

# ANNUAL REPORT

2013 - 2014





As I complete three years as President of BJE, I am filled with pride and gratitude. Pride in what BJE has accomplished during my tenure, both organizationally and substantively. Gratitude to have been embraced by a committed Board, an intelligent staff and generous donors.

During the past few years, funds donated by individuals and grants from funders catapulted BJE to greater impact. Contributions to BJE by individuals and foundations increased by 48 percent, allowing BJE to better meet the demands of our community. Although we still have much to accomplish, we thank you for your continued support.

BJE remains uniquely poised to partner with schools and others across the Los Angeles Jewish community, to deliver value and guidance for the benefit of children and their families. Our work increases

participation in Jewish education, enhances the quality of Jewish education and provides greater access to Jewish education. All these achievements provide substance, structure and meaning in the lives of Jewish children and families:

- How do young Jews get connected with Jewish life? Where do they find the best schools and programs for their families? On the Internet, of course. Through BJE's revamped website www.JKidLA.com they get information about schools and programs, while BJE's concierges guide and counsel families along their individual paths.
- BJE Impact, which also has a new website, helps to shape service learning so that teens carry Jewish values into adulthood.
- BJE has focused this past year on integrating technology as part of 21st-century learning so that Jewish impact will broaden and deepen for years to come.
- BJE is re-envisioning Complementary Education aka "Hebrew school" to meet the needs of today's kids and families.
- Meanwhile, BJE has infused millions of dollars into the Jewish day school system through government funding and increased endowment funds as well as helped schools contain costs through joint purchasing and a new benchmarking program.
- Teens in our region continue to experience Jewish life and history through BJE March of the Living and the newly launched Epic Israel, two phenomenal life-affirming programs.

BJE continues to garner accolades from national organizations for groundbreaking work in Jewish education. Our programs and services become models for other communities, and our elite staff speak nationwide on their fields of expertise.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to have led BJE's Board and to have worked with such forward-thinking professionals. BJE will continue to be at the center of the Jewish educational community of Los Angeles for all families, regardless of affiliation or denomination, for generations to come.



Donna S. Nadel



ny systemic change in a 77-year-old organization providing a broad array of programs and services requires considerable thought and skillful implementation.

At BJE, under the leadership of Donna S. Nadel, President from 2011 to 2014, we have witnessed the imagination and implementation of such high-impact change, captured in part on the pages of this annual report.

Yet no such account can fully convey the mission-driven passion and extraordinary qualities of character embodied by Donna. With care, consideration and understanding, she has elevated the work and capacity of BJE, capably guiding its strategic direction. All of us who value the vision and mission of BJE are indebted to Donna, and I feel privileged to have "journeyed" with her these past three years.

Much like Donna, Alan M. Spiwak assumes the presidency after years of service and leadership within BJE as well as with numerous other communal organizations. As a business leader who holds a doctorate in psychology, Alan keenly understands both the importance of BJE's work in the lives of children and families and the practical dimension of making programs and services more broadly accessible.

BJE is fortunate to enjoy the volunteer leadership and support of a Board that reflects the diversity of Jewish life in Los Angeles. With leaders like Donna and Alan, BJE continues to move from strength to strength, recognizing that meaningful Jewish education plays a key role in the continuing vitality of Jewish life both close to home and around the world. Thank you to Donna and Alan, and to all who share in this important work.

Gil Graff, PhD

Executive Director

# TECHNOLOGY IN DAY SCHOOLS

A technological revolution, both quiet and meaningful, is happening in the BJE community.

Some may have noticed the launch of new websites, and the revamping of existing ones, to reflect that people use the Internet in a more interactive manner. But much, much more is yet to come. "We have created a cultural shift within BJE about fostering knowledge with 21st-century learning," said Phil Liff-Grieff, BJE Associate Director.

BJE has facilitated the introduction and upgrade of technology at several of its affiliated schools, through methods that include schoolwide assessments, infrastructure upgrades and professional training.

"The ultimate goal is for Jewish schools in the region to use the latest technology meaningfully; these latest tools can help to foster higher-level thinking and collaborative learning," Liff-Grieff added.

The smart implementation and use of technology has yielded enormous cost savings:

- An AVI CHAI two-year grant of \$75,000 allowed for a consortium of 10 BJE-affiliated schools to start to transform into 21st-century learning environments.
- BJE facilitated the assessment of the schools' current infrastructure as well as the implementation of new practices, such as making joint purchases and sharing IT support staff, resulting in a total cost savings of \$375,000 during the two-year grant period.
- Maimonides Academy, an Orthodox day school in Los Angeles, has benefited greatly from BJE's "deep dives" into technology.
- As the institution moves into a new building, it will continue to receive technological guidance from BJE for maximum impact.





The payoff of BJE's efforts goes beyond the financial realm.

"We have new opportunities when moving away from the front of the classroom to students' desks," Liff-Grieff said, "These include teaching children how to navigate the world — both inside and outside school — and how to become literate in terms of which online sources to trust."

"Technology is a powerful tool that we have found to increase student motivation and enhance curricular studies. ... Pupils take charge of their learning and collaborate quite effectively and naturally."

> - Ilana Daftari, third grade teacher at Maimonides Academy

At Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School in Northridge, technology both expands and deepens student learning.

"It brings the curriculum to life in vivid color, in digital form, with physical structures and even through cross-cultural and cross-continental connections," said Larry Kligman, head of the community day school, adding, "It puts them squarely in the 21st-century, allowing them to explore, innovate and design individually and in teams, with an eye toward turning old systems and patterns on their heads. Students are able to virtually experience the vibrancy of modern Israel, as well as understand how the Jewish people are rooted in the ancient land."



### ETHAN HAMBURG

After volunteering at a transitional house for women and children as part of BJE Impact's 2013 Summer Teen Service Corps, Ethan Hamburg shared thoughts on a blog published on the new website www.bjeimpact.org.

Reflection on communal service is a key component in Jewish service learning, and a blog provides a contemplative online space and serves as a forum for ideas and inspiration.

BJE Impact, the Center for Jewish Service Learning, guides teens to think of their contributions in a Jewish context, rather than as a one-time action, and finds ways to integrate the experience into their lives.

Ethan, 13, a member of Valley Beth Shalom, did just that last summer at Alexandria House. Through the BJE Teen Service Corps, he tutored children and oversaw their activities at the home's summer camp.

He was so moved by the experience that he decided to donate gifts from his bar mitzvah to the interim housing program; he is pictured above presenting a check for \$2,000, as well as several gift cards, to Judy Vaughn, Founding Director of Alexandria House.

He included a special letter in his bar mitzvah invitation to family and friends about his intention. "I was moved by [Alexandria House's] sincere and honest work of 'repairing the world,' (tikkun olam)." Ethan continues to take part in BJE Teen Service Corps; it will be interesting to see what his future holds.

Vaughn was moved by his acts of kindness, saying, "Partnering with Ethan was a reminder of [our own] commitment to repair the world, one woman and one family at a time."

# SOMETIMES, CHANGE IS NECESSARY.

uring the past year, BJE launched two new websites to further outstanding programs, while realigning two other sites to reflect the reality of the Internet, which has become more conversational and less static. All the changes help to further BJE's overall mission of bettering education throughout the Jewish communities of Greater Los Angeles.



# www.bjeimpact.org

"We understand that our job is to provide multiple portals of value," said Phil Liff-Grieff, BJE Associate Director.

"BJE's online presence will continue to evolve in line with emerging shifts in technology usage," he added. "BJE has a robust social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and other platforms."

BJE's service learning program, known as BJE Impact, has a new website, www.bjeimpact.org, that helps teens embark on a lifelong journey of "tikkun olam," or "repairing the world." Specifically, Jewish service learning integrates community service with instruction and Jewish learning, and fosters partnerships that offer effective assistance to those in need.

"The site showcases how the program is a catalyst and connector in assisting both individuals, such as through b'nai mitzvah projects, and Jewish institutions, in maximizing social action outcomes," said Alisha Pedowitz, Program Leader of BJE Impact.

The site offers detailed information on how to get involved meaningfully in diverse areas of need – ranging from food insecurity to violence prevention – across the Los Angeles region. "Visitors to the site can avoid reinventing the wheel," Pedowitz said, "and share information, reflections and inspiration, through such vehicles as blogs."

Meanwhile, a grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation helped BJE create a site **www.lahighschoolaffordability.org** to document and disseminate the learnings from a two-pronged affordability initiative, generously funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation, at five Jewish high schools in Los Angeles.



# www.lahighschoolaffordability.org



The grant helps the schools provide significant financial aid for middle-income families who, prior to the program, did not feel they would qualify for scholarships, yet could not afford a private Jewish education. The initiative also helps day schools create sustainable endowments.

Through the tools and insights shared on the website, the initiative can serve as a model for other communities seeking to create affordability programs.

BJE reworked two of its existing sites to better align with how people engage online. Both BJE's main site www.bjela.org and its JKidLA program site www.JKidLA.org now assist users more dynamically, through social media, blogs, imagery and e-blasts, while remaining a clearinghouse of information on Jewish education for the region.

More than 6,000 families a month visit the JKidLA website, seeking information and connections to a broad range of Jewish educational opportunities. Those who want more personal assistance can still reach BJE "Concierges" by email or phone.









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BJE:Builders of Jewish Education

# EPIC ISRAEL



wenty fortunate teens, all first-time travelers to the Jewish state, spent 25 days this summer immersed in an inaugural program known as Epic Israel. BJE facilitated the life-changing program, in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and the Jewish Agency for Israel. "My hope is that these kids strengthen their connections to Judaism and Israel," said Justin Sadle, BJE Program Leader of Epic Israel. "The future will judge our success."

The program's two tracks included "Paving the Way: Experiencing Israel Through Community Service" and "isr@el: Exploring Israel Through Digital Media." The hands-on tracks "meet teens at their interests while building skills," Sadle said.

In addition to visiting the "must-see" sites of Israel, such as the Western Wall, Yad Vashem, the Golan Heights and the Dead Sea, and connecting those experiences to Jewish texts, participants ventured down roads less traveled.

Those on the social action track volunteered at Pantry Packers, which provides food to thousands of needy Israelis in the Jerusalem area, and helped to clear brush from the Carmel Forest, devastated in 2010 by a massive blaze. "Onion picking, as smelly and obscure as it sounds, was probably the most fun I had doing community service," said Rotem Azariya, 16, of Sherman Oaks, "My group picked

Rotem Azariya, 16, of Sherman Oaks. "My group picked

onions alongside Israeli teens with the organization Leket and by the end of our time volunteering, we picked enough onions to feed over three hundred families."

Teens on the digital media track visited MobilEye, a company that uses camera technology to revolutionize vehicle safety. MobilEye, which conducts research and development in Israel, produces advanced camera systems so that cars can better detect other vehicles, lanes, speed limits, pedestrians and other hazards.



While in Safed, the aspiring photographers learned from renowned photographer Eliyahu Alperin, who taught them about panoramic photography and invited the teens to put their skills into action by taking shots from his roof.

Parents and friends could track their children's activities through blog posts, Instagram and Twitter.

While the teens from the Los Angeles region were in Israel, officials found the bodies of three slaughtered Jewish teenagers. In response, the young participants held a ceremony to commemorate the tragedy.

"We are teenagers in the land where these teenage boys were killed," Adele Julius, 16, of El Segundo, said at the ceremony. "This is a story that will stay with us for the rest of our lives. Because we [were there], I feel more connected to the struggle of keeping our Jewish state alive."

# MARCH OF THE LIVING



s Hanna Nadel packed for BJE's March of the Living, she anticipated her meeting with Tadeusz "Tad" Kurowski, the son of the Righteous Gentiles who had saved her grandmother in Poland during the Holocaust.

Tad's parents, Jan and Marie Kurowski, kept Hanna's paternal grandmother, Estelle Nadel, as well as brother Steve and mother Chaya, hidden for 18 months in an attic on a farm near Krakow. Chaya would forage for food in the early mornings. One terrible day, a Nazi sympathizer shot her. Estelle was just 6 years old.

As the war ended, Estelle and Steve reunited with their older brother, Mel, who survived by pretending to be a gentile. All three eventually found their way to the United States, where they received asylum. Estelle now resides in Denver.

BJE facilitated the meeting between Tad and Hanna in a hotel lobby in Poland. The delegation was invited to attend the unique "reunion."

For his part, Tad told of Estelle's wartime experience through photographs of the farm. And Hanna said, "Our life is tied to his life. A huge part of meeting Tad was affirming that life moves forward and that there are such good people out there."

Each year, BJE invites Jewish teens – as well as Holocaust survivors – from across the Los Angeles region to take part in the March from Auschwitz to Birkenau that serves as a silent tribute to all victims of the Holocaust (Yom HaShoah). After spending a week in Poland, the group travels to Israel to celebrate Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day).

David Nadel, Hanna's father, said, "For me, as my mother's son, to recognize what she [Estelle] went through as a child is unimaginable. I have an overwhelming feeling of gratitude that she survived and that now in 2014, 70 years later, Hanna got to experience Poland and her journey in a safer way."

Hanna added, "Being a third-generation survivor makes being Jewish an obligation, in a good way. I need to stay involved with Jewish life and continue to be Jewish to ensure what my grandmother fought so hard for is kept alive."

The 2014 BJE delegation included 189 teens, joined by 10 survivors, two historians, two doctors and 21 staff members. BJE also brought 34 adults to experience the March in Poland, with some continuing to Israel as part of BJE's Adult March of the Living.



Mark Shpall with Max Levin

## LONE Soldiers

s the March of the Living trip travels from Poland to Israel each year, Ione soldiers from the Los Angeles region join the BJE delegation in commemorating Yom Hazikaron, the Jewish state's Memorial Day.

These lone soldiers come from other nations to serve in the Israel Defense Forces, and do not have family in Israel. Many of the lone soldiers from Los Angeles have taken part in BJE's programming or have attended one of its affiliated schools.

This year, Max Levin, 21, a 2011 BJE March of the Living participant and a graduate of New Community Jewish High School, met with young people on the BJE trip, as he had in previous years.

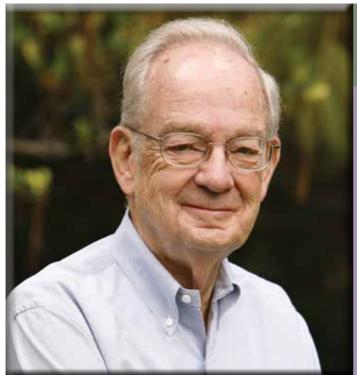
Weeks later, he was wounded in action in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge. A booby-trapped house collapsed, killing three members of his paratrooper unit and lodging shrapnel above Levin's right eye.

Max has been released from Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikva after surgery and has been visiting some of the injured soldiers from his unit.



Max spent the 2013 and 2014 Yom HaZikaron programs with the LA BJE March of the Living delegation. This year he also stayed with our delegation for Shabbat, which allowed him to impart the reasons that he decided to make aliyah and join the IDF and show through his actions and words his love of Israel. He helped to advance our mission of creating a deep passion for the State of Israel."

- Mark Shpall, Dean of Students, NCJHS; BJE March of the Living Staff Member



# EARL GREINE







t its 2015 gala, BJE will also recognize the Milken Family Foundation for its quarter-century of Jewish Educator Awards, which honor stellar day school educators.

The Foundation has also provided more than \$10 million in scholarship support, making it possible for thousands of Jewish children and families in the Los Angeles region to experience day school education at BJE's 37 affiliated schools.

"We appreciate the leadership of the Milken Family Foundation in affirming the importance of education," outgoing BJE President Donna Nadel and Executive Director Gil Graff stated. "The impact of the Milken Family Foundation, as the impact of educators, is for generations."

# TZ AND ELAINE LINDHEIM

B JE looks forward to honoring Earl Greinetz and Elaine Lindheim at its 2015 Gala. Coming from different traditions (Earl is Ashkenazi and Elaine is Sephardic), both share a passion for advancing Jewish education for children across the Greater Los Angeles area.

Earl Greinetz, at the helm of BJE's Board from 2002 to 2005, was asked to serve as President by then-BJE President Janet Farber (1999-2002) on behalf of BJE's Nominating Committee. "Janet had to talk me into it," Earl said of his BJE leadership stint, because he was already serving as President of the Los Angeles Jewish Home. "She convinced me I could keep up with both organizations."

Janet said, "Earl is the consummate volunteer in our Jewish community and is passionate about Jewish education."

Earl, a Denver native who relocated in 1968 from Colorado to the San Fernando Valley, is no stranger to hard work and strengthening the Jewish community. Together with his wife, Toba Greinetz<sup>z"</sup>, the couple reinvigorated their Jewish communities in Colorado and later, in California.

Their efforts have been described as "extensive" and their energy as "boundless," and their communal involvements have included American Jewish University (formerly University of Judaism), New Community Jewish High School, the Valley Alliance of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation and the Alzheimer's Association, among others. (Toba, who passed away in 2011, suffered from Alzheimer's.)

Today, Earl serves on more than a half dozen boards, and remains closely involved with BJE, specifically with its investment and planned giving efforts. "We have to preserve Judaism, through education and through Jewish community," Earl said. While he was President, BJE conducted a study of financial allocations in support of complementary Jewish education, an effort headed by Elaine Lindheim, who served as BJE President from 2005 to 2008.

Former President Rhea Coskey (1997-1999) was most enthusiastic when Elaine accepted her nomination as BJE Board President as Earl's term drew to a close. "Elaine is a 'renaissance' woman with a multitude of interests and skills," said Rhea. "As BJE President, her extraordinary management ability allowed us to move forward into a new era for the agency, earning the respect of staff and lay leaders alike."

During her tenure, Elaine oversaw the year-long strategic review that resulted in BJE's current core mission. "Future BJE leaders, such as Marc Rohatiner and Donna Nadel, also organically emerged during this planning process," said Elaine, who underscored the importance of nurturing leadership successors. Elaine was uniquely poised to launch such an initiative. She understood first-hand the need to strengthen the Jewish community through inclusiveness, while holding professional skills necessary to guide BJE through a complicated planning progress.

Elaine's background is noteworthy: She grew up in Los Angeles in a family of Turkish descent that helped to found Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel as well as the Maurice Amado Foundation, while her complementary religious education took place at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, a predominantly Ashkenazi Reform temple. She is an accomplished educational evaluator with a doctorate in research methods and evaluation. She also remains involved in the Jewish community, with BJE, the Sephardic Temple, UCLA Center for Jewish Studies, and the family foundation as some of her primary interests.

"Earl Greinetz and Elaine Lindheim represent the qualities of volunteer leadership that have guided BJE from strength to strength," said Dr. Gil Graff, BJE Executive Director. "They are thoughtful and inclusive, as well as strategic and outcome-focused. Their leadership has done much to advance BJE's mission and their impact is truly enduring."

**BJE Gala, January 8, 2015**, honoring Earl Greinetz and Elaine Lindheim and recognizing the Milken Family Foundation





# Gala 2013-2014

JE honored Janet and Jake Farber, pillars of the Los Angeles Jewish community and champions of Jewish education, at its December 2013 Gala, held at the Sheraton Universal Hotel Grand Ballroom in Universal City.

The Farbers embody the Jewish concept of "le-dor va-dor," "for all generations," through their deep ties and advocacy in the community, as well as through the values they have instilled in their family.

Janet is a past BJE President, while Jake is a former Board Chair of The Jewish Federation and Camp Ramah. Both have held myriad Jewish leadership roles, and remain active in Jewish education through BJE and other organizations in the region.





Honorees Janet and Jake Farber with Gala co-chairs Karmi Monsher and Sheila Baran Spiwak, flanking BJE President Donna S. Nadel and BJE Executive Director Gil Graff

Representatives of four Jewish educational programs for children with special learning needs were recognized for their outstanding work in partnership with the BJE's Spiwak Special Needs Initiative. Top row: Phil Liff-Grieff, BJE Associate Director; Donna S. Nadel, BJE President; Rabbi Michy Rav-Noy, Friendship Circle; Susan North Gilboa, Our Space; Dr. Gil Graff, BJE Executive Director. Bottom row: Randi Sher, Shlemut Network and Ezra; Rabbi Deborah Goldmann and Debi Rowe, Shlemut Network.



# SUPPORTING JEWISH EDUCATION: HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

Gifts of \$100+ received July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014

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

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To discuss Legacy or Endowment opportunities at BJE please contact Miriam Prum Hess, 323.761.8334 or mprumhess@bjela.org

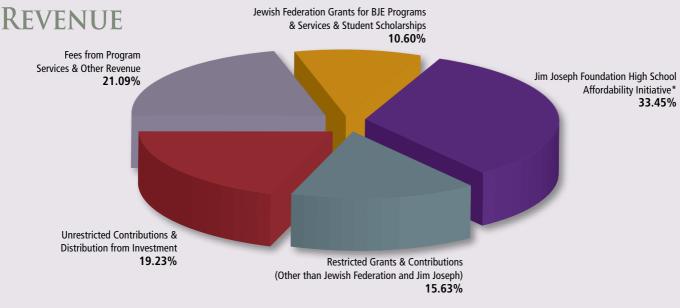
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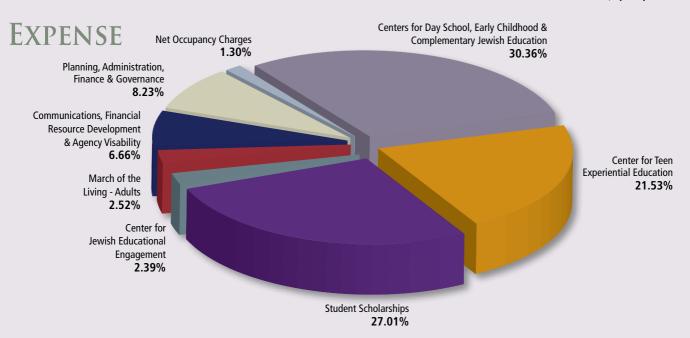


# FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014 (unaudited)



TOTAL	\$7,534,876
Fees from Program Services & Other Revenue	1,589,106
Unrestricted Contributions & Distribution from Investment	1,448,880
Restricted Grants & Contributions (Other than Jewish Federation and Jim Joseph)	1,177,930
Jim Joseph Foundation High School Affordability Initiative*	2,520,256
Jewish Federation Grants for BJE Programs & Services & Student Scholarships	\$ 798,704



Centers for Day School, Early Childhood & Complementary Jewish Education	\$2,287,478
Center for Teen Experiential Education	1,622,452
Student Scholarships	2,035,389
Center for Jewish Educational Engagement	179,986
March of the Living - Adults	190,180
Communications, Financial Resource Development & Agency Visibility	501,684
Planning, Administration, Finance & Governance	620,473
Net Occupancy Charges**	97,234
TOTAL	\$7,534,876

<sup>\*</sup>In conjunction with The Jewish Federation \*\*Net (Subvented) Rate for Occupancy at Jewish Federation's Goldsmith Center



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