

Sheva Center Leadership Institute

a Jim Joseph Foundation Case Study

Rosov
CONSULTING

10
YEARS OF IMPACT
2008-2018



Sheva Center
Leadership Institute for
Early Childhood Professionals
A signature program of JCC Association of North America



JIM JOSEPH
FOUNDATION
Shimon ben Joseph

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Framing the Case: Case Study as Window and Mirror

November 15, 2018

Since its founding, The Jim Joseph Foundation has been deeply invested in the professional development of Jewish educators. In 2017, the Foundation broke new terrain with the simultaneous award of three-year grants to ten different programs. **Selected in the Foundation's first ever competitive RFP process, these programs form a grantee cohort with a Professional Learning Community at its heart.** The educators served by these programs include Federation professionals, early childhood directors, day school educators, Talmud teachers, and peer educators.

A team from Rosov Consulting is facilitating the Professional Learning Community and is also evaluating multiple dimensions of the professional development initiative. We're examining who is being recruited to the 10 programs and their motivations for participation; the ways in which different programs work to develop their participants; and how the participants grow professionally, and the outcomes of this growth for their respective fields.

All ten programs include some form of intensive, residential, or retreat component. These components have become part of the grammar of professional development, one or more peak experiences to accompany the ground-level development-work in which participants engage over the course of a program. These experiences release participants from daily distractions, help form a cohort spirit among them, and enable a dive deep into the content of the work. Five of the ten programs are bringing their participants to Israel for an experience that truly releases them from their day to day concerns.

As part of our evaluation work for the initiative, our team is producing a series of case studies of these peak moments. The studies do not call for deconstructing these events to draw attention to what is and is not working. Instead, we come to the work assuming positive intent, adopting what Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot calls in her Portraiture work, a generous stance rather than a pathological one. These cases don't idealize, but by looking for the good, they draw attention to what can be sources of insight and inspiration.

We like to think of these cases as providing both a window and mirror. As windows, they provide an opportunity to peer into the work of fellow educators, make sense of their choices, and consider the implications of their practice for one's own work. There is a chance to become wiser through asking questions about others. These cases also serve as mirrors. By addressing challenges and pursuing goals a lot like our own, they make us ask questions about our own work. They inspire us to look at ourselves differently.

The **first case study** we present is of the **JCC Association Sheva Center for Leadership Institute (SCLI)**, an initiative intended to build a pipeline in the field of early childhood education of prepared leadership. We suggest that when reading this case, and especially when reading it with colleagues, it's worth asking three broad and three specific questions. **The broad questions** (questions for the head, heart and hand), **that can be asked about any case study, are:**



- (a) **Head:** What do I want to know more about, or understand better, and why?
- (b) **Heart:** What resonates in this case for me, inspires me, or frustrates me?
- (c) **Hand:** What here would I like to emulate and apply to my own work?



The **specific questions** that the content of this case inspires us to ask, when holding up the case as mirror to reflect back on issues in other programs, are:

1. What is our program's **unit of influence**?
2. How **Jewishly rich** are/might be our programs?
3. How much **tolerance** do your participants have for **pedagogic disruption**?

Building a “Kehilla Kedosha”

A Case Study of the JCC Association Sheva Leadership Institute

*“If you are ‘atem’ then we’re ‘n’tzavim.’
We stand here today and remember the dream.
Kehilah kedoshah
Kehilah kedoshah”*

Thirty-one adults are gathered on a wooden porch overlooking a sparkling blue lake in upstate New York. They sing the words above, penned by musician Dan Nichols and chosen by Cantor Ellen Dreskin to lead off today’s “morning ritual.” Some have their eyes closed, swaying as they sing. Others peer at their song sheets or turn towards Ellen (as all call her) as she strums her guitar and smiles back at the group. Their voices vary in strength and pitch and level of confidence in their vocal abilities (especially when Ellen encourages them to try harmonizing), but all are singing, all are lending their voices and spirits to create this chorus. Four days ago, these early childhood educators from thirty-one different JCCs across the country were mostly strangers, or at best, faces on each other’s computer screens. Now, however, after singing and learning and hiking and eating and chatting and laughing together for five days, they are a Kehilla Kedosha, an intentional, present, sacred community.

These educators — a mix of classroom teachers, entry-level administrators, and a few early-career school directors — comprise the inaugural cohort of the Sheva Center Leadership Institute for Early Childhood Professionals, a program of the JCC Association of North America. The Sheva Center Leadership Institute is funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation as part of the foundation’s multi-program Professional Development Initiative, and builds directly upon the Sheva Covenant Directors Institute, a three-year leadership program for directors funded by The Covenant Foundation from 2014-2017. The Sheva Center Leadership Institute seeks to create three concentric circles of impact — moving outward from the individual to the institution to the field — as explained by Mark Horowitz, JCC Association Vice President and Sheva Center Director:

The first goal is to help individual Fellows with their personal and professional journeys, and to do what we don’t do enough of in this field, which is to allow them to believe that this experience is just for them. It’s not just a means to an end to improve their work, but a way for them to nurture themselves, to learn how to build relationships, and to think about innovation through the lens of Jewish life and living. The more we can do that for people, the more enriching every part of their lives will be.

The second goal is to bring what they're doing to their local JCCs, and to make the connection between the JCC and Sheva Center Leadership Institute so that they can be catalysts for change in their institution. Ultimately, we want to help them all assume leadership positions, in whatever form makes sense for each of them and who they are.

The third goal, and the newest piece, is the idea of them being advocates. We want them to devote themselves for the rest of their personal and professional lives to advocate for the emotional and spiritual well-being of children and families. They will be a loud voice as a group and as individuals to talk about diversity and inclusion both within their local JCCs and eventually within the world.

Creating Kehilla

Foundational to the “theory of change” for achieving these goals is the work of creating a Kehilla Kedosha, an intentional, supportive, nurturing community with a sacred purpose. To that end, the Institute’s opening retreat, held June 24-29, 2018 in Buffalo, New York, was designed first and foremost to create deep and lasting bonds between the Sheva Fellows. This was achieved with resounding success, as evidenced by how Fellows reflected afterwards on the experience. Josh, a teacher from Denver, shared his surprise and delight that the connections between Fellows developed and intensified so quickly over the course of the week:

One thing that struck me most about the experience was the connections we were making so instantly. I think that had a lot to do with intentional choices made by Mark and the team — the place we were in, and the people that were selected. These are all people who are very passionate about what they do, so to be able to get an opportunity to pick everyone’s brain about what they think about the field was amazing. We so quickly fell into healthy conversations with each other. I came away with thirty new phone numbers, and at this point, which is pretty early in our Fellowship, I would feel comfortable calling twenty of them to ask about things that they’re doing in their schools or ask them to problem solve with me. I think that’s amazing, and it happened so quickly. I’m looking forward to developing those relationships even more.

Jennifer, a program coordinator from San Diego, identified a number of strategies that the faculty had used to encourage sharing and connecting from the Fellows’ first moments together:

Our very first session had each of us sharing a personal object, which they had asked us to bring, and talking about it, which was a great way for us to engage and connect. Then, I really liked the thoughtful manner in which we did our various breakout groups. It wasn’t just who you were sitting with, but sometimes it was a random group, and sometimes they really thoughtfully pulled a group together. Over the course of the week as people got more comfortable with each

And as Dave, a mentor teacher from Dallas, recognized, holding the retreat at a rustic, rural conference center rather than in an urban location was also an intentional strategy for creating community:

The location also seemed very purposeful in some ways. It had that summer camp feeling, with the bonfire and singing and meals together. Not being in a city where people can go out at night and split off brought the group together, and after just one week people knew each other much better than you would expect. That’s critical to a lot of the ongoing communication that’s going on between us right now — I don’t know that that would have been there otherwise.

The Seven Jewish Lenses

The second core goal of the retreat was to encourage Fellows to explore the seven “Jewish lenses” at the core of the Sheva Center curriculum as tools to nurture their own spiritual growth, provide an accessible language to bring Judaism to their schools and centers, and offer new and transformative directions for the field. The lenses are presented in Hebrew, with both a literal English translation and additional interpretive meanings, providing additional ways for learners to understand and connect with them:



- *Masa* – Journey (Reflection, Return, and Renewal)
- *Tzelem Elohim* – Divine Image (Dignity and Potential)
- *B'rit* – Covenant (Belonging and Commitment)
- *K'dushah* – Holiness (Intentionality and Presence)
- *Hit'orerut* – Awakening (Amazement and Gratitude)
- *D'rash* – Interpretation (Inquiry, Dialogue, and Transmission)
- *Tikkun Olam* – Repair of the World (Responsibility)

When introducing these concepts to the Fellows, the Sheva faculty sought to emphasize that these lenses offer a Jewish framework and language for values and ideas that the educators already intuitively know and use in their classrooms. As Ellen Dreskin explained, this gave the Fellows a sense of ownership over not just these seven Jewish ideas, but of Jewish learning in general:

I wanted to make them feel that they could approach Torah texts and it wouldn't be scary by letting them know, "You have permission to question this and permission to interpret it — that's what we've been doing for two-thousand years." So it was all about presenting Jewish learning

in a more matter-of-fact, less scary way. The idea is for people to not be intimidated by the Jewish aspect of anything. People are so concerned about saying or doing something wrong, or they know they're supposed to teach Jewish things in the classroom or observe a holiday, but they have no idea why. We presented it as, these are Jewish terms for things that you feel in your heart already — we're just going to give you the vocabulary to talk about it in a Jewish setting and help you understand why they're so important to bring into a Jewish setting.

To reinforce this message, Ellen led a text study of Deuteronomy 30: “It is not in heaven, that you should say: ‘Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, and make us hear it, that we may do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say: ‘Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, and make us hear it, that we may do it?’ But the word is very close to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.” (Ellen pointed out that these verses are from parshat Nitzavim, whose opening words — You stand this day — inspired the song “Kehilla Kedosha” that Fellows sang each morning.) The text study helped frame the idea that the concepts behind the Jewish lenses are already at the center — in the “hearts and mouths” — of early childhood education. This concept resonated with Jennifer who hopes to show her fellow educators how framing their work in Jewish terms can provide a new level of intentionality and meaning to their roles:

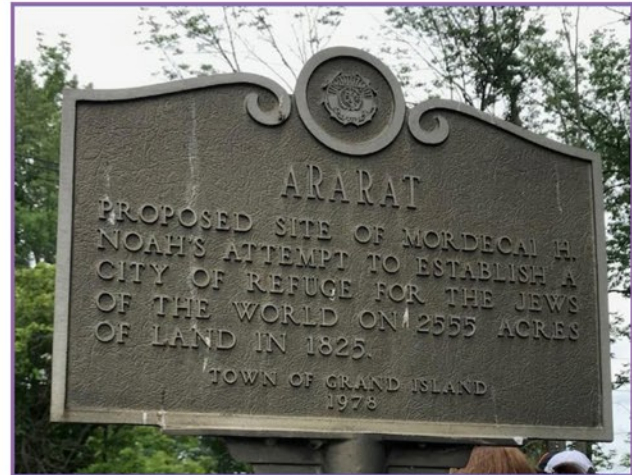
I feel that one of the things I'm going to bring back to the staff is that it's stuff that we're already doing. We do make these connections, but the lenses add a level of intentionality to everything that we do. That's a huge mental shift for people. I think about Brit, and we talked about how it says that it's more than parents just paying money and sending their kids to us for a few hours. It really is this deep connection in that the parents are entrusting us with their children, and they're also engaging with us in terms of the policies and the practices and supporting the education that we're giving. And by the same token, the teachers are taking in these children and providing them with educational experiences and opportunities and ways to explore and engage and to feel connected. So to see that in terms of Brit, I think it brings it to another level. It sanctifies it.

Kehilla Kedosha in Action - A Day of Intentional Experiences

What do Mordecai Manuel Noah, the Love Canal and Niagara Falls have in common? Though this sounds like an obscure riddle, it was actually the challenge posed to the Sheva Fellows during a “field trip” full of unique experiences in upstate New York. The first stop on their journey was the town of Grand Island, where on an ordinary street corner stands a plaque commemorating the planned city of Ararat, envisioned by Mordecai Manuel Noah in 1825 as a “city of refuge” for North American Jews. Announced with great fanfare but never built, Ararat today epitomizes both the vision and folly of Noah, a self-proclaimed Jewish leader with no followers. After a picnic lunch, the group next traveled to Love Canal, a section of the town of Niagara Falls which was the site of one of the worst environmental

disasters of the late 20th Century. After a guided historical tour of the site, the group ended the day at Niagara Falls, taking in the beauty and power of this natural wonder and enjoying a thorough soaking on a boat tour around the base of the falls.

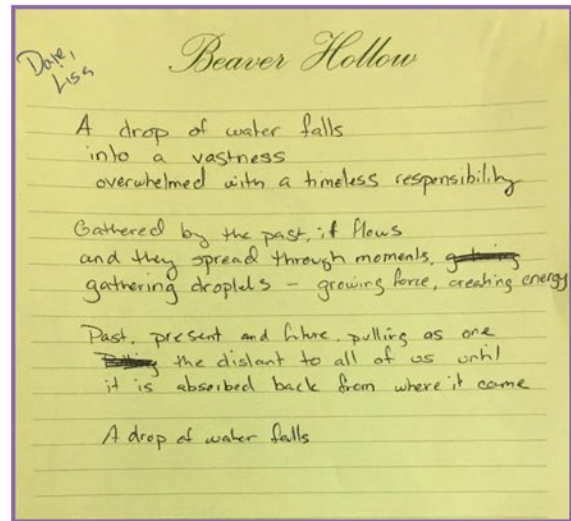
Fellows were encouraged to use the Jewish lenses to explore these experiences but were not given any explicit instructions about how to do so or what meaning they should take from them. To an observer, the outings seemed like enjoyable opportunities for group bonding and seeing the area sights, but the relevance to the Sheva Leadership Institute curriculum and goals was not immediately clear. The Fellows had spent the day paired with their hevruta partners, the colleagues (selected by the faculty) with whom they would learn and share throughout the next three years of the Institute. The next morning, each hevruta pair reflected together on their experience, then composed a brief summary of these reflections to share aloud with the whole group. As the selections below demonstrate, the insights and meanings that the Fellows gleaned from their experiences were striking and profound, revealing how after just a short time they were able to absorb the core themes of the Institute and use them to interpret and elevate what might otherwise merely have been a fun day of touring:



We used our experiences as a guide and catalyst for our own personal visions and journey. If we have a vision like Ararat, and we stand alone without a team of individuals who share in that vision and can cultivate it together, it may take years before we see tangible change. If, like the Love Canal, we let negativity or toxicity exist deep underground without removing (healing) it, then the negativity will inevitably resurface. However, if we gather like-minded individuals like drops of water together, we can build momentum and create true greatness. We must not forget to protect and nurture our communities and ourselves, so the change can be long-lasting and impactful for generations to come. And if we want people to join our communities, we must surface and incinerate what is negative and holds us back.

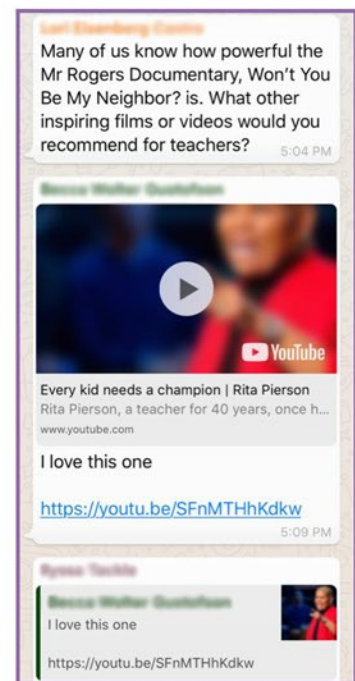
How do you go from a vision to a community? We saw extreme examples of visions at Ararat and the Love Canal. In Ararat, there was a singular vision of what the community could be, but there was no support, no-one to stand with him. As we have been singing in "Kehilla Kedosha," you can't be "nitzavim" unless you are "atem." Vision is just a dream without nitzavim. On the flip side, at Love Canal a community came together to advocate for itself but was destroyed. When the government tried to recreate the community there, they had lost the essential part, the shared vision of the people who had lived there. And at Niagara Falls, especially on the boat ride, we made the choice to be "atem," to be present to create community through the shared experience of wonder and power.

We begin life focused solely inward, egocentric, always needing. Somewhere along the way we forget the self-awareness, yet that presence is instrumental to finding gratitude. Modeh Ani — it begins with me, it begins with you. Then our awareness needs to make connections. To find other drops of water, come together, and make great change through common vision. Each one of us must play a part, hold the hope, right the wrong, remember, remind. Then, that which we are commanded today, for all time, is not too wondrous. Are we listening? Ayecha? Hineni — we must be. Our shared Brit is even stronger than Niagara Falls.



Bringing the Experience Home

As with any powerful group experience, the retreat eventually had to come to a close, sending the Fellows back to their homes and workplaces scattered across the country. Fortunately, technology is helping them to maintain and deepen their connections to each other in ways that wouldn't have been possible even a decade ago. Each Fellow was provided with a Zoom account for video calls so that talking with their hevruta partners and the larger group can still be done “panim el panim,” face to face, even if the faces are on a screen. The Fellows who were interviewed also each described how the Sheva Institute’s “Whatsapp” message board has created an omnipresent link to colleagues and mentors, allowing them to discuss topics from the highly practical to the purely entertaining to the deeply personal. Jackie, a teacher from Cleveland, marveled at how rapidly and effectively this online conversation had furthered the community-building that was launched at the retreat:



They set up a Whatsapp chat for us, and we've literally spoken to each other every single day. We've sent articles back and forth, we've asked questions, we've chit-chatted with each other, we've sent videos of fireflies. Just being able to have a question and reach out to forty other people in the field is huge. It's already helped us solve problems and we've only been home for a month. We have become genuine, honest-to-goodness friends. And that happened very quickly — I'm not even sure the faculty expected we would become as close as we did so quickly. As an

example, my school community and I just experienced a tragedy when my co-teacher passed away suddenly from a heart attack. After I let people know about it, I got so many cards and flowers sent by my Sheva Institute family. I realized genuinely that these people will be lifelong friends.

In addition to creating and sustaining the community of Fellows, the more challenging work of the Sheva Institute is to help each Fellow develop a Kehilla Kedosha in their own institutions to support and nurture their growth as leaders and their ability to bring about change. To guide this process, five leaders in the field of Jewish early childhood education are serving as mentors to the Fellows throughout the next three years¹. In addition to providing coaching and helping Fellows continue to develop their professional vision and goals, a critical role for the mentors is to be a liaison between the Fellows and the leadership of their JCCs, helping them navigate the potential hazards involved in trying to create institutional change. The importance of the mentor role is a lesson Mark Horowitz learned from the previous Sheva Directors Institute, in which mentors were not brought in until the third year:

At the end, when I looked back, I realized what a difference it would have made if we had started the mentoring piece earlier. Our ability to connect with the JCCs was compromised because we started that piece late. Now, we had them in place even before the first retreat — each Fellow had a Zoom call with their mentor — and we think that they're so vital to the success of this, we're bringing them all to Israel with us in December for our first Study Tour.

With the mentors as their guides, a key task for the Fellows over the next year is to establish a Leadership Team at their JCCs made up of strategically chosen lay and professional leaders. These Teams are meant to think deeply with the Sheva Fellows about how to create a vision and action plan for making the early childhood center, and the JCC as a whole, the best place it can be for young children and their families. The Sheva Center faculty are aware that for most of the Fellows, this task will challenge them to think and act as leaders within their JCCs in ways they may never have before, which for many brings both excitement and trepidation. As Jennifer shared,

I have this desire to dive deep and I'm so excited about it, but the rest of my school is doing what they're doing. Nobody is looking to transform their work. So I want to find that balance. I want to be able to engage people with the lenses. I want to reach them with the core components. But I need to be really thoughtful about how I bring it into the school, and careful because I don't want to turn people off. I want to give them enough that they're excited and they say, "Ooh, we want to learn more, we want to engage more." So figuring that out, I'm a little nervous about it, but hopefully it will come together.

¹ The five Sheva Leadership Institute mentors are Mark Horowitz, Sheva Institute Director; Kathy Pomer, Sheva Institute Educational Director; Caron Blanke, an independent consultant and former Chief Program Officer of the Loup JCC of Denver, and Veronica Maravankin, consultant and the director of early childhood education at the Mandel JCC in Palm Beach Gardens and Judi Morosohk. Director of Early Childhood Education at Jewish Colorado. Mark, Kathy and Caron were faculty at the Buffalo Retreat, and Judi and Veronica will join in that role in future retreats.

Having no illusions about how challenging the change process can be for institutions, the Sheva Center leadership has strategically ensured that the Executive Directors of every JCC with a Sheva Fellow is not only aware of, but fully on board with the goals and expectations of the Sheva Leadership Institute. Each Director signed a “Brit,” a statement of partnership and intent, when the Fellow was first selected. As Josh explained, “Knowing that my organization signed that paper allows me to walk in confidently when I ask for meetings and time and space to do the Sheva Institute work. That they did that was a really big change, and so far, I feel like my organization understood what they were getting into and they have fulfilled their part of the Brit.” And just to ensure that this original commitment hasn’t faded with time, Mark Horowitz emailed each Director immediately after the retreat to thank them for “sharing [your professional] with us,” to assure them that “our time with our Fellows exceeded every one of our expectations of their unique gifts, energy and passion and what they each brought to our nascent community,” and to remind them that “As we embark on this journey we want to ensure that you are beside us, helping us to make sense of it all and to better gauge our next steps. As Rabbi Tarfon used to say: ‘You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it.’”

“Each one of us...”

The Sheva Center Leadership Institute for Early Childhood Professionals has been carefully designed to excite, nurture, grow, delight and challenge its Fellows in ways they likely never have been before in their careers. The opening lines of the Institute’s “theme song” speak of creating community, of standing together, of dreams and of sacredness, all of which are infused into the experience the Sheva Fellows will have over the next three years. The verses that make up the core of the song have a different message. They shift from the community to the individual, to the responsibility that each person has to raise their awareness, to put in the work, to see what needs changing and to bring about that change:

*Each one of us must play a part
Each one of us must heed the call
Each one of us must seek the truth
Each one of us is a part of it all
Each one of us must start to hear
Each one of us must sing the song
Each one of us must do the work
Each one of us must right the wrong
Each one of us
Each one of us*

The Sheva Fellows are ready.

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Framing the Case: Case Study as Window and Mirror

November 30, 2018

1. How are educators making use of the lenses?

That's a great first question, because it's been the most interesting and surprising part of this Fellowship. The lenses were actually created for a prior program, and then we brought them in. Previously we had struggled with employing the lenses in a way that makes sense, that is accessible, and in the last Fellowship we didn't do well at that at all. But this group has been using and employing the lenses from the very beginning, and continuing to deepen how they are doing that. I think in large part it's because our Mentors have been working really hard to frame all conversations around the lenses, and we have also been doing that throughout the Retreats. We're always asking them to use the lenses as, well, lenses! And I think it's the first time we've trusted that they could actually play with that and do that, and so it's shown that everyone – in different ways and with different understandings of depth and meaning – is capable of exploring them and using them.

Many of the presentations we had during our last retreat were framed through the lenses. We were hosted by the Boulder JCC, and in their presentation about their journey they saw evidence of the lenses everywhere – physically, in reports and documentation – and they used that framing without us asking them to do so. So there's been a lot of evidence that the Fellows are beginning to use them as more second nature, though some of course are still struggling, as we all do. And the success of that at this early stage is really surprising to us, and to me particularly.

2. How and why, if at all, do fellows need to gain fluency in the values or is it just part of the “mood music”?

It's not at all “mood music.” It's about shifting completely our understanding what it means to be a Jewish school. Taking away the idea that what makes us Jewish is the way we celebrate the holidays, but rather than what makes us Jewish is the way we operate, and who we are – how we build covenantal relationships with our families, how we look at children through the lens of wonder. And that has the power to create change and resolve issues. For instance, after the shooting in Pittsburgh, which affected so many of our JCCs, we made sense of it together using the lenses. So the reason we feel it's so vital and important and we spend so much energy on it – though to be clear, what we don't do a lot of is say, now it's time to study the lenses – its about using them naturally in conversations about Leadership Teams, and conversations about change and the theory of change.

I'm very lucky because the team that is working with the Fellows is really brilliant. Every one of the mentors is so well versed and has worked so hard to understand how the lenses can become a part of everyday vocabulary. So it's very natural for all of them. We're about to leave for Israel, and we're going to be viewing Israel through the lenses as well. And it's beginning to impact the broader JCC Association, where people are beginning to understand what the lenses are and how to think about them. We're going to have sessions on the lenses at our conference in February, so any of the five-hundred JCC professionals there can begin to explore them. So our goal is to move beyond the Early Childhood Center to the whole JCC globally.

3. What are the challenges when participants try to recreate a kehila kedosha in their own communities?

That's the big special sauce. The Mentors have been meeting for hours over the past few weeks about Leadership Teams, returning home, all of those things that we thought we understood until we actually had real people in front of us. All 31 of them are in such different places, and ensconced in places that are really different from each other. So in some places the Executive Director is completely on board and fully a partner, and in other places they just want the Fellow to go to the Retreats and come back and leave them alone. So we're struggling with how to reach them all. We're working on Leadership Teams more slowly than we expected. Our goal went from having them in two months to having them in place and working when we leave them three years from now so that they continue to sustain.

Also the people who supervise the Fellows are all different as well. Some of them are Early Childhood Directors, some are Assistant Execs, some are Execs, some are Program Directors. So we are now working with the supervisors of the Fellows and the supervisors of the Early Childhood Directors and trying to get them all on board. We're really stepping up our mentorship, and finding more money than is in our budget, because we need more than the monthly calls with many of them. And if we can't get to that place then we can't get to the sustainability, which is really our goal. That's really what the Leadership Teams are about. It's not just visioning and having a dream for the Center, but creating sustainability for the kind of work that we're doing. We're feeling good about where we are now, and just beginning to step into those areas.

4. Do they experience any dissonance between their PD experience and the cultures of their workplaces?

For some, definitely. The culture of their schools in those cases is, "This is good enough, I'm not sure why you're carrying on here, we've filled our seats." One Fellow has heard from her supervisor, "We really just wanted you to get personal growth out of this. We didn't want to you come back and make a big deal out of it and try to change things." That's the extreme, not the norm, but it is something we're dealing with. On the other side, one Mentor was talking with her Fellow's two supervisors, and when the supervisors really began to understand what Sheva is all about, they became quite emotional about what they'd been missing. It really moved them. And that has happened a few times as well.

The good news is that when the Fellows are running into challenges and frustrations, we're really working with them to address them, reaching out their people. We're not saying, "Don't worry, it will be OK." And overall, I think there are many more good things happening. We're not having struggles with people listening to us; it's more the challenge of figuring out what we need to be saying. But the team of Mentors is amazing. I've never experienced such seriousness of purpose from a group of people in the early childhood field. We spend hours together each week, on screen and sometimes in person. We're working through what exactly the mentor-mentee relationships should be – the balance between social worker, coach, builder of capacity, etc. We're creating it as we go, and we're all very different so we have different goals and visions to reconcile. We want to be ourselves and bring our individuality to our roles, but still have consistency for the Fellows.

5. How are you working on getting institutional buy-in?

We've been working for a while on a letter to Executive Directors and supervisors to address some of the main challenges that have come up. The Leadership Team is a big one, figuring out when and how to get started in each JCC. What needs to happen before that process even begins? It's about communicating with the right people, so they will open doors. How much do they need to know going in about, for instance, the change process? Who do we bring together and when? We originally thought it needed to be the Execs and the people at the highest level, because they're the influencers. On the other hand, we believe that many of the Fellows are not being supervised well at all, so we're wondering if we need to do work around that with the supervisors. We'll be making those kinds of decisions soon. So we're working through what does "institutional buy-in" really mean, because the Exec needs to buy in, but if the person supervising the Fellow isn't buying in then they're not getting what they need day to day. There's so many people we need buy-in from, and we're trying to figure out how to reach the largest number and be most successful.

6. You seem to be conceiving of and work with the Fellows as current of future leaders, but what if they don't have leadership roles in their own organizations, or don't aspire to leadership?

People have begun to explore and understand "leadership" in different ways. When people first hear "Early Childhood Leadership Institute" – and even for us with the last Institute, which was called the Director's Institute – people think of the leader as the Director. And many of the Fellows are beginning to see that that isn't what they want to do. We're supporting the idea that in early childhood centers there can be many leadership roles, everything from being a classroom leader to being a curriculum person or a master teacher. So that's something we're addressing a lot with them. Then there's the fact that we have the two different groups, the administrators and the classroom teachers, and the administrators have more natural places to explore leadership because they're already leaders by title. The teachers are all people who have been prized as educators, but maybe not as leaders. So one of the things we've instituted in preparation for our Leadership Teams is the notion of "teacher-leaders," which people don't think about, and what that could mean. Who are the prized people who could be leads in different ways, or mentors, or age group leaders? How could they rise to leadership within the

context of the classroom? It makes such a big difference, because it gives many more people a sense of ownership and that they have a voice. We're having those conversations with the Fellows and the people in their settings.

7. What do you do about staff turnover in the ECE programs you're working with or among the Fellows themselves?

We haven't had any turnover among the Fellows. There has been turnover in some of the organizations, and we're working with the Fellows on managing those transitions. There was some chit-chat at our last retreat between one of the administrators and classroom teachers to see if she wanted to make a move to his Center. We had to have some conversations around that, because that would cause complications with both JCCs, but that situation hasn't come to pass yet. Other than that, we haven't had any big challenges around this issue, though in cases when Directors or Execs have left the JCCs we have to figure out who to work with. But we're probably more anxious about that than the Fellows themselves are.

8. How do the participants make use of the WhatsApp group?

It's constant! They're using it in all the same ways you wrote about: personal check-ins, sharing ideas and resources – here's an article, here's a painting, here's what I did with my class. A lot of, here's what we did in professional development, here's what we're studying, here's what we're learning. Now they're connecting around the upcoming Israel trip. It keeps them very closely connected. And we're hearing about the huge number of people who are connecting in other ways. Not surprisingly, each of the groups – administrators and classroom teachers – are engaging the most with each other. We did do more separate work with them at the last retreat, and they had some very intimate and deep and intense experiences with each other. So that probably contributed to that. So we're being careful to make sure to mix up the groups as well for our future experiences together.