

**The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington  
Outreach and Engagement Committee  
Jewish Outreach and Engagement Implementation Plan  
Executive Summary**

The attached Outreach and Engagement Implementation Plan, 2007-2016, aims at increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in the community. For purposes of this effort, being engaged in the Jewish community means participating in Jewish communal activities, interacting with other Jews, and feeling connected to the Jewish community, locally and worldwide. The Plan does not differentiate among types of Jewish activity. Whatever Jews do to engage actively and meaningfully in Jewish life contributes to the goal of building and maintaining a strong, vibrant Jewish community. Similarly, the Plan does not differentiate between participation in multiple types of Jewish activities and intense participation in one or two activities. What counts is that Jews be actively engaged with other Jews beyond their immediate families in whatever Jewish activities may be meaningful to them. The Plan looks at the community as a whole, without regard for denomination, marital status or personal Jewish history.

We propose as the goal that 65% of Greater Washington Jewish residents should consider themselves to be part of the Jewish community by 2016, compared with 51% in the 2003 survey.

**Recommendations for achieving goal**

To achieve this goal, Federation must recognize its responsibility as the central coordinating force in the community, provide the leadership required for the necessary changes, and encourage community organizations to embrace the goal and actively work together to achieve it. Federation has no higher priority than engagement. It has other priorities, but increasing engagement is vital for the future of the Jewish community.

Many changes can be carried out at little or no cost. Most importantly, the community needs to make changes in its culture. Community leaders must be more sensitive to market demand—what unengaged and under-engaged Jews are looking for and what will turn them away. The community must be sensitive to the possibility of modifying pricing policies to encourage increased participation. Community organizations must recognize that part of their mission is to foster Jewish engagement and consequently that their mission includes encouraging the Jews they serve to participate in Jewish activities sponsored by other organizations. Community organizations must follow-up initial contacts without making unengaged or under-engaged Jews feel pressured or guilty. The community must make greater efforts to ensure that unengaged and under-engaged Jews are aware of the wide range of activities offered. And, most importantly, the community must be understanding and non-judgmental. It must accept Jews as they are and encourage and welcome them to join in more communal activities. Every Jew has a place in this community, and helping each Jew to find that place will allow the community to thrive. An inclusive, welcoming attitude will be critical to the success of our endeavor. Many organizations have already adopted some of these practices, and Federation should now urge all community organizations—throughout the region—to adopt them.

Other changes call for sizeable expenditures. In view of the vital importance of the goal and the range of programs needed to pursue it, we recommend that Federation raise at least \$5 million per year to invest in the engagement effort over the coming five years and that it then consider extending these efforts for at least another five years. These funds would be used for expenditures on programs and activities designed to increase materially the number of Jews (and non-Jewish spouses) actively and meaningfully engaged in the Jewish community or the number of Jews who consider themselves to be part of the Jewish community. The funds would not be available for programs that contribute to, say, a more vibrant community for those who are already engaged but that have little effect on the unengaged or the under-engaged.

The funds should be allocated annually by a broad-based, impartial entity that would be responsible for execution of the engagement plan and that would allocate resources, in principle, based on the expected cost-effectiveness, i.e., on maximizing the expected increase in the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in Jewish communal life per thousand dollars allocated. As a practical matter, Federation cannot develop estimates of the cost-effectiveness for the wide range of programs envisaged. Nevertheless, broad judgments can still be made. Programs that primarily serve population segments already actively and meaningfully engaged (or that, based on their family background, are likely to become actively and meaningfully engaged) are unlikely to be cost-effective for these purposes. Federation and the community may have good reasons to support these programs, but they should not consider these programs as part of the community's outreach and engagement efforts. In contrast, other programs may be likely to attract unengaged or under-engaged Jews and draw them into greater involvement. Some of these programs, moreover, may lead to recurring interactions that create ties to other Jews and to the Jewish community. Provided that their costs are not excessive in relation to the number of persons meaningfully affected, these programs would appear likely to be cost-effective.

In general, we believe that cost-effectiveness can be maximized by (i) taking steps to develop a market-oriented culture and (ii) focusing efforts on the three core target markets—Jews in their 20s and 30s without children, Jews with young children, and interfaith families—and on the under-served, under-engaged suburbs. These population segments offer the best prospects for increasing engagement.

Although it might appear desirable to concentrate community spending on a small number of highly cost-effective programs, the community must adopt a broader approach. Differences among the population segments targeted and among individuals within each population segment make it necessary to offer a range of products to appeal to different audiences. Moreover, inadequate information on impacts and costs has limited our ability to select a small number of “winners” and reject programs likely to be less effective or less cost-effective. The Plan consequently recommends a range of ideas, providing an overview of the tools that might be considered to address the engagement issue. Community organizations may wish to develop proposals and seek funding based on these—or other—ideas.

## **Recommendations for assessing progress and adapting efforts to results of experience**

To achieve the goal of increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in the community, Federation and the community at large must assess progress and modify their efforts based on the findings of experience.

*First, we strongly recommend that Federation and other communal organizations monitor and evaluate all programs involving significant commitments of resources and that engagement programs not shown to be effective and cost-effective in promoting engagement be dropped from the engagement program.*

*Second, Federation's Engagement Coordinator should submit to the Outreach and Engagement Committee each year a report, approved by Federation's Executive Vice President and CEO, on the engagement activities carried out by Federation and community organizations (whether with Federation or UJEF funds or, to the extent known, with other resources), the costs incurred, the results of these activities—particularly with respect to the measures of success agreed for each activity—and recommendations for the future.*

*Third, the Outreach and Engagement Committee should review the Engagement Coordinator's annual report and send it, together with a cover memo expressing its own assessment, to the Federation's Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Planning and Allocation Committee, and United Jewish Endowment Fund and to community organizations by January of each year so that it can be taken into consideration in the allocation process..*

*Fourth, we recommend that engagement summit meetings be held prior to each triennial budget cycle to ensure broader input into the engagement efforts. These meetings will permit the community to draw on the lessons of experience in re-orienting the program and guiding future budgetary allocations.*

*Finally, we recommend that the community conduct a follow-up survey in 2016 similar to the 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study, and where appropriate, interim, more limited surveys. Given the importance of increasing engagement in Jewish life and the resources proposed to be invested, the community needs to assess the results to provide guidance for subsequent years.*

April 15, 2007

# The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington Outreach and Engagement Committee Jewish Outreach and Engagement Implementation Plan

## I. Introduction

### Context

The 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study, motivated in part by serious concerns about Jewish continuity, sought, among other things:

...to provide the Jewish Federation [and others] with information to enable them to...contribute to the development of a Jewish community that will offer compelling reasons for all Jews to maintain their Jewish identity and remain active members of the community.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the findings of this study, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington (Federation) established a Commission on Jewish Engagement (the Commission) to address “the principal problems regarding Jewish identity and participation.” In September 2005, the Commission issued A Strategic Plan for Community Engagement,<sup>2</sup> drawing on numerous interviews, a Professional Advisory Committee, a separate study commissioned from the Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI),<sup>3</sup> a strategic marketing plan drawn up by a Federation Marketing Committee,<sup>4</sup> advice from a noted scholar specializing in Jewish sociological studies,<sup>5</sup> a literature review, and a Community Summit on Engagement.

Federation’s Board approved the Strategic Plan and created an Outreach and Engagement Committee (the Committee) to develop plans and serve as a clearinghouse for ideas to increase the effectiveness of existing efforts at outreach and engagement, identify new strategies and programs to increase engagement in Jewish communal life, and increase communication and coordination among Jewish communal institutions on this issue. The Committee has prepared this Implementation Plan based on the foundation laid by the Strategic Plan, the extensive efforts already undertaken by the local community,<sup>6</sup> the experience of other communities nationwide, and extensive

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<sup>1</sup> Ira M. Sheskin, “Major Themes: The 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study,” Feb. 2004, The Charles I. & Mary Kaplan Family Foundation, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> “A Strategic Plan for Community Engagement: From Disengagement to Joint Community Ownership—*‘to build a purposeful and vibrant Jewish community...’*” Sept. 22, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Jewish Outreach Institute, “Jewish Outreach Scan of Greater Washington, DC,” Oct. 2004. This report made a number of useful recommendations. Work has started on some but, due to a lack of funding, has been deferred on others.

<sup>4</sup> “Toward a Vibrant and Purposeful Jewish Community: A Strategic Marketing Plan for the Greater Washington Jewish Community, March 8, 2005. This report made a number of useful recommendations. Work has started on some but, due to a lack of funding, has been deferred on others.

<sup>5</sup> Steven M. Cohen, “Report to the Presidential Commission on Jewish Engagement,” Aug. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Many community organizations are actively engaged in outreach activities, and we commend the variety and quality of programming in the Greater Washington area. Throughout this paper, we have referred to community organizations and specific programs, where applicable, to demonstrate particular points. These references are for illustrative purposes only and are not meant to reflect all community activities.

consultations with local organizations, community leaders and focus groups.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the Commission and the Committee have sought the views of more than 250 individuals from over 85 community organizations. The Plan lays out a range of ideas for increasing engagement, makes recommendations and provides background information to explain the thinking underlying our recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of engagement is important to the entire Jewish community. Federation, as the central coordinating force in the community, is uniquely positioned to take the lead in addressing this issue by convening and working with all local Jewish organizations. And all local Jewish organizations need to recognize that they are part of the community, that their future depends on the strength of the community, and to embrace the goal of increasing engagement.

## Goal

The underlying goal of this implementation plan is to build and maintain a vibrant, actively engaged Jewish community.<sup>9</sup> This goal calls for *increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully* engaged in the community. It calls for getting the unengaged to become engaged and for getting the engaged to be more actively and meaningfully engaged. For purposes of this effort, being engaged in the Jewish community means participating in Jewish communal activities, interacting with other Jews, and feeling connected to the Jewish community, locally and worldwide.

Our definition of engagement does not differentiate among types of Jewish activity. Some Jews may devote themselves primarily to participation in religious services, others to Torah study and Jewish education, others to Jewish social action or charitable activities, and still others to Jewish cultural or political activities. Whatever Jews do to engage actively and meaningfully in Jewish life contributes to the goal of building and maintaining a strong Jewish community.

Similarly, we do not differentiate between participation in multiple types of Jewish activities and intense participation in one or two. What counts is that Jews be actively engaged with other Jews beyond their immediate families in whatever activities may be meaningful to them.<sup>10</sup> Being engaged in a wide variety of activities is fine, but so is intense engagement in just one or two.

We propose that progress toward the goal be assessed based on one of the questions asked in the 2003 Community Study—whether respondent households

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<sup>7</sup> Annex 1 lists the community organizations that have contributed their thoughts to this Implementation Plan. The Committee extends its thanks to all who contributed to this effort.

<sup>8</sup> Annex 2 provides a summary of comments on the draft report received from community leaders and compiled by Federation staff.

<sup>9</sup> Federation's mission provides, among other things, that it "deepens engagement in Jewish life, and strengthens the bonds among Jews in the Washington area, in Israel, and around the world...all geared toward building and maintaining a strong Jewish community locally and worldwide."

<sup>10</sup> What happens within families is, of course, vitally important also. "What matters to the Jews we interviewed...are powerful individual memories and experiences...and the people who share the most meaningful moments on these journeys...primarily the members of their families." And "The spaces in which it transpires are predominantly intimate and private—homes and families, friendships and romances..." Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family and Community in America*, Indiana U. Press, 2000, p. 16.

considered themselves to be part of the local Jewish community.<sup>11</sup> The 51% responding positively in the 2003 survey was around the median for the communities shown but well below the 67% for Baltimore. For the Greater Washington area, positive responses ranged from 31% in Prince George's County and 34% in Arlington-Alexandria-Falls Church to 64% in Lower Montgomery County. We believe a target of 65% for the overall area by 2016 would be reasonable. Achieving this goal will require, among other things, significantly increasing a sense of identification with the Jewish community among the population segments that yielded low percentages in the 2003 survey, particularly, Jews under 35 years of age (36%), intermarried respondents (28%), and the under-engaged suburban areas (as low as 31%).

## **Overview**

This paper proposes a 10-year plan (2007-2016) for increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in the community. Chapter II deals with the community's overall engagement efforts, focusing on cultural change. It suggests a number of steps applicable to a wide range of organizations. Chapter III takes a different perspective. It focuses on the three core target markets identified in the Strategic Plan—Jews in their 20s and 30s without children, Jews with young children, and interfaith couples—and Jews in under-engaged and under-served suburban areas.<sup>12</sup> It suggests expanding or initiating a number of programs for reaching out to these populations and increasing their engagement in, and attachment to, the community. Chapter IV pulls together the overarching recommendations from the two prior chapters, adds some broader recommendations, and proposes arrangements for oversight and adapting the program in light of emerging experience.

Some of the report's suggestions will require additional spending to expand existing programs to serve a larger audience, to extend their availability to underserved suburbs, or to initiate new programs. Because resources are scarce, we recommend that engagement resources be allocated, at least conceptually, based on the expected cost-effectiveness in contributing to increased engagement and that programs be monitored and evaluated with a view to expanding, modifying or dropping them from the engagement program based on their engagement outcomes.

## **II. Overall Engagement Efforts – The Need for Cultural Change**

In the course of our work, we identified a range of steps that community organizations can take to increase engagement. Some require material expenditures, but most call rather for cultural changes. These changes essentially involve adopting good marketing practices. They call for community leaders to be more sensitive to market demand—what unengaged and under-engaged Jews are looking for and what

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<sup>11</sup> The percentage of *individual* Jews (rather than households) *actively and meaningfully engaged* would be a more appropriate metric, but we have no baseline data to use in setting a target. The next demographic survey, in addition to asking whether respondents feel they are part of the local Jewish community, should ask whether individual Jews feel they are actively and meaningfully engaged in the community. In addition, in keeping with the elements of Jewish engagement suggested in the text, the next survey should ask about the respondents' *active participation* (hours per month) *in a broad range of Jewish communal activities* (as opposed to just membership in major Jewish communal organizations).

<sup>12</sup> The 2005 Strategic Plan called for priority attention to be given to “twenty/thirty somethings, families with preschool children; [and] intermarried families”—essentially the same core target populations as the three identified here.

will turn them away. They call for sensitivity to the possibility of modifying pricing policies to encourage increased participation. They call for community organizations to recognize that part of their mission is to foster Jewish engagement and consequently that their mission includes encouraging the Jews they serve to participate in Jewish activities sponsored by other organizations. They call for following-up initial contacts without making unengaged or under-engaged Jews feel pressured or feel guilty. They call for greater efforts to ensure that unengaged and under-engaged Jews are aware of the wide range of activities offered by the community. And, most importantly, they call for the community to be understanding and non-judgmental, accepting Jews as they are and encouraging and welcoming them to join in more communal activities. Every Jew has a place in this community, and helping each Jew to find that place will allow the community to thrive. Many organizations have already adopted some of the practices discussed in this chapter, and Federation should now urge all community organizations—throughout the region—to adopt them.

### **Products offered**

Successful marketing starts with offering products the market wants. It calls for providing services that will attract unengaged and under-engaged Jews. American Jews today are like other Americans in selecting what is gratifying or meaningful to them, not necessarily what existing organizations may be offering in the market. The era of offering Model T Fords “in any color, so long as it’s black” ended long ago. Today’s most successful automobile manufacturer, Toyota, believes that it should serve every kind of customer.<sup>13</sup> Consumers now, particularly in leisure time activities, pick and choose. They do not feel obliged to select faith-based activities.

Moreover, society no longer imposes a Jewish identity on Jews. Compared with their parents, many Jews today feel less threatened by overt anti-Semitism and have more ambivalent attitudes towards Israel. The sense of existential threats that previously led many Jews to engage in communal activities no longer motivates as great a percentage of the population today. Indeed, many Jews feel free to embrace or ignore their Jewish identity.

If the Jewish community aspires to encourage more Jews to be actively engaged, it must recognize that there are many ways of being Jewish and must encourage the development of a range of products to meet the diverse interests of unengaged and under-engaged Jews. By increasing the number of portals—going beyond the synagogues, the JCCs and the traditional social service agencies—the Jewish community can attract Jews wanting to explore new approaches to conducting Jewish religious services, studying Jewish texts, creating Jewish cultural programs, or developing social action or charitable activities with other Jews. Basically, we have to make being Jewish attractive. Given the number of competing demands on time, we have to provide a viable reason to be part of the Jewish community. For many, simply being born Jewish is no longer a reason for engaging in Jewish communal life.

The need to broaden the product line implies that the Jewish community must maintain an accepting attitude to new approaches and new organizations. Some community institutions have resisted challenges to long-standing traditions and have

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<sup>13</sup> J. Gertner, “From 0 to 60 to World Domination,” *The New York Times Magazine*, Feb. 18, 2007, p. 38.

been hostile to new organizations. Yet these new approaches and new organizations have often demonstrated their ability to attract the unengaged and under-engaged.<sup>14</sup>

**In the synagogue.** Although synagogues have been the traditional core institutions of the Jewish community, only 26% of Jewish households in Greater Washington are now synagogue members, 31% attend only for Bar Mitzvah ceremonies, weddings, and other special events, and only 22% say that they attend synagogue services once a month or more. Just looking at monthly attendance, the Washington area trails well behind Cleveland, St. Louis, Dallas and Baltimore, all of which report that 30-31% of local Jews attend monthly or more often.<sup>15</sup>

The low level of attendance to some extent reflects dissatisfaction with existing services. Some Jews may be unhappy with the length of the services. Some may feel they get little out of services that call for them to sit as an anonymous member of a congregation. Some may want to spend more time exploring the week's parsha, either through a more probing dvar Torah or a participatory discussion. Some may prefer lay-led minyanim that empower participants to take responsibility for the design and conducting of services. And some may feel that Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies have taken over the services.

For other Jews, services may never be a meaningful mode of engagement. Attracting these Jews to the synagogue may require widening the range of programming. The Synaplex initiative provides ideas for synagogues to offer creative, non-traditional programming that will appeal to a wider Jewish audience and, thus, increase engagement among moderately involved Jews. Synaplex does not seek to attract more people to conventional prayer services but rather encourages synagogues to offer additional Jewish experiences involving not only alternative minyanim but also educational, social or cultural programs to attract participation on Shabbat. The Synaplex initiative claims that its approach increases attendance by 50% on Shabbat day and 80% on Erev Shabbat. Nearly 130 congregations, mostly Conservative or Reform, have adopted the Synaplex approach, including four in the Greater Washington area.<sup>16</sup>

Many synagogues, of course, already offer a wide range of programs and experiment with new approaches to increasing participation.<sup>17</sup> To meet market demand, however, *we recommend that the Federation-Congregation Relations Committee (FCRC) and the Board of Rabbis encourage more synagogues to offer alternative minyanim and programming on Shabbat and during the week and experiment with new approaches to increasing participation. FCRC is already encouraging synagogues and chevrot to share best practices on attracting Jews and should continue to do so, among*

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<sup>14</sup> Rabbi Sidney Schwarz, *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World*, 2006, Chapter 15.

<sup>15</sup> 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study, Compact Disk, Tables 6-24, 6-25 and 7-7. The survey responses suggest that 37% of Jewish households are synagogue members but, as explained on page 7-21 of the Compact Disk, this figure is less reliable than the data from the synagogue survey.

<sup>16</sup> Synaplex was developed by STAR (Synagogues: Transformation and Renewal). Further information can be found at <http://www.synaplex.org>. The local synagogues participating are Congregation Beth El, Congregation Har Shalom, Temple Beth Ami, all in Montgomery County, and Sixth and I Historic Synagogue in Washington, D.C.

<sup>17</sup> One local synagogue, for example, offers a 90-minute, inter-active Shabbat "Un-Service," which it advertises by asking "Could prayer be more fun?" and a Shabbat morning children's program that includes "Sports'N'Torah," i.e., "learn about the parsha, then shoot some hoops" for young boys (8+).

*other things, by developing a list of options for increasing membership and increasing participation by existing members, whether for services or for other activities. In addition, FCRC and the Board of Rabbis should encourage adoption of the Synaplex approach.*<sup>18</sup> Some synagogues may resist encouraging participation in non-traditional Jewish programs on Shabbat, rather than just traditional services, but a more open attitude on the part of some synagogues may be necessary to build a sustainable Jewish community.<sup>19</sup>

**Secular venues.** One approach, geared toward unengaged or minimally engaged Jews, calls for activities or programs outside of Jewish venues. Proponents of this approach believe that bringing Jewish programs to secular venues meets unengaged Jews where they are, affording them preliminary engagement with the community and encouraging participation by Jews who might otherwise feel uncomfortable crossing a Jewish threshold.

The Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI) encourages adoption of a three-stage model that starts with unplanned participation in “public space” events, e.g., “Sukkah-Building at Home Depot,” giant Chanukah menorah lighting ceremonies, Chanukah gift bags handed out at Metro stops or information about Passover handed out at supermarkets.<sup>20</sup> Many of these ideas have already been tried locally. The JOI model then calls for attracting Jews to “destination events” requiring no prior Jewish knowledge, e.g., street fairs or author events, again in secular venues. Finally, it calls for attracting Jews who have become more comfortable with these earlier activities to attend low key events at JCCs or synagogues and then gradually to become more engaged in the community.

The model sounds attractive, but we have found no evidence that the model is effective or cost-effective. Indeed, the only information the JOI report provides on the effects of a public space event (a storytelling program at a Barnes and Noble store before Rosh Hashanah) indicates that only 30-35 persons (including children) attended and that half were already affiliated. Considering the cost of the newspaper advertising for this program and the further steps that participants would need to take before becoming engaged, we question whether this particular program was worth the effort.

Destination events have attracted larger numbers. For example, the WDCJCC’s Jewish Film Festival, held at five secular venues, attracts 6,000 persons per year. Based on the responses to a 2006 survey, about one-third had not attended previously (half for those under 45), 85% identified themselves as Jewish, but less than half were dues-paying synagogue members.

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<sup>18</sup> FCRC and the Board of Rabbis may also wish to draw on the work of Synagogue 3000 ([www.synagogue3000.org](http://www.synagogue3000.org)). Synagogue 3000 seeks “to make synagogues compelling moral and spiritual centers—sacred communities....” It has established a synagogue studies research initiative and two working groups for exchanging ideas on synagogue leadership and on developing “transformative spiritual communities unbound by expectations about what a synagogue is ‘supposed’ to be” with a view to engaging “the unaffiliated and others who are not attracted to mainstream congregations.”

<sup>19</sup> As pointed out by Steven M. Cohen (“Members and Motives: Who Joins American Jewish Congregations and Why,” Fall 2006, [www.synagogue3000.org](http://www.synagogue3000.org)), different denominations have “very different constituencies, with different conceptions of Judaism, and different motivations for joining and remaining connected with congregations.” What is acceptable and works for one congregation may not be acceptable or effective for another.

<sup>20</sup> This section is based mainly on JOI, *op. cit.*

The effectiveness of public space events depends heavily on collecting information on participants and following-up to encourage further involvement. The Film Festival has begun to collect names that the community should be able to use for this purpose.

Although we have some doubts about the JOI model, as such, *we recommend use of secular venues for programs geared toward individuals who may be hesitant to attend programs in Jewish settings, particularly for young adults and interfaith couples.* Public space and destination events may soften up the market. They may contribute to the "multiple touches" some experts believe are needed to make people receptive to publicity or invitations to participate in other Jewish activities. In Chapter III, we support the use of nightclubs or other secular venues to attract young adults who would not be attracted to events at synagogues or JCCs and the use of secular venues for first-time parents who may feel uncomfortable in traditional Jewish settings.

**Social action.** Many Jews have little or no interest in religious services, Jewish texts or Jewish culture but identify with Judaism because of their concerns with tikkun olam (repairing the world). One study found that 47% of the Jews surveyed considered "a commitment to social equality" as being most important to their Jewish identity, compared with 24% for "religious observance" and 13% for "support for Israel."<sup>21</sup> Another study, covering Jews between the ages of 18 and 25, found that 82% considered being Jewish involved "making the world a better place," compared with 57% who considered that being Jewish involved attending synagogue.<sup>22</sup>

Jews can seek to address social issues through secular organizations or Jewish organizations. By attracting unengaged or under-engaged Jews to Jewish social action programs, we can increase their interactions with other Jews, strengthen their knowledge of Jewish values and, hence, make them feel part of the Jewish community. Many (though not all) social action programs lend themselves to the recurring interactions that create ties to other Jews and to the Jewish community.

Many local synagogues and other Jewish organizations are already involved in social action programs. For example, the WDCJCC Morris Cafritz Center for Community Service, which runs a range of programs, mobilizes 300 volunteers to cook Thanksgiving dinner for residents of a shelter and 1,500 volunteers to provide services at social service agencies on Christmas Day. These efforts are justified by the good they do, the good will they generate in the community at large, the additional activity they encourage among the engaged, and the likelihood that they attract some unengaged or under-engaged Jews to participate in activities in collaboration with other Jews. Indeed, the program receives around 80 new calls the day after the project is advertised in the local newspapers, and the WDCJCC sees a sharp rise in the number of new members each January.<sup>23</sup>

A recent book by Rabbi Sidney Schwarz contends that Jewish social justice programs attract many unengaged and under-engaged Jews and have the potential to attract more. He suggests that the organized Jewish community's emphasis on

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<sup>21</sup> "American Jews and their Social Justice Involvement: Evidence from a National Survey," 2000, cited in Schwarz, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

<sup>22</sup> "'Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam...'" Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choices," [www.rebooters.net](http://www.rebooters.net).

<sup>23</sup> JOI, *op. cit.*, p. 22-23.

protecting Jewish interests has alienated many young Jews from the mainstream community and drawn them into social justice programs developed outside the framework of the organized community. He cites:<sup>24</sup>

- Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), which has been receiving United Jewish Endowment Fund (UJEF) grants for the past several years. About two-thirds of JUFJ's members had not previously been involved in any organized Jewish activity, and participation in JUFJ led to some becoming more involved in the community.
- Washington, DC's Yachad: Jewish Housing and Community Development Corp. One of its founders has indicated that Yachad's activities have become a significant, if not a primary mode of identifying as Jews for some participants.
- Los Angeles' Progressive Jewish Alliance. 30-40% of its 2,000 members had little if anything to do with the Jewish community prior to their joining PJA.
- Minneapolis-St. Paul's Jewish Community Action has drawn in Jews, seen by some as too radical, who would not otherwise be associated with the Jewish community.

A more user-friendly Washington-based social action web site, providing links to individual programs run by Jewish groups and synagogues, could make it easier to generate additional participation in social action programs in a Jewish context. In 2006, Federation launched Jewish Volunteer Connection (JVC) to help Jews find social action opportunities in Jewish or non-sectarian organizations, and in its first year, it placed 800 Jews. This number, however, is equivalent to only 0.4% of the area's Jewish population 15 and over. The web site currently provides little information on specific opportunities and requires individuals seeking volunteer opportunities to register with JVC, which then deals with each individual inquiry. This system allows JVC to track the number of volunteers mobilized by the web site and allows its trained counselor to offer guidance and encouragement. Some people may need guidance and encouragement. Others, however, may prefer to explore options directly on the internet and may not want to go through an intermediary. JVC's web site should be sufficiently flexible to serve both types of people. Gathering data on the results generated from the web site may be important, but the same information can be garnered by requiring individual programs to report to JVC on the volunteers mobilized through the web site. We believe the web site could be more effective if it provided more detailed information on individual opportunities and links allowing individuals to sign up or get in touch with the sponsoring organization directly.

*We recommend that JVC develop a strategy for expanding Jewish social action programs offered by partner agencies, synagogues and community organizations<sup>25</sup> and encouraging broader participation in these activities with a view, among other things, to attracting unengaged and under-engaged Jews. This strategy might include (a) support on public relations and advertising, leadership development and infrastructure development for smaller organizations; (b) exchange of information on programs and best practices; (c) co-sponsorship of programs; (d) social justice community fairs or summits; and (e) community-wide social justice days or other programs.*

## **Pricing policy**

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<sup>24</sup> Schwarz, *op. cit.*, 2006, Ch. 15 *et passim*.

<sup>25</sup> In the remainder of this paper, "community organizations" will be used to refer to partner agencies, synagogues and community organizations.

People's willingness and ability to pay for synagogue or JCC memberships, educational programs or other Jewish activities differ. Indeed, there is a strong relationship between family income and membership in synagogues and JCCs.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, single Jews often postpone engaging with the Jewish community until after creating their own families, and high dues tend to prolong their period of inactivity.<sup>27</sup> As in private business, many Jewish organizations charge higher fees to some and lower (or no) fees to others, or offer membership categories that permit access to only certain activities. Community organizations should consider developing pricing policies designed to encourage broader participation.

- Some synagogues, social service agencies and schools charge different fees based on age, family status and income, giving discounts to new members and reduced fees or scholarships to those who cannot afford the full price. Under these various plans, those subject to the higher fees implicitly subsidize those benefiting from lower fees, and organizations often raise funds specifically to support the reduced fees and scholarships.
- The local JCCs offer full service and restricted service memberships. Membership categories take into consideration ability to pay and whether members will or will not be using health and fitness facilities. Additional segmentation, comparable to cafeteria-style pricing that would allow users to pay for specific programs, rather than an overall membership, might encourage additional participation. While JCCs already offer member and non-member fees for particular activities, JCCs may want to consider offering a variety of membership categories, all of which would allow the members discount rates for activities that fall within their membership category. For example, one membership category might be "cultural programs," which would give access and discounted fees for all cultural programs, but non-member fees (or no access) for sports facilities, summer camp or other types of programs.
- Some organizations use loss leaders to reach unengaged Jews. Some offer free educational programs or concerts. And some synagogues offer free admission to High Holiday services to encourage Jews to sample the offerings, either for the regular service or for a special afternoon service. Policies on High Holiday tickets raise some difficult issues. The price of High Holiday tickets discourages some unaffiliated Jews when they are most interested in participating in the Jewish community, but synagogues typically consider income from High Holiday tickets or from the membership fees that they encourage to be essential to help cover their costs.

*Given the financial implications of pricing policies and the diverse circumstances of individual organizations, we recommend that Federation sensitize local organizations to the issues and alternatives but not urge specific pricing policies.*

### **Cross-selling**

Just as a company may try to sell other products to a current customer, the Jewish community as a whole can try to engage participants of one program to participate in other communal programs. Community organizations, for example, can pass people on as they go through successive life stages. Some institutions, of course, already do so internally, for example, in attracting children from synagogue based pre-schools to

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<sup>26</sup> Sheshkin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> JOI, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

religious schools and on to youth groups. Others encourage participation in activities sponsored by other Jewish organizations. For example, JUFJ provides information on all local Jewish social justice events in its weekly email. More, however, could be done. Families receiving Shalom Baby baskets, for example, could be encouraged to join Jewish play groups or Mommy-and-Me programs and then Jewish pre-schools, and children attending religious schools could be encouraged to go to Jewish camps.<sup>28</sup>

More generally, many community organizations feel responsible only for carrying out their narrowly defined mission and do not accept adequate responsibility for promoting engagement in all aspects of Jewish communal life. Increasing engagement will require cultural change among community organizations so that each recognizes that handing off participants and promoting each other's activities are integral parts of its own mission. Accordingly, *we recommend that Federation, in conjunction with community organizations, develop mechanisms to foster a culture in which all accept responsibility for increasing engagement in the community at large and to develop processes to encourage hand-offs among organizations.* These processes may include joint staffing at activities, sharing of information about participants, joint sponsorship and cross-marketing of programs, and arrangements for follow-up.

### **Following-up on leads**

Successful outreach often requires more than a single contact. Indeed, some marketing experts argue that it often takes 10-14 “touches” to sell a product. *We, therefore, recommend that community organizations seek contact information from persons who get in touch with them or attend events, that they add this information to their mailing and email lists, and that they then send information about further activities.*<sup>29, 30</sup> More important than written follow-up, however, is personal contact, which more effectively conveys a welcoming tone and allows for tailoring outreach activities to individual needs and interests. For example, asking someone to “come with me” to an event may be the most effective way of drawing unengaged and under-engaged Jews into greater involvement with the Jewish community. More broadly, professionals and lay leaders must seek to understand what is important to unengaged and under-engaged Jews and must adapt their follow-up efforts to the needs and values of each individual or family.

### **Hard sell v. soft sell**

Different products require different selling techniques. Several observers have noted that unengaged Jews respond negatively to efforts to make them feel guilty about their low level of engagement or knowledge or to feel pressured to make a commitment, join a synagogue, join a JCC, or make contributions to Federation or other Jewish

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<sup>28</sup> Jack Wertheimer, “Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today,” Avi Chai Foundation, 2005, p. 31, and S. M. Cohen, “A Tale of Two Jewries: the ‘Inconvenient Truth’ for American Jews,” Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, Nov. 2006, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> According to JOI, p. 31 *et passim*, “The organized Jewish Community of Greater Washington has yet to harness this resource to its full advantage, and indeed, few organizations sought to capture any contact information from the JOI caller.” In addition, JOI suggested that some organizations may find it useful to develop partnerships with other Jewish organizations or other secular organizations that may have large numbers of Jewish members.

<sup>30</sup> In recommending that community organizations follow-up on leads, we recognize that excessive follow-up may irritate some unengaged or under-engaged Jews and, therefore, may be counter-productive.

organizations.<sup>31</sup> These observers have attributed the attractiveness of some programs to a no-strings-attached approach that allows unengaged Jews to set their own pace for participating in Jewish events. This approach makes sense. *Federation—as part of its training for engagement—should sensitize community organizations to the importance of not making unengaged Jews feel judged with respect to their knowledge of Judaism or level of engagement or feel pressured to make a commitment, become members of synagogues and Jewish organizations, or contribute to Federation or other Jewish organizations.*

## Advertising and publicity

Consumers must be aware of what is available if they are to buy. With a view, among other things, to increasing awareness of Jewish activities in the metropolitan area, Federation's Board approved a strategic marketing plan in April 2005.<sup>32</sup> Although the plan's goals go beyond engagement, we fully support the plan, which is complementary to the engagement effort, and would hope that Federation can provide sufficient resources to carry it out. Moreover, many of its recommendations deserve reaffirmation in the context of the engagement plan. We deal with some in other parts of the current report, but seven deserve mention here. Federation has made some progress but more needs to be done:

- *The community should continue to create or co-host news-generating and awareness-building events, including, e.g., public space displays or other events tied in with Jewish holidays, commemorations or other events (e.g., the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State of Israel).*
- The community should continue to distribute welcome baskets to new Jewish households. The Jewish Information and Referral Service (JIRS) sends "Welcome Ambassadors" to deliver baskets containing, among other things, a Guide to Jewish Life in Washington; information on kosher grocery stores, synagogues and JCCs; coupons; and an invitation to home hospitality for a Shabbat meal. Although JIRS advertises this service on Federation's web site, unengaged Jews are unlikely to seek information there. Accordingly, *we recommend that it actively try to identify individuals or families new to the Washington area, e.g., by drawing on information on purchases of houses and condominiums.*
- *Expand the Passover family match-up and community seder programs by advertising more aggressively and making Jews not planning to attend seders feel they will be truly welcomed.* JIRS has provided this service for many years, but still only 77% of area households (ranging from 51% in Prince George's County to 89% in lower

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<sup>31</sup> One study of 200 young Jews nationwide found that some "had negative experiences with the people involved in Jewish organizations, who they feel have judged them for 'not being Jewish enough.'" "Soy Vanilla Latte ..." *op. cit.*, p. 23. Similarly, Schwarz, *op. cit.*, p. 243, argues "Jews who might otherwise be open to initiatives or programs of the Jewish community...are driven away by an implicit attitude coming from communal institutions that they have 'not paid their dues' to the tribe, not only financially but also by their lack of regular association with communal institutions." Also, though no direct pressure is involved, the importance given to membership on the web sites of many synagogues gives the impression that communal organizations are primarily interested in membership and fees. Many synagogue web sites contain nothing about membership, and others de-emphasize membership by putting a link in a non-prominent place or requiring visitors to click on "About Us" or even "Index" to find information about membership. Others, however, put "Membership" in a prominent place on the home page or else as the first on a list of links to other pages.

<sup>32</sup> "Toward a Vibrant and Purposeful Jewish Community..." *op. cit.*

Montgomery County) always or usually participate in a seder. This service, which attracts more families willing to add Jews to their seders than individuals or families seeking to participate, needs to be advertised more aggressively, particularly where participation is low. Given the importance of the seder for Jewish identification and the widespread attractiveness of participating in a seder, we should set as a goal to *increase seder attendance to 90% within ten years.*

- *Revise community-wide and individual organization web sites to provide comprehensive information on events, programs, and opportunities to get involved and as many links as appropriate to other relevant sites.* This recommendation applies to the web sites of individual community organizations; web sites focusing on educational, cultural, social action or other specific types of activities; and web sites aimed at specific population segments, e.g., young adults, families with young children, and interfaith couples.
- *Organizations should expand their co-sponsorship of events to appeal to a wider audience and to make audiences aware that other programs of interest may be available from some of the co-sponsoring organizations.* The WDCJCC and the 6<sup>th</sup> and I Synagogue, for example, are sponsoring an up-coming event. Similarly, Federation has co-sponsored with local synagogues lectures by its scholar in residence.
- *Community public relations and advertising efforts for outreach purposes should extend to secular newspapers or magazines, which may be more effective than articles and advertisements in Jewish publications.* For example, the WDCJCC has posted monthly advertisements in the *Washington Post* and other local papers for a series of literary and other Jewish cultural programs it is offering in partnership with Nextbook.<sup>33</sup>
- *Since many community organizations will not have the resources to arrange public relations and advertising efforts on their own, Federation should make its marketing and communications services available to the community as a whole.*

In addition, we have three further suggestions:

- *The Jewish community should use public relations experts to improve coverage of Jewish events in the local press.* For example, a recent *Washington Post* article on December 24 Matzo Ball parties that attract thousands of Jewish singles in their 20s and 30s undoubtedly gave greater visibility to these events than they could have achieved through advertising. Getting coverage may be difficult, but the community should nonetheless increase its efforts.
- *The Jewish community should use retailers, e.g., book stores and food stores, with Jewish holiday displays to distribute literature about outreach programs.*
- *The Synaplex initiative, discussed earlier, also helps with marketing, e.g., improving newsletters, weekly announcements and web sites. Synagogues should consider seeking marketing assistance from Synaplex.*

### **Market-oriented culture**

Underlying most of the recommendations in this chapter is the need for all Jewish organizations to develop a market-oriented culture. Needed changes range from the

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<sup>33</sup> Cohen & Kelman, *Cultural Events & Jewish Identities: Young Adult Jews in New York*, National Foundation for Jewish Culture, Feb. 2005, pp.130-1, and Jewish Outreach Institute, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

handling of initial contacts<sup>34</sup> to attitudes towards spouses and children of interfaith marriages and would-be converts. Federation must take a leadership role in changing this culture. Based on its past efforts, it has much to be excited about as it starts this effort. To this end, we recommend that Federation ask each community organization to:

- *Incorporate outreach and engagement in its mission statement and periodically remind board members, staff and others of this aspect of the institution's mission.*
- *Appoint a Board member (or someone else in the governance structure) to exercise oversight over outreach and engagement activities. He or she should report regularly to the organization's Board of Directors on progress.*
- *Include outreach and engagement in the personnel reviews of relevant staff members.*
- *Assign responsibility for welcoming new participants.* Many Jews complain of “the unfriendliness of most congregants,” or “the ‘cliques’ formed by longtime members to the exclusion of newcomers.”<sup>35</sup> To address this issue, some synagogues appoint greeters, who may wear name tags with their names and responsibilities at the synagogue. (At least one local synagogue provides name tags to all members to deal with the problem of casual members forgetting the names of their co-congregants. Other synagogues color code name tags for visitors so they may be easily identified and specially welcomed.)

*In addition, we recommend that Federation provide periodic training for professional and lay leadership of community organizations on outreach and engagement.* This training should deal, among other things, with welcoming and integrating new participants, lowering barriers, fostering hand-offs, and working with interfaith families. Synagogue and agency staff, in turn, can train additional staff members and volunteers. Training will involve some costs, but these costs are likely to be modest in relationship to the benefits.

Most of the steps suggested in this chapter can be taken easily and involve little or no costs. Federation should encourage their widespread adoption. Aside from these suggestions aimed at the effectiveness of the outreach efforts of the community as a whole, the community should focus special efforts on the most promising markets. Chapter III identifies these markets and suggests how to address them.

### **III. Programs Directed at Most Promising Markets**

Not surprisingly, engagement—and opportunities to increase engagement—differ among segments of the Jewish population. Orthodox Jews, of course, are typically very engaged in religious and educational activities. Many non-orthodox Jews are also highly engaged, but many are not. The greatest opportunities for increasing engagement can

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<sup>34</sup> JOI notes that visitors to Jewish institutions are often “met with apathy or boredom, or worse, rudeness, or even hostility.” Based on telephone calls to 113 community institutions, “JOI found that a general challenge facing newcomers who seek to access the community—even when they take the first steps towards Jewish engagement themselves, rather than waiting to be found—is the Jewish community’s lack of responsiveness to these overtures.” It noted “shortfalls in “phone etiquette, lack of knowledge regarding available programming, and unreturned calls and e-mails.” JOI, *Op. cit.*, pp. 19 and 41.

<sup>35</sup> A. L. Sales, “The Congregations of Westchester,” Brandeis U., March 2004, p. 31. And A. Wolfson writes that many people are uncomfortable about walking into a synagogue, “Because it is unfamiliar, intimidating, and often unwelcoming—especially for guests, shul-shoppers, and even for members who rarely show up.” *The Spirituality of Welcoming: How to Transform Your Synagogue*, 2006, p. 1.

be found in four non-orthodox population segments—Jews in their 20s and 30s without children, Jews with young children, interfaith families, and Jews in under-engaged suburban areas. (Though our categories refer to “Jews,” they include interfaith couples’ children who have not yet decided on their religious identification.) These categories inevitably overlap to some extent, but looking at the four markets individually helps clarify the opportunities and what can be done to address them.<sup>36</sup> Focusing on these four markets represents a departure from the past, when the community’s attention was focused mainly on serving Jews who were already seriously engaged.

### **Young adults without children<sup>37</sup>**

Young adult, non-orthodox Jews without children are typically not actively engaged in the Jewish community.<sup>38</sup> Nationally, 85% consider being Jewish to be very important or somewhat important, and 29% say that being part of a Jewish community is very important. Yet only 13% say they feel “a lot” connected to the Jewish community.<sup>39</sup> For the remainder—16% of the Jews in this population segment—being part of the Jewish community is very important, but they do not feel “a lot” connected. Locally, 11% of Jews under 35 feel “very much” a part of the local Jewish community.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, this population segment has the potential of generating large numbers of actively engaged Jews, particularly in the Washington area, where 68% of Jewish adults under 35 years of age are single and 57% of married Jewish households under 35 have no children at home.<sup>41</sup>

Programs directed at this market may encourage increased engagement among young adults without children in the near term and may influence future decisions as young Jews marry and have children. Aside from social justice programs, discussed earlier, two types of activities may be particularly fruitful—trips to Israel and events developed largely by the young adults themselves.

**Trips to Israel.** Visits to Israel have a significant impact on Jewish engagement. Since its creation in 1999, the Taglit-birthright Israel program (Taglit) has provided free, ten-day group trips to Israel for over 100,000 Jews 18 to 26 years old. Over half were marginally or non-engaged young adults making their first effort to connect with their

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<sup>36</sup> The first three categories used here parallel three used by Jacob B. Ukeles, et al. in *Young Adults in the United States Today*, American Jewish Committee, Sept. 2006, pp. 60-61. Ukeles divided Jewish adults, ages 18-39, into four categories—orthodox adults (11% of total based on National Jewish Population Survey, 2000-01); unmarried Jewish adults and married Jewish adults without children, all other Jewish denominations (56%); married Jewish adults with children, all other Jewish denominations (13% of total); and intermarried Jews, with or without children (20% of total).

<sup>37</sup> That is, Jews in their 20s and 30s.

<sup>38</sup> This lack of engagement is not surprising. It is typical of the generation, for both Jews and non-Jews. Young adults of this generation tend to sample a variety of programs and organizations without making firm commitments. Based on data from the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey, 22-25% of Jews who have not had children attended a JCC program during the preceding year, compared with 28-40% for two-parent families with children still living at home; 17-24% attended an adult Jewish education program, compared with 26-38% for two-parent families with children still living at home; and 17-20% gave \$100 or more to Jewish charities other than Federation, compared with 34-43% for two-parent families with children still living at home. Cohen & Kelman, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> Ukeles, *op. cit.*, pp. 65 and 71.

<sup>40</sup> Compact Disk, p. 7-114.

<sup>41</sup> Compact disk, pp. 5-44, 5-45 and 5-79.

Jewishness. A series of rigorous, independent evaluations has shown statistically significant impacts from the visits. Returning participants are more directly involved in Jewish activities on their college campuses, are more likely to want to raise their children as Jews, and have stronger connections to their Jewish identity, the Jewish people and Israel. The evaluations attribute the program's success, among other things, to the group experience, including the interaction with Israeli peers. The evaluations also stress the importance of follow-up programming, a finding taken to heart by Federation, which has assigned two staff members to work with Taglit alumni in furthering Jewish learning and engagement with the Jewish community and Israel.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the proven efficacy of this program (which costs \$2,300 per participant) and the \$200 million spent over the past seven years, large numbers of young Jews have had to be turned away because of inadequate funding. Taglit was able to accept only 8,000 of the 25,000 who applied for the summer 2006 trips.<sup>43</sup> The Greater Washington area sends about 1,000 per year, equivalent to 30% or less of the number who would qualify.

In view of the proven efficacy of this program, *we recommend that Federation encourage all 18-26 year old Jews in the Greater Washington area (including children of interfaith couples) to apply.* Taglit does not link the number of applicants accepted to the level of support provided by a community, so Federation cannot influence the number of local applicants accepted. It can, however, *advocate for an increase in the overall program and explore the possibility of increasing the number of Washington Metropolitan area Jews participating in Taglit program by covering 100% of costs of incremental participants with local funds.*

Visits to Israel may also be beneficial for other young adults (and others, more generally).<sup>44</sup> *We recommend that Federation consider providing subsidies for group trips for unengaged or under-engaged Jews in their late 20s and their 30s (including families with young children, otherwise discussed below) who have not previously visited Israel.*<sup>45</sup>

**Activities developed largely by young adults themselves.** Over the past decade or so, young Jews have taken the initiative to develop Jewish activities outside the framework of the formal community.

- Playful, irreverent music, created by popular singers or music groups, integrating Jewish themes into hip-hop, reggae or other contemporary forms. Young Jewish

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<sup>42</sup> L. Saxe, et al., "Taglit-birthright Israel: Impact on Jewish Identity, Peoplehood, and Connection to Israel," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis U., June 2006. See also L. Saxe, et al., *Evaluating birthright israel: Long-term Impact and Recent Findings*, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis U., Nov. 2004.

<sup>43</sup> [www.birthrightisrael.com](http://www.birthrightisrael.com).

<sup>44</sup> The Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning runs the Israel Quest program that provides subsidies for Jewish teenagers to visit Israel.

<sup>45</sup> Federation and other communal organizations subsidize trips to Israel for other purposes (e.g., leadership development or political education). These visits may be valuable, but subsidies may not be required in all cases. To the extent that these subsidies can be reduced, additional funds could be allocated for trips designed to encourage engagement.

social entrepreneurs have arranged for performances by these singers or groups at popular secular venues with a cachet of their own.<sup>46</sup>

- Christmas Eve Matzo Balls, including one in Washington, D.C., or similar events.
- New social action programs, including at least one in Washington, D.C., Jews United for Justice (discussed in Chapter II).
- Non-denominational religious services or Jewish study groups developed and led by young adults. Some draw mainly orthodox and conservative Jews. Others, e.g., Tikkun Leil Shabbat, draw mainly reform Jews. The latter provides services with a dvar Torah touching on the week's parsha and social justice issues and includes dinner and extended opportunities to talk and sing.<sup>47</sup>
- A web site (EntrypointDC GeshherCity) that supports volunteer-led cluster groups providing opportunities for young adults new to the DC area or new to the Jewish community to meet in small (up to 35 members), informal groups. The clusters are based on age, neighborhood, or special interests, e.g., bicycling, camping, dancing, dining out, foreign films, politics, etc.

Some of these activities minimize overt Jewish content to avoid discouraging Jews with little familiarity with Jewish traditions. Others provide transliteration of Hebrew prayers or opportunities to download audio versions of traditional songs and prayers on the web.

From the point of view of engagement, these developments provide opportunities for young Jews to socialize on a recurring basis with Jewish friends and meet new ones. A study of these events in New York City found that they mainly draw unaffiliated Jews who have not been active in community life but who come from relatively strong Jewish backgrounds, rather than Jews with little prior exposure to Jewish prayer, learning, traditions, etc. Still, they foster a sense of community and strengthen social networks.<sup>48</sup>

Although these programs have not been subject to rigorous evaluation, they appear likely to contribute to Jewish engagement. Rigorous evaluations would be helpful in deciding on supporting such programs but risk destroying the informal, peer-sponsored nature of the events and, thus, undermining their attractiveness. Given the limited sums involved, Federation should support programs of this type and should rely on informal assessments of who participates and the extent to which the programs increase their Jewish engagement. *We recommend that Federation and UJEF allocate part of their engagement funds for supporting peer-sponsored activities directed at young adults.*

### **Jews with young children<sup>49</sup>**

Families expecting their first child typically seek information, guidance, and relationships with other families with children of the same age. These families are particularly open to new ideas and activities during their children's early years. This

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<sup>46</sup> The mission statement of *Heeb*, which started out as an irreverent magazine for young Jews and has gone on to sponsor concerts, comedians, book readings and other cultural events, describes its audience as "the plugged-in and preached-out." Similarly, JDub Records, a not-for-profit venture, produces records and events that are "points of connection with no strings attached."

<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, many of the activities attracting young Jews provide free food.

<sup>48</sup> This paragraph is based mainly on Cohen and Kelman, *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> Aside from the demographic data, based on Ukeles and the demographic study, this section is based mainly on M. Rosen, *Jewish Engagement from Birth: A Blueprint for Outreach to First-Time Parents*, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis U., Nov. 2006, pp. 50-52. References to Jews and Jewish families throughout this section refer also to interfaith families.

period provides a prime opportunity to encourage young adults to engage or re-engage with the Jewish community. Nationally, 95% of non-Orthodox Jewish parents 18-39 years old consider being Jewish to be very important or somewhat important, and 54% say that being part of a Jewish community is very important. Yet only 26% say they feel “a lot” connected to the Jewish community.<sup>50</sup> Locally, only 23% of households with children (not limited to households with young children) say that they feel “very much” a part of the local Jewish community.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, young families with children are at a stage in their lives when they are most likely to be open to greater participation in Jewish activities.

Five types of programs may be effective in contributing to increased engagement of these families and their children—programs for expectant parents, gift baskets for newborns, infant-toddler programs, preschools, and education programs for parents of young children. To the extent these families become more involved in Jewish activities when their children are young, they are more likely to provide the warm family experiences that create the memories underlying the development of a strong Jewish identification by their children. And participation by the children may serve as a catalyst for attracting the parents to greater involvement with Jewish learning and traditions.

**Programs aimed at expectant parents.** Several programs provide training for expectant Jewish parents. Some, e.g., Lamazal Tov in Baltimore, combine childbirth education, taught by childbirth educators, with education in Jewish traditions, e.g., bris, pidyon ha-ben, simchat ha-bat, and making a Jewish home. Others, e.g., Making Mishpocha in Washington, DC, limit themselves to Jewish content. These programs have the potential of attracting unengaged or under-engaged Jews and then linking them to Jewish play groups or Mommy-and-Me groups and later to Jewish preschools. The two programs mentioned report that at least half of the participants are under-affiliated and that some form play groups after the children are born.<sup>52</sup> Few expectant parents, however, participate. *We recommend that Federation look into these and similar programs around the country (as well as an earlier PJLL program in the Washington, DC area) and prepare a paper with recommendations on whether to support them locally.*

**Gift baskets (Shalom Baby programs).** A number of cities provide gift baskets to newborns to make the families aware of the resources available from the Jewish community and attract families into taking advantage of these resources. Northern Virginia has had a Shalom Baby program for eleven years, and a similar program for Washington, DC and the Maryland suburbs started about a year ago. None of these programs has been independently evaluated, but an internal study of a program in San Diego yielded encouraging results. It found that 63% of respondents felt more connected to the Jewish community, 38% had become more involved, 79% had either enrolled or planned to enroll their child in a Jewish preschool, and 78% had either joined or were planning to join a synagogue.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ukeles, pp. 65 and 71.

<sup>51</sup> Compact Disk, p. 7-115.

<sup>52</sup> This paragraph is based on Rosen, *op. cit.*, and telephone interviews with the persons responsible for the Baltimore and Washington, DC, programs.

<sup>53</sup> M. Rosen, *Op. cit.*, p. 48. This evaluation compared *before and after* participation, rather than *with and without* participation, and it did not include a control group. Thus, the differences cannot be attributed to the program.

These programs involve two main difficulties. The first is identifying Jewish families with newborn children. If the programs rely on Jewish organizations for this information, they will mainly reach families who are already engaged, rather than the unengaged and under-engaged. The relatively more successful programs seek to expand their reach, e.g., by distributing brochures to offices of obstetricians and pediatricians and to maternity stores. A further possibility that might be explored would be to request local hospitals to permit delivery of Shalom Baby baskets at the hospitals themselves, using the information provided when expectant mothers check into the hospitals. According to a recent report, the Northern Virginia program makes some efforts to identify parents of newborns, but the Washington, DC-Maryland program does not.<sup>54</sup>

Even leaving aside whether they reach the engaged or the unengaged, the overall outreach is disappointing. The 23 programs on which information is available delivered gift baskets to between 4% and 75% (median 16%) of the Jewish children born in the regions they serve. The Northern Virginia program provided Shalom Baby baskets to only 9% of the newborn Jewish children in its area and the Washington, DC-Maryland program to only 5%, equivalent to 7.5% for the area as a whole.<sup>55</sup>

The second difficulty with these programs is ensuring adequate follow-up. Providing gift baskets for newborns may foster a favorable attitude towards the Jewish community, but further efforts are needed to encourage the parents of newborns to participate in Jewish activities for toddlers and their families and, thus, create the personal relations likely to lead to later enrollment in Jewish preschools and participation in other Jewish activities. According to a recent report, the Northern Virginia program makes some follow-up efforts, but the Washington, DC-Maryland program does not.<sup>56</sup>

*We recommend that the local programs substantially increase their efforts to identify newborn children from Jewish families and that they deliver a Shalom Baby basket to each and then follow-up to encourage participation in activities for infants and toddlers. We propose that they aim at increasing their coverage to 500 children (about 14% of newborn children in Jewish families) for 2008 and then to add a further 250 children each year (about 7% of newborns) for each subsequent year covered by this Plan. The programs should make special efforts to identify newborn children from unengaged or under-engaged families. If they are unable to ensure that they are reaching these families, they should abandon the programs.*

**Infant-toddler programs.** Jewish communities around the country have used several approaches to encourage parents to participate in Jewish programs for infants and toddlers. Although weekly playgroups may be particularly attractive to new mothers and particularly effective in integrating them into a Jewish social group, few Shalom Baby programs seek to form Jewish playgroups to serve families receiving gift baskets. The St. Louis community asks recipients of gift baskets if they would be interested in joining a playgroup, assigns interested mothers to new groups, and attends the first session to get the group off to a good start. Other communities have offered Mommy-and-Me programs, music and swimming classes for toddlers, childcare, parenting and

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<sup>54</sup> Rosen, *op. cit.*, Table A1.

<sup>55</sup> These percentages reflect the estimated number of annual Jewish births used in Rosen, Table A1. In contrast, using the number of Jewish children appearing in the demographic survey (Compact Disk, Table 5-9), only 5% of the newborns in the Washington area would be receiving Shalom Baby baskets.

<sup>56</sup> Rosen, *op. cit.*, Table A1.

child development programs, and Tot Shabbat services. Some offer free-standing programs. Others—including the JCC of Greater Washington, the WDCJCC and some local synagogues—offer a wide range of services. All these programs create opportunities for mothers to socialize with other Jews, but the friendships developed through participation in small, long-lasting playgroups and Mommy-and-Me groups are likely to have the greatest influence in encouraging Jewish choices.<sup>57</sup>

*We recommend that the Shalom Baby programs follow-up with each family receiving a Shalom Baby gift basket to encourage participation in Jewish activities for infants and toddlers. We propose that the programs aim at getting 10% of the gift basket recipients to participate in Jewish-sponsored activities for infants and toddlers in 2008, 20% in 2009, and 30% in subsequent years.*

**Preschools.** The flow from Shalom Baby programs to Jewish infant and toddler programs and then Jewish preschools may not take place if Jewish preschools are not available within a reasonable distance. JOI has noted that the distribution of the 29 Jewish-sponsored preschools in the area is broadly consistent with the distribution of preschool children but that gaps exist in the Arlington-Alexandria-Falls Church area (15% of preschool children but only 3% of preschools), Western Fairfax County (7% and 3%, respectively) and Prince George's County (3% and zero, respectively). *We recommend that PJLL examine whether there is an unmet demand for Jewish preschools in suburbs with low levels of engagement; explore what might be done to ensure an adequate supply, including the possibility of establishing co-operative preschools or regional preschools; consider seed grants and supportive services to foster development of additional Jewish preschools for underserved communities; and make recommendations on what might be done to close these gaps.*<sup>58</sup>

**Family camping.** Camping provides an immersion experience that may contribute to greater engagement.<sup>59</sup> Federation already subsidizes children attending a Jewish camp for the first time. The availability of Capital Camp's recently renovated, attractive camp facilities near Washington provides an opportunity to experiment with camp experiences—possibly subsidized—for families with young children (as well as young adults without children, in separate programs). For example, Capital Camps could offer low cost, Club Med-type family camp sessions during winter break or after the normal summer camp sessions that would allow participants to choose among Jewish or secular activities but that would put all participants in a Jewish environment, create opportunities for interaction with other Jews and provide information on other communal activities throughout the year. In addition, religious schools could build into their curricula long weekends at Capital Camps for children and their parents. *We recommend that Capital Camps and synagogues experiment with these ideas.*

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<sup>57</sup> Rosen, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-32.

<sup>58</sup> JOI, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. Only 44% of Jewish children attending preschools in the Washington Metropolitan area go to Jewish preschools, down from 51% in 1983 and well below average for 25 comparison communities in the country. (Sheskin, *op. cit.*, p. 11.) It is unclear to what extent the unavailability of preschools in some suburbs contributes to these shortfalls.

<sup>59</sup> Several studies have shown a correlation between Jewish engagement and having attended a Jewish camp, but we have not seen any showing a statistically significant causal relationship.

**Education programs for parents of young children.**<sup>60</sup> Many parents want to raise their children as Jews but lack sufficient knowledge to create a Jewish home and transmit a Jewish identity. This issue arises particularly in the case of interfaith families. At least two programs focus on the children:

- The AI Galgalim: Training Wheels program, sponsored nationally by Hadassah, offers nine-session basic family education programs focusing on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. The sessions include relevant arts and crafts projects, singing, practice of rituals; separate sessions for the adults; and handouts for the parents. Aside from the substantive learning that takes place, the program creates opportunities for parents to establish ties with other Jews. Hadassah indicates that a high percentage of interfaith families participate in the program and that many participants become active in Hadassah.<sup>61</sup>
- The PJ Library provides Jewish books and CDs for children from 6 months to five years of age, sends parents guides to help them in using the books and CDs, and provides a book on Jewish parenting.<sup>62</sup>

At least two programs focus on the parents:

- Ikkarim, a nineteen-session program developed in Boston for parents of children from birth through age five, attracts parents wanting practical advice on parenting but also seeks to encourage Jewish learning, Jewish choices, and parenting that reflects Jewish values. Most participants learn about the program through their synagogues, but some non-affiliated parents also participate.
- The Parent Education Program, an adaptation of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School curriculum, is offered to parents of children in Jewish preschools (locally through PJLL). The two-year program seeks to expand the parents' Jewish knowledge, increase family Jewish observance, and influence decisions on the children's education. The program, at least initially, had problems attracting participants, but a substantial share of those who did participate had weak Jewish backgrounds. Based on a survey of participants, 17% were Jews by conversion and 9% non-Jewish. Of respondents raised as Jews, 16% had no Jewish education, and 37% had attended only a one-day-a-week supplementary school. According to a 2004 evaluation, the program positively affected attitudes towards Jewish study, observance, and involvement in the Jewish community. Participants had increased their commitment to giving their children a Jewish education, and 26% of the respondents had enrolled children in or switched them to a Jewish day school since starting the program. Because of shortcomings in the evaluation, however, the reported results may over-state the program's effects.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> This section is based mainly on Rosen, op. cit., and a telephone interview with Hadassah.

<sup>61</sup> Programming costs are negligible. Participants must be Hadassah members, which costs \$36.

<sup>62</sup> Donors in participating communities pay \$60 per family per year; the families pay \$18 per year..

<sup>63</sup> This bullet paragraph is based mainly on F. Chertok & L. Saxe, *The Florence Melton Parent Education Program: Evaluating an Innovative Approach to Adult Jewish Education for Parents of Preschoolers*, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis U., Nov. 2004, which assessed the results of the program in Portland, St. Louis, and Boca Raton. The reported results may over-state the programs effects because the control group was not fully comparable with the treatment group, the study ignored the significant number of drop-outs, and only 50% of the control group responded to the survey.

Although these four programs sound interesting, none has been adequately evaluated. *We recommend that Federation, PJLL, synagogues and the local JCCs try out pilot programs at a few sites and evaluate the results.* As with other programs suggested in this plan, the programs should be dropped if independent evaluations do not show satisfactory results.

### **Interfaith couples and their children**

Forty-one percent of Greater Washington households where at least one spouse is Jewish are interfaith households (ranging from 25% for lower Montgomery County to 55% for Northern Virginia and 70% for Prince George's County), and only 45% of Greater Washington interfaith families with children age 0-17 are raising their children as Jews. This percentage is above the 33% reported by the National Jewish Population Survey, 2000, but well below the 62% reported for Baltimore.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, only 29% of Jewish respondents in Greater Washington interfaith households feel very much (5%) or somewhat (24%) a part of the local Jewish community, and only 20% belong to either a synagogue or a JCC.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, nationally, 14% of 18-39 year old Jews in interfaith marriages felt "a lot" connected to the Jewish community (compared with 5% for Washington), and 80% considered being Jewish to be very important or somewhat important.<sup>66</sup> The gap between these percentages suggests that many unengaged and under-engaged Jews in interfaith marriages might be open to greater Jewish involvement and raising their children as Jews.<sup>67</sup> *We recommend that the Washington community seek to increase the percentage of interfaith families raising their children as Jews from 41% in 2003 to 60% in 2016.*

Two elements are essential to encourage greater Jewish involvement by interfaith couples and to encourage them to raise their children as Jews. First, the *Jewish community must be accepting and non-judgmental.* Too often, interfaith couples are informally discouraged or even formally barred from sending their children to Jewish preschools, religious schools, or summer camps, and non-Jewish spouses are made to feel unwelcome.<sup>68</sup> If parents are to raise their children as Jews, they must feel that they and their children will be welcome and warmly embraced at all types of programs. To change attitudes within the community and reach out to interfaith couples, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston (CJPB) has added "Interfaith couples are welcome" to

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<sup>64</sup> Compact Disk, Chapter 6. The Compact Disk also cites higher percentages for Cleveland (66%), Miami (65%), and St. Louis (65%), but these percentages are not comparable with the results of the Washington survey because of a material difference in question wording. The same holds true for the 60% recently reported for Boston. See Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis U., "The 2005 Boston Community Survey: Preliminary Findings," Nov. 2006, p. 12, and S. M. Cohen, *et al.*, "Read Boston Study on Inter-marriage with Caution," *Forward*, Dec. 8, 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Compact Disk, Chapter 7.

<sup>66</sup> Ukeles, *op. cit.*, pp. 65 and 71, and Compact Disk, p. 7-116.

<sup>67</sup> Some interfaith marriages, of course, lead to conversion and significant Jewish engagement. Nationally, "Within five years of their marriage, some 15% of non-Jews who marry Jews convert to Judaism (or switch their identities without...formal conversion)...These conversionary marriages...report rates of Jewish involvement that approach those of in-marriage between born-Jews...." The 15% conversion rate applies to 1995-2001 marriages. This rate may increase after the first five years, particularly as more couples have children. Nevertheless, there appears to be a downward trend from the high of 45% (cumulative conversions) for 1955-64 marriages. Cohen, Nov. 2006, pp. 18-19.

<sup>68</sup> One member of the local community contrasted the unreservedly warm welcome by his fiancée's church with the aversion found at several synagogues where she was made to "feel like a contaminant."

all communications and programs. Although some community institutions may be unwilling (or unable) to change their policies or attitudes (particularly in light of halakhic constraints), *we recommend that Federation encourage as many as possible to do so.*

Second, the community needs to reach out to interfaith couples. *We recommend that the Outreach and Engagement Coordinator and the Engagement Committee investigate the reasons explaining the high percentage of interfaith families raising their children as Jews in Baltimore and a few other cities and that they make recommendations based on this investigation.* Most of the programs discussed earlier can serve interfaith families as well as intra-married families,<sup>69</sup> but several programs have been developed specifically to address parenting issues for interfaith families with young children. The Mother’s Circle, developed by JOI, provides an 8-9 month adult education course for non-Jewish mothers who are raising Jewish children. The course provides practical information about Jewish rituals, practices, and ethics and about parenting issues. The Pebbles program, a Reform movement program in Denver, organizes family sessions and parent discussion groups for interfaith couples and their children aged 4 and under. It provides basic information with a view to encouraging eventual affiliation with a synagogue. And CJPB provides a variety of educational programs for interfaith couples, ranging from brief introductory programs to more intensive courses that can provide the basis for conversion. None of these programs has been evaluated, but we should explore further what can be done without waiting for evaluation results.

### **Under-engaged suburban areas**

A significant portion of the Greater Washington’s Jewish population lives in suburbs where engagement is low.

	<b>Jewish Population</b>	<b>% of Total Jewish Population</b>	<b>Feel Very Much or Somewhat a Part of the Jewish Community of Greater Washington</b>
<b>Virginia Suburbs</b>			
• Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church	27,837	12.9%	34%
• West Fairfax, Loudoun	14,477	6.7%	42%
• South Fairfax, Prince William County	24,988	11.6%	47%
• Total – Virginia Suburbs	67,302	31.2%	41%
<b>Maryland Suburbs</b>			
• Prince George’s County	7,219	3.4%	31%
• Upper Montgomery County	24,385	11.3%	53%
• Lower Montgomery County	88,373	41.1%	64%
• Total – Maryland Suburbs	119,977	55.8%	60%
<b>District of Columbia</b>	27,735	12.9%	48%
<b>Total</b>	215,014	100.0%	51%

<sup>69</sup> For example, the Melton Parent Education Program, discussed in the previous section, reportedly “seems to be very attractive to parents who are either non-Jewish or Jews by choice.” Chertok, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Although most of the programs discussed earlier in this chapter serve Jews throughout the metropolitan area, the low level of engagement in some suburban areas calls for special efforts in these areas. These programs should be targeted as much as possible to the three core target markets, but some programs will inevitably serve a wider audience. *We recommend that Federation support programs targeted to the unengaged and under-engaged suburbs, particularly those with high concentrations of young adults, families with young children, and interfaith families, i.e., Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, West Fairfax and Loudoun County.*

#### **IV. Summary and Overall Recommendations**

This plan aims at increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in the community. It calls for increasing participation in Jewish communal activities, interactions with other Jews, and feelings of connectedness to the Jewish community. The 2003 Community Study found that 51% of Greater Washington Jewish households felt connected to the local Jewish Community. *We propose that the goal be to increase this percentage to 65% by 2016.*

##### **Recommendations for achieving goal**

To achieve this goal, *Federation must recognize its responsibility as the central coordinating force in the community, provide the leadership required for the necessary changes, and encourage community organizations to embrace the goal and actively work together to achieve it.* Federation has no higher priority than engagement. It has other priorities, but increasing engagement is vital for the future of the Jewish community.

Many changes can be carried out at little or no cost. Most importantly, *the community needs to make changes in its culture. Underlying most of the recommended changes is the vital necessity of the community's becoming more accepting and welcoming and more active in fostering efforts by engaged Jews to promote increased involvement in Jewish communal life and increased levels of involvement by unengaged and under-engaged Jews.* The community needs to recognize that increasing engagement is an over-arching communal goal that goes beyond the traditional missions of individual organizations. Some Jews, and the spouses of Jews who have intermarried, may lack knowledge of Jewish practices and traditions. Others may feel alienated from Jewish institutions because of having felt rebuffed or ignored, having had negative experiences as children, disagreements over substantive issues or resentment over perceived pressure to pay dues or make financial contributions. Others may be at a stage in their life cycle when their Jewish identity is less important than it may be at other stages. And others may simply not know how to become involved in Jewish activities. Wherever individuals may be in their relationship to their (or their spouse's) Jewish identity, the community must be understanding and non-judgmental, must accept them as they are, and must encourage and welcome them to join in more communal activities. Whether these activities involve traditional or new approaches to conducting Jewish religious services, studying Jewish texts, Jewish cultural programs, or Jewish social action or charitable activities is secondary. The important thing is to welcome and encourage greater Jewish involvement by unengaged and under-engaged Jews and non-Jewish spouses.

Other changes call for sizeable expenditures. In view of the vital importance of the goal and the range of programs needed to pursue it, *we recommend that Federation raise at least \$5 million per year to invest in the engagement effort over the coming five years and that it then consider extending these efforts for at least another five years.* These funds would be used for expenditures on programs and activities designed to increase materially the number of Jews (and non-Jewish spouses) actively and meaningfully engaged in the Jewish community or the number of Jews who consider themselves to be part of the Jewish community. The funds would not be available for programs that contribute to, say, a more vibrant community for those who are already engaged but that have little effect on the unengaged or the under-engaged.

*The funds should be allocated annually by a broad-based, impartial entity that would be responsible for execution of the engagement plan and that would allocate resources, in principle, based on the expected cost-effectiveness, i.e., on maximizing the expected increase in the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in Jewish communal life per thousand dollars allocated.* As a practical matter, Federation cannot develop estimates of the cost-effectiveness for the wide range of programs envisaged. Nevertheless, broad judgments can still be made. Programs that primarily serve population segments that are already actively and meaningfully engaged in the Jewish community (or that, based on their family background, are likely to become actively and meaningfully engaged) are unlikely to be cost-effective in terms of increasing the number of Jews actively engaged. Federation and the community more generally may have good reasons to support these programs, but they should not consider these programs as part of the community's outreach and engagement efforts. In contrast, some programs may be likely to attract unengaged or under-engaged Jews (and their non-Jewish spouses) and to draw them into greater involvement. Some of these programs, moreover, may lead to the recurring interactions that create ties to other Jews and to the Jewish community. Provided that their costs are not excessive in relation to the number of persons meaningfully affected, these programs would be likely to be cost-effective.

In general, we believe that cost-effectiveness can be maximized by (i) taking steps to develop a market-oriented culture and (ii) focusing efforts on the three core target markets—Jews in their 20s and 30s without children, Jews with young children, and interfaith families—and on the under-engaged suburbs.

Although it might seem desirable to concentrate spending on a small number of highly cost-effective programs, the community must adopt a broader approach. Differences among the population segments targeted and among individuals within each population segment make it necessary to offer a range of products to appeal to different audiences. Moreover, inadequate information on impacts and costs has limited our ability to select a small number of “winners” and reject programs likely to be less effective or less cost-effective. Chapters II and III have consequently recommended a range of ideas, providing an overview of the tools that might be considered to address the engagement issue. Community organizations may wish to develop proposals and seek funding based on these (or their own) ideas.

## **Recommendations for assessing progress and adapting efforts to results of experience**

To achieve the goal of increasing the number of Jews actively and meaningfully engaged in the community, Federation and the community at large must assess progress and modify their efforts based on the findings of experience.

*First, we strongly recommend that Federation and other communal organizations monitor and evaluate all programs involving significant commitments of resources and that engagement programs not shown to be effective and cost-effective in promoting engagement be dropped from the engagement effort.*<sup>70</sup> Evaluations require planning from the outset of a program and can involve substantial costs. At the outset, an organization must define the metrics to be used in assessing the program, decide how to define the control group (if appropriate), and set up systems for collecting data. In allocating funds for engagement, Federation and UJEF should charge each grant recipient with developing plans for appropriate monitoring and evaluation (taking into consideration the importance of the resources allocated to each program) and with budgeting for the costs involved. Federation and UJEF should approve these monitoring and evaluation plans and budgets as a condition for approving the allocations.

*Second, Federation's Engagement Coordinator should submit to the Outreach and Engagement Committee each year a report, approved by Federation's Executive Vice President and CEO, on the engagement activities carried out by Federation and community organizations (whether with Federation or UJEF funds or, to the extent known, with other resources), the costs incurred, the results of these activities—particularly with respect to the measures of success agreed for each activity—and recommendations for the future.* This report should, among other things, incorporate the findings of the monitoring and evaluation efforts.

*Third, the Outreach and Engagement Committee should review the Engagement Coordinator's annual report and send it, along with a cover memo expressing its own assessment, to Federation's Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Planning and Allocation Committee and Endowment Fund and to community organizations.* To perform its duties, the Committee will need to keep abreast of the engagement activities of local community organizations and of Jewish communities elsewhere. Given the wide range of activities envisaged, the Committee should appoint six Deputy Chairs—one charged with oversight over the cultural changes recommended in Chapter II, one for the other recommendations in Chapter II, and one for each of the population segments discussed in Chapter III.

*Fourth, we recommend that engagement summit meetings be held prior to each triennial budget cycle to ensure broader input into the engagement efforts.* The Outreach and Engagement Committee would be responsible for organizing and setting the agenda for these meetings. Prior to each meeting, it should submit a report summarizing the annual reports on engagement, making recommendations for changes in the Plan, and proposing new performance targets for measuring future success. These meetings will permit the community to draw on the lessons of experience in re-orienting the program and guiding future budgetary allocations.

*Finally, we recommend that the community conduct a follow-up survey in 2016, similar to the 2003 Greater Washington Jewish Community Study and, where*

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<sup>70</sup> Programs addressing other aspects of Federation's mission should, of course, be assessed primarily based on those other own goals and objectives, rather than their contributions to engagement.

*appropriate, interim, more limited surveys.* Given the importance of increasing engagement in Jewish life and the resources proposed to be invested, the community needs to assess the results to provide guidance for subsequent years.