



JCYF

Jewish Community Youth Foundation



10 years of **IMPACT**: 2003-2012

The Jewish Community Youth Foundation (JCYF) is celebrating its ten-year anniversary. This report presents findings from an evaluation of the Foundation's impact (2003-2012). Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA), an independent group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, conducted the research.

INTRODUCTION

“ JCYF has allowed me to connect to my Jewish identity which, throughout the past several years, has become very important to me. In a sense, the Jewish Community Youth Foundation is a stepping stone, an entry into certain ideals that are fundamentally Jewish, and what it means/is to be Jewish today. I think JCYF is an amazing program and is very important for young adults.¹ ”

- JCYF alum

The Jewish Community Youth Foundation (JCYF) is celebrating its ten-year anniversary. This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the Foundation’s impact (2003-2012). Response rates from JCYF Alumni were unusually high, an indication of the personal significance of their involvement in the Foundation. Fully 69% of the JCYF graduates surveyed, 64% of parents, and 88% of grant recipients responded.² In sharp contrast, online response rates often do not reach much higher than 10%. It is especially difficult to obtain replies from busy college students.

JCYF started in 2003 with a vision of strengthening the next generation’s Jewish identity, a commitment to repair the world, and the goal of strengthened ties with the wider Jewish community nationally and in Israel.

The hope was that by actively learning about and participating in philanthropy, Jewish youth would 1) develop or continue connections to Jewish values and communal life; and 2) establish a lifelong practice of giving. This report clearly demonstrates that JCYF strengthens participants’ Jewish identity, engagement with the Jewish community, and continued philanthropy through a lens of Jewish values.

JCYF is unique in its in-depth, text-based curriculum focused on the Mitzvah (commandment) of Tzedakah (justice), Gemilut Chasadim (acts of loving kindness), and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). Participants study Jewish values and then are empowered to act on them.

The Youth Foundation was founded by Ricky Shechtel after careful review of other youth grantmaking initiatives around the country, both Jewish and secular.

JCYF is a project of Jewish Family & Children’s Service of Greater Mercer County and is funded by the Ricky and Andrew J. Shechtel Philanthropic Fund and the Jewish Federation of Princeton Mercer Bucks.



¹ All quotes are from JCYF graduates unless otherwise noted.

² Respondents included JCYF alumni 68/99 (69%), parents 132/205 (64%) representing 193 families of both current participants and alumni, and grant recipients 22/26 (85%).

Groups of Jewish teens predominantly join the program in 8th grade and continue through their senior year in high school. As part of JCYF, participants:

- Learn about Jewish values through study of a well-researched, text-based curriculum.
- Contribute \$120 of their own money which is then matched by both the Ricky and Andrew J. Shechtel Philanthropic Fund and the Jewish Federation of Princeton Mercer Bucks. This results in a total giving of \$360 per teen and a total fund of \$7,200 per group (20 teens per group and two groups per grade) to distribute to a variety of Jewish organizations. (www.jfcsonline.org/jcyf.html)
- Review proposals using a set of guidelines and conduct site visits.
- Engage in a group consensus-based allocations process.
- Lead a community-wide ceremony to distribute funds and celebrate the graduation of the seniors who have completed five years in the program.

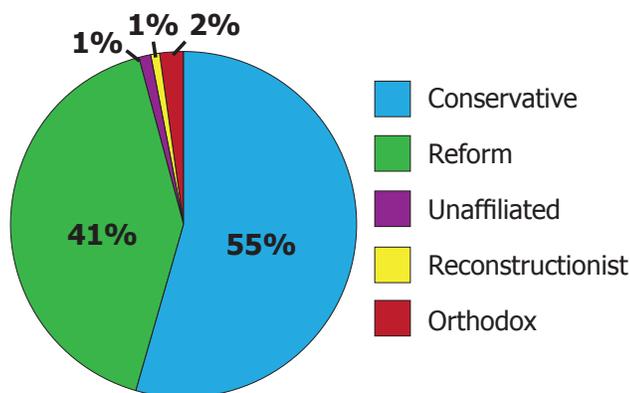
Each grade has a different focus:

- Local Jewish Social Service Needs (Eighth Grade)
- National Jewish Social Service Agencies (Ninth Grade)
- Jewish Art & Culture (Tenth Grade)
- Outreach & Advocacy in the Jewish Community (Eleventh Grade)
- Israel (Twelfth Grade)

Over the past ten years a total of 357 individuals have participated in JCYF. This number includes current participants as well as 99 graduates. The first year, 15 students were involved. This number has grown to 162 teens in the 2012/2013 school year. As the program expanded, two groups per grade were created to accommodate the growing numbers of participants. Older siblings valued the program so much that they encouraged their younger brothers and/or sisters to follow in their footsteps. To date, fully one-third of families have had multiple family members in the program.

The majority of alumni, 93%, stayed with the Foundation for four or five years as a result of joining in 8th or 9th grade. They are 41% male and 59% female. Young Jewish males high level of participation is significant, as nationally, trying to engage young men in programs that support their Jewish identity has been a major challenge. Graduates represented a wide range of religious affiliations: Conservative (n=54), Reform (n=41), Unaffiliated (n=1) Reconstructionist (n=1), and Orthodox (n=2). They came from 17 different synagogues, 12 different middle schools and 21 different high schools. The participants are from Princeton and elsewhere in Mercer County, New Jersey, and from Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Who are our Alumni?



Our alumni come from:

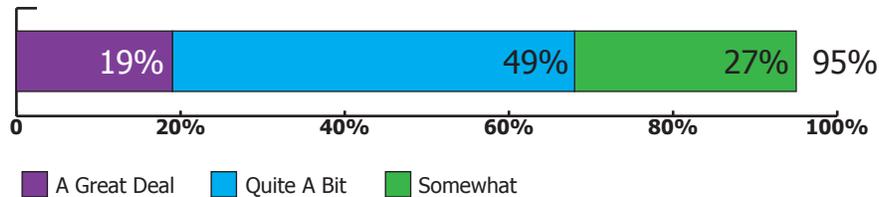
- 17 different synagogues
- 12 different middle schools
- 21 different high schools
- Towns throughout Mercer and Bucks counties

ALUMNI

JCYF Strengthens Jewish Identity

“ Being in JCYF helped define myself as a Jewish person. It helped me to connect to my Jewish roots and discover how important it is to give back to the culture that has given so much to me. ”

Extent to Which Alumni Indicated Their Jewish Identity Was Enhanced



95% of alumni responded that their Jewish identity was enhanced as a result of their experiences with JCYF.

In an era of texting, the fact that respondents wrote a full five pages of thoughtful and insightful comments explaining how their identity had been strengthened is an indicator of the extent of the program’s impact on their lives. These young people have internalized core Jewish values that can link them to their Jewish identity for the rest of their lives. Philanthropy is an innovative and creative approach that links the next generation to their roots and responsibilities. Furthermore, JCYF graduates have gained lifelong skills that will increase the effectiveness of their future giving and efforts to repair the world. Fully 87% of alumni thought that their JCYF experience was valuable.

As a result of their JCYF experience, graduates now regard giving back to be an integral part of their Jewish identity, and consequently, they feel more a part of the Jewish community:

"For a while, I struggled with my Jewish identity. I was having trouble feeling a connection after I had lost three friends in High School. It was hard for me to understand how God could allow something so tragic to occur... However, JCYF allowed me to understand that my Jewish identity goes beyond my belief in God; it's my connection to my community, my ever-lasting friendships, my knowledge of Jewish non-profits, and my understanding of the importance of giving back to my community."

"My participation in JCYF has greatly affected my Jewish identity. I chose to work for a major Jewish non-profit and my time at JCYF was a major contributor to my current profession."

"Being a part of JCYF has definitely affected my Jewish identity. This foundation gave me the chance to give back to the community while teaching me important Jewish values. It taught me to respect others' opinions and not be scared to speak my own. JCYF gave me a sense of responsibility to be an active member of the Jewish community."

"Over the five years I was involved with JCYF I felt myself grow a stronger connection to my Jewish identity. I realized that no matter how young I was, I do have an important role in my community."

"Participation in JCYF made me stronger and prouder to be Jewish."

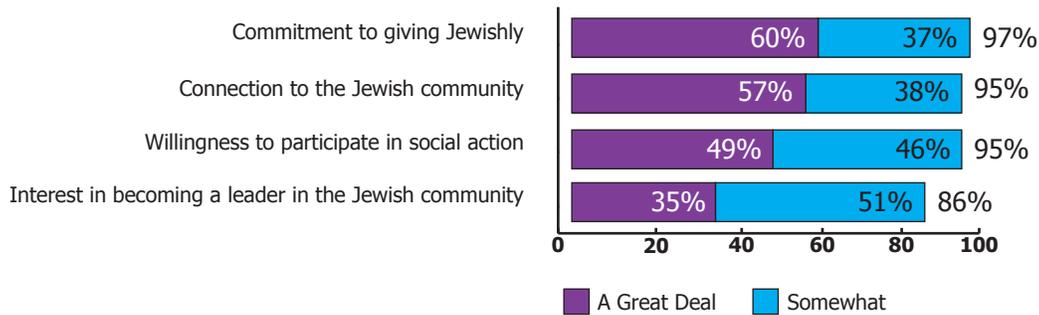
ALUMNI

JCYF Supports Connections to the Broader Jewish Community

“ Before JCYF I did not really consider my relationship to other Jews outside of my family, friends, and synagogue. JCYF helped me to realize that all Jews are connected and increased my identification with the greater Jewish community. ”

Nearly all of the graduates (95%) believe that taking part in JCYF has increased their ties and commitment to the Jewish community and to taking action to repair the world.

Alumni Jewish Commitments, Connections and Desire for Leadership



JCYF creates a core network of young Jewish adults with roots and relationships in the greater Jewish community.

It is the only program in the region where participants can meet Jewish students from a variety of backgrounds and synagogues. Most alumni (86%) are still in touch with one or more of the people they met through JCYF. New JCYF graduates are linked with others attending their colleges through the Alumni Connect program which orients them to the Jewish community on campus. Meeting another Jewish student when they arrive is especially significant for individuals who attend a college without a Hillel or similar organization.

Important ties to the Jewish community were established when participants were exposed to Jewish non-profits to learn about the difference these organizations are making in the world in their region, nationally, and internationally. One person explained her on-going relationship:

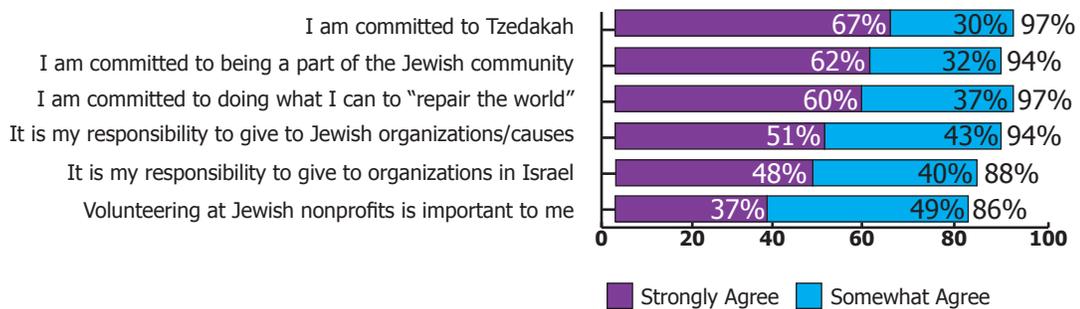
“JCYF definitely helped me connect with my 'Jewishness.' I guess I always knew that I was going to get involved with Jewish life on campus, but the Center for Jewish Life (CJL) at Princeton was actually my site visit in 8th grade, so it's funny to see how I've come full circle in that I spend a lot of my time at the CJL.”

ALUMNI

Alumni are Committed to Jewish Philanthropic Values and Demonstrate This Through Their Volunteering Patterns and Giving

“ I went to a small liberal arts college with only 25 Jewish students. When I was a freshman there were no Jewish organizations on campus. I wanted to build a reputation for the college so that more Jewish students would come. I worked in the admissions office and gave tours to Jewish teens and their parents. Then, I was asked and agreed to start a Hillel. If I hadn't been involved in JCYF I wouldn't have had the confidence to do this. JCYF laid the groundwork and gave me knowledge and skills for campus leadership. ”

Alumni Attitudes Toward Jewish Philanthropic Values



Alumni Volunteer

Over the past 12 months:

46% of survey respondents have volunteered their time for a Jewish charity or non-profit organization and 82% for a not-specifically Jewish non-profit.

Hours volunteered ranged from less than 10 to 500.

"Before JCYF I hadn't volunteered my time. I was pleasantly surprised how much I enjoyed it, and therefore continued to do so."

"I have been influenced to share my love of community service and to show others how important it is and help them to see the positive effect they can have."

"JCYF has taught me the importance of giving back, which is why I volunteered at JFCS until I left for college. I have not yet done any specific volunteering at my college; however, I am on the Freshman Hillel Leadership Board."

ALUMNI

Alumni Give

“ I now know the importance of volunteering and being knowledgeable about the places to which I donate so my money can be best utilized. ”

Over three-quarters of JCYF graduates are still in college (87%). The rest are pursuing graduate degrees or are newly employed in the workforce. As a group they are still young, ages 18 through 22. Over the past 12 months:

36% of survey respondents have donated their money for a Jewish charity or non-profit organization and 47% for a not-specifically Jewish non-profit.

Most of the gifts were under \$500. Five gifts, however, were in the thousands (\$1,000, \$1,800, 2,000, \$10,000 and \$40,000). It is reasonable to expect that giving will grow as their income increases.

JCYF Participants Gained, and Still Use, Knowledge, Jewish Values and Leadership Skills

JCYF teaches about grantmaking through a lens of Jewish values. Students acquire valuable knowledge and life-long skills. They learn that giving back is a responsibility and learn about Jewish non-profits' work locally, nationally and internationally.

Imagine for a moment a room full of 9th graders. They have each reviewed one or more grant proposals, including detailed budgets, and have visited an organization to ask questions and learn more about their work. At this allocations meeting, their task is to share proposals' strengths and weaknesses, to listen carefully to each other, to ask questions, to form opinions and to come to consensus as a group about which to fund. Passionate about their opinions, students' conversations are quite lively and often heated. One of the adult advisors was impressed when one girl stood firm and had the courage to speak up even when the rest of the group disagreed with her point of view.

Recognizing the uniqueness and value of their experience with JCYF, fully 73% of survey respondents wrote about their JCYF experience in their college applications.

"I am still giving, and I use the lessons I learned to inform how I give (researching organizations, considering where the money goes, using Maimonides ladder)."

"JCYF also taught me how to work constructively in a group and how to put together charitable events."

"It taught me to respect others' opinions and not be scared to voice my own."

ALUMNI

What Students Learned About in JCYF

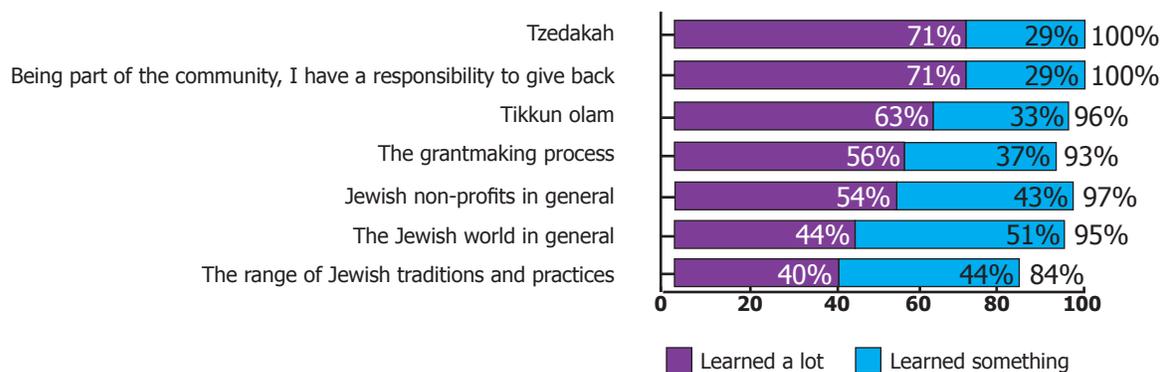
“ This was the first time I learned about how to allocate money and make decisions about funding in a group. I learned about negotiating, weighing different values/priorities, and expressing my opinion persuasively. I’ve been involved with budgeting and grants in college, and I think JCYF helped me to develop these skills. ”

Through the grantmaking process, participants acquire leadership skills as well as learn core concepts of Judaism that relate to repairing the world and the giving of Tzedakah. Skills alumni learned in JCYF and are still using include:

- How to work in a group - 98%
- How to listen to others - 94%
- How to disagree with someone else respectfully - 87%
- How to build consensus - 84%
- How to present my ideas - 84%
- How to form an opinion - 77%
- How to be a leader - 76%
- How to speak in public - 73%

* Percentages refer to how many respondents indicated they gained and still use the indicated skill through JCYF.

What Students Learned About in JCYF



"Not only has JCYF made me more aware of Jewish obligations and values that I have incorporated into my life, but also the skills of working together with people to make educated decisions on Jewish issues that matter."

ALUMNI

Alumni Lead

“ At the Naval Academy, peer leadership is one of the most difficult challenges we face on a daily basis. The open discussion and debate typical during JCYF grant evaluations teaches tact, listening, respect, and the ability to take charge of a group while at the same time ensuring everybody has input into the final resolution. JCYF certainly helped prepare me for my future career as a Naval Officer. ”

Although JCYF was not designed as a leadership development program, students do learn relevant skills that they continue to use. Since graduation from high school, over half have held a leadership role in a Jewish charity or non-profit organization, at their Hillel and/or college, or at a not-specifically Jewish organization (e.g., leading a particular activity or event for the organization, serving as an officer of the organization, or being on the board of an organization).

Since graduation from high school:

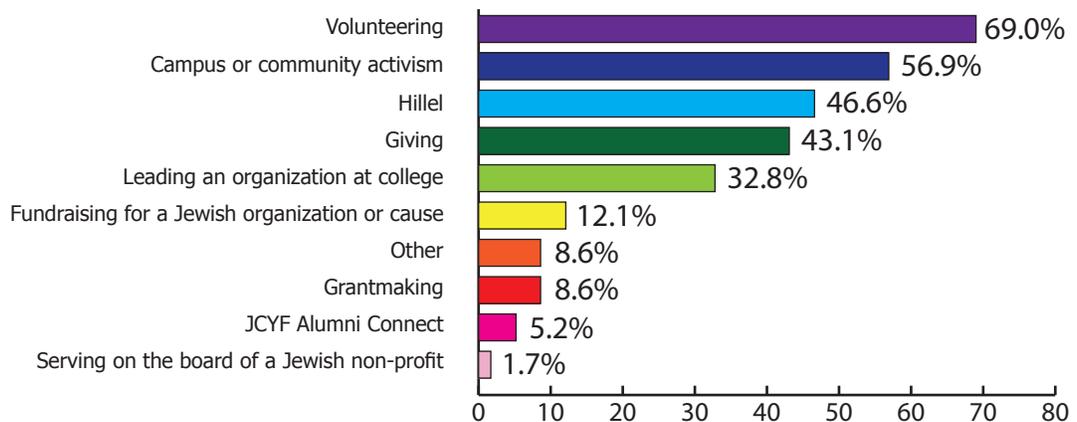
16% of alumni have played a leadership role in a Jewish charity or non-profit

29% have played a leadership role in their Hillel at college

48% have played a leadership role at a not specifically Jewish charity or non-profit

One young woman directly attributes her career choice and her ability to pursue that choice to the knowledge, skills, and experiences she gained through JCYF. She now works for the UJA-Federation of New York where she supports the allocation of \$35-plus million to over 100 agencies. She obtained the job, in part, because she was knowledgeable about the grantmaking process and about Jewish non-profits.

Current Involvements in College



"This past summer while working at URJ Camp Harlam, my campers were given a grant of \$1,200 from a national organization called Jewish Teen Funders Network. It was my job almost equivalent to an advisor in JCYF to lead the group and help them build consensus. The program was very similar. It taught kids about Jewish values and how to give back to the community. Being a part of JCYF gave me the leadership skills to be a successful camp leader."

"I use the abilities I've learned at JCYF in my school's student government."

"I feel more confident as a leader, and I understand how a little money from a lot of people, if put to a worthy cause, can go a long way."

PARENTS

Participation in JCYF Has Affected Parents' Conversations With Their Offspring Around Jewish Philanthropy

“ I think in our community our kids grow up with a very specific view of the world - philanthropy teaches them that along with privilege comes responsibility for others as well as themselves. It teaches them that each person can indeed make a difference and that it is important to do so. Also it teaches that philanthropy is not merely about the amount you give but also about the act of giving and that the act of giving is what matters. ”

- JCYF Parent

How parents interact with their students in regards to Jewish philanthropy has been positively impacted. **Two thirds (66%) of the parent survey respondents indicated that the nature and/or frequency of conversations with their teens/young adults had changed as a result of JCYF.** Parents indicated that as a result of JCYF, they now:

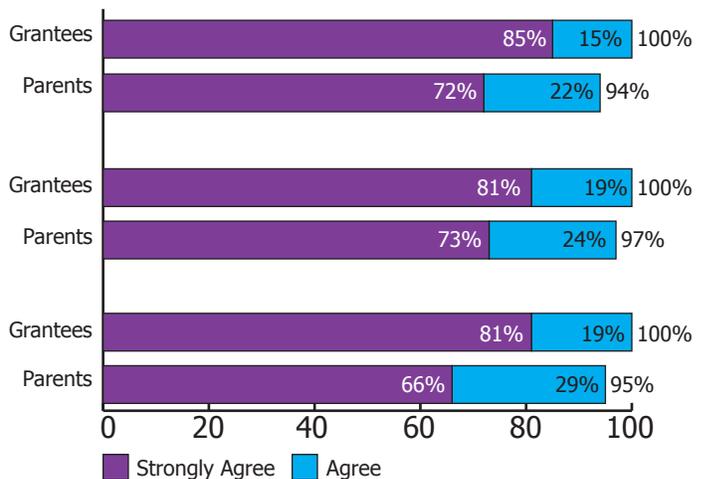
- Talk about giving Jewishly - 52%
- Talk about Tzedakah - 47%
- Have conversations about Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) - 42%
- Make donations as a family - 40%
- Provide or match their teen with money with which to practice philanthropy - 30%
- Volunteer - 28%

Parents and grantees believe that JCYF engages participants in an innovative way and empowers them to address community needs. Adults understand that young people's links to Jewish non-profits, through their practice of core Jewish values, prepares them well to be the next generation of leaders and philanthropists in the Jewish community.

JCYF is an innovative way to engage diverse teens in making a difference Jewishly.

JCYF educates youth about the needs and challenges of their community and empowers them to address those needs.

JCYF helps prepare the community's future leaders while teaching Jewish values and practices of philanthropy.



"Our conversations have more depth to them, and I think as they continue in this program that will change as well. We hope to get them to be more involved in our family giving." - JCYF Parent

"I am really impressed with how the JCYF program teaches the teenagers to be thoughtful program evaluators in the spirit of serving their communities throughout their lives. These are really important skills and values they can use in many ways." - JCYF Parent

"JCYF gave us an impetus to have a discussion about the giving that my husband and I do and why we choose to support those organizations, either with our time or our money or both." - JCYF Parent

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Grant Recipients Leverage Their Resources and are Starting to Envision New Possibilities for Engaging Teens and Thinking Differently About Youth Leadership

“ Receiving the grant and being a part of the grant process has made us aware of how empowering it is to expose Jewish youth to philanthropy. We have started a committee of teen leaders with the goal of growing teen engagement and involving teens in the fundraising process as they advocate for us. ”

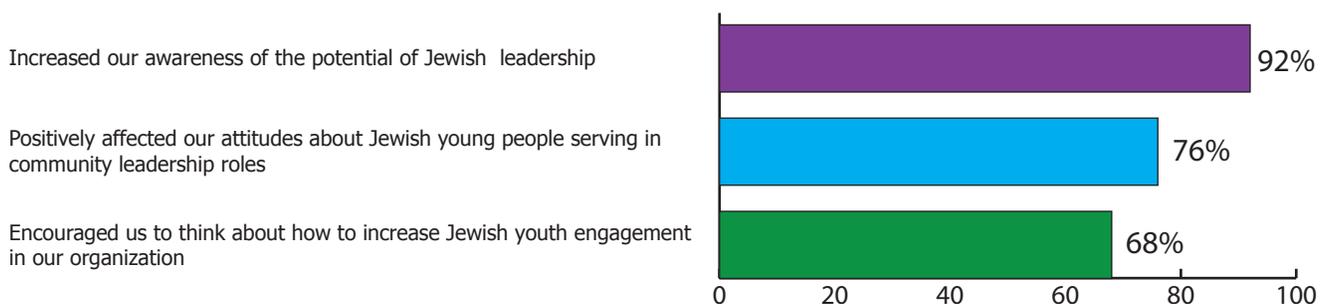
- JCYF Grantee

Jewish teens have granted a total of \$463,745 over the past ten years through JCYF to Jewish organizations that serve youth (85%), both Jewish and non-Jewish people (74%), and just the Jewish community (26%).

That includes \$110,404 to services directly benefitting Israel!

JCYF raises grantees' awareness of the potential of the next generation of Jewish donors and leaders. When JCYF participants conduct site visits to their organizations, they present themselves professionally and arrive well prepared, having carefully reviewed the organizations' proposals and developed questions to ask. Grantees have the opportunity to explain their funding requests to young donors. The grantee organizations that serve youth have found value in their interactions with the JCYF students.

Impact on Grant Recipients

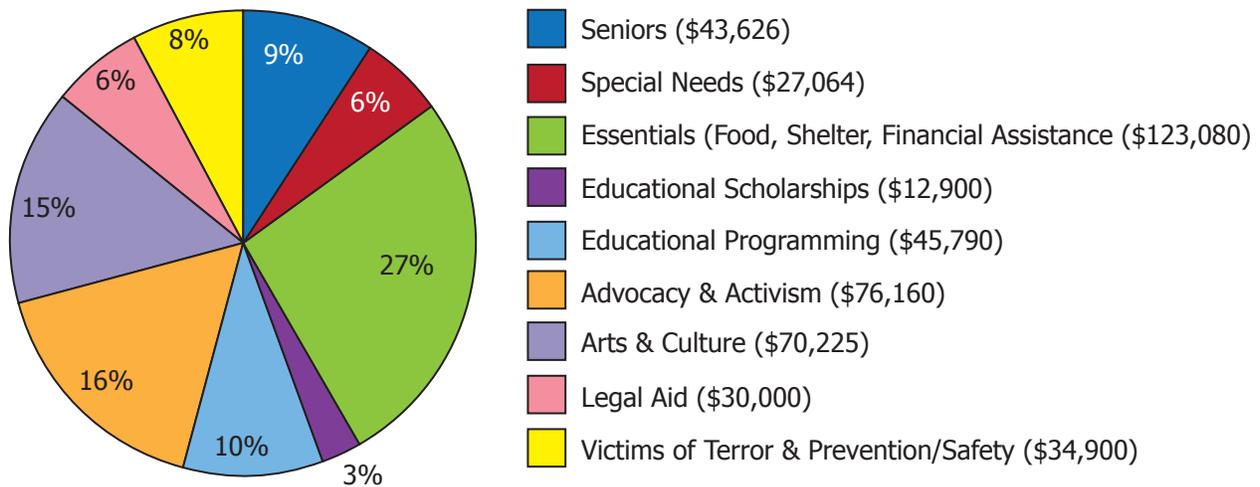


"We benefit from meeting and working with teens from your organization and from sharing our program. After our site visit, our members always remark on how great it is that they (as teens) are representatives of a program, presenting to another group of teens--sharing and exchanging knowledge, information, and ideas." - JCYF Grantee

"It's amazing to see the teens this vested in philanthropy... amazing for our whole community - not just for our youth. They are providing an example for all of us to follow!" - JCYF Grantee

GIVING

10 Year Giving Total of \$463,745 By Category



JCYF Recipient Agencies Since 2003

Since the program's inception in 2003, JCYF participants have awarded grants to **53 different organizations** both locally and around the world:

- 92nd Street Y
- Abrams Hebrew Academy
- American Israel Education Foundation
- American Jewish Committee
- Anti-Defamation League
- AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps
- Betty & Milton Katz JCC of PMB
- Birthright Israel Foundation
- Board of Rabbis of PMB
- CAMERA
- Center for Jewish History
- Center for Jewish Life at Princeton University
- Children's Galleries for Jewish Culture
- College for All
- Educational Alliance
- Facing History and Ourselves
- Foundation for Jewish Camp
- Fuel for Truth
- Friendship Circle of Greater Mercer County
- Greenwood House
- Hadassah
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
- Israel on Campus Coalition
- JCC in Manhattan
- Jerusalem Season of Culture
- JerusalemOnlineU.com
- Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Mercer
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs
- Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Mercer County
- Jewish National Fund
- Jewish Telegraphic Agency
- Jewish Women International
- Leket Israel
- Lower East Side Tenement Museum
- Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty
- Museum at Eldridge Street
- Museum of Jewish Heritage
- National Jewish Outreach Program
- National Yiddish Theatre
- Ofanim
- Ohr Torah Stone
- OneFamily Fund
- Panim
- Principals' Council of PMB
- SHALVA
- Sharsheret
- StandWithUs
- Thank Israeli Soldiers
- The Israel Project
- The Jewish Federation of PMB
- The Jewish Museum
- Yachad
- Yad Eliezer

CONCLUSIONS

JCYF connects the next generation to their Jewish roots through philanthropy. The experience significantly strengthens alumni's Jewish identity and their relationship with the broader Jewish non-profit sector. They become committed to Jewish philanthropic values and are acting on them as evidenced by their volunteerism, personal giving, and leadership activities. JCYF graduates find many uses for the knowledge and skills they learned through the JCYF. As a result of their JCYF experience, graduates now regard giving back to be an integral part of their Jewish identity, and as a result, they feel closer to the Jewish community.

Parents and grant recipients also perceived JCYF as an innovative and highly valuable program. The nature of family conversations changed to include more discussions about Jewish philanthropic values. Grantees are starting to think about how they might involve young people in leadership capacities in their own organizations.

The challenges for the next 10 years will be to:

1. Develop community ownership to support program sustainability.
2. Remain mindful of shifting Jewish community demographics and reach out to a broad cross-section of students.



For more information about the Jewish Community Youth Foundation, visit our website at www.jfcsonline.org/jcyf.html or call us at 609-987-8100.

About the Survey

This report presents findings from an evaluation of the Foundation's impact (2003-2012). Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA), an independent group based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, conducted the research. FERA designed and implemented four online surveys. FERA also visited the JCYF to conduct background interviews with staff, alumni, and advisors and to review background materials.³

Karin Tice, Ph.D., is President of Formative Evaluation Research Associates (FERA). She has evaluated youth grantmaking initiatives throughout the country for over 20 years. These evaluations have been published and disseminated locally, nationally and internationally and have contributed to the field of youth philanthropy www.feraonline.com

³ FERA also conducted a survey of current participants (119 out of 161 responded). This data is not presented in this report. Their feedback will be used by JCYF staff to strengthen the program.

JCYF 10 YEAR TIMELINE

JCYF holds its first meeting at the Center for Jewish Life. Fifteen 8th graders donate \$7,200 to 5 local need based social service programs.	2003-2004
A new 8th grade group joins the new 9th grade for a total of 35 participants. JCYF takes it's first 9th grade trip into New York City for site visits.	2004-2005
JCYF participates in the first national Youth Philanthropy Conference in Denver Colorado.	2005-2006
Two 8th grade groups are formed. The 11th grade travels to Washington DC for the first time. The Youth Advisory Board is launched.	2006-2007
The Jewish Community Youth Foundation celebrates its first graduating Senior class.	2007-2008
Fourteen out of the sixteen graduating seniors have participated in the program for 5 years, since eighth grade.	2008-2009
JCYF hosts Inside the Philanthropist Studio with Charles Bronfman at the annual Check Presentation Ceremony.	2009-2010
JCYF launches the first Annual JCYF Distinguished Alumni Award honoring Lily Pepper.	2010-2011
The Jewish Community Youth Foundation reaches 100 Alumni graduated.	2011-2012
JCYF celebrates its 10 Year Anniversary. 162 teens donate \$72,000 to 26 non-profit organizations.	2012-2013