

2011-2012
ANNUAL REPORT



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This Annual Report, sharing highlights of BJE’s 75th year, evokes reflections on generations. When BJE was launched in 1937, fewer than 150,000 Jews lived in Los Angeles and the “Bureau” of Jewish Education served 12 affiliated schools: 5 Hebrew Schools, 3 (Yiddish) Folk Shulens, 3 Workmen’s Circle Schools and one Child Care Center. Twenty-five years later, in 1962 – following post-WWII migration west and the post-war baby boom – L.A. Jewry had tripled in number and BJE’s educational services were meeting the needs of tens of thousands of students at nearly 100 Jewish schools: synagogue – sponsored schools complementing public school education with afternoon and weekend Jewish study, early childhood Jewish education centers, L.A. Hebrew High School (which BJE helped initiate) providing post-bar/bat mitzvah Hebrew-intensive educational opportunity for students graduating synagogue schools, and 5 day schools.

By 1987, BJE was - in addition to its work with a growing school system - well known for conducting teen experiential education programs, including its pioneering Summer Ulpan-in-Israel and the innovative Havurat Noar program integrating themed weekend retreats with weekly discussions led by counselor – teachers. Recognizing the growing scope of BJE’s services and programs and the enduring need for a communal organization wholly dedicated to Jewish education, the Jewish Federation decided – in a friendly “spin off” – to constitute BJE as an independent agency, a transition that was completed in 1990-91. As these pages reflect, BJE: Builders of Jewish Education continues, in 2011-2012, to build a vital present and nurture a meaningful Jewish future.

From helping families find just the right Jewish educational experiences for their children through its nationally acclaimed JKidLA/Concierge program, to strengthening Day School sustainability; from its creative use of technology to enable students to explore Jewish life and culture in different times and places through virtual worlds, to guiding hundreds of teens each year to identity-building experiences in Poland and Israel on the nation’s largest “March of the Living” program, BJE is a field leader in Jewish education. BJE’s programs and services are constantly re-imagined to meet ever-changing needs, but its core commitment is enduring: to help create a strong Jewish future through encouraging participation, enhancing quality and promoting access to Jewish education. This mission could not possibly be accomplished without the partnership and financial support of many institutions and individuals. We are proud, in this Report, to recognize with appreciation those who share in these efforts.

We also acknowledge with special thanks those who – at this milestone of BJE’s 75th year – are part of the BJE Legacy Society. Those Jewish communities that have flourished over time are communities in which the Jewish education of successive generations has been a significant priority. We are privileged to carry forward this legacy....for generations.

Thank you for your support,

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Experiencing the Past and Building a Better Future

Months have passed since Mel and Susan Plutsky, and daughter Emily, returned to Santa Monica from Poland and - in Emily's case - from Israel, on BJE's March of the Living, but the journey's vivid experiences still resonate. "You can watch movies, see pictures, study the Holocaust all you want. When you go there you get a whole different perspective that can't be described in words," Mel said.

The Plutskys were part of BJE's delegation of 280 teens, adult participants, survivors and staff, making it the largest U.S. group. The teens and adults each participated in separate tours, at times uniting for joint programming. They joined 10,000 people from 40 countries on Yom HaShoah, for the "March of the Living," walking from Auschwitz to the Birkenau death camp, connecting to the more than 1.1 million Jews murdered in those camps during World War II. All the teens and nearly half the adults also visited Israel, celebrating Yom Ha'Atzmaut and the Jewish homeland's rebirth as a sovereign Jewish state.

"To be able to share the experience with my parents made it even more powerful," said Emily, 18. "We'll be at dinner and they'll say, 'Remember when...' and we discuss what we saw." Hearing Holocaust survivors talk of their harrowing experiences in the very places they were during the war - a train station cattle car, a barracks bunk - left a deep impression on the Plutskys.

"It's so hard to fathom, but when you hear directly from a survivor you get an inch closer to it being more real," Emily said. The Plutskys became close with their fellow travelers. Emily, who just graduated from high school, will attend the University of Oregon with a friend she met on the March. Mel and Susan have attended an adult participant reunion. Committed to building a better future through Jewish education, Susan is a VP on the executive committee at Milken Community High School as well as chair of the school's annual campaign, and Mel has joined the Board of Directors of BJE.

"It's important to never forget. Going to the place where it happened made what I learned all these years real," Emily said. "I'm more knowledgeable, I am a witness and I can say I've been there, I saw it."



(From right) Emily Plutsky, Noah Applebaum, Cayla Bergman

“When you go there you get a whole different perspective that can't be described in words”



▲ Susan Plutsky in downtown Krakow



◀ Survivor, Sidonia Lax with Mel Plutsky

Experiencing Jaffa/Tel Aviv Through Game-Based Learning

Jack Lieblein, 10, Abby Cohen, 11, and 20 other fifth graders played a videogame in their Hebrew school classes at Adat Ari El this year. “It was the most fun I ever had in Hebrew school and made me excited to go,” said Jack, who will attend Luther Middle School in Burbank in the fall.

Virtual Israel is an interactive, 3D online game that teaches users about the development of the modern State of Israel. Developed by BJE in partnership with Adat Ari El, the game realistically simulates Palestine around 1912 with users becoming European immigrants who, after arriving at the Port of Jaffa, must accomplish tasks to adapt to their new home. Jack and Abby obtained visa stamps, found Israel’s seven fruit species, had tea with an Arab resident and met Henrietta Szold, Arthur James Balfour and other historical figures.

“It was a great experience because you’re learning while you’re having fun,” said Abby, who will attend Milliken Middle School & Performing Arts Magnet in Sherman Oaks in the fall. “Kids love videogames and including that in Hebrew school is a great way to get us involved.”



Abby Cohen

“It was the most fun I ever had in Hebrew school and made me excited to go”



Jack Lieblein

The curriculum includes introductory and debriefing lessons. Game experiences often sparked sophisticated class discussions, said Hebrew teacher Rebecca Chernotsky.

“I love that it incorporates elements of teaching. We’re not just sticking them in front of a computer and saying, ‘Explore,’” Chernotsky said.

BJE hopes to expand the game beyond the eight lessons currently completed.

“It behooves educators, and therefore, supportive donors to seek new technology strategies to enhance the teaching/learning process,” says BJE Board Member Sandra Bernstein, “‘Virtual’ programming, in its infancy, offers students a new learning technique.”

Virtual Israel was funded through grants from The Jewish Federation, BJE and BJE Advisory Board Member Sandra Bernstein.

Connecting Families to Jewish Learning and Living

Sally Loevner discovered that the best way to promote her preschool's many early childhood programs is through BJE's JKidLA.

A web resource geared toward families with children ages birth-18, JKidLA provides information on the extensive selection of Jewish educational programs and events in the Los Angeles area. These include 54 preschools, 56 religious schools, 39 day schools, 21 residential camps and 35 day camps, Shabbat and holiday services and happenings, sports programs, family camps, parent-and-me classes, and special needs workshops. The website <http://jkidla.com> also offers links to recipes and parenting resources. In addition, staying informed is easy through twice-a-month eblasts, Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest postings. JKidLA's City and Valley Concierges are also available for personalized recommendations.

Loevner, director of the Leonard I. Beerman Early Childhood Center at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, submits preschool, camp, infant/toddler, open house, and mommy and me programs for posting on the site.

"JKidLA is a wonderful way to market our programs, have people know we're here so that they can contact us and visit us," said Loevner, whose school recently marked its 25th anniversary. "Anytime anyone goes to that website and looks for preschools we're always there."

Parents interested in early childhood education have told Loevner that they found her school through JKidLA and liked that it was listed on the website. A number of students have enrolled in Loevner's school as a result.

"JKidLA Concierges are letting people know that if they need a full-day program to check out our school," Loevner said.

Debra Markovic, BJE's City Concierge explained: "JKidLA/Concierge Services is about really listening to parents, who they are and what they want for their children, in an effort to connect them to the Jewish schools, camps and programs that reflect the family's unique values and ideas."

The JKidLA/Concierge program is an important vehicle for advancing BJE's goal of encouraging participation in Jewish education, with emphasis on children and families.



Sally Loevner with a student from the Leonard I. Beerman Early Childhood Center

“JKidLA/Concierge Services is about really listening to parents, who they are and what they want for their children”



Extreme MAKEOVER: Hebrew Edition

After 18 years of teaching Hebrew, Luna Shalom completely changed her language instruction approach. Instead of lectures and traditional textbooks, the Sinai Akiba Academy fifth grade educator now uses fun and effective language immersion methodology she learned through BJE.

“Now, the students are not afraid to talk and write. When you’re comfortable with the language you are going to learn much more,” Shalom said.

Day school teachers and administrators throughout Los Angeles are altering Hebrew language instruction through two BJE programs, enriching student classroom experiences and learning outcomes.

To create a cadre of highly trained instructors to serve as lead immersion teachers in their schools, BJE, in cooperation with American Jewish University, developed a two-year Hebrew Language Certificate Program.



Janine & Peter Lowy

Shalom is one of eight teachers who recently earned the certificate after participating in formal instruction and on-site mentoring. The program, led by Hebrew specialist Aviva Kadosh, was based on nationally successful language immersion models and funded by grants from Janine and Peter Lowy and the Jewish Federation. Faculty from Abraham Joshua Heschel, Adat Ari El, Sinai Akiba Academy, Valley Beth Shalom, Valley Torah and Yavneh day schools participated.



Arnee Winschall

“We wanted to revolutionize the teaching of Hebrew and were looking for partners...BJE has really been a trailblazer.”

Building on the certificate program, BJE launched a three-year Hebrew Language Proficiency Project in Fall 2011, in collaboration with Massachusetts-based Hebrew at the Center, led by nationally-acclaimed Dr. Vardit Ringvald of Brandeis University. The project provides administrators and teachers with in-person and online training in techniques that individualize the curriculum for students.

Los Angeles is the second community to pilot this nationwide model, supported in part by the Jewish Federation and federal funding through “No Child Left Behind.” Participating day schools are Abraham Joshua Heschel, Pressman Academy, Sinai Akiba Academy, Temple Emanuel and Valley Beth Shalom. “We wanted to revolutionize the teaching of Hebrew and were looking for partners who could have a greater impact than [our] just going to an individual school,” said Arnee Winschall, Hebrew at the Center Board of Directors President. “Being able to find a central infrastructure in a community that identifies a key agenda shared by multiple constituencies helps serve more people. BJE has really been a trailblazer.”

HOLLYWOOD

Take Note!

Jake Gardenhour can already add accomplished film director to his resume at the ripe old age of 13. Jake made two films that were among those featured during BJE's first jTeenLA FilmFest.

Held in collaboration with the Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival, the program attracted Jewish-themed comedy, animation, drama and documentary submissions from students ages 11-18. The festival culminated in May with screenings, a filmmaker discussion and reception. "It's a great way to engage kids in Jewish issues," said Jake, a 7th grade student at David & Hillevi Saperstein Middle School of Milken Community High School.

Since Jake and his friends were in the throes of bar mitzvah preparation, it was natural for them to create "The Bar Mitzvah Nightmare," a two minute comedy, with special effects and dream sequences.

“It's a great way to engage kids in Jewish issues”

"We were having dreams of failing in our bar mitzvahs," Jake said. "Making the film gave us a chance to express our fear."

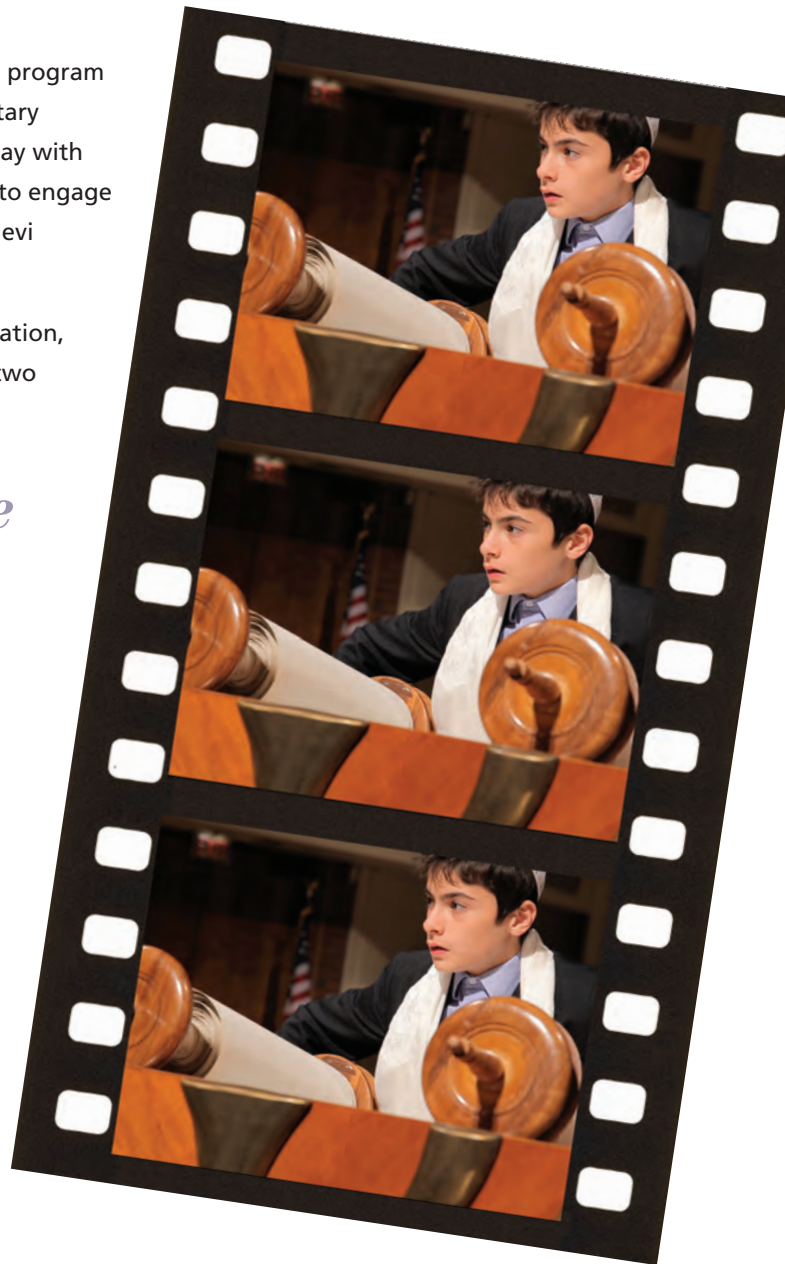
Jake's second film, "Shame," a nine minute drama, is more serious. A Jewish boy and a Muslim girl meet after bullies push them into a closet at school. The story follows the development of their relationship and the reaction of others.

"I had to do a lot of research before making 'Shame'," said Jake. "I learned that some places around the world still have anti-Semitism and racism."

Although Jake had made movies since the age of 8, "Shame" marked the first time he directed a film. He discovered that it takes time to make movies, obtain and set up equipment, and persuade participants to cooperate.

Jake is already thinking about next year's jTeenLA FilmFest.

"We all enjoyed it and came to the conclusion that we want to do it again next year because it was so fun," Jake said.



*Jake Gardenhour in
"The Bar Mitzvah Nightmare"*

The Lainer Family: Making Day School Accessible to Future Generations



Mark & Ellie Lainer

Mark, Nahum and Luis Lainer, as their parents before them, understand that the key to the strength and longevity of the Jewish people is Jewish education. That's why the brothers and their wives, Ellie, Alice and Lee, want to help more local students enjoy the benefits of a Jewish day school education.

Together with BJE, the Lainer families are dedicated to addressing day school affordability through the Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment Fund, memorializing the brothers' parents, who were Jewish education advocates.

"In our society, where it is so easy to assimilate and adopt the secular values of our country and world, if we want to maintain Jewish values and Jewish community, the only way to do it is through Jewish education.," said Mark Lainer.

All of the Lainers' children attended Jewish day schools, as do their school-age grandchildren today.

The BJE/Lainer endowment endeavor, initiated in partnership with the Jewish Federation, encourages and supports endowment development system-wide. Its initial cohort of schools was five high schools participating in the Jim Joseph High School Affordability Initiative. These schools have already raised over \$8.3 million in pledges and awarded more than \$2.6 million in tuition assistance to 171 students in the three years since the program's inception. In addition to tuition grants and development support provided by the Jim Joseph Foundation, schools will receive income distribution from a 25% Lainer Fund "match" to their endowment funds raised.



Alice & Nahum Lainer

Seven elementary day schools are now participating in Generations LA, a program also administered by BJE to assist these schools in endowment development. The seven schools have generated over \$2.6 million in cash endowment pledges and planned gifts since launching in October 2011. Generations LA is a fitting name as the Lainer family's commitment to building day school endowments continues with the next Lainer generation - as Gary and Jeff Lainer are among the leaders of the endowment development efforts at their respective children's schools.

Generations LA is part of a pilot program funded by AVI CHAI and local donors in three communities. The project is coordinated nationally by PEJE. In addition to an endowment "match" from the Lainer Fund, Generations LA schools receive development support and scholarship grants funded in part by Wendy and Richard Kellner, Ellie and Mark Lainer, Janine and Peter Lowy, and Sheila and Alan Spiwak.

"Everyone involved sees the value of what they are doing," Mark Lainer said. "When people work together, the level of accomplishment increases."

The goal is to encourage every day school in the community to actively build endowment.

"If we can raise more funds for the Lainer Day School Endowment Fund, we can add more schools and help more students," Lainer said. "I feel we've accomplished quite a bit and I'm very proud of it. We still have a lot to do."

"If we want to maintain Jewish values and Jewish community, the only way to do it is through Jewish education"



Luis & Lee Lainer

Making a Difference: Teens Who Care

Noah Kaplan and Sarah Goodstein learned in summer 2011 that anyone can make a difference in the world, including kids. Both seventh graders had the opportunity to give back to the Los Angeles community through BJE's Teens Who Care Summer Day Camp, which was funded with seed money from the Jewish Federation.

Noah, Sarah, and their 12 and 13 year old peers, traveled by bus to a different volunteer site daily, serving food to the homeless, working in a recycling plant or restoring native plants. The program is open to bar/bat mitzvah age kids entering grades 7 and 8.

Sarah and Noah have continued volunteering year-round, planting trees at The Shalom Institute, cleaning trash from the L.A. River and assisting autistic children. "I learned that there are many ways to help. It made me look at things differently," said Sarah, a student at Portola Highly Gifted Magnet School in Tarzana.



Noah enjoyed his experience so much that he is returning to Teens Who Care this summer and bringing eight friends. "It was really interesting and fun. My friends will like it as much as I did," said Noah, who attends Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School in Northridge.

Noah and Sarah enjoyed getting to know people they helped as well as fellow participants.

"I know [a week] seems like a short time but we became our own little family. It gave me a sense of how a bunch of kids from different places could get together, do something fun and benefit the world," Sarah said.

One experience stood out for Sarah. After serving the homeless at a shelter, the teens went up to the building's roof to see the contrasting view.

"In the distance we saw tall buildings, big houses and wealthy looking places. Below us on the street we saw dirty buildings and homeless people," Sarah said. "It gave a reality check to all of us."

Building on the successful summer 2011 pilot, BJE Board members Jake and Janet Farber and Earl Greinetz joined with the Jewish Federation in contributing to the development and support of the summer 2012 Teens Who Care program focusing on the environment ("Going Green") and people in need ("Lending a Hand").

“It gave me a sense of how a bunch of kids from different places could get together, do something fun and benefit the world”



BUILDERS OF JEWISH EDUCATION



On January 19, 2012, BJE celebrated the milestone of 75 years of service to the Los Angeles Jewish community at a Gala event held at Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel. More than 350 people joined in honoring Marjorie and Rabbi Jacob Pressman, builders of enduring Los Angeles Jewish educational institutions in the 20th century, and Nurit and Rich Robin, leaders in building for future generations in the 21st century. Monise Neumann, BJE Director of Teen Experiential Education, was recognized for her professional leadership in nurturing the Jewish identity of thousands of teens through her work with such BJE programs as Ulpan, Halutz, Yad B'Yad and March of the Living.



Margorie & Rabbi Jacob Pressman, Nurit & Rich Robin and Monise Neumann



Supporting Jewish Education: HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

Gifts received January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

BJE gratefully acknowledges the essential support of the donors and organizations whose generosity enables BJE to provide ongoing services and programs to enhance quality, increase access and encourage participation in Jewish education.

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² *Benefactor Society: \$10,000-\$24,999*

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Legacy Society

BJE gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those that have made testamentary provisions to support the enduring mission of BJE:

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To discuss Legacy designation or Endowment opportunities at BJE, please contact Miriam Prum Hess, (323)761-8334 or mprumhess@bjela.org.

^{z"l} of blessed memory

Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment Fund

We acknowledge with appreciation those who contributed to the Simha and Sara Lainer Day School Endowment Fund, a joint project of BJE and The Jewish Federation, from January 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012.

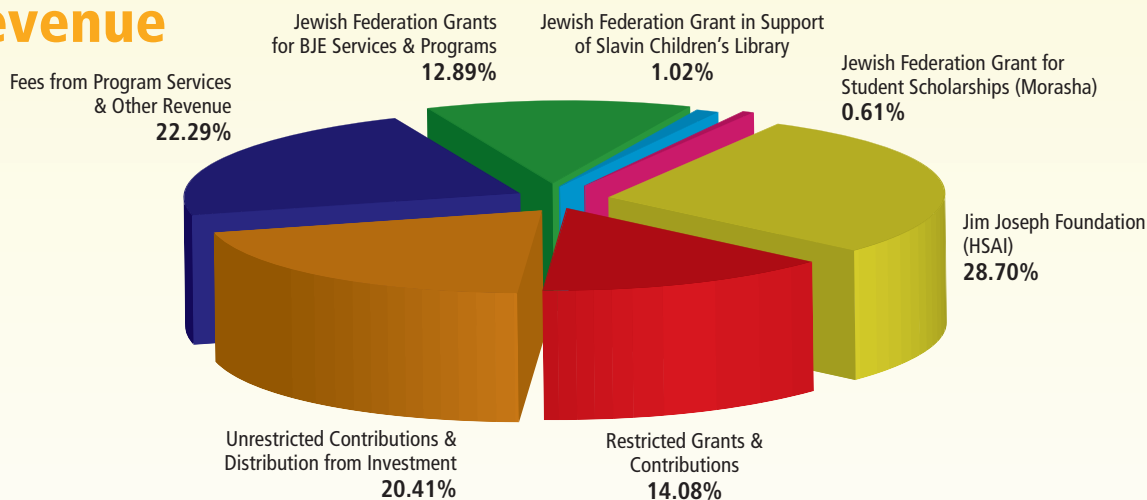
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Financials at a Glance

FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012 (unaudited)

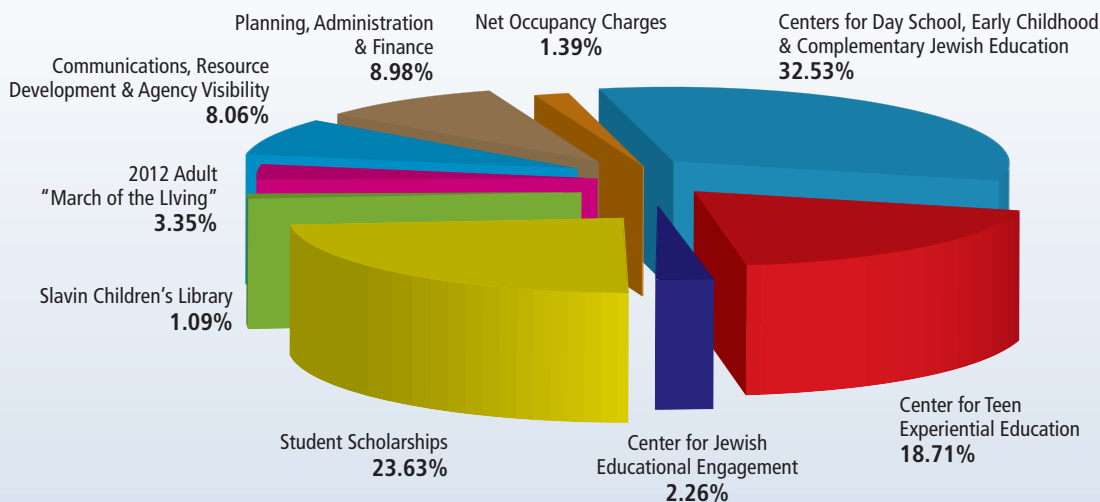


Revenue



Jewish Federation Grants for BJE Services & Programs	\$ 882,380
Jewish Federation Grant in Support of Slavin Children's Library	70,120
Jewish Federation Grant for Student Scholarships (Morasha)	42,000
Jim Joseph Foundation High School Affordability Initiative Grant (HSAI)*	1,963,486
Restricted Grants & Contributions	963,334
Unrestricted Contributions & Distribution from Investment	1,397,000
Fees from Program Services & Other Revenue	1,524,989
TOTAL**	\$6,843,309

Expense



Centers for Day School, Early Childhood & Complementary Jewish Education	\$2,226,378
Center for Teen Experiential Education (March of the Living, SULAM, YPAC)	1,280,589
Center for Jewish Educational Engagement	154,391
Student Scholarships	1,617,721
Slavin Children's Library	74,436
2012 Adult "March of the Living"	229,056
Communications, Resource Development & Agency Visibility	551,531
Planning, Administration & Finance	614,333
Net Occupancy Charges***	94,874
TOTAL	\$6,843,309

*In conjunction with Jewish Federation **Does not include federal funds of over \$1.2 million in educational services accessed from LAUSD in support of students at BJE-affiliated day schools. ***Net (Subvented) Rate for Occupancy at Jewish Federation's Goldsmith Center



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Calendar of Events

<i>October 2012</i>	26 The Jewish Federation's 1,000 Shabbat Celebrations
<i>November 2012</i>	11 BJE Conference for Religious School Educators 18 Global Day of Jewish Learning
<i>December 2012</i>	13 Milken Family Foundation Jewish Educator Awards Luncheon
<i>January 2013</i>	17 BJE Gala honoring Marc Rohatiner
<i>March 2013</i>	11 Conference for Early Childhood Educators 13 BJE Conference for Day School Professional Leadership
<i>Spring 2013</i>	BJE Legacy Society Event
<i>April 2013</i>	4-18 BJE March of the Living (application deadline: November 16, 2012)
<i>May 2013</i>	5 BJE Major Donor Event