The Annual Presentation of the Hornstein Graduating Students’ Culminating Projects

Hornstein MA/Heller MBA students present Team Consulting Projects

Hornstein MA/Heller MPP students present Capstone Projects

Hornstein/NEJS dual MA students present theses or final projects

Tuesday, April 28, 2015
2:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Rapaporte Treasure Hall
Brandeis University

Supported by the Bernard Olshansky Jewish Continuity Fund
created to honor the memory of Bernard Olshansky, Ph.D. ’61
About Us

The Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program prepares future Jewish leaders to address the challenges of a fast and ever-changing Jewish community. Educationally robust, intellectually rigorous, and experientially rich, the program offers four separate leadership tracks:

**MBA + MA**
*Presented in collaboration with Brandeis’s highly esteemed Heller School for Social Policy and Management*
This innovative program prepares future Jewish community leaders with the full complement of MBA/non-profit skills and specialized knowledge of contemporary Jewish life.

**MPP + MA**
*Presented in collaboration with Brandeis’s highly esteemed Heller School for Social Policy and Management*
This program prepares future Jewish professional leaders with a wide spectrum of policy analysis and implementation skills, as well as specialized knowledge of contemporary Jewish life.

**MA + MA**
*Presented in collaboration with Brandeis’s renowned Department of Near Eastern & Judaic Studies (NEJS)*
This rigorous program prepares future Jewish leaders to understand contemporary Jewish issues within the context of Jewish history, culture and tradition. The program is designed to provide the tools necessary to articulate a leadership vision for the Jewish community.

**BA + MA**
*Presented in collaboration with Brandeis’s renowned Department of Near Eastern & Judaic Studies (NEJS)*
Achieved in a fifth (graduate) year of study, the Hornstein MA provides the professional skills and deep knowledge of the American and world Jewish communities that will position graduates for work in a wide range of careers in the Jewish community.

Hornstein Faculty 2014-2015

**Dr. JONATHAN D. SARTA**, Hornstein and NEJS Program Chair; Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University; and Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History

**Ms. ELLEN SMITH**, Associate Professor and Director of the Hornstein Program; affiliated faculty of the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and the Heller School

**Dr. MATT BOXER**, Research Scientist, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

**Dr. RACHEL FISH**, Associate Director, Schusterman Center for Israel Studies

**Rabbi DAVID MERSKY**, Managing Director, Mersky, Jaffe & Associates

**Dr. JOSEPH REIMER**, Associate Professor, affiliated faculty of the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education

**Dr. MARK ROSEN**, Associate Professor, Director of Field Experience Programs

**Dr. AMY SALES**, Associate Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies; Director, Institute for Jewish Philanthropy and Leadership

**Dr. LEONARD SAXE**, Klutznick Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies; Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies; Director, Steinhardt Social Research Institute

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A Community-Focused Marketing Strategy for Nuestra Comunidad
(Presented on August 21, 2014 to the Heller School for Social Policy and Management)

Ashley Arnold

Academic Advisor: Ellen Smith
Thesis Advisors: Melissa Nemon, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate and Lecturer
Field Experience: JOIN for Justice, Boston, MA
Field Supervisor: Sarah Resnick, Elana Kogan, and Larry Bailis

Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation is a nonprofit, community development corporation (CDC) working primarily in Roxbury and in some adjacent Boston neighborhoods. As a CDC, Nuestra develops residential and commercial property, offers homeownership and financial counseling, and oversees programming for seniors at risk of homelessness. The goal of these activities is to bolster economic and social opportunities for local low- and middle-income residents and businesses.

One main challenge Nuestra had faced to serving this community was the changing population composition of Roxbury. Typical urban neighborhoods show demographic change every two generations, while Dudley Square churns residents much quicker, showing demographic changes in just one generation.

As the Roxbury community continues to change, Nuestra needed to understand first, who its target clients were and second, the value of the Nuestra brand and services to community members. Furthermore, Nuestra sought best practices in marketing its services, and overall brand, to these target clients.

During the four-month period of consulting, the team studied community-focused marketing strategies with a goal of developing a more effective approach to increasing resident engagement in programs, as well as ways to position Nuestra as a positive community leader.

The Heller consulting team provided Nuestra a detailed market segmentation using a cluster analysis statistical procedure, a Low Income Marketing (LIM) Framework, an analysis of similar CDC offerings in the greater Boston area compared to Nuestra’s existing marketing efforts, marketing strategy recommendations with implementation plans, and an internal marketing tool to aid in day-to-day implementation of report recommendations.

A Community-Focused Marketing Strategy for Nuestra Comunidad
(Presented on August 21, 2014 to the Heller School for Social Policy and Management)

AShLEY ARNOLD (MA/MBA), originally from Wichita, Kansas, attended Wichita State University where she studied Communication and Political Science. After graduation, Ashley worked internationally on social justice issues including nutrition, public health, and poverty alleviation. She spent six months living and working in Jerusalem for one of Israel’s largest food banks. In 2011, Ashley joined the United States Peace Corps working in Mali, West Africa. There she managed the introduction of a nutritious, sustainable crop to fight food insecurity through training small groups in four garden cooperatives. After her Peace Corps service in Mali was cut short by a coup d’état, Ashley became a regional adviser for Saving Mothers, Giving Life, a U.S. State Department program aiming to reduce maternal mortality in Zambia. Since returning to the U.S., Ashley has worked in civic engagement and leadership development in the communities of Wichita, Kansas and Roxbury, Massachusetts. In the summer of 2014, she began working for JOIN for Justice (Jewish Organizing Institute and Network) to develop a strategic plan for the organization’s mentoring and consulting services focused on training the next generation of community organizers and Jewish leaders. Ashley intends to continue working in the Boston area post graduation.

Program

2:00 Reception with Refreshments

2:30 Welcome: Jonathan D. Sarna
Opening Remarks: Susan Olshansky Singer

Student Presentations

2:45 From Hidden Gem to Crown Jewel: Envisioning a Future for the Vilna Shul, Boston’s Center for Jewish Culture
Hornstein/Heller MA+MBA TCP Presentation by Edana Chaya Appel, Beth Lesch, and Meredith Lynn Grabek

3:15 American Liberal Zionism in the Early 20th Century
Hornstein/NEJS MA+MA Thesis Presentation by Eli Cohn

3:35 Increasing Enrollments in Jewish Early Childhood Education, a Policy Analysis for CJP
Hornstein/Heller MA+MPP Capstone Presentation by David Manchester

3:55 Connecting the Next Generation: A Case Study in Shabbat
Hornstein/NEJS MA+MA Thesis Presentation by Evan Taksar

4:15 Break

Student Presentations

Hornstein/NEJS BA+MA Thesis Presentation by Aaron Weinberg

4:45 Cultivating a Sense of Belonging: The Role of Childhood Jewish Education
Hornstein/Heller MA+MPP Capstone Presentation by Nathan J. Vaughan

5:05 Bringing Israel Engagement Online: MySababa’s response to the post-Birthright Challenge
Hornstein/Heller MA+MBA TCP Presentation by David Bigio, Joe Hyams, and Sabrina Taran

5:35 Guide to Understanding Friday Night of Shabbat at Brandeis University
Hornstein/NEJS MA+MA Project Presentation by Heather Kurfert

5:55 Closing Remarks: Ellen Smith
Bernard Olshansky z”l (1927-2010)
Edited from the Boston Globe, December 5, 2010

Growing up in Dorchester before World War II, Bernard Olshansky dealt with anti-Semitism in daily encounters. Those experiences taught him never to back down from a fight and also inspired a view of his faith and people that he carried through a lifetime that included 11 years as executive director and chief executive of Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

Barry Shrage, president of CJP, wrote a tribute and recalled that “Bernie once summarized his view of the purpose of Jewish life and the Jewish community with the following beautiful idea: ‘The Jewish people are committed to a set of values that are an example for the world. Jews believe in the value of human life, the dignity of human beings, responsibility for each other, readiness to share what we have and to do what it takes to make this a better world.’”

Dr. Olshansky’s family reflects: Bernie comes from the old school of Jewish professionals. He expected much out of everyone in the places he worked, beginning with himself. If he had a principle, he never cut a corner or compromised on that principle. There were things people needed to do to reach his standards, and he was harder on himself than on anyone else in reaching for those standards. He never set a goal towards which he didn’t push himself the hardest.

In 1970, he became executive director of Combined Jewish Philanthropies in Boston, and later commuted to New York City as chief operating officer of the Council of Jewish Federations where he helped coordinate a $1 billion loan program that financially assisted the resettlement of Jews who left the Soviet Union for Israel. Dr. Olshansky helped “create the foundation upon which our current work was built and the modern Federation movement as we know it today,” Shrage wrote. “During his 11-year stewardship at CJP, Bernie’s vision for the agency involved outreach to people in all social and geographic segments of the community, engagement of new leadership and constituencies, and an emphasis on Jewish education and Jewish continuity.”

That emphasis went beyond Greater Boston as Dr. Olshansky “worked on strengthening ties with Jewish communities in Israel and throughout the world,” Shrage wrote. “He also supported emigration efforts for Jews in the former Soviet Union and other nations where Jews were at risk.”

Dr. Olshansky ascended to these leadership roles from the streets of Boston where he and his younger sister were the children of immigrants. His father was from Belarus, his mother from Lithuania.

After graduating from Dorchester High School, Dr. Olshansky joined the Army. At the end of World War II, he was posted in Japan, where he served in the honor guard for General Douglas MacArthur.

Dr. Olshansky majored in psychology at Boston University, from which he graduated in 1950.

Guide to Understanding Friday Night of Shabbat at Brandeis University

Heather Kufert

Academic Advisor: Ellen Smith
Project Advisors: Ellen Smith, Jonathan Sarna, and Joseph Reimer
Field Experience: Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta, Georgia
Field Supervisor: Shelley Buxbaum, Director of Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning & Melton School

Since Brandeis’s founding in 1948, Brandeis has had a large Jewish student body. Whether students are Jewish or not, they will most likely hear about the special time of Shabbat.

This guidebook will provide background knowledge to Jewish students from all different levels of practice as well as those who are not Jewish about Friday night Shabbat traditions, customs, rituals and the reasons behind these practices. The way Shabbat is observed at Hillel at Brandeis or Chabad at Brandeis may be completely new to non-Jewish and Jewish students and can be uncomfortable at first. This guidebook will help students understand and navigate through the variety of Shabbat experiences at Brandeis.

The goal of this guidebook is to help Brandeis students feel more confident and comfortable in a Friday night Shabbat experience and to encourage Jewish and non-Jewish students to try it. The focus of the guidebook is Friday night of Shabbat, but there will be brief explanations of Shabbat offerings at Brandeis on Saturday.

The main sections of this guidebook are: Introduction, What To Expect on Shabbat Overall, Shabbat Service Unplugged, Dinner & Oneg, Tips & Pointers for Understanding Shabbat Observance, Conclusion, Glossary, and Appendix.

The format used throughout the guidebook usually entails a short explanation of a concept followed by questions and answers. The question and answer format gives students the chance to explore the areas that they want to learn more about.

This guidebook will enable students to have easy access to a resource on Shabbat specifically tailored for Brandeis University.

HEATHER KUFERT (MA/MA), who grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, began shaping her Jewish identity through the lens of the URJ’s youth movement and camping system. At Florida State University (FSU), she studied elementary education, while becoming deeply involved with FSU Hillel. Inspired to work in the Jewish community, Heather spent five years before Hornstein as the Program Director at Temple Israel in Tallahassee, Florida, where she created and developed innovative programs for all ages including a Jewish 20s and 30s group, and frequently led services as Cantorial Soloist her last two years. In Tallahassee, she also served on the board of the Holocaust Education Resource Council, where she co-founded a successful interfaith Holocaust book club. She enjoyed her time as a kindergarten teacher at Temple Israel of Boston the past two years. Heather is a recipient of the Jewish Community Center Association Graduate Scholarship, and looks forward to working at a JCC after graduation.
**Bringing Israel Engagement Online: MySababa’s response to the post-Birthright Challenge**

*The TCP Team*

David Bigio (MA/MBA) is from Cali, Colombia. There he was director of the local youth movement, Atid Tnat Noa, running activities, camps, training new madrichim, and participating in informal education training programs with Hanoar Hatzioni across Latin America. David earned a B.A. in Intercultural Business Administration from the Lauder Business School in Vienna, Austria. In college, David volunteered at the European “Maccabi Games 2011” and served as a student representative for ECJS in Austria. Additionally, David has worked in an online focused marketing agency as a campaign specialist for Latin American countries. After graduating from Lauder, David returned to Colombia and worked as a local representative for Israel Soul Train, a non-profit organization that strengthens small Jewish communities around the world. He was responsible for running programs for local Jewish students and coordinating artistic events for the community. Simultaneously, he was involved in the for-profit sector, working as a sales manager for a leather company.

Joe Hyams (MA/MBA) was born and raised in the U.K., where he pursued an unusual undergraduate mix of Jewish studies and photography. His love of teaching, creativity, and an interest in the media combined to earn him key roles at some of London’s longest established advertising agencies. Joe’s affinity with Israel, and ad-campaign experience resulted in an invitation to join the Tel Aviv office of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising as a strategic planner for major international clients including P&G. Connecting his media know-how to a desire to improve Israel’s image abroad, Joe made aliyah, joining HonestReporting.com in 2005, where he will return upon graduation to Saatchi Advertising as a strategic planner for major international clients including P&G.

Sabrina Taran (MA/MBA) comes from Montreal, Quebec. She graduated from McGill University with a B.A. in Jewish Studies and a concentration in Education. During her time at McGill, Sabrina had the opportunity to deepen her appreciation for the Yiddish language, having assisted on a research and translation project on Yiddish poetry, and was the recipient of the Sarah Rozenfeld Prize for Yiddish. She is also a graduate of the Uriel Weinreich Summer Yiddish Program at YIVO in New York and worked as a translator and archivist for the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre Archive in Montreal. Prior to beginning graduate study at Hornstein, Sabrina spent two years working on the March of the Living Program at the Bronfman Israel Experience Centre in Montreal. She had the opportunity to assist in the creation of an experiential education program at Federation CJA during her summer field work after her first year at Hornstein and was recently hired to join their Planning and Strategy team.

**Bernard Olshansky z”l (1927-2010)**

(continued)

He received a Master’s in Social Work two years later from Simmons College. While in college, friends introduced him to Nancy Levenson. “My mom took one look at him and she was done,” said their daughter Susan Olshansky Singer of New Canaan, Conn. “She kept making excuses to invite him to things.” They married in 1952 and raised three children. Nancy Olshansky died in 1997. “They were stellar parents,” Singer said. “There isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t think specifically of a lesson from my parents when dealing with my own children.”

As a social worker, Dr. Olshansky worked with adolescents in Boston and led a Waltham agency before 1961, when he and three others became the first students to receive doctorates from what then was Brandeis University’s Florence G. Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare. After graduating, he spent nine years away from Boston, first as planning director of a health and welfare agency in Pittsburgh, then as assistant director at the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. He returned to Boston to join Combined Jewish Philanthropies, becoming executive director a couple of years later.

“At CJP, Bernie was eager to open doors to new leadership, especially to young people, people new to the Greater Boston Jewish community, to the unaffiliated, and to women,” Shrage wrote in his tribute. “The young people and new leaders who Bernie helped recruit are now many of the senior leaders of CJP.” Shrage added that “Bernie was particularly proud of CJP’s success in mounting a successful major campaign to aid Israel” during the Arab-Israeli War in 1973.

In 1999, Dr. Olshansky married Rena Shapiro Blumberg of Cleveland, Ohio. The two worked to blend their families and, as he neared death, Dr. Olshansky handwrote a letter to the couple’s combined 13 grandchildren about the values he held dear and that he hoped would resonate with them. “He was always smiling,” Fresa said. “If you asked him how he was, he said, ‘terrific,’ that was the lowest level he started from. He was joyous, always singing. People were drawn to his warmth.”

In addition to his wife, daughter Susan, and grandchildren, Dr. Olshansky left another daughter, Judith Anne Olshansky Gragg of Needham; a son, Kenneth of Brooklyn, N.Y.; a stepdaughter, Catharyn Gildesgame of Arlington; two stepsons, Stuart Blumberg of Los Angeles, and David Blumberg of Greenwich, Conn.; and a sister, Muriel Lachter of St. Paul, Minn.

“My dad appreciated the things in his life that were blessings,” Susan Singer recalled. “He was like no other.”

* * * *

*From the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program, with enduring gratitude*

Bernard Olshansky was a genuine Jewish leader. He helped build a just and vibrant Jewish community and he lived a value-driven life. We will sorely miss him. His legacy will long remain in the organizations, projects and individuals he nurtured. We remain deeply grateful for the Bernard Olshansky Jewish Continuity Fund he and his family established here at Hornstein and his beloved Brandeis University. The fund supports our students’ Team Consulting Projects in the MA/MBA program and underwrites this public celebration of each year’s Hornstein graduating class. The fund reflects Bernard Olshansky’s love for the Jewish people, his commitment to his alma mater and his passion for mentoring young people. His life and his memory are a blessing to us all.
Many organizations are struggling to find the most effective ways to reach and engage young Jews. In early June 2014, Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) of Greater Boston began working with a consulting team to create a website designed to “crack the code” of Millennial / young adult engagement online around issues pertaining to Israel. In particular, they asked the question: If young adults are interested in or supportive of Israel but hesitant to participate in Israel-focused conversations on social media, what would happen if we created a unique social media space for them?

The result was www.mysababa.org. The website, which employs the latest in crowd-sourcing technology, allows users to post, comment, and “vote up” news stories, videos, and photographs. Every month, the site features interesting guests on “Ask Me Anything” interviews. Through alert notifications and newsletters, MySababa spurs regular engagement with a growing audience and keeps them coming back to the site.

During times of crisis for Israel, such as last summer’s Operation Protective Edge, MySababa is designed to be a one-stop site to find and share news across social media platforms; that is, from their Israel-focused social media site to mainstream platforms, including Twitter and Facebook.

Management Challenges

Based on early indications from the first phase of the project, MySababa invited Heller / Hornstein input to identify enhancements in (a) attracting audiences, (b) retaining users, and (c) converting visitors and viewers into engaged users.

Thus the management challenges defined by CJP for MySababa are broadly:

- As a crowd-sourced platform, how can we draw enough of a target audience to the site to establish critical mass?
- Once a sizable audience is attracted, how can we ensure the site / community remains vibrant, engaged and relevant?

The TCP Project

The team designed a project that meets the needs of the organization and reflects the moving trends in the Israel online engagement field.

Bearing this in mind, the TCP Team:

- Analyzed the social media market and assessed trends in social media habits in general and in regards to Israel. We asked the following questions: “Is MySababa targeting the right people in the right way?” and “Is MySababa utilizing the best mechanisms to engage those who have been driven to the website?”
- Determined what competition exists in this space for time / interest of young Israel-interested adults and determined how we can partner when possible and compete when necessary to win them over.
- Utilized competitive frameworks and qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to assess how recommendations can be employed by MySababa in its efforts to grow a community of engaged young adults interested in Israel.

The TCP Team developed recommendations that will serve as a roadmap toward improving the website as well as growing the community. The proposal encompasses specific guidance on the end-user experience, targeted marketing, and unique programming via strategic partnerships.
The Vilna Shul is a testament to the vibrant Jewish history of our city. Founded by immigrants from Vilna, Lithuania, it is the only remaining immigrant-era shul in Boston. By 1990, the Vilna was no longer a functioning synagogue—but a group of individuals recognized its historic and communal value and organized to preserve the building and its story. Renamed the Vilna Shul, Boston’s Center for Jewish Culture, the organization has recently been re-energized by new professional and volunteer leadership. As the Vilna prepares for a capital campaign to restore and renovate its historic building, it seeks to actualize its potential as Boston’s foremost Jewish cultural center.

Our team has focused on offering recommendations to the Vilna regarding how it can best partner and communicate with other Jewish organizations in Greater Boston. These recommendations furnish the Vilna with valuable information, such as:

- Which communal needs is it uniquely positioned to fill?
- How is it perceived by other organizations?
- With whom may it form strategic partnerships?
- What form might those partnerships may take?
- Where are key opportunities for growth?

Our recommendations to the Vilna offer a framework for pursuing a three-pronged mission:

- Serving as a center for Jewish arts and cultural programming
- Building community amongst Jews who live in downtown Boston
- Providing education about immigrant-era Jewish Boston

All of these activities derive from the Vilna’s core strengths, as seen by the organization’s leadership as well as those organizational peers who were surveyed:

- Distinctive building
- Coveted location in downtown Boston
- Connection to the History of Jewish Boston

Our conclusions—about the quality and scale of demand for Jewish programming in downtown Boston, the financial success of comparable organizations, and opportunities for strategic collaboration—both affirm and clarify the Vilna’s mission and vision. Alongside a set of new marketing directives and materials, which are being developed by an outside consultant, it is our hope that our recommendations provide a clear roadmap for the Vilna to actualize its potential.
EDANA CHAYA APPEL (MA/MBA) is from El Paso, Texas. She graduated in 2008 with a B.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic studies and Women’s and Gender studies with a minor in Hebrew Language and Literature from Brandeis University. Upon graduation she received the Rachel Olivi Prize for her outstanding work in the Women’s and Gender studies department and the Student Life Award. Edana has worked as the assistant director at two different Jewish overnight camps: Camp Young Judea and West and Camp Livingston. During her years at Camp Livingston, she was chosen to participate in the JCC Association’s Merrin Teen Professional Fellowship Program and the Foundation for Jewish Camp’s Titro Leadership Program. Most recently, Edana worked at Camp Interlaken JCC where she was the Chizuk Fellow. Upon her return to Brandeis for graduate studies, she was chosen as a JCC Association Graduate Scholar and the JFEW/Brandeis Scholar Graduate Student Mentor.

BETH LESCH (MA/MBA) grew up in Long Island, New York. She received her B.A. in History with a focus on modern Jewish history from Yale University in 2009. Upon graduation from Yale, she was a Jewish Organizing Fellow with JOIN for Justice. She worked for more than two years as a Synagogue Organizer for the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston where she trained Jewish adults and teenagers to design and implement political campaigns and to become leaders in their synagogues. In 2011, she moved to Jerusalem to pursue full-time Torah study at Midrashet Rachel v’Chaya and at Nishmat, where she fell in love with the study of halacha and Talmud. Beth is a member of the Kevah Educators Network and the Director of Ma’ayan: Torah Study from the Sources. Upon graduating from Hornstein, Beth looks forward to staying in Brookline next year, to continue to learn and grow at Ma’ayan.

Meredith Lynn Grabek (MA/MBA), originally from Paxton, Massachusetts, attended the University of Delaware where she studied sociology and art history. In 2008 she moved to New Orleans as a Corps Member with AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps. There she studied social justice in the community and served elderly, disabled, low income clients as the Intake Assistant with Rebuilding Together New Orleans, a project of the Preservation Resource Center (PRC). Following her AVODAH year, Meredith worked as the Development and Next Gen Manager with the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans where she assisted with the Federation’s Annual Campaign and collaborated with colleagues and lay leaders to develop a re-energized Jewish Next Gen program called JNOLA: Your Hub for Next Gen Jewish Life. The experience allowed Meredith the opportunity to network among the local and international Jewish community. Meredith has spent much of her time at Hornstein exploring the intersection of social justice and Judaism in her coursework and through her Fieldwork with Yad Chessed Fund. Upon graduation Meredith will begin work as a Senior Development Officer of Professional Networks at Boston’s Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

Nathan J. Vaughan

Academic Advisor: Mark Rosen
Capstone Advisors: Amy Sales
Dr. David Bryman, Chief Innovation Officer, Jewish Education Project
Field Experience: URJ Camp Harlam, Teva Supervisor & Program Assessor
Field Supervisor: Aaron Selkow, Director

Nate’s final capstone project asks the question—“What effect does childhood Jewish education have on the adult Jewish beliefs and behaviors that lead to a sense of belonging in the Jewish community?” This question assumes Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan’s position that Jewish beliefs and behaviors lead to a sense of belonging, in other words, a sense of Jewish identity. The project explored how different types and lengths of childhood Jewish education affect adult Jewish identity. To answer his question, Nate reviewed relevant literature and conducted secondary analysis on Pew Research Center data.

The main finding is that while type and length of exposure to childhood Jewish education have a significant effect on adult Jewish beliefs and behaviors, this affect is maximized in adults who identify with a specific Jewish community, as measured by adult affiliation with a specific denomination. Secondary findings include the significant affect age, gender, and childhood denominational affiliation has on adult Jewish beliefs and behaviors.

Based on his analysis, Nate argues that policymakers in the Jewish community should aim to lower or totally eliminate the cost of Jewish education. High-income community members should be solicited to fund access to Jewish education for low-income community members. This strategy strengthens the Jewish community by leveraging the findings that high-income individual want to be publicly Jewish (i.e., give to a Jewish cause) while low-income individuals are already oriented towards traditional and contemporary Jewish values. By removing the income barrier that limits children’s access to Jewish education, policymakers can ensure families have access to quality Jewish education for children without concern for whether or not they can afford to be Jewish.

NATHAN J. VAUGHAN (MA/MPP) is a Jewish educator from small-town southern Kentucky. A 2009 graduate of the University of Louisville with a self-designed B.A. in Middle Eastern Affairs, Nathan has worked in a variety of Jewish communities and organizations. Immediately after college, he joined the faculty of the American Hebrew Academy in Greensboro, North Carolina as a Teaching Fellow and Media Specialist. In 2011, Nathan moved to the Greater Boston area and began work as a Development Associate for Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Boston. Most recently, he joined the staff of URJ Camp Harlam, working to build a Jewishly engaged outdoor education program. In 2014, for his Hornstein fieldwork, Nathan worked with the leadership of URJ Camp Harlam to conduct a rigorous program assessment. He is passionate about Kentucky basketball, the Red Sox, spending time in nature, listening to great music, and canoeing. Nathan’s professional interests include evaluating the impact of Jewish experiential education programs, the application of traditional Jewish & contemporary ethics to Israel and the American-Jewish relationship with Israel, and the renewal of secular Jewish life in America.
A Vision for Coherent Israel Education: The Makom Matrix, The Right Angle Vector, and Diagonal Pedagogy

Aaron Weinberg

Academic Advisor: Joseph Reimer
Thesis Advisors: Jon Levisohn and Ellen Smith
Field Experience: Makom Israel, an Initiative of The Jewish Agency for Israel, Jerusalem, Israel
Field Supervisor: EliSheva Kupferman, Makom Educator and Strategic Planner

A popular philosophy of Israel education in North America has been predicated on the notion of “connection first, knowledge later.” Some common phrases that epitomize this philosophy are “love before learn” and “connection before complexity.” This thesis seeks to challenge the effectiveness of this approach, problematize its elements, and articulate an alternative coherent and holistic vision for Israel education that engages both in meaningful connections to Israel and deep understandings of Israel’s nuances.

The Makom Matrix is an exceptionally instructive tool developed by Alex Sinclair, Robbie Gringras, Yonatan Ariel, Esti Moskowitz-Kalman, and other colleagues at Makom Israel. The Matrix both helps map the challenges with the sequential connection or love-first approach, and aids in demonstrating a coherent and holistic vision of Israel education through proportional diagonal pedagogy.

The sequential connection or love-first approach is captured by a framework coined the Right Angle Vector approach. Cases of published press pieces written by North America Jews reflecting on their Israel Educational experiences illuminate the framework.

TaNaKh education and the role of teaching biblical criticism, through the case studies provided and vision articulated in Susan Tanchel’s work, serve as a powerful comparison and proof of concept.

Finally, an original paradigm of Israel education is presented, of the three C’s: connected, compelling, and complex. This new model is offered as a tool to aid in better achieving proportional diagonal pedagogy as part of a coherent and holistic vision for Israel education.

AARON WEINBERG (BA/MA), originally from the Chicago area, received his B.A. from Brandeis, studying Sociology, Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Hebrew, and Social Justice and Social Policy. He completed his fieldwork at Makom Israel, an initiative of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Aaron previously worked as an iEngage Intern and research assistant to Gil Troy at the Shalom Hartman Institute. He spent the spring 2013 semester studying Jewish education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. While in Jerusalem, Aaron co-chaired Ta Shema, J Street’U’s on-the-ground educational initiative, planning trips to parts of Israel and the West Bank. In fall 2012 while participating in American University’s Washington Semester where he studied communal change and political speechwriting. Aaron worked as a D.C. Jewish Outreach Fellow on President Obama’s re-election campaign. Aaron has participated in Machon Kaplan at the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, was a Counselor on the Eisendrath International Exchange, and interned at the iCenter. Before college, Aaron participated in Kivunim: New Directions—a Jerusalem-based program that studies and travels to Jewish communities around the world. Aaron was a student delegate to the first Conference on the Holocaust in the Arab World and is an alumnus of the Bronfman Youth Fellowship.

Horace Kallen, Judah Magnes, and American Liberal Zionism in the Early 20th Century

Eli Cohn

Academic Advisor: Jonathan Sarna
Thesis Advisors: Eugene Sheppard and Rachel Fish
Field Experience: Temple Beth Shalom, Needham MA
Field Supervisor: Rachel Happel

This paper examines the contributions of two Americans to the Zionist idea. Horace M. Kallen and Judah L. Magnes were both active in the Zionist movement during the first half of the 20th century. While Kallen was particularly active during World War I, Magnes had a more prolonged engagement with the Zionist movement. These two thinkers went to great lengths to synthesize American ideas and Zionism and therefore to make Zionism more palatable for American Jews.

Both Magnes and Kallen were heavily invested in principles of American liberalism and democracy, which they perceived as preserving equality among individuals and among nations. They reject the idea of the American melting pot and instead support a view of American democracy that supports differences among ethnic groups. By relying on American democratic ideas and American language, Kallen and Magnes created a Zionism that was attractive to broad sections of the Jewish community.

The paper’s first section looks at why Zionism posed a problem for American Jews, and how Zionism was perceived by Americans as chauvinistic. I then move to how Kallen and Magnes define democracy, and how this definition works to alleviate the concerns of American Jewry. The third section takes a closer look at how Kallen and Magnes utilize democracy in shaping the Zionist project, and also focuses on how Kallen and Magnes employ American terminology in shaping their Zionist thought. I show that Kallen used language from the Declaration of Independence while Magnes favored the Constitution.

In the paper’s final section, I explore how lessons from Kallen and Magnes can be applied to modern communal debates about liberal American Zionism.

ELI COHN (MA/MA) was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He went to Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy. While in college, Eli helped found the Greater Portland Hillel and served as its first president. After graduation, Eli spent a year in Israel on the OTZMA program, where he volunteered, worked, and traveled throughout the country. For the two years prior to starting graduate studies at Hornstein, Eli worked as the Coordinator for Israel Engagement for the Hillel at Brandeis University. He serves on the committee for ReachOut, an organization committed to engaging Jewish young adults in community service. The product of a lifetime of Jewish camping, youth groups, Hillel, and more, Eli has special interests in Jewish education, Israel, and Jewish peoplehood.
Increasing Enrollments in Jewish Early Childhood Education, a Policy Analysis for CJP

David Manchester

Academic Advisor: Leonard Saxe
Capstone Advisor: Joel Jarvis, Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP)
Field Experience: CJP, Jewish Family & Children Services
Field Supervisor: Dara Freedman-Weiss, CJP; Laura Beals, Jewish Family & Children Services

Jewish organizations view early childhood education as both an opportunity to educate and to guide young children, as well as to engage parents at a critical time in their lives. Parents undergo significant life changes following the birth of a child, including shifting their traditional social circles to new social groups including other families with young children of similar ages.

Over the past three years, several Boston area Jewish preschools have closed due to low enrollment. Concerned about the trend, CJP sought to understand the factors influencing a family’s preschool choice and ways CJP can support local Jewish preschools.

After analyzing survey data from Jewish families with young children in the Boston area as well as information from area Early Childhood Education centers (ECEs), this analysis recommends five initiatives CJP could undertake to increase enrollment.

First, CJP should support the development of improved marketing materials and strategies for ECEs. Survey respondents that utilized an information fair, school websites, or community email listservs were less likely to choose a Jewish ECE.

Second, expanding their current service to include full day, full year, and infant coverage will expand the market they attract, and support the majority of households where both parents work.

Third, CJP should work to expand enrollment capacities especially in Arlington and Jamaica Plain where a lack of Jewish ECEs and limited local capacity is not engaging areas attracting families with young children. This could be accomplished by opening new Jewish ECEs in these neighborhoods or working with existing preschools to incorporate Jewish content in some of their classrooms. Such partnerships are currently occurring with New York Jewish organizations view early childhood education as both an opportunity to educate and to guide young children, as well as to engage parents at a critical time in their lives. Parents undergo significant life changes following the birth of a child, including shifting their traditional social circles to new social groups including other families with young children of similar ages.

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Finally, CJP should prepare for the possibility of universal pre-K in Massachusetts by building relationships with other religious groups running ECEs. These partnerships could increase the likelihood that these schools would be eligible for state funding if such an initiative is passed.

David Manchester (MA/MPP) grew up in Scarsdale, New York. He received a B.A. in International Relations from American University. After college, David worked as a legislative assistant in Hadassah’s Washington Action Office and then as an operations analyst at Blackboard, Inc. where he honed his skills in quantitative metrics and evaluation. He currently serves as a Graduate Research Associate at Brandeis University’s Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies where he analyzes Jewish communities and programs nationwide. Through his work, David helps organizations utilize data to make strategic decisions and understand the outcomes their work is generating. Following Horstein, David will continue his studies seeking a Doctor of Philosophy in Social Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis.

Connecting the Next Generation: A Case Study in Shabbat

Evan Taksar

Academic Advisor: Joseph Reimer
Thesis Advisors: Ellen Smith and Mark Rosen
Field Experience: JCC Camp Chi
Field Supervisor: Jamie Lake

This thesis is the culmination of an eight-month investigation into Jewish young adult engagement in the Boston Jewish community. I looked at the history of American Jewish identity, and the relevant literature specific to Jewish identity and Jewish Millennials.

I identified four different organizations in Boston currently providing Shabbat engagement opportunities to this demographic. I spent time attending Shabbat programs, as well as speaking with program professionals and program participants.

This is a qualitative study. Through my many conversations I hope to identify what makes a Friday evening Shabbat program successful in reaching and engaging the Millennial generation. In this thesis I will share the outcome of my interviews, and provide recommendations for an organization looking to build a strong young adult Shabbat engagement program. Based on my research, there are several important factors that contribute to a successful engagement program, including special attention to program space, clearly defined program objectives and outcome measurements, and a community-organizing approach to engagement and empowerment.

Evan Taksar (MA/MA) grew up in Los Angeles, California. She earned a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Colorado at Boulder, with a minor in Jewish Studies. At CU Boulder, Evan served as a board member of CU Hillel and was active in the Program in Jewish Studies. She spent her senior year as the Development Intern at the Boulder Jewish Community Center. Evan has spent the past 15 summers at Camp ICA Shalom Malibu: seven as a camper and eight in various staff and administrative positions. She considers her time spent at camp to be the most defining Jewish experience of her life both personally and professionally. While at Horstein, Evan has focused her studies in modern Israeli society and the contemporary Jewish experience. She also completed a Master's Concentration in Israel Education through the iCenter. Last summer she brought her passion and talent to JCC Camp Chi as their Judaic Programming Director. At Camp Chi she helped shape the Jewish experience for over 1,000 campers of all ages from different Jewish backgrounds. She is passionate about connecting individuals to modern and relevant Jewish experiences. In her spare time, Evan enjoys cooking, live music, reading and going on adventures. Upon graduation Evan will begin work as an Assistant Director and Director of Program Design & Operation at Camp Alonim at Brandeis-Bardin in Brandeis-Bardin, California.