

PERSONNEL INITIATIVES IN CONGREGATIONAL AND COMMUNAL JEWISH EDUCATION

To help the JESNA Committee on Congregational and Communal Jewish Education determine its further actions in the personnel area, we have prepared the following inventory of JESNA initiatives, as well as a SAMPLE list of non-JESNA initiatives.

RECRUITMENT

JESNA INITIATIVES

1) Lainer Israel Interns for Jewish Education

This program, begun in 1992, takes a unique and innovative approach to recruit university students for careers in Jewish education. Students spend parts of their last two years in college, one in Israel and the other in North America, actively involved in learning about and working in the field. In Israel, the Interns take a specially designed credit seminar, "Issues in American Jewish Education" as part of their studies at either Hebrew University or Tel Aviv University. They participate in field trips, shabbatonims and hands-on workshops designed to give a "living" experience of being a Jewish educator. They also meet leaders of North American and Israeli Jewish education and participate in a field work internship at an institution in Israel involved in Jewish education in the Diaspora.

In North America, the Interns take on a mentored Jewish teaching or youth position in their university community during the senior year. They attend a mid-winter seminar/reunion during the senior year to meet with faculty from the graduate training institutions, outstanding professional educators and lay leadership in Jewish education.

The goal is then to have the Interns pursue graduate degrees in Jewish education and Jewish communal service and to work in the Jewish community. Significant numbers of students have done just that. Approximately 400 students have gone through the program with over 100 going on to full-time work in Jewish education and communal service with many others still in graduate programs or undecided about their career direction.

2) Jewish Educators Corp

Following up on the success of JESNA's Lainer Interns for Jewish Education, JESNA designed the "Jewish Educator Corps" to encourage university students on North American campuses to learn about and to explore career opportunities in Jewish education. The program is a partnership between JESNA, Hillel and the community's Central Agency for Jewish Education. The program combines multi-session seminars Jewish education coordinated by the Central Agency and Hillel staffs with supervised experience in a local educational setting. The students also benefit from becoming part of a support network provided by JESNA and the other sponsoring agencies. Such benefits include a mentor program as well as career counseling. The goal of the program is to recruit undergraduate students to the field of Jewish education, in both

formal and informal settings. This year the program is being piloted in San Diego, St. Louis and Rhode Island.

3) Campus Jewish Educator Recruitment Initiative

JESNA has joined with Hillel, the JCCA and the Foundation for Jewish Camping in a Joint Recruitment Campaign for Jewish professional careers targeted at college campuses across the country. JESNA's presence along with other Jewish organizational recruiters (at career and graduate school job fairs and at events that are specifically arranged for students concentrating in areas such as Jewish studies and education) provides access to prospective recruits for the field of Jewish education.

JESNA has updated its recruitment materials so that they are attractive, enticing and informative tools in this process, attempting to match the job-marketing campaigns of other sectors. JESNA works with our partner agencies to identify the most promising target schools and most cost-effective recruitment strategies.

4) JewishJobFinder.com

Many of those who could be tomorrow's most talented Jewish educators and communal professionals never make it into the field because they lack basic information on career opportunities available in Jewish education and the Jewish community, more generally. In response, JESNA is developing JewishJobFinder.com, a web site specifically targeted at college students, young adults and those who might consider a career in Jewish education or in professional or communal leadership. Users clicking onto JewishJobFinder.com will find information on various career paths and job openings available in these areas. The web site will serve both to improve the job-seeker's search and to boost the recruitment potential of major, national organizations as well as that of smaller, local institutions, such as synagogues and schools. JewishJobFinder.com will offer an array of resources, including job listings, practical advice for job seekers, guides to graduate training and professional growth opportunities, online counseling from experts, and first person stories of the satisfactions of Jewish professional careers

5) Graduate Seminar on Career Choices in Jewish Education

Building on the success of the Lainer Interns for Jewish Education, JESNA created in 1996-97, a post-university program on Jewish education for young adults who are spending a year learning in Jerusalem at various graduate and continuing education and yeshiva programs. The seminar introduces the young adults to the many career options in Jewish education and provides a general introduction to the theory and practice of Jewish education. In 1998-99, JESNA expanded the program to include a special series of seminars on similar topics for the participants of the OTZMA Program sponsored by the United Jewish Communities. Upon their return, participants are encouraged to be in contact with the JESNA office for guidance and assistance in

finding their place in the Jewish educational community. Career, graduate school and placement counseling in the field of Jewish education are provided.

NON-JESNA INITIATIVES

1) CAJE Schusterman College Program

The CAJE Schusterman program is a seven-day experience as part of the larger CAJE Conference that attracts 1500 plus attendees annually. The program attracts 20-30 college students annually. The program is organized and implemented by Jewish educational professionals who volunteer their time. The program combines sessions just for the college age participants and the opportunity to participate in the larger CAJE conference program. At the conference they are assigned to a mentor—a CAJE member who guides them for a year following the conference. The CAJE Schusterman program covers all costs of the conference leaving transportation as the only responsibility of the participant.

2) Lights in Action

Lights in Action is a national student group that provides Jewish/Zionist education in North America and is committed to serious and substantive peer education in a pluralist setting. In 1999, the Jewish Continuity Commission of the New York Federation awarded CAJE and LIA a three-year grant to train 5-7 New York area students per year to become Jewish peer educators during a one-year internship program. The program attempts to develop a student's interest in the Jewish community and Judaism and to raise their awareness of Jewish education as a field.

3) New University Initiatives in Jewish Education

Universities throughout the country are developing plans to combine degrees in education with Jewish studies programs. Among these are the University of Wisconsin, Ohio State University, University of Pennsylvania, seven campuses of the California State University system, and the South Florida Jewish Community Consortium which will include up to four universities.

4) Metropolitan Detroit Jewish Educational Internship Program

Through the support of the Covenant Foundation, the initiative offers up to five recent college graduates two years of personalized placement in schools, agencies and summer camps, plus travel to Israel. Participants receive six weeks of training in the summer, culminating in attendance at the CAJE conference. The program then provides each intern with customized exposure to various Jewish professional settings, combined with a training program designed specifically for the interns. The program is not specifically aimed at training interns to become teachers but teaching is an option that candidates are offered for their job placement.

5) Educators for the Jewish Renaissance

The Boston BJE's Covenant-supported Renaissance Educators program has a national job recruitment component. The goal is to find and train up to twenty Renaissance Educators, offering them full-time employment by combining several existing synagogue budget lines and supplementing their income from a communal fund. The program recruits new educators taking into account individuals' diverse entry points and the need for systematic induction of novices into the field and their support over time by mentors.

6) Special Initiatives in Avocational Teacher Training

The Covenant Foundation awarded three grants in 1999 in the area of avocational teacher training. The Center for Jewish Educational Resources of the Jewish Federation of Rockland County, New York received a grant to support a second year of training for avocational teachers with an emphasis on mentoring. The Central Agency for Jewish Education in St. Louis received a grant to develop a teacher-training program based on teacher teams to work with education directors to strengthen synagogue in-service programs. And the Jewish Educational Services of Atlanta received a grant to support Judaic and pedagogic training and mentoring for avocational teachers.

7) TRI (Teacher Recruitment Institute) in Philadelphia

The Teacher Recruitment Initiative (TRI) is the product of a grant awarded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia to the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education. It responds to the lack of sufficient, trained, competent teachers for congregational and communal schools. The program recruits potential teachers from the community at large—some of whom are already teaching in secular schools or other settings, others of whom are pursuing unrelated professions—and offers them the rewarding opportunity to involve themselves in Jewish education. The program offers training, subsidized by grants from the Federation, in general teaching methodology and in teaching specific Jewish content areas, to those who require such preparation. The TRI computerized database provides educational directors with names and pertinent information of people interested in teaching positions. Over 250 people have inquired about the program and over 140 are currently listed on the database. Over 80 have enrolled in training seminars and over 50 teachers have been placed in schools in the Greater Philadelphia area..

8) Other Community Programs

Please note that the following communities are either planning or are actively involved in personnel projects for congregational and communal Jewish education: Baltimore, Bergen County, Chicago, Cleveland, Hartford, MetroWest, Milwaukee, Phoenix, Rhode Island, Rochester and Washington, DC

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JESNA INITIATIVES

1) National Jewish Diffusion Network

The Association of Directors of Central Agencies (ADCA), JESNA and the education departments of the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements have joined together to create the National Jewish Diffusion Network. The National Jewish Diffusion Network will identify, support, validate, demonstrate and disseminate outstanding models of congregational and communal Jewish education in order to raise the level of quality of such education nationwide. The National Jewish Diffusion Network will enable congregations and communities to learn from one another and to spread success more widely and consistently than has ever before been possible.

2) Leadership Institute for New Congregational School Principals

JESNA has joined forces with the Hornstein Program at Brandeis University to establish an intensive Leadership Institute to assist newly appointed principals of congregational schools to make the conceptual and professional shift required to function effectively as educational leaders. The Institute is based on extensive experience in both the Jewish and general educational arenas indicating that effective school leadership requires a set of professional perspectives integrating communal leadership, school management and educational excellence that many new principals have not had the opportunity to learn. The Institute includes two intensive seminars on campus, a year-long mentorship with a veteran educator, and a final project that incorporates reflection on the year's learning and plans for future growth.

3) The Harold Grinspoon Awards for Excellence in Jewish Education

The Harold Grinspoon Foundation, in partnership with JESNA, created these awards for excellence in Jewish Education. These awards are designed to recognize, honor and support outstanding Jewish educators in formal educational settings on the local level. Central agencies or federations disseminate award materials to their Jewish educational institutions. The local selection committee reviews all submissions, identifies a nominee and forwards that nominee's application forms to JESNA for review. A national awards committee confirms the selection of the final recipients. The award offers national recognition to its recipients, each of whom is awarded a minimum of \$2,500. \$1,000 of this amount is contributed by the local community; a matching \$1,500 is provided by the Grinspoon Foundation. Each winner must use \$1,500 of the award for professional development.