

Enhancing Programs and Services to Jewish Single Adults

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Jewish single adult population is difficult to serve. These adults have an assortment of paradoxical views and attitudes that run counter to each other (e.g. singles want opportunities to meet people; they are wary of programs designed to meet people). This is not unique to Baltimore; the factors identified in Baltimore have been confirmed by professionals in other communities working with the single adult population.

The methodology for this study followed a qualitative framework including interviews with a total of 23 "key informants" (i.e. people knowledgeable about the Baltimore single adult scene) and a series of eight focus groups including a total of 52 participants. The findings were confirmed through discussions with experienced professionals in four other similar communities (i.e. Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis and Greater Washington DC). In essence, this study process led to a series of recommendations which fall under the general rubric of communal attitudes, communal structure, and programming.

The following attitudinal and structural recommendations should have the highest priority as these are endemic to insuring that these single adults will feel comfortable being part of the organized Jewish community.

- Create a Welcoming Approach - overwhelmingly the singles report not feeling particularly welcomed
- Invest in Singles - carefully consider the issue of finances; do not allow money to act as an impediment to including single adults
- Get Out of the Singles Business - the term "singles" has a pejorative connotation; there is a stigma to programs designed for singles
- Establish a New Entity for Young Adults - identify an approach which gives these adults their own space and identity.
- Bring More Young Adults into the Governance Structure - invite these adults onto boards and committees; put them in charge of their own programming

The following programming recommendations become important once the single adults feel more involved in the community.

- Provide an Extensive Menu of Activities - these programs must be well planned and well marketed to insure an 'up-scale' feeling; single adults need programs that make them feel good about themselves. No single program meets all needs; each of the program models we tested were acceptable to at least some members of the single adult community
- Involve Singles in Program Development and Implementation - there are a significant number of young adults who are interested and willing to work on their own programming as long as the community provides sufficient resources (i.e. staff and space).
- Maintain a Dating Program - JSSN has been moderately successful as an underfunded, understaffed program; a well funded and staffed dating service could have much more success (the St. Louis connections program sponsored by the JCC and the JFS has over 1000 people);
- Create a Matchmaking Program - this idea proved controversial as a number of the adults we spoke with were adamantly opposed, but there was sufficient interest to warrant a program modeled after the ones in other communities (e.g. St. Louis and Boston).

The suggestions above are based on the information gathered from single adults in Baltimore and confirmed in consultation with staff members in Baltimore and in other communities. Unless the community makes a concerted effort to reach out to the single adult community there will probably be no major improvement in involving these adults, and a significant proportion will likely be lost to the community.*

* It should be noted that there are suggestions that this young adult "loss" may be temporary as the majority of these single adults will marry and have children and will then be reconnected. However, this still does not speak to the group who will not marry, nor to those who will be so "turned off" by their negative feelings that they will not reconnect.

BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

The Associated Jewish Community Foundation of Baltimore (i.e. the Associated) and the Baltimore JCC have a long history of providing service to the Jewish community; for example, the Baltimore YMLA (i.e. Young Men's Literary Association) was the first Jewish Community Center established in North America in 1854; and the Associated, originally formed in 1920, has taken the lead in raising money to support the needs of the community and in creating a well established process of planning for the community through its Board of Directors and committee process.

At the end of 1996 the Associated completed its annual planning process with a series of reports and recommendations for the 1997 calendar year by suggesting that contributors and recipients deserve a thoughtful and responsive system ... (and the committees making these decisions) deserve useful information for making these decisions." By March 1997 the Associated set its community priorities and included outreach to young adults within the top ten areas. This concern is due to a number of factors including these 3 most relevant:

- An expressed feeling of exclusion by this group
- High intermarriage rate
- Lost gifts to the Associated as parents die and their children are not connected

With this as background the Associated and the Jewish Community Center joined together to contract with the Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center to conduct a study of the young, single adult population in order to provide the kind of "useful information" requested by the Community Planning and Budgeting committee*. Specifically, the Research Center was engaged to gather data about these single adults in order to identify

- their attitudes toward the organized Jewish community,
- their current level of Jewish Identity and involvement
- their current social networks and patterns - who they spend time with, where they go, what kinds of activities/events are attractive to them, and what kinds of activities/events do they want

* In 1994 the Research Center conducted a study of the Jewish single adult population in Cleveland. The following report uses the earlier Cleveland study process as a model in order to determine the programming needs and interests of Jewish singles and young professionals in Baltimore.

METHODOLOGY

The primary methodology employs a qualitative design involving both interviews with key informants and a series of focus groups including a representative group of single adults. Between March and August 1998 we conducted 23 interviews with "key informants" (i.e. individuals who are knowledgeable about the single adult scene in Baltimore including Rabbis, Jewish communal professionals, journalists, and some single adults themselves), and held a series of 8 focus group sessions with a total of 52 single adult participants (28 women and 24 men with an age range from 22 to 47 years old).

Other activities included gathering information for comparative purposes from the Cleveland, St. Louis, Boston, and Greater Washington JCCs on their services to young adults. Finally, secondary research was also employed where the Research Center reviewed published material including notes and reports of the Baltimore Single Adult Committee, the Associated's Planning & Budgeting Committee, and a 1994 report from Boston on "A New Model of Service to Jewish Young Adults".

REPORT FORMAT

The report is divided into the following sections:

1. A Framework for Policy and Decision Making
2. Summary of Recommendations

This sections presents the key insights gained from this study as well as recommendations to the Associated and the JCC.

3. Report on Potential Programmatic Initiatives
4. Review of Experiences in Other JCCs

The JCCs of Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Greater Washington were identified as agencies whose experiences in this area could provide significant insights and have relevance to services to single adults as it pertains to Baltimore

A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY AND DECISION MAKING

The recommendations presented to the Associated and the JCC as a result of this study reflect the sensitivity and awareness about these single adults gleaned from the interviews and focus group meetings allowing us to identify some of the underlying factors that are important in motivating this population.

As in the Cleveland study of four years ago, we found that singles adults do not wake up each morning with the overriding need or interest in meeting new people to date and marry. Once again we find that the organized Jewish community fails to fully understand that these singles are mostly interested in finding interesting activities and recreational outlets for their leisure time, and that the benefit of meeting potential mates may be a by-product of these activities.

These single adults are interested in achieving a successful blend and combination of a meaningful professional life and an equally meaningful personal life (which will often include a married life and children), and the organizations and activities which recognize these multiple interests will get their presence and support. Single agenda programs such as dating bureaus and/or matchmaking services have a much more limited interest for the majority of these single adults.

THE PARADOXICAL ATTITUDES OF SINGLES

Services to the single adult population have been on the Jewish communal agenda for some time, and there have been a number of studies that have considered the appropriate models of providing programs and activities for this group. Most notably, in 1994 the Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center conducted a market research study in Cleveland and a similar study was produced in Boston that same year. The data and instruments from these earlier studies was used to develop the research project in Baltimore.

In Cleveland, we used a formulation of "vicious circles" to consider the conflicting attitudes and perceptions of singles towards the organized Jewish community. This approach proved to be very revealing for that study, and we therefore considered the underlying motivations of the Baltimore singles from this same perspective of a variety of paradoxical perceptions, feelings and attitudes.

Some of these paradoxes were less true in Baltimore (e.g. in Cleveland we found that singles felt their Jewish Heritage was very important, but they could not articulate why it was important; in Baltimore the singles were equally

concerned about their heritage, but they were better able to articulate why they felt this way). Other paradoxes emerged in Baltimore that had not surfaced in Cleveland (e.g. Baltimore singles think Baltimore is a good place to live as a single Jew, but they also see Baltimore as provincial and look to the Washington DC area as a more exciting and interesting place for Jewish singles). The ten paradoxical circles below include verbatim responses in *italics* to provide a better sense of the tensions in the life of a single Jew in Baltimore.

1. Singles in Baltimore would recommend that a single Jewish man or woman should look favorably on moving to Baltimore as it is a good place for a young Jewish adult to live.

They are quick to put down Baltimore and find it lacking in sophistication and interest when compared to the Greater Washington DC area. "*I am tired of seeing the same faces that I grew up with.*"; "*When I want an interesting, exciting evening I head for the bars in Rockville or in DC*"

2. Jewish singles think highly of the organized Jewish community in Baltimore,

They are critical of the same organized community "*The community lacks interpersonal skills! I want to be welcomed; no one even says "Hello".*"

3. Singles want opportunities to meet people

They are wary of programs that are primarily designed to meet people "*A program needs content, it has to be interesting in its own right or I'm not coming*"; "*... there is always a stigma to organized singles events*"

4. Singles want general programs for young adults which can include married couples "*Many single friends have married friends and vice versa*"

They can be somewhat uncomfortable being at social events with couples "*Not a good idea to mix in couples, it is very embarrassing to approach someone as a potential date and have their spouse walk in.*"

5. Singles respect and appreciate the Associated and the JCC.

They are leery about the motives of both the Associated and the JCC *%/CC and Associated are so money oriented"; "I need to feel I am worth more than just my pledge or my membership"*

6. Singles want "top of the line" sophisticated programs and say they would pay for these programs.

They are very price sensitive and are quick to find fault and complain *"It was tacky to hold the event in such a nice place and then only serve potato chips and pretzels for \$17."*

7. Singles in Baltimore have long term affiliations with synagogues (nearly 100% bar/bat mitzvah) and say they remain interested in religion.

They feel the synagogues are not interested in them and are unwilling to go where they do not feel welcome *"Synagogues need to be more personal." "Synagogues do not care about the single population." "As for synagogues, I'd be surprised if a synagogue sponsored anything. "*

8. Singles say they are willing to work for the Jewish community and ask to be invited *"Invite singles to plan events not just for singles but for the community. Are any singles working on Israel's 50th? Invite us to the table."; " Not addressing age cohort of 20 - 30 year olds, missing at every Jewish institution, no young people on any boards, why not use on a young adult steering committee."*

They are hard to pin down and do not fulfill their commitments. They are rather fickle and are quick to change plans when something better comes along (note: nearly 50% of the singles who committed to attend focus groups never showed up; more than half of these never even called to cancel).

9. Singles say they want to meet potential Jewish partners and they want to marry Jewishly. *"Yes , I very much want to get married and have a Jewish family"*

They say that marriage would be nice but it is not the end-all/be-all of their existence, and many are not fully committed to the idea of a Jewish spouse. *"Marriage is not the only thing on people's minds , and Jewish would be a preference but it is not crucial " ; "Around 25% will only marry Jewish, 50% prefer Jewish and 25% don't care"*

10. Singles fully understand the threat of intermarriage for the Jewish community and are eager to find a Jewish spouse and have Jewish children.

They resent the pressure that the community puts on them to marry Jewishly in order to maintain Judaism (not to mention the pressure put on them by parents, aunts/uncles, siblings, etc.). *"I'm very concerned about Jewish continuity and I would probably demand that my children be brought up Jewish, but I'll marry whomever I like ."*

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This next section of the report provides recommendations that should be able to accomplish the primary goals of the Associated and JCC in attracting and encompassing the single adult community into the orbit of the organized Jewish community. These suggestions are based on the information gathered throughout the six months, and are sensitive to the contradictory nature of the attitudes/perceptions as described above.

The recommendations are categorized in three general areas:

- A. Attitudinal
- B. Structural
- C. Programmatic

A. ATTITUDINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a Welcoming Approach

A continual impression that ran through the interviews and the focus groups was that singles do not feel particularly welcomed by the Jewish community. This was explicitly stated in a number of our meetings by both men and women and including both younger (i.e. under 30) and older (i.e. over 40) people. Also, the people who did not say this themselves were clearly in agreement with the sentiment (there was generally a lot of nodding and murmured "yeses" each time this was expressed). Clearly this is not an isolated perception.

By and large there was a clear feeling that the Associated was primarily interested in an individual's gift, the JCC was primarily interested in membership, and the synagogues were only interested in having the single adult join when she/he married and had children (note: this was not a universal sentiment and a number of agencies and programs including the Associated's Young Adult division and the JCC's Single's program, especially the sports leagues, received some praise for their attempts at reaching out to the young adults).

There is a successful approach to creating this kind of welcome that falls under the general rubric of a "group work model". Historically, the group work model was the *modus operandi* of the Jewish communal system most notably through the JCC Movement which was chiefly directed by trained social workers. The decline of the social group work approach has been documented in a paper by Martin Birnbaum and Bessie Pine*. The following four group work principals are most relevant for the single adult population;

- 1) clarification of group purpose and formulation of group goals,
- 2) promotion of social interaction,
- 3) support for democratic/Jewish values, and
- 4) development of member and group responsibility.

A group work model of involvement for the single adult population would work towards the development of this welcoming approach that these singles are looking for (in fact, the highly successful sports leagues noted above essentially uses this "group work" approach on an informal basis as the coordinator reaches out to each person on an individual basis and brings them into the group) . This includes involving these single adults in the governance of the communal enterprise (this is a separate recommendation which will be included in the structural area).

Reviving Group Work in Jewish Community Centers: Journal of Jewish Communal Service; Summer 1997, pages 268 - 277.

o Invest in Singles

This goes along with the "unwelcoming" atmosphere described above. Singles feel that they are the "orphans" of the community and are generally left out of communal planning. They believe that the community is unwilling to provide resources for single adults and that all programs must be run on a break-even basis if not actually creating a surplus. This places a significant barrier in the way of many singles who can be "turned off" to the community's programming efforts because of cost factors (whether real or perceived is irrelevant at this point).

The issue of finances needs to be carefully considered as it should not be allowed to get in the way of attracting these adults. For example, the community could take a chance and seriously invest in these adults by charging minimal fees and/or asking for donations to cover costs. There is a strong likelihood that these investments will pay off in the long run as these generally successful adults will be much more likely to pay their fair share once they have been properly welcomed and incorporated into the community.

Addressing these two attitudinal recommendations should go a long way toward insuring the singles that they are viewed as valued members of the Baltimore Jewish community.

B. STRUCTURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage Existing Organizations to Get Out of the "Singles" Business

The data that we collected in Baltimore and information from other communities leads us to suggest that singles are both tired and leery of programs and services specifically aimed at "singles". The label attracts the same "walking wounded" to programs and ignores the wider interests of this population. The Baltimore singles, like their counterparts in other cities are interested in meeting people through "serendipity" where they encounter people with similar interests and then begin a relationship. They are tired of the carefully staged programs aimed at singles and designed to promote social interaction aimed at encouraging relationships.

It is not merely a matter of changing labels and eliminating the term "single" from programs because these sophisticated adults can see through the "young professional" or "young adult" programs that are clearly designed to "meet people". Many of these programs are referred to as "meat markets" and the single adults we spoke to resent them. Changing the way that these single adults view programs may require a sophisticated marketing/promotion approach. The Associated and the JCC could consult with ad agencies and/or public relations firms who might work on such an approach on *a pro-bone basis*.

□ Establish a New Independent Entity for Coordinating Services to Young Adults

As noted earlier, there is clear evidence of generally good feelings about the Jewish institutions in Baltimore; but there is also a pervasive skepticism about the motives underlying these same institutions when it comes to singles. Young adults feel neglected by the community especially as compared to senior adults and families. A new entity would be a clear statement by the community that young adults are being given the serious consideration they find lacking.

This new communal organization could be housed in its own space which would provide the kind of "drop-in" facility that some of these adults are looking for. The governance for this community-wide program should be made up of single adults who would then be taking charge of their own programs and services. This "young adult center" would coordinate all services to the community including developing a community calendar for the Associated, JCC and synagogues eliminating unproductive overlap whenever possible (e.g. it would certainly be counter-productive for two synagogues to hold a film festival while the JCC has productions going on at the Gordon Center).

• Allow More Young Adults into the Governance Structure

As noted earlier, the single adults we spoke with felt left out of the decision making processes of the community. A new young adult center would address this issue to some degree, but there would still be gap in the existing communal governance bodies. There are already a number of these adults involved on Boards and committees, but the larger young adult community feels left out. There is no denying that this is a difficult issue; not everyone is qualified to be a leader, and community governance is too important for it to be treated as a service or program that is open to all comers regardless of skills, abilities, resources, etc. At the same time, there is a perception that young adults are left out. An effort should be made to counter this perception through a real and well publicized program designed to bring more young adults into the governance structure.

o Replicate the Efforts in Other Communities on a "Jewish Membership Package"

As already noted, the individuals in this cohort are "price sensitive". They often feel that full participation in the organized Jewish community is beyond their means (e.g. a gift to the Associated, a JCC Membership and a Synagogue membership along with tickets for the high holidays).

There are successful models of inter-agency cooperation in Chicago and MetroWest which allow individuals to join the JCC and a synagogue for a single fee. This is worth testing out in Baltimore.

C. PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide an Extensive Menu of Programs

The first recommendation is obvious, the single adult community is made up of a wide variety of individuals with a full palette of tastes and interests. To include the greatest number of people the community should develop programs which meet these interests. The program models we tested with the focus group participants proved this to be the case; at least 30% of the respondents felt that each of the ten models we suggested would "probably work in Baltimore" (see the report on "Report on Potential Programmatic Initiatives" in the next section).

At the same time, it is probably true that many of these programs will prove to be uneconomical since they may only bring in a small group of interested parties. Therefore, this recommendation incorporates the earlier suggestion that the community should invest in singles.

- Differentiate Programs by Age

The single community was very clear about the perception that programs that attract some of the older singles (i.e. 40+) provide the wrong atmosphere and image for singles below 40. The term "stigma" was continually used for these programs and the agencies that run these programs are viewed unfavorably. There is an unfortunate perception that these single adults include a lot of "losers" and this perception can become a self-fulfilling prophesy as the younger, more attractive people avoid these activities leaving the older, less attractive group in the majority.

There is no easy solution to this problem; a pluralistic community which values free choice cannot easily exclude anyone. This is a constant theme whenever professionals discuss working with the single, adult community; none of the other communities we spoke with have come up with any clear solutions. It is important for decision makers to recognize that this issue is inherent in working with this population.

- Show Extra Sensitivity to the Orthodox

The Orthodox men and women we spoke with were concerned that they are sometimes made to feel unwelcome at programs. One concern involves food; there are times where the kosher food available is very limited. This feeling came through for all of the programs sponsored by the general Jewish community (i.e. not specifically the Orthodox). A concern was also expressed about the possibility of meeting potential partners who may not be Jewish since these events which are typically open to the entire community.

- Promote a Social Action Agenda

The Jewish community has long been associated with social action and the young adults we talked with clearly subscribe to this agenda. Identifying volunteer opportunities in both the Jewish and general communities would very likely attract a sizable group of these young professionals. These volunteer activities often have the added benefit of promoting social interaction which can have significant benefits. There are anecdotal stories of Jewish couples who met each other at soup kitchens on Christmas eve when the rest of the non-Jewish world is out celebrating their holiday.

- Provide Programs With Easy Access and Small Commitments

A general theme that carried through the interviews and the focus groups was a reluctance to invest time, effort, and resources in programs and activities until the individual is confident that the investment is worthwhile. For example, a series of Israeli films which could be seen as a set or on an individual basis would probably be attractive to a large group of the adults we spoke with. It is counter-productive to require significant commitments of time from people who are unwilling to commit themselves and often will not have made definitive plans until the last minute.

- Image and Atmosphere are Essential Elements

As noted above, a major issue of single adult programming involves the stigma associated with some of these programs. The best way to combat these negative perceptions is to present a top-of-the-line image in the programs and activities offered. This will generally require a modern, well presented marketing approach. It is not enough to develop and run excellent programs; the image that the programs reflect is crucial.

- Include Well Planned Ice-Breakers

Many of the people we talked to expressed their discomfort when initially entering the room at some of the programs they have attended; often they will not attend a program unless they are going with a friend (this is more often true of women, although a number of men offered similar observations). The idea of having a "greeter" at the door who would make people feel comfortable was viewed positively by many of the focus group participants (not unlike taking on the role of host at a party).

Everyone agreed that this was also tricky as it can look forced and make people even more uncomfortable if not done well. A number of participants suggested that they would welcome taking on this role if they were asked.

Provide Both a Dating Service and a Matchmaking Opportunity

The organized Jewish community has a clear agenda in promoting intra-marriage (i.e. Jews marrying Jews). In this regard, two specific programs were tested with focus group participants for their potential in this area; a continental dating service and matchmaking.

There is a dating service in Baltimore which has had limited success. It is housed in one of the synagogues and is entirely run by volunteers. These volunteer leaders have done a yeoman job in keeping this program running for the last few years, but they report a feeling of "burn out" at this time.

Essentially the program consists of two elements - a "book" which contains pictures and descriptions of single adults which can be viewed and used for potential dates, and a few organized dances throughout the year. The efficacy of the book is limited to the number of people who are willing to join the program and allow themselves to be in the book. At times there have been as many as 200 individuals included; at other times the number has dwindled to less than 100. The dances have been generally successful.

The dating service model that we tested involved the idea of a "continental" approach. This continental model was viewed rather unfavorably (only 50% felt that this would even have a fair chance of success). The comments included the negative aspects of the geographical issues involved. Most people were reluctant to get involved with a potential long distance relationship.

However, the model of a Baltimore based program still appears viable. The new young adult Center could house this program, and it would have a much better chance of success with professional support.

Matchmaking has a long history in the Jewish community and is still used in some strict Orthodox sects. To the modern American Jewish young adult there is an inherent negative connotation surrounding the idea of being "fixed up" with marriage as the end result.

However, there are instances of modern matchmaking services which have been successful in other communities. Unfortunately the matchmaking program is entirely dependent on the skills of the matchmaker (usually a woman with a warm, welcoming personality and demeanor who makes people feel comfortable and is able to gain the trust and confidence of her clients).

Well over 50% of the respondents felt that a matchmaking program could work in Baltimore. At the same time, some people were adamant that this would fail "I would not participate in this - nor would my friends". Given the community's significant interest in promoting Jewish marriages this is a program that is worth trying.

TESTING PROGRAM MODELS

As part of the study of singles we tested a series of 10 different program models which have proved successful in other communities and/or at other times. Each of the programs had been successful for "some of the people some of the time", but of course none of the programs had been 100% successful for the proverbial "all of the people all of the time." A few of the programs had already been tried in Baltimore with varying success (e.g. the current sports leagues are enjoying an extremely successful run at this time).

The tables below report the opinions of 48 singles from the focus groups and interviews who completed forms; the programs are listed in order of preference:

PROGRAM MODELS

1. **"Participatory Sports"** - The community develops a series of leagues (similar to the current summer softball games) and/or one-time events (e.g. a 5km road race, rock climbing, etc.)

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 38% | 50% | 8% | 4% | 0 |

Comments:

- Age range now too broad - 35-45/50 better than 22-44
- Hard to go if you don't feel competent in the sports.
- Great idea, works well

2. **Community Volunteer Program** - Opportunities to participate in non-denominational volunteer projects that benefit the entire community or specific disadvantaged groups.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 31% | 50% | 13% | 6% | 0% |

Comments:

- Already in place with the Associated
- Should not be tied to singles
- Absolutely needed - Mitzvot projects bond from the heart.

3. **"Spectator Events"** - The community develops a series of spectator events such as Orioles/Ravens games, museum tours, concerts/shows, etc.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely <u>Not</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 31% | 44% | 19% | 6% | 0% |

Comments:

- Needs to be marketed well; keep price down
- Bulk ticket prices. Great idea!
- Might be OK occasionally.

4. **"Dinner with Twelve Strangers"** - Sponsored by the community or a specific organization, the opportunity to meet people on similar age, and similar interests using a profile questionnaire in advance.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 13% | 56% | 21% | 8% | 2% |

Comments:

- Great idea, I would definitely be interested, and involved with this
- Have some way of sorting so people don't end up with people they already know
- Neat idea - has to be well planned.
- This would be great if it was at a popular restaurant - but there would be a problem with people who keep Kosher.
- Why, when you know so many people, do you need to be with no one you know to have fun?

5. **"Cultural Events"** - Relatively small audiences that would go to theater, movies, museums, etc. that would facilitate meeting people.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably <u>Not</u> | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 13% | 46% | 31% | 21% | 0% |

Comments:

- If offered on a regular basis e.g. every Wednesday, once a month
- Get discounts for good seat - I would like to have this available and maybe pick and choose.
- Perhaps forming and "arts group" within the larger group.
- If going to cultural event, (e.g. movie) would also need to have some other type of interaction.

6. **"Friday Night Services with Dinner"** - In conjunction with the synagogues.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably <u>Not</u> | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 8% | 52% | 31% | 9% | 0 |

Comments:

- So many people look for Friday night Happy Hours - this would be a welcome change - provided that services are short and inclusive (participatory)
- Good idea; go out to dinner afterward
- I would be attracted to an interactive type service

7. **"Just Lunch"** - Meet for lunch, has been used by dating services; could be developed for groups.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely <u>Not</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 13% | 33% | 35% | 13% | 6% |

Comments:

- Downtown location is better - probably better for professionals who have less of a limited lunch time (in terms of time)
- I would have to have contact with the person first
- Already available and not using
- Have some way of sorting so people don't end up with people they already know

8. **"Social Programs"** - The kind of dances, dinners, etc. which are currently offered.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 17% | 15% | 42% | 27% | 0 |

Comments:

- Depends on price, location, one-on-one calling "are you going"?
Needs to be marketed and advertised; upscale event
- Not at JCC need to be at outside venue
- Spend the money
- Need proper promotion and execution
- Interactive/Ice breaker activities included with these events.
- Planned & organized by singles - money raised is used for something positive for singles possibly

9. **"Brunch with a Leader"** - Sunday Brunch for 12 at the home of a Baltimore politician and/or celebrity and/or Jewish communal leader.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | <u>Probably</u> Not 13% | <u>Definitely</u> Not 6% |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 13% | 15% | 54% | | |

Comments:

- These are very successful each fall by Associated - could do more often, smaller groups; pulls an excellent group
- Did in Chicago lots of fun could be fun
- Great Idea!
- Never work

10. **"Neighborhood Havurot"** - Groups meet on a regular basis (usually monthly) for informal study and conversation; typically group convenes each month in a member's home.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | <u>Probably</u> Not 8% | <u>Definitely</u> Not 6% |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6% | 25% | 56% | | |

Comments:

- Would need new influx of people once in awhile
- A program by Etz Chaim in Baltimore was successful. This had innovative, interesting discussion groups. Participants were invited to attend and were grouped by common interest, age and religious backgrounds.
- Good idea because it involves interaction around something other than your resume.

Finally, we tested two specific programs designed to help people meet potential mates; a continental dating service and a matchmaking service. The continental dating service did not seem to fit well for these singles; JSSN is a dating service for the Baltimore community and it has been moderately successful - expanding this to a larger geographical pool was viewed as a poor idea.

On the other hand, matchmaking was seen as a real possibility with a majority of the respondents feeling that it would have at least a fair chance to work. Less than 25% of the respondents felt that matchmaking was a poor idea.

A. "Continental Dating Service" - Sign onto a service with pictures and descriptions of Jewish singles in communities throughout North America.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 6% | 19% | 25% | 31% | 19% |

Comments:

- Too much geographical unsuitability
- Most people prefer to find someone in Baltimore area.

B. "Matchmaking" - The community employs an experienced matchmaker who interviews clients and arranges potential matches.

Would this work in Baltimore:

| <u>Definitely</u> | <u>Probably</u> | <u>Possibly</u> | Probably Not | Definitely Not |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 17% | 27% | 33% | 13% | 10% |

- Need to specify Jewish affiliation
- I would not participate in this - nor would my friends.
- Nothing else really available, so would certainly provide an option.

EXPERIENCES IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

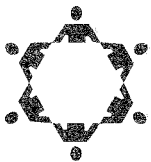
As part of this study we collected information from four other communities that are similar in size to Baltimore: Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, and Greater Washington DC.

In essence, the experiences in these other communities can be easily summarized - the single adult population is difficult to attract and serve. There really is a stigma associated with single programs (this is a constant theme in every community). It is essential to program separately by age (e.g. under 35 vs. 35 and older), but no one has been able to fully solve the dilemma of separating people in institutions which value an open pluralistic approach.

Dating services have limited successes and checkered histories; at times these programs thrive and are highly successful attracting hundreds of people, at other times there are only a few people involved which defeats the purpose of the service in the first place. There appears to be *no clear reason for this* phenomena (the *worker* involved with the singles is often important), but there is definitely an ebb and flow to the dating service programs. Matchmaking services are 90% dependent on the matchmaker. With the right individual these matchmaking programs show a moderate success rate with a number of marriages each year.

A wide variety of programs is needed to attract and maintain the single community. Nearly every program is successful for at least some people, and no programs are universally successful all of the time. Each community reports success with their young leadership programs at the federation, but these are clearly elitist and do not reach into the mainstream of the community.

Boston and Cleveland had moderate success with separate entities for young adults. The Boston program lasted nearly 10 years and was eliminated in the late 1980s due to budgetary considerations. Cleveland, St. Louis and MetroWest, NJ are following the "Kehilla" model developed in Chicago where single adults can join the JCC and a synagogue for a reduced fee. This merger of the synagogue and the JCC can have a synergistic effect as seen in a recent study by Professor Steven M. Cohen for the Florence G. Heller---JCC Association Research Center.



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