

Our Founder

Jim Joseph was a dedicated Jewish philanthropist who cared passionately about the education of Jewish children, youth, and young adults. He believed that focusing on young people was the best way to preserve a strong Jewish faith and proud heritage, thereby ensuring success of the Jewish people for the future.

The Foundation's Board of Directors and its Foundation professionals are building on the philanthropic mission that Mr. Joseph pursued: to foster compelling, effective learning experiences for young Jews in the United States.



I have found the Foundation's involvement very helpful, especially in trying to understand what we are trying to learn from the evaluation. They want to talk about it and talk about it again.
Ellen Irie, BTW *informing change*

They take evaluation seriously. They are at a sweet spot in terms of being involved, wanting to know outcomes, and wanting to know how those outcomes will be used.
Mark Schneider, American Institutes for Research

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