

**PROMOTING JEWISH INTRAMARRIAGE
THROUGH INCREASED SOCIAL INTERACTION**



Jay Levenberg,, Director of JCC Association Marketing & Membership Services, coordinates a full range of marketing and membership services available to North American Jewish Community Centers including strategic planning, workshops, production of sales materials, sales and promotional strategies, and consumer research.

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The Immerman Foundation of Cleveland, founded in 1987 by Robert Immerman, is dedicated to creating a systematic approach to increasing the opportunities for young, Jewish singles to interact, It believes that when Jews have more chances to be with other Jews, the potential for *inframariage* is increased and *intermarriage* is reduced. In turn, the Jewish community infrastructure will be protected and supported for future generations.

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The Immerman Foundation & Project Purpose

In the fall of 1987, The Immerman Foundation was established by Robert A. Immerman, a Clevelander who at that time was in his late 30's, single, and from first-hand experience, had become concerned about a lack of adequate programming for the single population in Cleveland. Many of Cleveland's Jewish singles were experiencing great difficulty finding comfortable ways to meet one another. The backdrop to this lack of programs for young, Jewish singles was the national trend of a rising rate of intermarriage among Jewish individuals.

Through his involvement in leadership programs at the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, Bob Immerman became aware of the many services provided to Jewish preschoolers, school children, teenagers, and college students. He also saw that the entry point into the organized Jewish community was generally the time when young, married couples had children. At that time, the family typically joins the Jewish Community Center and/or a synagogue.

When Bob Immerman decided to establish The Immerman Foundation as a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Federation, it was done for the principal purpose of addressing the obvious gap in services which existed for Jewish singles who were out of college, but not married. During the Foundation's first five years of existence, it made several grants seeking to strengthen programming to a singles market estimated to be 6,000 in the Cleveland area. While some of these initial efforts were promising, they were limited in scope and impact. In addition, the troubling findings of the Council of Jewish Federations' 1990 National Jewish Population Study (highlighting a 52% intermarriage rate) added to a sense of urgency.

As a result, it became clear to the Foundation's trustees that, to heighten the impact of its efforts, the Foundation needed to do three things:

- Recast the Foundation's articulated interest in this issue, framing its mission more positively in terms of "promoting *intramarriage*" among Jewish singles.
- Elevate this issue on Cleveland's community agenda. (It was clear that the issue was not a priority of any existing Jewish agency, synagogue, or organization.)

3. Learn more about the attitudes of Cleveland's Jewish singles regarding the value they place on marrying Jews and the types of programs they would find appealing. (The National Jewish Population Study impressed upon The Immersion Foundation trustees the great value of gathering data in order to build a well documented case for action. Clearly, anecdotal evidence and generalized discussion of the importance of sustaining Jewish continuity had been insufficient to generate a groundswell for more effective programming for Cleveland's Jewish singles.)

It was at this point that The Immersion Foundation contracted with the Florence G. Heller Research Center of the JCC Association of North America. Through research to be conducted in Cleveland, the Foundation wanted to:

Develop a better understanding of the general factors that contribute to the high rate of intermarriage among Jewish singles, and the specific factors that may be prevalent in the Cleveland area.

Develop community and programmatic responses that could possibly foster increased social interaction among Jewish singles in the Cleveland area, with the objective of promoting intramarriage.¹

The recommendations developed as part of this project are designed for the Cleveland area. However, the Foundation has expressed the hope that our findings and recommendations will serve as a national model.

Project Methodology

Between October, 1992 and March, 1994, JCC Association (Florence G. Heller Research and Marketing Services) conducted primary and secondary research on behalf of the Immerman Foundation. The research included the following elements.'

Collection and review of materials from other communities related to programs for Jewish singles

Collection and review of current literature pertaining to the inter-faith marriage phenomenon

Review of Cleveland and national Jewish demographics'

Interviews with community leaders⁴ in the Cleveland area (14 interviews)

Focus Group sessions with Jewish singles (5 sessions)"

Interviews with married individuals (5 interviews)

Focus Group session with professional colleagues to evaluate data, and to discuss potential responses organizational programmatic)

² All primary research (focus group sessions and personal interviews) was conducted with Cleveland participants.

³ Ann Schorr, a Cleveland demographer, has compiled data on Cleveland's Jewish single population. She has made her data and analysis available for us on this project.

⁴ Community leaders, also referred to as *key* informants, were interviewed for their perspectives on community and organizational issues related to serving Jewish singles in Cleveland.

The first three sessions focused on impressions, attitudes, and habits related to social interaction among young, Jewish singles. The final two sessions were designed to test actual programmatic and organizational approaches to increasing social interaction among young, Jewish singles.

Report Format

The research conducted within this project has provided many new insights into the factors leading to intermarriage. More importantly and related to the core mission of the Foundation, the data has signaled potential approaches to increasing social interaction among Jewish singles in the Cleveland area for the purpose of promoting intramarriage.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Foundation with:

Highlights of the consumer^b and "Key Informant" data.

Our interpretation of the data from interviews and the first three focus groups, and the community and programmatic responses we tested in the final two focus groups.

Our programmatic and organizational recommendations.

The report is divided into the following sections:

Summary of Recommendations

This section includes an overview of key insights gained from this project as well as the recommendations presented to the Foundation at the conclusion of this project.

2. Eight interfaith marriages: a significant phenomenon

Prior to initiating our own research, we conducted a scan and review of existing literature related to interfaith marriage (Jewish & Catholic, as the Roman Catholic community is faced with similar concerns related to inter-faith marriage.) This section summarizes the key issues and sensitivities that were the most meaningful to this project's research.

⁶ "Consumer" refers to Jewish singles and married individuals whom we interviewed, mostly in focus groups, for their perspectives on their own and/or their friends' Jewish lifestyles in Cleveland.

3. Research Participant Profiles

This section provides the reader with a profile of the kinds of people we interviewed and who provided us with the data needed to prepare recommendations.

4. I.e. Research Topics, Findings & Interpretations

During the course of this project, we identified key topics for our research probes that we felt were needed in order to develop recommendations for the Foundation. Each topic has its own section, so that the reader is provided with an overview of the key findings and interpretations that are related to each topic and that served as the basis for our recommendations.

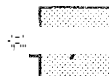
The topics that we pursued among consumers and "key informants" are as follows:

- a. History of Jewish affiliation and background that shapes attitudes and values related to dating, marriage, and Jewish activities.
- b. Dating experiences & current attitudes about interfaith dating and marriage.
- c. Current attitudes about (Cleveland) Jewish organizations & their ability to relate to young, Jewish singles.
- d. Program ideas for promoting social interaction among young, Jewish singles.

For the exact questions posed in focus groups and interviews, please see Appendix: Focus Group Moderators Guides (Key Community Informants, Jewish Singles, Jewish Married Individuals).

Selected quotes in each topic section are the most representative of the answers we received in the course of the focus groups or interviews.

The Key Informant questions were obviously not directed at personal experience as much as community and organizational perspectives, yet they relate to the same subject categories as summarized here.



5. Summary of Potential Pilgrimage & Community Responses

This section provides the reader with a summary of the potential program and organizational responses that emerged during the course of our key informant interviews and focus groups. These are the themes, considerations, sensitivities, and ideas that we brought to our final two focus groups for testing.

6. Professional Colleagues Discussion Group

At the time of our preliminary reports to the Foundation, and before we tested potential programmatic and organizational responses in our final round of consumer focus groups, we also sought feedback from a group of professional colleagues. This section summarizes key findings from this informal discussion group.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The recommendations that we present to The Immerman Foundation as a result of this project's research reflect a sensitivity and awareness that is clearly traceable to the interviews and focus groups that we conducted. For example, one major insight that we've gained as part of the research is that singles do not wake up each morning with the overriding need to meet new people, find dates or get married. Too often, organizations (in Cleveland and elsewhere) that claim to relate to singles fail to realize that the everyday life of singles is more about finding interesting activities and recreation than about dating and marriage. The benefit of meeting people is a valued k:product of these activities, but is not the primary motivation to participate in a program.

Throughout the research process of this project, we have solicited organizational and programmatic ideas from consumers, community leaders, and professionals who either serve the young, Jewish singles market or who are social scientists actively studying this group. Many of the emerging recommendations were included in preliminary reports and presentations to the Foundation. Our last round of focus groups was designed to specifically evaluate many of the recommendations that surfaced in a variety of settings (our research, related studies, and program models in other communities).

The Vicious Circles of Attitudes & Perceptions

As we've reviewed all the material and synthesized our findings, we have defined a series of conflicting attitudes and perceptions that we refer to as "*vicious circles*". As recommendations are considered by the Foundation, the Cleveland community, and other communities interested in this market segment, it is important to recognize the following *marketing contradictions*.

Young, Jewish singles think highly of organized, Jewish structure in Cleveland.

They are also highly critical of the same organized, Jewish structure for ignoring their unique needs and for not involving them in decision making processes.

2. They want more opportunities to meet people.

They are very leery of any programs that are evidently designed to meet people

3. They commend the Federation's Young Leadership programs and events.

They claim that its nearly impossible, due to existing cliques, to meet anyone new at these events.

4. They would prefer to meet other Jewish individuals and marry Jewishly.

They don't want to work too hard at it,

5. They want sophisticated programs and sources of information.

They are very price sensitive and belie stereotypes of young professionals with money to burn.

6. They convey that their Jewish heritage and identity is important to them.

They carnot articulate why their Jewish heritage and identity is important,

7. They express pride in their Jewishness.

They convey an anxiety about appearing "too Jewish" or "religious".

With all these factors in mind, the purpose of this section of the report is to categorize and assign priorities to those recommendations we now feel will have the most impact on the Foundations's core mission, to increase social interaction among young, Jewish singles. Based on everything we've heard and tested during these past two years, these are the approaches we feel will have the greatest return on the Foundation's and the community's investment into this all important market segment.

Keeping with the format and themes of our research questions, the recommendations are categorized as follows:

- A. Structural/Organizational
- B. Programmatic
- C. Publicity & Information

A. **STRUCTURAL/ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Encourage existing organizations to get out of the "singles" business!

All of our work confirms that "singles" are wary and weary 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. Additionally, our research participants and testing with professional colleagues confirm that singles want to meet other people through "serendipity", not through overly staged events marketed exclusively to singles. Lastly, singles talked about the special friendships they have with married individuals, and how such relationships produce more quality social interaction with new people (e.g., potential dates) than any of the more formal programs or events.

Existing organizations should be encouraged to reconstitute themselves as "Young Professionals" or "Young Adult" departments. The theme and program focus of these new departments should be restructured to appeal to all people in the 20 to 40 year old market, thereby facilitating the social interaction among a wider group of singles, and encouraging the benefits of singles meeting Jewish friends through the network of married individuals.

Establish a new and independent community identity for coordinating services and programs to young, Jewish professionals.

There is a predominance of good feelings about the Jewish, organizational structure in Cleveland. But, there is also a pervasive skepticism about the agendas and economic factors (i.e., pricing structures) related to existing organizations. Singles feel neglected as a market segment, believing that families and seniors take priority in the minds and workings of existing organizations like the JCC and synagogues. Additionally, singles in Cleveland cite a lack of coordination among existing service providers in terms of the nature and timing of programs and events.

An independent identity promoting exclusive service to this market segment would remove the credibility barriers about conflicting agendas, and maybe ameliorate some of the pricing concerns. It could also serve as the community's central coordinator of all programs appealing to this target market, thereby ensuring the best timing and pricing of programs.

Test the idea of a single, Jewish organization membership package modeled after the Chicago Kehilla Project.

Individuals in this market segment are very price sensitive. To make matters worse, they feel that organized Jewish life (in which they include the JCC and synagogues) is beyond their economic means.

A package membership, for a one-time limited duration of two years, could be tested among this age group. While the specific benefits have to be defined, it could include certain access to the JCC and one or more synagogues.

Encourage the community to invite more young, Jewish professionals into the lay leadership process.

While the Federation's Young Leadership program scored high marks among the individuals we tested, many more feel the Federation is only interested in "white collar types who are likely to contribute dollars." Under the Foundation's auspices, every Jewish organization in Cleveland should be encouraged to actively invite young, Jewish singles to participate in agency governance and community leadership. Organizations should be guided by real demographics of this population reminiscent of the civil rights movement; is there a representation of this market in the decision making process proportionate to their actual population numbers?

- **Begin the process of sharing this project data with other organizations in Cleveland.**

A series of presentations should be scheduled with every Jewish organization in Cleveland that includes the following:

Highlights of findings

- Suggested programmatic and organizational responses
- Concrete consultation in sales and marketing to young, Jewish singles

We recommend this as a high priority item for the next wave of the Foundation's efforts. The small group of other agency representatives we convened after the last round of focus groups generated a very worthwhile discussion of common goals and dilemmas related to serving young, Jewish singles in Cleveland. With the comprehensive data and reports we've developed, the Foundation could now take the lead in establishing its goals (of increasing social interaction opportunities for this age group) as a major community agenda item.

B. PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a **series of programs, classes, and events targeted to** specific interests **that can overshadow any implicit interest or need to meet other singles.**

Our primary and secondary research confirms that special interest events and outings have a great appeal to this age group. Examples include ski weekends, theater trips, investment clubs, sailing weekends, foreign language classes, etc. These must be sophisticated (and where appropriate, specific skill oriented) programs that overcome any skepticism that the program is only a front to bring lonely singles together.

- Develop a series of opportunities for young, Jewish singles to participate in community causes that are not necessarily Jewishly oriented.

This age group still retains high levels of idealism about its ability to change the world for the better. Although proud of their Jewishness, they shun all labels, even the "Jewish" one. We recognize that programs without a Jewish focus may increase their interaction with non-Jewish individuals. However, if promoted effectively among our Jewish target markets, we can at least add one more opportunity to meet Jewish individuals.

- Offer **programs that allow easy access and that minimize the duration of** the commitment.

One of the most successful features of many health clubs that serve a young clientele is the member's ability to drop into an aerobics class at anytime of the day without advance registration, and without a commitment to attend another class. Each class is an independent offering with easy access. The physiological benefits exist for every class; while regular attendance is encouraged in order to maximize the long term benefits, no specific attendance pattern is demanded or assumed.

Other programs geared to the non-fitness interests of this market should adapt a model similar to the fitness club aerobics model. Regular events, classes, and programs should be scheduled on a drop-in basis.

Schedule ongoing focus group type discussions among members of this target population.

Besides the data they generated, the focus group sessions themselves were regarded by participants as a "fun evening", a "great way to discuss issues and meet people."

Develop programs that have a central theme of professional networking and career development.

The idea of being invited to a country club or home of a distinguished business leader appealed to the career interests of the individuals we tested. If the program was marketed exclusively or predominately to young, Jewish professionals, it would have the non-career related benefit of meeting other Jewish individuals with similar lifestyles and interests.

C. PUBLICITY & INFORMATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a **feature story (or series of stories) about The Immerman Foundation's work and this project.**

Young, Jewish professionals have a high regard for organized, Jewish life, but feel they represent a very minor agenda item for Jewish institutions. Publicity that recognizes the importance of this market and its future place in Jewish society will go a long way towards establishing a stronger working relationship with members of this age group.

- Produce a newsletter/magazine **aimed at the interests of this target** population.

No single publication in Cleveland (or in any other community that we're aware of) targets this population (young, Jewish singles) as a discrete market segment with interests beyond dating and mating. A sophisticated, independent publication that appears on a regular basis could effectively promote the agenda of social interaction without the stigma of a dating service publication. It could include:

News stories

Cultural features

Program and event calendars

"How-To" features

Byline guest articles by members of this target population

- Establish a local phone "hotline" that interactively allows callers to get current program and event information.

Quick and easy access to "coordinated and current" program and event information was highly regarded by members of our focus groups. They acknowledge that most or all of the information is probably available in the "avalanche of information" they're already receiving, but they feel a phone hotline would be a more effective tool for getting right to the information they'd want.

Introduce the Foundation and its project reports to every major, national Jewish organization.

Although we recognize that the Foundation is primarily concerned at this juncture with the Cleveland Jewish community, we also know from experience that establishing a local agenda as a national issue also heightens local awareness and credibility. Along these lines, we recommend that the Foundation "market" this report and supporting presentations to national forums like JCC Association's Biennial and CJF's General Assembly.



LITERATURE SCANS & RESOURCES
FINDINGS & IMPRESSIONS

(Extracted from a report presented to the Immerman Foundation on October 22, 1992.)

LITERATURE SCANS - TOPICS

The following topics are those we used in searching out information about intermarriage among Jews:

Jewish Issues

- a. Survival of the Jewish people (Jewish continuity)

Intermarriage from a religious standpoint

(Note that each of the three primary sects of Judaism take their own positions about intermarriage. Any potential strategies for increasing the likelihood of intramarriage among Jews must consider these sect-related positions.)

- c. Services and programs for intermarried couples

—on-Jeish Issues

- a. The Christian perspective on intermarriage with Jews

3. **The Secular World**

- a. Demographics of singles

Singles' approach to relationships, dating and marriage

- c. Services and programs for singles (Jewish and non-Jewish)

LITERATURE SCANS - FINDINGS AND IMPRESSIONS

These are the prevalent findings, themes, and interpretations of the literature uncovered in this project. Many of these items were incorporated for testing in our focus group formats.

1. *Intermarriage is not the problem; it is the outcome of a problem.*

Mate selection is based on a long list of priorities that reflect the personality and belief system of the individual. The list can include things like physical attributes, intellectual level, social status, personality traits, sense of humor, financial status, and religion.

Whether an item is on the selection list or not reflects attitudes and beliefs shaped over the individual's entire lifetime. And the list changes as life experiences occur. For example, a 20 year old may put more emphasis on physical attributes. As other attributes become more important to the individual as part of his or her own maturing process, this item may move down in priority.

The Jewish factor and its place on the list will depend on the belief system developed within that individual. Cultural ethnicity (mere identification as a Jew) is not a belief system and is not, in and of itself, enough of a motivation to marry Jewishly.

The problem, therefore, is not intermarriage, but rather a lack of a strong Jewish belief system which results in intermarriage.

2. *North American Jews are divided into three primary groups that span all denominations:*
 - a. Members of an ethnic group without any uniquely Jewish belief or practice
 - b. Jews who demonstrate their Jewishness through rites and rituals, but who do not convey a strong belief system to their children
 - c. Jews who maintain the traditions of Judaism, but also convey a strong Jewish belief system to their children.

From the reports and literature **we've** uncovered to date, intermarriage appears to be a problem only among groups a. & b.

3. *The current demographic reality that people are marrying much older than in previous generations works against intra-marriage.*

In other words, the older an individual is the more likely he or she is to intermarry. In past generations, when people got married almost right out of high school or college, they were still under the influence of parents. They chose mates according to what parents might accept as selection criteria; staying within one's religion was one such parental criteria.

As the individual ages, he or she is that much more removed from parental influence.

4. *Psychologists have found that non-Jewish stereotypes of Jews have had an impact on a Jew's decision to marry a non Jew.*

For example, the JAP (Jewish American Princess) joke has become so prevalent, that Jewish males are threatened by the prospect of marrying a "JAP".

5. *This generation of young singles is more likely than past generations to use professional services to improve their lives, including resources that will identify potential mates.*

Young singles are among the most prevalent purchasers of personal consultants in nutrition, physical training, wardrobe, and the like. It is no longer a stigma to extend this habit of using outside services into the use of dating services.

6. *In past years, Roman Catholics viewed intermarriage as a potential source of converts to Roman Catholicism.*

Now that the conversion rate among their intermarrieds has dropped, Roman Catholics face the same concerns that we have about intermarriage.

The prevailing question in much of this literature is: Should we be exploring ways to increase conversion after the intermarriage, or should our main concern be preventing intermarriage?

OTHER RESOURCES

Early in this project, the following individuals and organizations were identified as key resources. Throughout the project, we referred to materials they wrote or sponsored, and we also spoke to many of these individuals personally during the course of our work.

Individuals

Dr. Egon Mayer -- Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College

Dr. Steven M. Cohen Professor of Sociology, Queens College

Rabbi Rachel Cowan - Author, rabbi, teacher

Esther Perel -- Psychotherapist (Director of Interfaith Programs at 92nd St. Y, New York)

Leora Hoffman - Director of Jewish matchmaking service, Baltimore

Estelle Frankel -- Psychotherapist, author on the subject of Jewish perception of self and Jewish relationships

Institutions

Spertus College of Judaica (Chicago)

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University

University of Chicago School of Social Research

National Association for Personal Relationship Development (Chicago)

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Cowan, Paul with Cowan, Rabbi Rachel, ***Maxed Blessings: Marriage Between Jews Christians.*** 1st edition, (New York: Doubleday, 1987), pp. 275

Goodman-Mal arnuth, Leslie & Margolis, Robin, *Between Two Worlds.* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), pp. 208

Klein, Mavis, *How to Choose a Mate.* (Boston: Marion Boyers, 1981), pp. 160

Levin, Laurie & Golden-Bellotti, Laura, *You Can't Hurt Love: An Intimate Look at First Marriages After 40.* (New York, USA: Dutton, 1992), pp. 268

Mayer, Dr. Egon, *Love and Tradition: Marriage Between Jews and Christians* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), pp. 311

Petsonk, Judy & Remsen, Jim, *Internania andbook: A Guide for Jews and Christians.* 1st edition, (New York: Arbor House, 1988), pp. 416

Institutions

Spertus College of Judaica (Chicago)

Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University

University of Chicago School of Social Research

National Association for Personal Relationship Development (Chicago)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Key Informant Profiles

"Key Informants" were selected based on one or more of the following criteria:

Representing an organization which serves Jewish singles.

By virtue of profession, could provide insights into the single "psyche", even though he or she may not serve the singles market directly.

Has collected data about and/or studied the singles market.

The Key informants interviewed are listed on the following page:

Immerman Foundation Report

1. Rabbi Alan Lettovsky
Executive Director
Cleveland Hillel Foundation
2. Ms. Heidi Hes
Director of Graduate Programs
Cleveland Hillel Foundation
- Rabbi Rosette Barron Haim
Temple Tifereth Israel
4. Rabbi Yehuda Appel
Aish HaTorah of Cleveland
5. Ms. Sue Cahn
Group Services Director
Jewish Community Center of
Cleveland
- Ms. Sheri Foxman
Special Event Coordinator for
Singles
Jewish Community Center of
Cleveland
- Ms. Carole Kaufman
Director
JCC Connections (Dating Service)
Jewish Community Center of
Cleveland
8. Mr. Adam Schwartz
Young Business & Professional
Group
Jewish Community Federation of
Cleveland
- Mr. Rick Leibovich
Young Business & Professional
Group
Jewish Community Federation of
Cleveland
10. Ms. Cynthia Dettelbach
Editor
Cleveland Jewish News
11. Ms. Sheila Rosen
Columnist
Cleveland Jewish News
12. Ms. Peggy Wasserstrom
Community Leader
13. Dr. Sally Wertheim
College Administrator &
Immerman Foundation Trustee
14. Ms. Ann G. Schorr
Cleveland Demographer

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PA!"lisi 2Itt Profiles

For single consumers who would provide current situational perspectives about dating, social interaction, and marriage considerations, we were interested in a random cross-section of the Cleveland Jewish population with the following criteria:

- Between the ages of 20 and 40
- Living outside of parental households
- Mostly or completely finished with schooling and "classifiable" as a "Working professional".

These are not the profiles of every participant, but are the most representative.

(Jewish affiliation and activity in this profile section refers to the *participant's upbringing*. For the summary of *current affiliations*, please see Research Topic A. History of Jewish Affiliation and Background that Shapes Attitudes & Values Related to Dating, Marriage, and Jewish Activities on page 4L)

Female, 24, Shaker Heights, 8 months in Cleveland from Boston; B.S. & B.A. degrees in psychology & business; Bat Mitzvah, Hebrew school and confirmation; father Orthodox, mother Reform, celebrated all the holidays but not kosher; moderate Jewish activity in childhood home including celebration of holidays.

Female, 26, Cleveland Heights since 4th grade; B.S. degree in psychology, Masters in clinical research; Bat Mitzvah, confirmed, and graduated from Hebrew High School (part time school); Conservative home, very traditional, celebrated all the holidays, parents were very involved in the Jewish community which "didn't make me more religious but more in touch with my Judaism".

Male, 28, Shaker Heights most of life (last 5 years in New York City); B.S. degree in economics; active in family business; 9th grade confirmation, "minimal Jewish education", Bar Mitzvah, Reform, Jewishly inactive family.

Female, 35, Solon 6 years (from St. Louis); B.A. degree in biology and Masters in reproductive physiology; confirmation, no Bat Mitzvah, no Hebrew school; Reform, "slightly active" family.

Female, 24, Shaker Heights most of life; B.A. degree in education, teacher; Jewish education to 10th grade, Bat Mitzvah; Reform family not very active Jewishly, just around holidays.

Male, 23, Beachwood; B.A. degree in family therapy; Hebrew school and Hebrew High school, Reform home very active Jewishly.

Male, 27, Lyndhurst; B.A. degree in business; Bar Mitzvah; moderately active Reform family.

Female, 31, Mayfield Heights; Masters in education; 6th grade Hebrew, no Bat Mitzvah; mother very active in B'nai Frith, ORT, Conservative temple, "but we were more Reform".

Male, 27, South Euclid; B.S. in computer science; confirmation; moderately active Conservative home, mostly around Jewish holidays.

Male, 28, Shaker Heights; Masters degree in social psychology; completed temple Hebrew High School, Hebrew language courses in college; Reform family was fairly active.

Female, 30, Beachwood; some college; confirmation, no Bat Mitzvah, minimally active Reform family.

Male, 27, Mayfield Heights; B.A. systems analyst; Bar Mitzvah, Conservative, moderately active home.

Female, 32, Beachwood; J.D. degree; confirmed, no Bat Mitzvah, Conservative temple, not active religiously but family has strong Jewish identity.

Female, 33, Mayfield Heights, from Chicago; Masters in marketing; one year beyond confirmation, Bat Mitzvah, Conservative, family very active Jewishly.

Female, 29, Cleveland 5 years (from Columbus and St. Louis); Masters in marketing; Bat Mitzvah and confirmed, father Orthodox, mother Conservative, household traditional Conservative, very active Jewishly.

Interviews with Marrieds

For married individuals, we wanted perspectives about their own experiences and factors leading to a Jewish spouse or an intermarriage. We were interested in individuals who were:

Between the ages of 20 and 40

Although married, not too far removed by economic or professional status, from the single consumers with whom we were meeting.

Although we pursued meetings with many more married individuals, only five agreed to meet with us. These are their profiles:

Female, 30, Shaker Heights; Masters in Jewish communal service; through temple Hebrew High School, Reform, not active, no Bat Mitzvah; married year after graduate school but dated same man throughout college.

Female, 31, Solon; 6 years, JD, degree; confirmed, Conservative home, parents very active in Jewish community but not in temple; married two years after law school.

Female 24, Shaker Heights; B.A. degree; confirmation, no Bat Mitzvah; Reform family, father was active Jewishly but mother was not; engaged in college, married right after graduation.

Female, 34, Shaker Heights; B.A.; grew up in non-Jewish home, converted to Judaism at time of marriage.

Female, 31, Lyndhurst; B.A. degree; Conservative home, confirmed, no Bat Mitzvah,

A. HISTORY OF JEWISH AFFILIATION AND BACKGROUND THAT SHAPES ATTITUDES AND VALUES RELATED TO DATING, MARRIAGE, AND JEWISH ACTIVITIES

Two primary reasons for marrying Jewishly or considering a Jewish marriage have emerged from our Cleveland-based research:

- To protect and maintain cultural heritage and interests.
- b. To "defy the secular world by maintaining a sense of Jewish identity and pride.

The background of all participants reflects varied levels of Jewish activity in upbringing, ranging from minimal to very active. Current Jewish activity and affiliation was modest among the people in our groups.

Out of 39 singles we spoke to, there were the following affiliations:

- Nine have their own (unrelated to their family) synagogue membership.
 - Seven are JCC members, primarily for fitness or health club activities.
- Five are fairly active in Federation's Young Business Professionals.
- One is active in Jewish National Fund.

Among the 5 married individuals we spoke to, we found the following affiliations:

- One is a synagogue member.
- None of the marrieds are current JCC members (one was a JCC member when her child was an infant, for early childhood programs, but "it got too expensive for us to keep the membership."

The single common element among the participants was a strong identification with the cultural dimensions of Jewishness. Even though many of the participants could not articulate why "being Jewish" was important to them, they were especially quick to say it was not for religious reasons. They are almost embarrassed that their Jewish pride might be perceived as being religious.

From their comments, there is ample evidence of a Jewish pride and connection which would not surface if the only link was into their formal Jewish affiliation. Respondents conveyed that they did not want to succumb to subtle pressures in the secular world to give up their Jewish identity. Marrying out of the Jewish faith would be a submission, according to some of our participants, to such pressures. In other words, even if these respondents are not formally affiliated religiously, they can still have a deep pride in their Jewish heritage. There can be a strong desire to maintain their Jewish heritage through a Jewish marriage.

Focus group participants spoke about marrying Jewishly because Jewish partners will likely place an emphasis on cultural things that are important to me." No participants spoke of marrying Jewishly for "religious reasons".

Typical comments included:

"Most kids in my public school were Jewish; being Jewish is part of my value-system."

"I was in BBYO in high school when I was real shy. Being involved gave me the ability to get in front of people. High school was somewhat Jewish, and I joined a Jewish sorority in college. For me, Judaism is really a culture as well as beliefs."

"I feel that Judaism is my cultural identity as well as my religion. After Bat Mitzvah, I didn't like the Jewish students in my area, so that turned me off. The trip to Israel helped restore my positive feelings, but I still didn't get active until lately. Since I moved to Cleveland, I feel really welcomed into this community."

"I have more in common with someone who is Jewish because Judaism stresses education and places an importance on cultural things."

"Judaism focuses on the family; Jewish family values are what's important to me"

"Only 10% of the students in my high school and college were Jewish, so I had to work hard to keep my identity strong."

"Where I work there's only one other Jewish person there, so I make sure everyone knows I'm Jewish. I'm proud of my Jewishness."

"Israel was really a turning point; I lived there, went to school, and worked there. It made me more assertive and open about my Jewishness. I'm learning a lot about Jewish law and Jewish customs, giving me a sense of Jewish pride. "

"Beachwood (where I grew up) is probably 95% Jewish. I went to Ohio State which was the first time I was a minority. It made me realize how important my Jewish identity is, my Jewish culture."

Community leaders we spoke to referred to "shared values" as critical to the marriage partner selection, but noted that Judaism is too often not one of the shared values among today's young people. They also referred to the "social acceptability" of mixed marriages and dating. Most importantly, key informants refer to Cleveland as a "community that lacks good, organized opportunities for singles to meet each other in non-threatening environments."

B. DATING EXPERIENCES & CURRENT ATTITUDES ABOUT INTERFAITH DATING
A MARRIAGE

It was evident from our focus groups that strong identification with the cultural dimensions of Judaism has a direct effect on attitudes about interfaith dating and marriage. There seems to be some pattern emerging among the singles we spoke to about wanting to avoid the potential troubles associated with interfaith marriage.

We also noted that feelings and attitudes about interfaith dating and marriage are in a constant state of flux and reassessment among this group of young, Jewish singles. One day they seem to have a firm conviction to date and/or marry Jewishly; the next day some event or experience forces a new way of thinking. They are troubled by this vacillation, and it seems that any program or marketing effort by the organized Jewish community should try to reinforce the conviction to date and marry Jewishly.

As a result of the high rate of intermarriage, many singles have friends, relatives, or siblings who have non-Jewish spouses. Many of our participants told us about unfulfilled promises to raise the children Jewishly and about family tensions associated with dual religions in the home. Those who shared these stories with us told us they intend to marry Jewishly because "it's not worth the strains that the interfaith element puts on a marriage."

Typical comments included:

"The Jewish factor is equally as strong in the dating criteria as in the marriage criteria because it's easier to deal with it now than when things get serious."

"I want my dates and future husband to be attractive, intelligent, Jewish, socially competent, with a sense of humor. I was much more open to date non-Jews who had met the other criteria, but with marriage, the Jewish piece is very important. The conflict became apparent when I became very serious about a non- and the Jewish piece became the main issue of conflict between us"

"I used to think I could date anyone, Jewish or otherwise. But, my three brothers all married non-Jews and I see the tensions in those marriages about how to raise the children. It's probably better if I just dated Jewish men."

"I go back and forth on the Jewish issue. If I find someone really wonderful, I may trade off the Jewish piece "

"I'm concerned about the identity of the children I may have, not so much from the religious aspect but cultural."

"I intend to marry Jewishly precisely because I am so active in the Jewish world, I am not going to let the non-Jewish world take away my Jewish identity."

"I lived in New York City where most people I dealt with were Jewish, but then I dated a non-Jewish woman which made me wake up to my Jewish identity."

C. CURRENT ATTITUDES ABOUT (CLEVELAND) JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS & THEIR ABILITY TO RELATE TO YOUNG, JEWISH SINGLES

We found that Jewish singles have a high general regard for the organized Jewish community and what it has done and continues to do for the Jewish population of Cleveland. Consumers have positive feelings about the Cleveland Jewish community as a whole, but feel that particular organizations have done a poor job in relating to Jewish singles.

They also feel that local synagogues and the JCC of Cleveland have not made serious efforts to relate to singles. They cite a disproportionate interest in these organizations in serving families, claiming that fee structures are inequitable, in relation to what families pay, especially in the jCC. Some of the people we spoke to feel that the high costs involved have virtually shut out a large segment of young, Jewish singles from on-going participation in these organizations.

The single best example consumers gave of Jewish organizations relating to singles is the Young Business Professionals program in the Cleveland Federation. But, even that program was criticized by some as "relating only to the white collar types who will eventually contribute money to the Federation."

Key informants agree that organizations have done an inadequate job, individually and collectively, of serving the single Jewish population. The key informants we spoke to confirm the high cost of maintaining an active Jewish life, and most of them (8 out of 14) suggested that Cleveland's Jewish organizations should do more to siaby rit₂ programs that foster social interaction among Jewish singles.

Another impression we uncovered in the focus groups is that young Jewish singles do not see themselves as major powerbrokers in Jewish organizational life. Our entrepreneurial society has fostered and glorified the young "tucks" of business, people like Bill Gates of Microsoft. Young professionals have increasingly found themselves in the middle of major business decisions at a much younger age than their parents. Yet, our focus group participants tell us that they don't find commensurate respect or encouragement in the organized Jewish community. They tell us that they think of their parents when references are made to most Jewish organizational decision makers.

Community leaders agree that Jewish organizations in Cleveland (the ones the key informants represent and others) do not actively seek young, Jewish singles to participate in organizational leadership. The Jewish singles we spoke to see individual organizations doing a poor job of serving their needs. When these organizations do reach

out to them, it is almost a competition for their time and money. They suggest that Cleveland's Jewish organizations coordinate their efforts in order to effectively serve the singles market. The majority of community leaders whom we interviewed confirmed that a consortium of Jewish organizations would be the best solution for serving the needs of Jewish singles, and for eliminating the problems of conflicting program dates, and overlapping agendas. Additionally, they view a consortium approach as a way to pool and leverage the limited resources of individual organizations.

For many participants, when we said "Jewish organization" they thought of Hillels, their most recent experience with a "Jewish organization". Jewish singles will develop lifelong dating habits and/or will meet their future marriage partner on a college campus. Hillels could be a primary instrument for promoting social interaction among Jewish students, but many Hillels have a stereotype (often deserved) of attracting the socially "clumsy" individual.

Focus group participants recall some modest interest in the Hillel facility and program when they were in school. *But*, Hillel wasn't a "cool" place to "hang-out". It may have also been considered "too Jewish", and/or too religious. (It was interesting that many participants who had these negative images of Hillel, spoke highly and positively about the Hillel rabbi.)

The Executive Director of the Cleveland Hillel Foundation, (who has considerable field experience and responsibility beyond the Cleveland area) confirms the negative stereotype of many Hillel organizations. He cites the practical need to change the name of the Hillel organization, and re-emerge as something like the "Jewish Community Campus Center".

At the opposite end of the spectrum, many of our research participants remember Jewish fraternities and sororities as elite (and expensive) places to meet and be with other Jewish students. They recalled a wish they had during their college days for something "in the middle, between the Hillel and the elite fraternity or sorority."

Typical focus group participant comments included:

"I belong to a temple, and have been an advisor for a BBYO group and a member of 'CC. I refer to this as my health club life, not my Jewish life. I am somewhat involved in Young Business Professionals (Federation); it's a good program, but doesn't relate to a large segment of young people who are not on the fast business track."

"My age group (30s) has a negative experience showing up at a JCC event. They draw more undesirables. Synagogues are so family oriented that they don't view singles as important prospects, People like me can't really afford JCC or synagogue membership."

"I have mixed feelings about Cleveland Jewish organizations. They do great work, but some just want money and are snobbish. I have a pretty positive attitude about them (Jewish organizations), but I think my friends feel it's an inner-circle, "money is power" kind of thing,

"Jewish organizations are run by good people, but not our generation (of singles). The real power people may not know much about singles at all."

"JCC is probably the best place for a young, Jewish single to go and hang out in order to meet other Jewish people. But, the Center is much too expensive for us. That's because they're totally family oriented."

"I've been a synagogue member for four years, and they never communicated to me as single. I get the same mailings that they send to families. They don't even know or care that I'm single."

"I came from New York where I was never contacted by any Jewish organization. In Cleveland, the Federation and the JCC contacted me right away."

"There has to be some coordination among the Jewish organizations in terms of better pricing, and in terms of programs that are offered. Too many of the organizations want my financial support, and compete for my time as well,"

"Aish Hatorah is unadvertised and unstructured, but I like their message of friendship and informality. It feels like a group of friends getting together. Other organizations could learn from their approach."

"I heard about a 'Young Congregation' membership at a synagogue, at a lower fee, but it's really not promoted."

"The JCC is a family place; they claim to serve singles, but at what high price? Their newsletter only talks about families and seniors. We're not a real market for them."

Typical Key Informant comments included:

"Federation doesn't specifically target singles. JCC singles events are well-received. But, overall, Jewish organizations are not geared to singles."

"Some temples try to reach out to singles and are moderately successful. Young Business & Professional is probably the best approach. It's tied to their ca^reer, so it combines personal and business interests."

"Hillel image is generally not good. Young Business & Professionals group is good, but their primary goal is fund raising not meeting singles socialization needs."

"Hillel carries a stereotype that it's not cool to be very Jewish."

"It's just too expensive for singles to maintain close connections to organized Jewish life. We have to get together and help offset the high costs."

D. PROGRAM IDEAS FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL INTERACTION AMONG YOUNG, JEWISH SINGLES

Jewish singles have become tired and leery of programs labeled as "singles programs". Focus group participants told us about their dislike of being labeled "single", as if "it were a disease of some kind." In fact, such programs increasingly attract "socially unacceptable" people which discourages their own participation. As an alternative, Jewish singles would like to see more cultural events and programs that "happen to attract singles like us, but that are not necessarily exclusive programs for singles."

Community leaders confirm the same problems with labelling events for "singles". They told us about how such events attract the "wrong people". They also suggested placing less emphasis on single events and more on "ongoing, low key activities like classes, sports leagues, and the like." The rationale is that for relationships to develop, individuals need frequent contact, in a "no-pressure environment", with people who share common interests.

Singles are also placing an increasing reliance on friends and associates to meet dating partners, and feel less and less interested in going to organizationally sponsored "social events." They see these events as the bastion for the desperate types. They seem more comfortable meeting people through friends they trust than by subscribing to dating services or going to "singles" events. They especially do not like the pressured environment of finding a dating partner at a formal event.

Married focus group participants told us about the increasing amount of time they spend introducing single friends to each other. Both singles and marrieds referred to the difficulty in meeting other singles in the Cleveland area and to the "underground network of friends who introduce you to other singles."

Regarding specific program themes, Jewish singles see all forms of social activism (beyond just "Jewish issues") as part of their Jewish upbringing and culture. Focus group participants convey a pride in their Jewishness combined with a concern for the future of the world in which they live. They would like to see more opportunities for young, Jewish people to actively participate in nonsectarian social causes like the homeless, urban poverty, and the like.

Typical focus group participant comments included:

"We need more cultural and more social issues. This means more coordination among Jewish organizations, because we can't differentiate who's offering what,"

"More tours, cultural events."

"We want things that aren't necessarily Jewish for Jewish people. Cavs games, night at Playhouse Square, museum trips are good examples. It doesn't always need a Jewish gloss."

"Focus on niches rather than events geared to the masses. Find common interest themes like skiing, athletics, and tours of old Cleveland. Find things that a few people will like and build connections that way."

"Tear down the sign that says "Singles Department" and stop marketing to us as "singles ". We would like to hear about programs that would appeal to us as young, professional adults, who may also happen to be single."

"Programs may need a professional facilitator, someone to encourage interaction. Many times you go to the programs with people you know, and you never meet anyone new."

"We'd like more non-Jewish activities and interest clubs like ski trips and athletic events,"

"If it's just a social program, I throw the literature away. The programs need more of a purpose than just meeting people. I want to meet people, but I'll go to learn something about an interest or hobby of mine."

Typical Key Informant comments included:

"Community organizations should put less emphasis on events and more on ongoing low key activities. For relationships to develop, you need frequent contact, familiarity, without pressure. Classes offer casual ongoing contact among potential partners, Examples include co-ed sports league as in Rogers Park, Chicago which was written about in the Wall Street journal a year ago. This program is private and not Jewish, but it's a good example of what would work."

"All Cleveland's organizations must provide opportunities for young people to meet on an ongoing basis, not just at events. The community has to work harder at identifying who the singles are and reaching them. Temples have not done enough up to now because they lack the professional time; the rabbis are stretched now."

"The Temples should be doing more, but they cannot figure out how to attract and keep singles interested. ThejCC should use their unique position of having a place for them to work out and be involved in sports."

"More programs need an interest theme; not just a social theme. In fact, we're starting to ignore the social theme programs because they attract the wrong people."

"The Christmas party that Federation ran last year had 500 people, but I didn't meet anyone new. We all went with our own friends and stayed with them."

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL PROGRAMMATIC &
COMMUNITY RESPONSES

The process we established for this project involved a final round of "product testing" focus groups. Many of the community leaders and consumers whom we met with prior to the "product testing" stage offered ideas about actual programs that may appeal to young, Jewish singles. They also had suggestions about what community and organizational structures might be best suited to serve singles. Additionally, as we synthesized the Cleveland data with our collection of program materials from other communities, some new community and program models began to emerge.

This section provides the reader with a summary of the potential program and organizational responses that emerged during the course of our key informant interviews and focus groups. These are the themes, considerations, sensitivities, and ideas that we brought to our final two focus groups for testing.

A community consortium comprised of major Jewish organizations in Cleveland expressly charged with developing new programs and services for young Jewish adults. The emphasis should be on developing programs (without labeling them for singles") that will appeal to young adults, many of whom will likely also be single by virtue of demographic realities.

A single membership, at a fair cost, that allows Jewish singles access to a variety of cultural, recreational and religious programs offered by different Jewish organizations (like the Kehilla Project developed in Chicago).

A community-wide effort to subvent the cost for a Jewish single to belong to any Jewish organization in Cleveland.

An aggressive promotion to include Jewish singles in the lay leadership of Jewish organizations.

The development of social activist programs that will appeal to young adults and that extend into Cleveland's secular community.

- The development of young adult programs that have an element of continuous social and recreational involvement, like sports-leagues, hobby classes, etc.

"Havurah" type programs that meet in people's homes and that encourage informal, but ongoing, interaction among Jewish singles.

- "Discussion cafes" (like the Los Angeles program) that are divided by ages (younger and older singles) and that meet on a regular basis.

Casual discussion groups held in the homes of influential Jewish leaders and politicians (Washington D.C. model).

Ongoing focus groups (perhaps on a quarterly basis) among Jewish singles to discuss issues and concerns. Focus groups are critical because moods and images can change according to current events and dynamics in the community. Additionally, the focus group itself was an enjoyable activity for the participants.

- The publication of a newsletter designed for young Jewish adults, many of whom will likely be single (unattached to any single organization and possibly underwritten and/or coordinated by the Cleveland Jewish News) that contains a variety of articles pertaining to the lifestyles of young Jewish adults (single and otherwise) in the Cleveland area. Based on our findings, this should not be a typical "singles, find a partner" type of newsletter, but rather a medium that relates to the varied interests of young, Jewish individuals.
- The development of publicity that conveys, in diplomatic language, the difficulties associated with interfaith marriages.
- A major initiative between the Jewish Community Center of Cleveland and the Cleveland Hillel Foundation to develop a "JCC Campus Branch."

- Major publicity efforts that communicate the Jewish community's collective commitment to serve young, Jewish singles.
- Organizational efforts to support and encourage the "informal network" of friends introducing other Jewish friends to each other.
- Workshops on marketing to singles and young adults offered to all Jewish organizations in Cleveland

PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUE DISCUSSION GROUP

At the time of our preliminary reports to the Foundation, and before we tested potential programmatic and organizational responses in our final round of consumer focus groups, we also sought feedback from a group of professional colleagues.

The Professional Colleague Discussion Group was convened on October 5, 1993, in New York City. Its purpose was to solicit feedback on two levels:

Reactions to the data collected and interpreted up to that point (everything except the final round of "product testing" focus groups).

- b. The potential organizational responses we should test in the final round of focus groups.

All participants were sent preliminary reports in advance.

The following individuals participated in this three hour session moderated by Jay Levenberg and Ed Kagen:

- Dr. Egon Mayer Professor of Sociology, City University of N.Y.; recognized expert in Jewish Inter-marriage issues
- Rabbi Art Vernon Director of Jewish Educational Services, JESNA
- David Dubin Executive Director, JCC on the Palisades (New Jersey)
- Les Cohen Executive Director, JCC of Southern New Jersey (consultant on previous JCC Association study of serving Jewish intermarrieds)
- Barbara Korin Associate Executive Director, Suffolk YM-YWHA (director of three year intermarried outreach project)
- Debbi Needleberg Intern at UJA-Federation, New York; work focus is on encouraging UM. involvement among young, Jewish professionals in Greater New York
- Lisa Shapiro Director of Singles Department, JCC of Greater Washington

Professional Colleague Discussion Format

The format of the session was kept more informal and interactive than the other focus groups we conducted. After summarizing the key findings up to that point of the project, we posed the following questions in order to prompt the discussion and feedback:

- a. Does the data collected *thus far* confirm or challenge your own experience and/ or research on this *subject* matter?

What recommendations would you like to see the Foundation consider as they formulate their programmatic and organizational responses to our data?

Summary of Findings

The group confirmed that the data we presented corroborated their own respective work in this field (either working directly with or conducting research among the single, Jewish population). They especially agreed with our finding that singles feel they have been "diagnosed" as having "some disease", and that too much marketing to the singles population has unwisely "pigeonholed this group as only having dating and mating on their minds."

Most of the discussion focused on recommendations to the Foundation for future programmatic and organizational responses. The central themes were as follows:

- Although the Foundation has focused its efforts on increasing social interaction among this age group, more should be done by the "Jewish community at large" to instill a sense of urgency about marrying Jewishly. The group felt that very little publicity has been generated to this age group about how they hold the future of the Jewish people in their hands by virtue of their marriage decisions.
- Related to programs, the group strongly felt that "serendipity" opportunities to meet people are much more conducive to marrying Jewishly than planned programs or events. They urged the Foundation to encourage programs that are focused on interests related to this group, rather than on programs whose "principal flavor is to develop dates among Jewish singles."

- More evaluations (surveys and focus groups) should be scheduled with members of this population. The group felt that the Jewish community has not done a good job of actively soliciting ongoing feedback from this target market.
- More programs in contemporary style and jargon were suggested "about what it means to live Jewishly in today's world."
- The group thought the single membership concept (like Chicago's Kehilla Project) could be a very effective means for attracting this population to organized Jewish life.
- If the Foundation were to assign any additional research, the group felt that it should focus on how "ideals are shaped" by members of this target population. They want to know "the most prominent triggers in their entire personal history that shape a person's conviction to date and marry Jewishly."
- The group encouraged all types of segmented programmatic and marketing approaches according to interests, neighborhoods, economic status, age, etc.

APPENDIX
FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDES

IMMERMAN FOUNDATION

MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR "KEY COMMUNITY INFORMANTS"

The following questions were asked of the key informants in individual meetings lasting an average of sixty minutes.

1. What is your assessment of Jewish organizations in the community and how they relate to Jewish singles (ages 18 to 40) in the community?
2. From your perspective, what are the primary causes for the current high rate of inter-marriage among the Jewish population?

What community organizations are, or should be, playing a lead role of promoting or facilitating social interaction among Jewish young people?

What should these organizations be doing?

Why do you think certain organizations may not be doing these things?

4. Are there key staff people in local Jewish organizations that are or should be playing a role in helping develop or promote programs that will encourage interaction among the community's Jewish singles?

Are there key lay people in the community who can or should play a role in helping develop programs that will encourage interaction among the community's Jewish singles?

6. Do you see the possibility or need for community organizations to form consortiums toward promoting interaction among Jewish singles?

Please describe what such a consortium might look like and what it might do.

Have you seen programming models (in Cleveland or elsewhere) that you feel do an effective job of promoting interaction among Jewish singles?

Do you know specific individuals or couples who may have unique insights into the subjects of intermarriage and what Jewish organizations can do to encourage infra-marriage?

Do you have any personal experience including family, relatives, close friends with intermarriage?

10. What are some of the economic implications of supporting programs for Jewish singles in the Cleveland area? For example, is it your perception that these need to be subverted, or can they break even on their own, or even make money?

If funding is needed, where should the funding come from?

IMMERMAN FOUNDATION

FOCUS GROUPS MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR JEWISH SINGLES'

Introduction

Hello, thank you for joining our focus group. My name is Jay Levenberg, and I'm here today representing The Immerman Foundation of Cleveland. The Immerman Foundation has retained me to conduct a research and planning project in order to:

1. Better understand the factors that have contributed to the current high rate of intermarriage among the Jewish population, estimated at 50% in the 1990 Jewish Population Study.
2. Help the community develop programs that will encourage social interaction among Jewish individuals.

As part of this project, we are meeting with a number of groups including unmarried Jewish men and women, Jewish men and women who are in inter-faith marriages, Jewish married couples, and "influencers", the people who may have influence in the area of dating and marriage in the lives of Jewish individuals. These may include teachers, parents, rabbis, staff of Jewish organizations, and the like.

The format for our 90 minute focus group today is as follows:

I have a number of questions to ask that I will pose to each of you, one at a time. We'll go in the order I designate and I'll ask that you answer briefly (in about two minutes) or pass. If you think of a comment when it's not your turn, please jot it down on the note paper provided and include it in your response when I get to you. So, you see this is not a group discussion; this controlled format allows us to take notes and to get detailed opinions and perceptions from each of you.

⁸ This is the guide used for the first three sessions where the research focus was on impressions, attitudes, and habits related to social interaction among young, Jewish singles. For the questions used in the last two sessions, where the focus was on testing actual programmatic and organizational responses, see the guide following this one that is subtitled "Testing Program & Organizational Responses".

Everything you share with me today is for research only. No comment will be attributed to anyone by name, nor will there be any contact from us (unless you request it) or any other organization after this session, except for us to communicate our thanks to you.

Any questions before we start?

First, we need some participant profile information, so I am going to ask each of you to introduce yourself by name, age or age range, neighborhood of residence, length of residence in the Cleveland area, level of secular education, occupation, level of Jewish education, and level of Jewish affiliation in the home in which you grew up.

Don't worry, I'll repeat these items as I get to each of you.

(This profile allows us to sort responses according to the various characteristics.)

1. a. On the notepaper in front of you, please list the top five criteria in your selection of a dating partner.

Now I am going to ask each of you what you listed.

How would the list be different if I asked you to list the top criteria for a prospective dating partner?

- c, How have these criteria changed from your teen or college years?

2. How would you describe your current level of Jewish commitment, activity and affiliation?

Prompts: *synagogue attendance; volunteer activity with Jewish organizations; observance of Jewish rituals and customs; Israel support; Federation involvement; ICC participation; Jewish community events*

3. How much of your social development do you associate with Jewish customs, Jewish organizations, Jewish youth groups, trips to Israel, and Jewish friends?

Prompts: *BBYO; Jewish Community Centers; Israel youth trips; synagogues; Bar/Bat-Mitzvah; day camps; resident camps; college programs like Hillel*

4. What experience have you had as a teenager and then as an adult with Jewish organizations either in Jewish observance, recreation or culture?

Prompts: *JCC programs; synagogues; havurot; Israel trips; Federation professional groups; Hillel; Jewish fraternities and sororities*

What image do you have of Jewish organizations in the Cleveland area and their ability to relate to Jewish singles like you?

Prompts: *synagogues; Federation; JCC*

6. How would you describe opportunities to find dates/mates in the Cleveland area? Please describe the places you go to meet people.

Prompts: *Health clubs; bars; JCC programs; dating services; Jewish and secular*

How important is it to you to meet and socialize with other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *Do today's attitudes have an effect on future decisions related to marriage within the Jewish faith?*

8. a. What factors encourage you *to want to* meet other Jewish singles?

What factors discourage you from meeting other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *family; friends/peers; parents; teachers; camp friends; JCC staff & programs; Israel*

How strong is your preference for a Jewish life partner, and what contributes to this preference?

Prompts: *What in your background or current lifestyle adds to or detracts from the preference?*

10. What can Jewish organizations do or offer to promote Jewish socialization and interaction for singles?

Prompts: JCC

11. How would you chart your future Jewish life?

Prompts: *Affiliation; marriage; children; involvement in Jewish causes; volunteerism; Israel travel and support; charity; JCC activities; Jewish community events*

12. What percentage of your friends have been and are Jewish from your teen years until today?

Prompts: *high school years; college; today*

13. How common is intermarriage among your friends and family, and what is your reaction to it?

14. Are there final comments? Suggestions for promoting or developing programs that would encourage intra-faith dating and marriage?

IMMERMAN FOUNDATION

FOCUS GROUPS MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR JEWISH SINGLES Testing Programmatic **and** Organizational **Responses**

Introduction

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1. Better understand the factors that have contributed to the current high rate of intermarriage among the Jewish population, estimated at 50% in the 1990 Jewish Population Study.
2. Help the community develop programs that will encourage social interaction among Jewish individuals.

As part of this project, we have met with a number of groups including unmarried Jewish men and women, Jewish men and women who are in inter-faith marriages, Jewish married couples, and 'influencers', the people who may have influence in the area of dating and marriage in the lives of Jewish individuals. These included teachers, parents, rabbis, staff of Jewish organizations, and the like.

These are our last rounds of focus groups, and as such we are now interested in testing a number of programmatic and organizational responses that have been identified in all our research to date. In other words, we want to get your reaction to some very specific recommendations before we formally present them to the Foundation and the community at large. For any of you who participated in our previous focus groups, you may hear some similar background and attitudinal questions. But, you will then also hear a new round of questions that are very specific to the items we'd like to test with you.

The format for our 90 minute focus group today is as follows:

I have a number of questions to ask that I will pose to each of you, one at a time, We'll go in the order I designate and I'll ask that you answer briefly (in about two minutes) or pass, If you think of a comment when it's not your turn, please jot it down on the note paper provided and include it in your response when I get to you. So, you see this is not a group discussion; this controlled format allows us to take notes and to get detailed opinions and perceptions from each of you.

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Don't worry, I'll repeat these items as I get to each of you.

(This profile allows us to sort responses according to the various characteristics.)

How would you describe your current level of Jewish commitment, activity and affiliation?

Prompts: *synagogue attendance; volunteer activity with Jewish organizations; observance of Jewish rituals and customs; Israel support; Federation involvement; JCC participation; Jewish community events*

What image do you have of Jewish organizations in the Cleveland area and their ability to relate to Jewish singles like you?

Prompts: *synagogues; Federation; JCC;*

3. How would you describe opportunities to find dates/mates in the Cleveland area? Please describe the places you go to meet people.

Prompts: *Health clubs; bars; JCC programs; dating services; Jewish and secular*

How important is it to you to meet and socialize with other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *Do today's attitudes have an effect on future decisions related to marriage within the Jewish faith?*

What can Jewish organizations do or offer to promote Jewish socialization and interaction for singles?

Prompts: JCC

With that background established, I'd like to now begin testing a series of programmatic possibilities. For each item, please tell me why you think the program or organizational structure will help foster social interaction among young, Jewish singles; or, why you think the idea will not be effective in fostering social interaction among young, Jewish singles.

Learning Annex (Chicago Model) - A sophisticated approach to continuing adult education offered by non-denominational (not for profit organizations)

Community Volunteering Programs and Projects (Dallas "Do Good" Model) -- Opportunities to participate in non-denominational volunteer projects that benefit the entire community or specific disadvantaged groups.

- c. "Dinner with Twelve Strangers" (Baltimore) - Sponsored by the community or a specific organization, the opportunity to meet other people of similar age, and of similar interests if a profile questionnaire was used in advance.

"Just Lunch" Program (Chicago Model) First developed by a dating service to provide less threatening opportunities for two individuals to meet, the concept could also be applied to groups.

- e. Neighborhood Havurot (Friendship) Groups -- Groups meet on a regular basis (usually monthly) for informal study and conversation; typically, each month group convenes in another member's apartment or home.

Cultural Events -- Neighborhood oriented and relatively small audience that would facilitate meeting people.

- g. Jewish Organizational Memberships (Chicago Kehilla Project) Nominal membership for young, Jewish singles to belong to a variety of Jewish organizations for a limited period of time (up to three years).

Country Club Outings -- Sponsored by a community leader, the opportunity to meet other Jewish singles in a relaxed, recreational atmosphere

"Lay Leader Home Invitations" (Washington, D.C. model) -- Sponsored by a visible leader in the community, an opportunity to meet other young, Jewish singles in a relaxed setting of the lay leader's home.

- j. Jewish Singles/Professionals Bulletin Board -- Accessible by phone and/or computer modem, the bulletin board would be a current listing of events, programs, and services of interest to young, Jewish singles.
- k. Jewish Singles/Professionals Newsletter/Newspaper - Published on a regular basis (e.g., bimonthly) a sophisticated publication with articles, features, profiles, and event information of interest to young, Jewish singles.

We would now like to recap and/or newly discuss your evaluation of the following items:

1. Communication

- How you like to get information about programs and services that may interest you?
- What media and formats?
- How often?

2. Sites Locations

- How far will you travel?
- Should programs be neighborhood oriented?
- Do you like the idea of programs in "private homes"?
 - ...in JCC's?
 - ...synagogues?
 - ...offices/conference rooms?

3. Times - Schedule

- What days do you prefer for programs?
- What times are best?
- Is there an ideal length of time for an event or program?
- Would you commit to an ongoing program of many weeks or months?

4. Sponsorship

- Does the sponsoring organization matter?
- Any skepticism about any particular organization?
- Do you prefer an entirely new entity established for the sole purpose of serving young, Jewish professionals like yourselves?

5. Cost

- How much are you willing to pay per event? (Ranges)
- Does a program/service membership model interest you?

IMMERMAN FOUNDATION

MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR JEWISH MARRIEDS

Introduction

Hello, thank you for agreeing to this interview. My name is Jay Levenberg, and I'm here today representing the Immerman Foundation of Cleveland. The Immerman Foundation has retained me to conduct a research and planning project in order to:

1. Better understand the factors that have contributed to the current high rate of intermarriage among the Jewish population, estimated at 50% in the 1990 Jewish Population Study.
2. Help the community develop programs that will encourage social interaction among Jewish individuals.

As part of this project, we are meeting with a number of groups including unmarried Jewish men and women, Jewish men and women who are in interfaith marriages, Jewish married couples, and "influencers", the people who may have influence in the area of dating and marriage in the lives of Jewish individuals. These may include teachers, parents, rabbis, staff of Jewish organizations, and the like.

Everything you share with me today is for research only. No comment will be attributed to anyone by name, nor will there be any contact from us (unless you request it) or any other organization after this session, except for us to communicate our thanks to you.

Any questions before we start?

First, I need some participant profile information, so I am going to ask you to introduce yourself by name, age or age range, neighborhood of residence, level of secular education, level of Jewish education, and level of Jewish affiliation in the home in which you grew up.

(This profile allows us to sort responses according to the various characteristics.)

1. a. At what point in your life did you get married?

Prompts: *during college; right after college; well into career*

Describe your Jewish and non-Jewish dating and socialization prior to your marriage.

Prompts: *Quantify how much you dated non Jews.*

- c. What criteria do you remember for dating partners, and how might it have differed from the criteria for a marriage partner?
- d. Who do you recall having the most influence on your dating and / or spouse selection?

Prompts: *friends, family, personal choice*

2. How would you describe your current level of Jewish commitment, activity and affiliation?

Prompts: *synagogue attendance; volunteer activity with Jewish organizations; observance of Jewish rituals and customs; your family (parent's) history; JCC participation; Jewish community events*

How much of your social development do you associate with Jewish customs, Jewish organizations, Jewish youth groups, trips to Israel, and Jewish friends?

Prompts: *BBYO; Jewish Community Centers; Israel youth trips; synagogues; Bar/Bat-Mitzvah; day camps; resident camps; Hillel*

4. What experience have you had as a teenager and then as an adult with Jewish organizations either in Jewish observance, recreation or culture?

Prompts: *JCC programs; synagogues; havurot; Israel trips; Federation professional groups; Hillel; Jewish fraternities and sororities*

What image do you have of Jewish organizations in the Cleveland area and their ability to relate to Jewish singles who you know?

Prompts: *synagogues; Federation; JCC*

6. How would you describe the opportunities you had to find dates/mates in the Cleveland area (or wherever you are from)? Please describe the places you went to meet people.

Prompts: *Health clubs; bars; JCC programs; dating services; Jewish and secular*

How important *was it* for you *to* meet *and* socialize *with other* Jewish singles?

Prompts: *What attitudes had an effect on your future decisions related to marriage within the Jewish faith?*

8. What *factors* encouraged you *to want* to meet other Jewish singles?

b. What factors discouraged you from meeting other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *family; friends/peers; parents; teachers; camp friends; JCC staff & programs; Israel*

How strong was your preference for a Jewish life partner, and what contributed to this preference?

Prompts: *What in your background or current lifestyle added or detracted from the preference?*

10. What can Jewish organizations do or offer to promote Jewish socialization and interaction for singles?

Prompts: 'CC

11. How would you chart your future Jewish life?

Prompts: *Affiliation; children; involvement in Jewish causes; volunteerism; Israel travel and support; charity; JCC activities; Jewish community events*

12. What percentage of your friends have been and are Jewish from your teen years until today?

Prompts: *high school years; college; today*

13. How common is intermarriage among your friends and family, and what is your reaction to it?

14. Are there final comments? Suggestions for promoting or developing programs that would encourage infra-faith dating and marriage?

IMMERMAN FOUNDATION

MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR INTERMARRIED INDIVIDUALS

Introduction

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(This profile allows us to sort responses according to the various characteristics.)

1. a. At what point in your life did you get married?

Prompts: *during college; right after college; well into career*

- b. Describe your Jewish and non-Jewish dating and socialization prior to your marriage.

Prompts: *Quantify how much you dated non Jews.*

- c. What criteria do you remember for dating partners, and how might it have differed by the criteria for a marriage partner?

- d. Who do you recall having the most influence on your dating and/or spouse selection?

Prompts: *friends, family, personal choice*

2. How would you describe you and your spouse's current level of Jewish commitment, activity and affiliation?

Prompts: *synagogue attendance; volunteer activity with Jewish organizations; observance of Jewish rituals and customs; your family (parent's) history; JCC participation; Jewish community events*

3. How much of your social development do you associate with Jewish customs, Jewish organizations, Jewish youth groups, trips to Israel, and Jewish friends?

Prompts: *BBYO; Jewish Community Centers; Israel youth trips; synagogues; Bar/Bat-Mitzvah; day camps; resident camps; Hillel*

4. What experience have you had as a teenager and then as an adult with Jewish organizations either in Jewish observance, recreation or culture?

Prompts: *JCC programs; synagogues; havurot; Israel trips; Federation professional groups; Hillel; Jewish fraternities and sororities*

What image do you have of Jewish organizations in the Cleveland area and their ability to relate to Jewish singles who you know?

Prompts: *synagogues; Federation; JCC*

6. How would you describe the opportunities you had to find dates/mates in the Cleveland area (or wherever you are from)? Please describe the places you went to meet people.

Prompts: *Health clubs; bars; JCC programs; dating services; Jewish; secular*

Prompt here for what Jewish organizations and programs could or should have done for the Jewish spouse towards encouraging infra-marriage.

Eg. How did these organizations relate to you when you were single?

7. How important was it for you to meet and socialize with other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *What attitudes had an effect on your future decisions related to marriage within the Jewish faith?*

8. a. What factors encouraged you to want to meet other Jewish singles?
- b. What factors discouraged you from meeting other Jewish singles?

Prompts: *family; friends/peers; parents; teachers; camp friends; JCC staff & programs; Israel*

9. Even though you intermarried, did you ever have a preference for a Jewish life partner, and what contributed to this preference or detracted from it?

Prompts: *What in your background or current lifestyle added to or detracted from the preference?*

10. What can Jewish organizations do or offer to promote Jewish socialization and interaction for singles?

Prompts: JCC

Prompt here for what Jewish organizations and programs could or should have done for the Jewish spouse towards encouraging intra-marriage.

Eg. How did these organizations relate to you when you were single?

11. How would you chart your future Jewish life?

Prompts: *Affiliation; children; involvement in Jewish causes; volunteerism; Israel travel and support; charity; JCC activities; Jewish community events*

12. What percentage of your friends have been and are Jewish from your teen years until today?

Prompts: *high school years; college; today*

13. How common is intermarriage among your friends and family, and what is your reaction to it?

14. Are there final comments?



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