

This provides our initial evaluation of the North Shore Teen Initiative (NSTI). We have based our assessment on (1) a review of the program's scope and content, and (2) recently-completed interviews with seven North Shore Jewish community leaders who provided an "on-the-ground" perspective regarding NSTI's impact and effectiveness.

Overall, we found the scope and diversity of NSTI programming to be impressive and community leaders' perceptions of the NSTI initiative and its leadership to be extremely favorable. In fact, these leaders were consistent in their sentiment that NSTI has become a leading force of "blossoming Jewish activity" in the North Shore, and that it has largely succeeded in building strong relationships with congregations and other local organizations.

I. BACKGROUND

NSTI, covering 23 cities and towns within the North Shore of Massachusetts, was launched in September, 2008 and is now in its third year of operation. Funding from the Jim Joseph Foundation in support of the program continues through 2013.

NSTI has been self-described as an "...organization committed to building community among Jewish teens through institutional collaboration, a rich spectrum of innovative programming and participation in national opportunities." NSTI "strives to connect Jewish teens to their peers and to motivate participation in Jewish life through collaborating across the community for teen engagement, offering new experientially-based programming rooted in Jewish values and learning, and expanding opportunities to participate in 'best practice' programming in New England and beyond."

II. PROGRAM EVALUATION GOALS

Summation will evaluate this program based on the following four components, designed to assess the three-year outcomes identified in the program's Theory of Change (TOC) model. Part I is based on the first two components--the latter two will be addressed in our second and final evaluation next Spring.

1. Key metrics (program offerings, level of participation, etc. as detailed in Addendum 1)
2. "On-the-ground" perspective via interviews among a sample of 7 community leaders/stakeholders with knowledge of NSTI programs and activities. (Detailed in Addendum 2)
3. Direct participant feedback via online research among teens.
4. Parental perspective via online research among parents of teen participants.

III. FINDINGS

1. Although lacking a definitive baseline *prior to* NSTI for comparison, the growth in the variety, scope, and quality of programming now led by and facilitated through NSTI seems to have established it as one of, if not *the*, central resource for connecting and engaging North Shore Jewish teens. For perspective, in its introductory half-year (2008-09), NSTI offered **6** different programs, in which nearly **125** teens participated. This grew to **26** programs and over **800** teens in 2009-10, and **27** programs and nearly **1,050** teens in 2010-11. This was further underscored by the near-unanimous belief that NSTI has been filling a void in the North Shore community, creating events and generating youth participation that would not have happened without it, *especially* for smaller organizations/congregations and previously unaffiliated Jewish teens.

2. Our assessment of success also stems from the *depth* of programming alternatives NSTI now makes available. Consistent with its objective of creating programming "rooted in Jewish values and learning", the NSTI program "mix" has evolved to include a broad range of successful community service initiatives. Hundreds of teens have volunteered their time preparing and serving food at a number of events, including the Cape Ann Food Pantry, interacting and socializing with the residents at the Woodbridge Assisted Living Facility, and travelling during spring break to Wake County, North Carolina to work with Habitat for Humanity.

3. With persistent effort and (and an impressive degree of diplomacy and patience), NSTI now enjoys strong relationships with a number of other Jewish youth organizations in the North Shore area. In fact, while acknowledging its challenging start-up year, many described NSTI's present status as a "conduit" for collaboration and credited it with bringing together other, sometimes territorial, Jewish organizations and promoting/supporting Jewish teen activities sponsored by these organizations. For perspective, in 2009, *all* offerings were exclusively NSTI programs. Beginning in 2010, however, NSTI began offering programs *in conjunction with* other organizations, including SMART, USY and YAISH. This progressed further in 2011, as NSTI used its website and established communication tools to promote other groups' activities, including the "JEW CREW takes Manhattan trip" and the "Magical Mystery Tour-Sky Zone."

We also should specifically note NSTI's success in making substantive inroads with Y2I (Robert L. Lappin "Youth to Israel" Adventure), a dominant and influential North Shore program that initially resisted overtures by NSTI. While Y2I's declining financial resources certainly contributed to their more collaborative attitude, the value of what is now a much-improved working relationship is recognized and valued by many in the community. In fact, NSTI has now forged a strong enough relationship that Y2I asked an NSTI board member to attend three different Israel pre-trip meetings to talk to 100 teens about NSTI opportunities.

4. NSTI is seen as having not only developed new programs but just as important, having "raised the bar" on the overall quality of programming for the community. Said differently, it's hasn't just been about "more", it's also been about "better." This has been especially valuable to and appreciated by smaller Jewish organizations with more limited human and financial resources -- NSTI is credited with having provided them with the means, sophistication, and level of support that they would not have had otherwise.

5. The leaders with whom we spoke believe NSTI has removed many barriers to teen involvement in Jewish programming. The content and quality of the programming itself is perceived as having provided an opportunity for Jewish teen participation to be "OK", "cool", and "relevant" in ways that had not existed previously. This was brought up in a number of our conversations with community leaders and will be an area we try to quantify in our teen and parent research next Spring.

6. The favorable feedback we received bodes well for efforts to ultimately make NSTI a locally-sustained program. Nevertheless, a strong focus should be maintained on:

- Continuing to build relationships with local Jewish youth organizations (such as Chabad). We recognize this may be easier said than done but clearly, it is critical to NSTI's long-term viability and success. NSTI's track record to-date and well-regarded leadership should go a long way towards making this possible.
- Continuing to build awareness for NSTI throughout the North Shore community, perhaps "taking the show on the road" to focus on the more geographically distant North Shore communities.

Along those lines, NSTI needs to continually improve their communication and marketing to teens (including their registration process and teen database).

NEXT STEPS

- Late Fall 2011: Begin planning for quantitative research among parents and teens. This will include (a) reviewing the NSTI database to ensure files are current and easily accessible for research applications and (b) determining the best methods for reaching out to parents/teens to encourage online research participation.
- December 2011/January 2012: Develop quantitative research questionnaires
- February/March 2012: Field quantitative research
- Late Spring/Early Summer 2012: Submit final evaluation

ADDENDUM 1
NSTI EVALUATION

Detailed Listing of NSTI Activities and # of Participants

Year 1:

Category	Activity	Date	# of Participants
Service	Beverly Bootstraps (Community Clean-up)	3/29/09	22
	SCI Lynn (Community Clean-up)	4/26/09	8
	Brookhouse Home	5/17/09 + 3 add'l dates	23
	The Food Project	5/17/09	9
General	Project Adventure	10/25/09	23
	Canoeing	7/29/09	10
Camp Incentive	CIP Grants	Summer	28

Year 2:

Category	Activity	Date	# of Participants
Service	Cape Ann Food Pantry	12/16/09 + 2 add'l dates	12
	Food Project	11/1/09 + 1 add'l date	7
	NSARC	11/1/09 + 4 add'l dates	22
	Brookhouse Home	11/8/09 + 5 add'l dates	20
	Reading Buddies	12/2/09 + 9 add'l dates	10
	JRC: Latkes & Dreidels	12/9/09	10
	Service Learning for JTI	6/30/10 + 7 add'l dates	60-80
	Leonard Florence Assisted Living	12/12/09 + 3 add'l dates	5-14
General	Shabbat Dinner Reunion (Families from Maccabi Artsfest)	10/16/09	30
	Project Adventure/Team Building	10/25/09	24 + 6 Adults
	Soup-er Sunday	11/15/09	25 + 5 Adults
	Teen Advisory Council Meeting	11/15/09	7
	Laser Quest Lock-in with USY/SMARTY/YAISH	1/23-1/24/10	38
	Snow Tubing Superbowl with USY/SMARTY/YAISH	2/7/10	50
	L'Taken Social Justice Seminar (Washington DC)	2/19-2/22/10	17
	Teen Advisory Council Meeting	3/21/10	8
	Shear Madness/Visit to Faneuil Hall and Holocaust Memorial for Yom Hashoa commemoration and lunch with USY/SMARTY/YAISH	4/11/10	20
	Presented NSTI opportunities at Y2I pre-trip retreat	4/11/10	100
	J-Serve prep work	4/14/10	8

North Shore Teen Initiative: Part I

September 20, 2011

	J-Serve 2010 project at Ford School	4/25/10	80 + 20 Adults
	JTI Generations	7/21/10	16
	Maccabi Games and Artsfest "Send off"	7/28/10	40
	JTI Lynnwoods	8/4/10	12
	Maccabi Artsfest (San Rafael, CA)	8/8-8/13/10	24 (Largest delegation)
	Summer BBQ & Reunion	8/26/10	55
Camp Incentive	First time CIP Grants	Summer	40

Year 3:

Category	Activity	Date	# of Participants
Service	North Shore ARC	12/5/10	10
	Habitat for Humanity (Wake County, NC)	2/20-2/25/11	19
	Ford School (Reading Buddies)	3/2/11 + 8 add'l dates	12
	Cape Ann Food Pantry	3/6/11	5
	Woodbridge Assisted Living	3/15/11 + 1 add'l date	12
	Leonard Florence Assisted Living Center	11/9/10 + 5 add'l dates	20
	Got Mitzvah	3/13/11	100
	J-Serve 2011	4/17/11	80 + 29 Adults
	Haven for Hunger	5/16/11	20
	JTI Service Learning	Summer	60-80
General	Leadership Development with CHA 8th Grade	9/7/10	20
	Urban improv performance on cyber bullying	10/7/10	50
	Rockfest - The Josh Nelson Project	11/14/10	80 + 145 Others
	Soup-er Sunday	11/21/10	45 + 15 Adults
	Chinese Food Shabbat Dinner Reunion (Maccabi Artsfest)	12/10/10	25 + 7 Adults
	Loon Mountain Ski Trip	1/9/11	23 + 5 Adults
	Blue Man Group	3/13/11	100
	Laser Quest Lock-in	1/22/11	50+
	Snow Tubing Super Bowl	2/6/11	80
	Jam Space	2/13/11 + 7 add'l dates	30
	Presented NSTI opportunities at Y2I pre-trip retreat	4/10/11	100
	Lag B'omer Beach Jam	5/22/11	55 + 20 Adults
	Red Sox game	7/6/11	30
Camp Incentive	First time CIP Grants	Summer	33

ADDENDUM 2
NSTI EVALUATION
North Shore Jewish Community Leader Interviews

Interviewees:

1. **Ken Schulman** (Head of Cohen Hillel - only day school on NS) - involved with NSTI since beginning (part of Rabbinic Council that helped create idea) - Adam has done one event for them (8th graders) and Cohen Hillel "graduates" are very active in NSTI
2. **Deb Shutzman-Vazella** (Exec/Education Director at Temple B'Nai Abraham/Beverly - 187 families) - involved with NSTI since beginning. One of temples that sponsors Jam Space. Many temple teens involved with NSTI
3. **Carrie Berger** (Board of JCCNS/runs Maccabi games) - involved with NSTI since beginning (Artsfest)
4. **Laura Shulman-Brochstein** (Dir of Women's Philanthropy/Development at Jewish Federation) - aware of NSTI since beginning - not much overlap (one small event with NSTI)
5. **Rabbi Meyer** (Temple Emanu-el/Marblehead - second largest temple in NS) - involved with NSTI since beginning (part of Rabbinic Council that helped create idea). Many temple teens involved with NSTI
6. **Rabbi HaLevi** (Temple Shirat Hayam - largest temple in NS - merger of two smaller temples about 6 years ago) - president of Rabbinic Council.
7. **Janet Cline** - parent of an involved NSTI teen living in a smaller community (Hamilton; temple in Gloucester); she has been involved (chaperone)

Descriptions of NSTI (asked each interviewee to describe in 1-2 sentences):

- The center of the community for Jewish teens
- The core that is building relationships with other organizations and teens in the NS area
- Bringing consciousness/opportunities for Jewish teens to come together for common activities/causes that support the larger Jewish community as well
- A community support organization for teen programming and leadership, best fit with smaller congregations who lack resources
- Developing cooperative youth programming ventures across NS community
- Leading force of blossoming Jewish teen activity in NS (provide resources/financial support)
- Foundation for teens upon which all other teen programs (including those that were around prior to NSTI) are built
- Group that focuses on community service; different from other Jewish teen activitieslooks for Jewish kids who have NOT been affiliated/active, finds ways to get them involved and WANT to do more Jewish activities. Makes an effort to search out kids who are not active/affiliated, but also embraces kids who are already involved. By getting kids involved, helps them to develop their Jewish identity.

Perceived Effectiveness of NSTI: (Very effective to not effective scale)

A. Creating new teen-directed programming and activities:

- All 7 described NSTI as "very" effective
- One of only truly innovative programs in NS (not "same old" stuff) - Artsfest, Mitzvah Days Activities like HFH, leadership trips would not have happened without NSTI
- Ask active kids to bring unaffiliated friends to help get those who are not active more involved

B. Working with other organizations (perhaps like yours) to create and promote new teen-directed programming and activities:

- 5 "very" effective; 1 effective, 1 limited knowledge
- Open to working with any/all NS agencies
- Everyone wants to collaborate with NSTI - other organizations go to NSTI to plan an event

- Directly attributed this to Adam - he has really reached out to other organizations
- In beginning, key leaders of a number of synagogues/organizations negatively (and actively) campaigned against NSTI (including Rabbi of her own temple in Gloucester) - said that NSTI was not needed because there were other established NS organizations supporting NS teens - JJF should give established organizations that same money

C. Promoting the activities/events of other organizations:

- 2 "very", 3 effective, 2 N/A; Sometimes more temple's fault (vs NSTI) - not as responsive to NSTI requests as could be
- No more effective than others in community
- Cool insert in Jewish Journal

D. Success in bringing new teens to participate in Jewish programming:

- 5 "very"; 2 N/A
- Very successful but others in NS trying to do same thing (mentioned Chabad)
- Knows of previously uninvolved teens who are now involved because of NSTI

E. Success in encouraging currently involved teens to come to more Jewish activities:

- 3 "very"; 1 effective, 3 N/A

NSTI's strengths:

- Engaging teens who would not otherwise have been involved
- Improved vibrancy of NS youth programs overall
- Communication (2)
- Accessibility
- Understanding teens and ability to connect to them
- Planning - getting "biggest bang for buck"
- High energy
- Positive enthusiasm in dealing with kids
- Getting Jewish teens involved in activities consistent with goals of Jewish community
- Programming
- Leadership training
- Community-building
- Bringing innovative ideas to NS
- Successfully challenging assumptions about what will engage teens
- Non-denominational
- Creating strong working relationships w/ organizations that did not previously work together
- Focused agenda and has stayed "in scope"
- Charismatic leadership (2)

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Relationship with Chabad
- Awareness of NSTI - need to keep educating
- Take the "show on the road" - create opportunities throughout NS
- Continue to improve marketing (registrations process/teen database)
- How make a sustaining organization once grant ends/"turning over" leadership (2)
- Do better job involving the affected organization - have them help themselves more

QUESTION: Do you think NSTI is filling a void in the North Shore community or do you think the work they are doing is more of an "add on" for the community? ("Void" defined as without NSTI, there are things that would not have gotten done.)

"Filling a Void" (6)

- Has become THE central organization/resource for community
- Has created collaboration that would not have happened without NSTI
- Developed new programs and "raised bar" on overall programming - without NSTI, NS would have "same old" programming
- Have bridged gap/taken down all barriers for a Jewish teen to become involved within NS
- Is the foundation upon which all Jewish teen directed organizations now build (even those that were in existence prior to NSTI)
- Initially did not think it filled a VOID ("lots of things for Jewish teens to do") - but now that she sees what NSTI has brought/done, believe it has definitely filled a void
- Definitely more important for areas farther out/smaller communities - more limited number of temples, organizations with teen activities. Also lots of Interfaith families - she sees them getting more involved and benefitting from NSTI

"Add on"

- "If NSTI went away, teens would find other things to do"

Level of Acceptance Within the North Shore Community: (scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all" and 5 is "totally")
Among...

- *Teens*: 3.5 (teen tough audience to attract), 4.5, 4.5, 5, 5, 5, N/A
- *Synagogues/Congregations*: 3 (neutral/don't know), 4, 4, 4, 4 4.5, 4.5-5 (although started as 1)
- *Other organizations/community leaders*: 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5 (although started as 1)

Other Comments:

- NSTI has brought new "blood", new interest/excitement/innovation to NS.
- Confident recommending NSTI to others - never heard anything bad.
- NSTI makes it "OK, cool, relevant" to be a Jewish teen; makes them proud to be Jewish teen.
- NSTI provides smaller temples with means and sophistication and level of support that they would not have without NSTI.
- Provides most value to smaller temples/groups and in bringing Jewish programming to non-affiliated Jewish population.
- NSTI helps kids become leaders; shows them how to stand up for what they believe and helps them to become more confident in other organizations they may belong to.