



Jewish Federation
OF ST. LOUIS

**Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Orthodox Community Study
Fall/Winter 2013**

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Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Community Study – Fall/Winter 2013

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the St. Louis Orthodox Community and their needs for Jewish Federation of St. Louis via interviews with community leaders and members by Rachael Green Smith (referred to hereafter as the researcher).

Methodology

The researcher collected data, via interviews, during the fall of 2013, with data analysis and compilation occurring in the winter of 2013. Two interviews were set up to obtain the Study Supporters – rabbis in the Orthodox community who were willing to be interviewed, solicit possible study participants, and offer support in terms of “vouching” for the researcher with said study participants.

After securing and interviewing the three rabbis to serve as Study Supporters, the researcher then interviewed 11 other community members, plus the director of Jewish Family & Children’s Service. Questions for the Study Supporters included: congregation size, how many families need assistance, how many times a year someone comes for assistance, who the families turn to for assistance, why they go where they go for assistance, why they do not go certain places for assistance, the greatest needs of the congregants, the greatest needs of the Orthodox community that are not being met, and what suggestions they had to help Jewish Federation meet those needs (see Appendix 1). The questions for the community members included: family size, membership at a congregation, how many times a year did they need help, where do they go for help, why they go where they go for help, why they don’t go certain places for help, what the greatest needs of their family are, what the greatest needs of the Orthodox community are, and what suggestions they had to help Jewish Federation meet those needs (see Appendix 2).

All community members (except the one non-Orthodox participant, the Executive Director of JF&CS) were asked to sign a Consent to Participate form (Appendix 3), which alerted community members to the only known risk to participating in the study – possible feelings of sadness or depression when discussing their hardships. Consents also had helpful phone numbers on them including: BRC crisis hotline, Jewish Federation, Jewish Council Against Family Violence, Jewish Family & Children’s Service, National Suicide Hotline and St. Louis County Youth Connection Hotline. All participants were offered copies of their signed consents or blank copies (so they had the helpful numbers).

Participants

Fifteen total participants were interviewed and their breakdown is as follows: three Orthodox rabbis as the Study Supporters, seven community members whom are lay people and four community members who are also Orthodox rabbis in local organizations/synagogues. There was one non-Orthodox participant in the study (interviewed at the request of Susan Scribner of Jewish Federation) – Louis Albert, Executive Director of Jewish Family & Children’s Service.

The original intent of having two study supporters turned into three Study Supporters, albeit from two Orthodox organizations. The first two Study Supporters, interviewed together (first interview), were the father-son team from Chabad of Greater St. Louis: Rabbi Yosef Landa, Director and Rabbi Levi Landa, Program Director. The third Study Supporter (second interview) was Rabbi Menachem Greenblatt of Agudas Israel Synagogue. With the permission of all three rebbeim, their interviews were recorded and highlights transcribed for this report (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, respectively). All three were informed that the recordings would be erased immediately after transcription. Both Study Supporter interviews took an hour each.

The three rabbis that served as Study Supporters answered questions and had conversations about the needs of their congregants and the Orthodox community as a whole (see Appendix 3, Questions for Rebbeim). As compensation for their time, Rabbi Yosef and Levi Landa received four \$25.00 Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift cards to distribute to people they knew in need. Rabbi Menachem Greenblatt also received four \$25.00 Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift cards to distribute to people he knew who were in need. The gift cards served as not only compensation for their time, but also a way to engender positive feelings toward the study. The Study Supporters were also given the researcher's business cards to give to anyone they felt might want to participate in the study. Study Supporters were informed that community members interviewed by the researcher would each receive a \$20.00 Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift card as compensation for their time and that those interviews would only take 20-30 minutes. Community members would also be provided complete anonymity, with their identity known only to the researcher.

After the Study Supporters were interviewed, 11 community members were interviewed by the researcher and received a \$20.00 Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift card. Those interviews lasted 20 to 30 minutes each and took place in the participants' synagogues, places of employment, or over the phone (for two that had to be rescheduled). Of those 11, all but one participant worked in an agency that was Jewish in identity or nature, and four of them were Orthodox rabbis posted at synagogues or other Jewish non-profit agencies. It is interesting to note that the one participant who did not work in a Jewish agency had worked at a Jewish agency in the past, but due to low wages was now working at a secular location. The only study participant who did not receive a Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift card was the Executive Director of JF&CS, Lou Albert, who is listed below with the 11 participants. The total value of Kohn's Kosher Meat and Deli gift cards given out was \$420.00.

Below you will find general information about each participant:

Participant One: There are two parents and five children in the family, but only six of them in the home. They belong to one congregation. One child is living with relatives out of town to attend a good public school because the family can't afford tuition for all five children. Because they do not like the quality of their local public school, they have signed over legal guardianship of one of their high-school age children so that child could attend a better public school. This family pays tuition for the other four children. If they paid full price, it would be \$85,000 to \$90,000 to educate those children, much more

than the parents' combined salaries. They are not able to pay full tuition and juggle in-kind scholarships (parent performed services that the school needs) and give-and-get (where the parents pay \$1000 or donate hours to help the school).

Participant Two: This family consists of one parent and three children, two of whom live in the home. They belong to one congregation. Two of the three children have special needs. This family has received help from a variety of sources and is "now in a place to give back".

Participant Three: Is a community member who is involved with Tomchei Shabbos, an Orthodox-only food pantry in town. She answered questions as they relate to the 40-50 families that use Tomchei Shabbos on a weekly basis.

Participant Four: There are two parents and four children in this family and they belong to one congregation. They have received help from many different sources and are familiar with all available programs. Participant Four feels most community agencies and events are not "Orthodox friendly"; citing different examples, one as simple as the local JCC Hanukkah party served hot dogs and placed dairy gelt on all of the dining tables.

Participant Five: A community member who is also a congregational rabbi at an Orthodox shul in town. He answered questions as they relate to the 100 families in his shul.

Participant Six: This family consists of five people: a married couple, an in-law, and two children. They belong to one congregation. This family turns to other family members for help. Participant Six did not know where she could go for other assistance such as counseling or utility assistance.

Participant Seven: Is unique in that he is the only non-Orthodox participant in the study. He is Louis Albert, Executive Director of Jewish Family & Children's Service. It was necessary for the scope of this study to include him and his agency's role in helping the St. Louis Orthodox Community. It was also requested that the researcher do so, by Susan Scribner of Jewish Federation. (In the interest of full disclosure, it should be noted that one of the researcher's day jobs is working at JF&CS. The researcher did disclose this to participants in the interest of honesty, but made it abundantly clear that the researcher was acting as an agent of Jewish Federation in this study, not as an agent of JF&CS. Lou Albert also knew of the researcher's role in the study and was supportive of the study.)

Participant Eight: Is a community member and a rabbi at a not-for-profit organization in town. He answered the questions as they relate to the community members he comes into contact with daily.

Participant Nine: Is a community member and a rabbi at a not-for profit Orthodox school in town. He answered questions as they relate to the 90 families at his school.

Participant Ten: Is a congregational rabbi at an Orthodox shul in town. He answered questions as they relate to the 170 families in his shul.

Participant Eleven: This family consists of two parents and seven children, six of whom live with the parents. They belong to one congregation. Participant Eleven was incredibly savvy in her knowledge of both Jewish and secular ways to get assistance for her family. She and her husband both work, but their budget is stretched incredibly thin. The family lost their home to foreclosure recently.

Participant Twelve: Is a community member and a rabbi at an Orthodox shul in town. He answered the questions as they relate to the 88 families in his congregation.

Results

Where did these participants go to get the help they needed and why did they go there, rather than elsewhere? The results from the study participants are found below. Please note since Rabbi Yosef and Rabbi Levi Landa of Chabad spoke as one voice for Chabad, their answers will be recorded together. Also, Lou Albert had an open-ended interview, so his feedback is recorded differently than all other participants. Therefore, the total number of responses below will indicate 13 rather than the 15 total respondents.

Question One asked the rebbeim about their congregation sizes. Their answers were: 80, 170, 100, 160 and 200, for a grand total of 710 families being represented in this study. All families interviewed were congregants at only one of the Orthodox shuls in St. Louis. (It was noted by the rebbeim that many families belong to two, but none of the participants did.)

Question Two asked how many of those families the rebbeim would consider low income, and their combined responses estimated 65 of them (9%) are considered low income. (It should be noted that this number does not reflect one of the congregations because that rabbi said he wouldn't even be able to guess a number for that question.)

Question Three asked how many times per year do you need assistance/does a congregant come to you for assistance obtaining food, money shelter or professional counseling? The Tomchei Shabbos participant reported assisting 38-50 families weekly, typically the same families. One of the congregational rabbis reported assisting at least once a week, another reported 12 times a year and a third reported 15 times a year. Two different congregational rabbis reported helping someone at least 100 times a year. Those numbers alone indicate 2255 to 2879 instances of help within the Orthodox Community. Community members' responses varied between once or twice a year, weekly and depending on employment.

Question Four asked where the individual's family/the rabbi's needy families turned for assistance. Please see table below:

Question 4	Number (N = 13)	Percentage
Within your/this congregation	7	5%
Outside the congregation, but within Orthodox community	4	31%
Outside congregation & Orthodox community but within Jewish community	5	38%
Jewish Federation	4	31%
Tomchei Shabbos	9	69%
JF&CS	8	62%
Jewish Food Pantry	8	62%
Other (Jewish community)	5	38%
Other (secular community)	1	8%

It should be noted that several of the people interviewed mentioned they only went to the Jewish Food Pantry once or twice, but went weekly to Tomchei Shabbos.

Question Five asked what are the reasons you/your congregants received assistance from those places mentioned in Question Four:

Question 5	Number (N = 13)	Percentage
Proximity	3	23%
Confidentiality	7	54%
Ease	7	54%
Other	6*	46%

*The responses for “other” included: I was desperate, too much red tape at JF&CS, they’re discreet at Tomchei Shabbos, Tomchei Shabbos is anonymous, Tomchei Shabbos is frum, too much red tape at the Jewish Food Pantry, the Jewish Food Pantry is not dignified, and I’m seen as a person at Tomchei Shabbos – not at Jewish Food Pantry.

Question Six asked what the reasons are that you/your congregants did NOT choose to get assistance from the places mentioned in Question Four.

Question 6	Number (N = 13)	Percentage
Transportation	2	15%
Fear of Recognition	1	Less than 1%
Paperwork	4	31%
Other	4*	31%

*The responses for "other" included: trust, too much red tape, no outlet to give Jewish Food Pantry feedback, I know all the volunteers and employees of the Jewish Food Pantry.

Question Seven asked the greatest needs of your family/congregation:

Question 7	Number (N = 13)	Percentage
Kosher Food	3	23%
Counseling	7	54%
Utility Assistance	4	31%
Elder Care	2	15%
Child Care	4	31%
Rent/Mortgage Assistance	6	46%
Other Housing Needs	1	Less than 1%
Medical Care	5	38%
Other Types of Assistance	5	38%

All answers related to the child care section of Question Seven were surrounding child care fees and adoption fees. Other housing needs specifically referred to house cleaning. One rabbi mentioned he has seen a few cases where the family just can't keep up and what sounds like a luxury, cleaning assistance, becomes a necessity when the children are living in unclean conditions. Under medical care, many mentioned clinics and prescription assistance but difficulty obtaining needed dentist or orthodontist help. Under other types of assistance, every single respondent mentioned money, either for loans or the rebbeim's discretionary funds.

Question Eight asked for the greatest needs of the Orthodox community that are not being met:

Question 8	Number (N = 13)	Percentage
Food	0	N/A
Housing	1	Less than 1%
Counseling	1	Less than 1%
Utility Assistance	0	N/A

Responses to Question Eight were interesting because of the low numbers. People generally stated some funds were there and people were managing to scrape by, but they added in response choices of: jobs (1), fund for cost of living (1), and education/tuition (4).

The greatest information came from Question Nine, which asked what suggestions people had to help Jewish Federation meet the needs of the community that weren't being met in Question 8. Responses encompassed a variety of ideas and plans for helping the community. One Study Supporter, Rabbi Yosef Landa, recommended "deputizing" rabbis in order to streamline the paperwork process with JF&CS. Several of the rabbis and community members said they would not go to JF&CS or send others there due to paperwork and feeling like there were too many hoops to jump through, and that JF&CS didn't care about them. Rabbi Landa also had an idea to have a point person at JF&CS for the rabbis to call if they don't know how a particular person might be helped. He said if he doesn't know what kind of help is available, he can put a call in to Lou Albert, but Lou is a busy man. Finally, he suggested a volunteer matchmaking program for Jewish Federation, where instead of volunteers going to the food pantry to stock shelves, the Federation takes into account personal volunteering for those willing. Examples would be an elderly individual who needs someone to take them to the physician once a month, or someone who just needs a check in phone call from a fellow Jew.

Rabbi Greenblatt, another Study Supporter, mentioned that rabbis could help identify families under stress or Jewish Federation could give to a rabbi's discretionary funds to assist those the rabbi has identified. On an organizational level, he suggested the day schools needed more assistance. He and several other rabbis mentioned they would like it if Jewish Federation would take a look at other cities such as Detroit, Cleveland and Baltimore to see how their respective Jewish Federations handle day school contributions.

Several of the rabbis and community members had common themes when responding to Question Nine. These are covered below in suggestions.

Suggestions:

1. A revised food pantry system. Each person mentioned they knew the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry could not operate exactly the same way as Tomchei Shabbos, but all said there was a need for change. Many people mentioned they no longer go due to feeling like employees and volunteers didn't understand or care about kashrut or the Orthodox. Many mentioned stating to employees and volunteers (both verbally and on the paperwork) that they keep kosher, only to be given non-kosher food. Those same people then would have to go wait – sometimes for more than an additional hour – until someone could honor their original request for kosher food. A few mentioned privacy concerns; that they knew the employees and volunteers, or that all information stated to an employee is overheard by the entire waiting room. Some even mentioned they have to wait for hours, even with an appointment time, and that negatively impacted their jobs. Many expressed they felt Tomchei Shabbos wanted to help and the Jewish Food Pantry did not. Check out Yad Ezra in Detroit and their drive-through service.
2. There are no special needs homes or services specific to the Jewish population. One community member has an adult child with an intellectual disability. Since there are no Jewish, kosher

homes this adult child is in a group home with no Jewish influence and no kosher food. One rabbi mentioned losing congregants because the parents, who both had good jobs, needed special education for their child and the local day schools are not equipped to provide those services here, but they are equipped to do so in other cities.

3. Participants are unable to sign up for WIC (Women Infants and Children) nutrition assistance. There are no kosher choices. One participant even went to the Anti-Defamation League to discuss this issue. This reflects a greater need for kosher food pantries.
4. There is a need for more inclusive groups, like Nishmah. Several mentioned feeling that community events and the JCC as well as other agencies were not "Orthodox friendly".
5. School Based Consultants (SBC) from JF&CS were taken away. Many cannot transport their children after school to JF&CS for counseling due to school schedules, long hours, or juggling carpool. The SBCs that were at Epstein Hebrew Academy, Missouri Torah Institute, Esther Miller Bais Yaakov and Torah Prep School are barely there now (some gone completely) and many of the participants' children no longer receive needed counseling because of it. Several rabbis and community members mentioned this, and none had a clear understanding of why their hours were taken away or cut back.
6. Jewish Family & Children's Service is mostly serving non-Jews for food and counseling. This seemed to be the perception of a large number of individuals interviewed. Whether the numbers are accurate or not, many mentioned feeling this way in the waiting room at JF&CS.
7. The Orthodox community is lacking in resources or at least sees itself as lacking in resources. They need help with jobs. Many Orthodox families are leaving St. Louis because they cannot find jobs. If they cannot find jobs, they cannot afford homes, shul memberships or day school tuitions. Several rabbis told me they field phone calls weekly from rabbis interested in moving their families to St. Louis, but they need help finding work. There is no system in place to help them. Many also mentioned that they have lost families to other cities because they cannot find jobs here. It was noted that there are 110 married Torah Prep alumni and only 15 of them live in St. Louis; others want to live here, but there are no jobs.
8. The day schools need help. What many just referred to as "the education issue" is driving people away from St. Louis or even driving the residents who stay here away from being Orthodox here. Many mentioned they felt the first priority of Jewish Federation should be education. Many schools barely make payroll. Many need tutors for the students and have no idea how they will pay for them. The buildings of nearly all of the day schools need structural or safety updates.
9. We need a JPro-like organization for Jewish Business Owners. Help them grow, learn how to invest, network, learn how to promote, hire fellow Jews. This idea was told to the researcher by one of the rabbis, but he said credit is due to a man named Mark Gordon. A community member mentioned seed money for starting businesses or small business loans; she has the talent and drive to open a business, but no money. Also mentioned: creating a job team to help find jobs and bring families to St. Louis. The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles has Employment Training Grants.

10. Give incentives to buy houses. It was mentioned by a couple of the rabbis that they know of Jewish Federations in other cities (Cleveland and Baltimore were mentioned here) that helped entice in new community members by offering incentives to buy houses near shuls.

One cannot complete a report on the Orthodox community without mentioning the gemachs. Participants mentioned different techniques utilized to pay bills including borrowing money, using credit cards and taking advantage of the gemachs. There are several Orthodox gemachs that were mentioned including ones for: Purim costumes, school uniforms, tables and chairs for events, bridal gowns, silk flowers for weddings, and medical equipment.

The interview with Louis Albert, Executive Director of Jewish Family & Children's Service (himself not Orthodox) yielded information that was somewhat different from that given from the Orthodox community members themselves. Lou reported that the agency has an excellent relationship with the Orthodox community – something the rebbeim reported in that they could call on Lou if they had a question, but the community members did not feel was reflected to each individual or family in the community. Lou gave an example of when two suicides were reported within the Orthodox community; he says that someone from JF&CS met with the rebbeim to “touch base” after that event. He reported that JF&CS may have someone from intake follow up with leaders within the Orthodox community (it was not clear if he meant for individuals or the community as a whole).

When the researcher mentioned Rabbi Landa's idea for a rabbi point person within the agency, Lou mentioned years ago (when pagers were widely used) having a person who would be available to be paged if the rabbis had a question. It is the sincere belief of the researcher that there is a vast difference between using a pager from years ago and waiting, indefinitely, for a call back and having the ease and speed to leave someone a voicemail or email. When pressed, Lou said the agency would be open to having a point person for the rebbeim.

The researcher also mentioned Rabbi Landa's idea of deputizing rabbis and having a once-a-year rabbi training and information session, as well as all of the other rebbeim supporting this idea. Lou stated he would be willing to staff “an Orthodox outpost therapist”, but mentioned funding difficulties for that type of position. Lou said JF&CS would need program specific funding for such a position and that the agency would be unable to use St. Louis County Children's Service Funds or United Way funds for that, saying instead JF&CS would need to just use Jewish Federations funds which he reports have been declining. It was not clear to the researcher how a clinician stationed at the Orthodox schools as an “outpost” therapist would be different than the past and current School Based Consultant positions that were at the Orthodox day schools and funded through St. Louis County Children's Service Fund.

He also suggested broadening the definition from Orthodox to observant, citing a Reform Jew he knows who keeps kosher. The idea of broadening the definition and just looking at “Jews as Jews” is appealing, but it cannot be denied that those who are Orthodox have issues and areas to contend with that those who are not Orthodox, even if they keep kosher, do not. Lou also mentioned that JF&CS would like to

do more “educational things” within the Orthodox community. Overall, he seemed fairly open to the ideas presented by the researcher from Rabbi Landa.

Summary and Recommendations

Rabbi Yosef Landa’s idea to deputize rabbis and teach them how to do any needed JF&CS paperwork while also looking for any suicidal or homicidal ideations is brilliant. People are coming to their rabbis in crisis and pouring their hearts out, imploring for help. To have a cold transfer over to JF&CS only to have to tell a few sentences to intake staff, be put on a wait list, then have an actual intake with a licensed clinician becomes stressful in and of itself. Since Rabbi Landa was the first meeting, I asked each rabbi I interviewed if they would be willing to attend a “deputizing” training to help with paperwork. Every single one said they would, and several mentioned it was a great idea to help their congregants. Perhaps the rebbeim could also assist their congregants with any needed Jewish Federation paperwork as well.

The same holds true for Rabbi Landa’s idea about having a JF&CS point person. During the interview, we spoke at length about what that would mean for the rebbeim. A point person at JF&CS would avoid confusion, misinformation and rabbis feeling as if they are “bugging” the Executive Director, and ensure they receive timely call backs for crisis calls. Each rabbi the researcher spoke to also thought that would be great, as all said they knew they could call Lou, but hesitated sometimes to do so. The idea also came about for JF&CS to have a once a year brief meeting letting rabbis know of different programs, who their JF&CS contact person is and what type of help is available.

In addition to the items mentioned above, the following are recommendations for Jewish Federation after review of the participants’ responses:

1. The Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry and Jewish Family & Children’s Service are both perceived by the Orthodox community as sub-par. There were multiple instances of participants stating that at the Food Pantry they had long waits, non-kosher food given to them after indicating verbally and on the paperwork that they needed kosher food, and less-than-welcoming attitudes from the staff (all noted volunteers to be welcoming, just seemingly uneducated about kashrut). One woman even stated that when she attempted to give feedback to the director, she was told not to return. Rebbeim and community members avoided going to or referring others to JF&CS unless they absolutely had to, citing long waits, too much paperwork, and clinicians who were not “Orthodox friendly”. Many did mention their fondness for the School Based Counseling program within the day schools, but then concern regarding those hours getting reduced or cut entirely. Rather than meet these concerns with defensive responses, it behooves Jewish Federation and JF&CS (including the Food Pantry) to find a way to meet the community where they are.

Instead of debating numbers of how many Jews versus non-Jews JF&CS as a whole and the Jewish Food Pantry in particular help, Jewish Federation could push for the community agencies to actively participate in Jewish day schools, synagogues and events. There is a continuum of

participation here – from handouts and posters, to meetings with staff and teachers, to providing security at schools or events. The community wants to know that Jewish Federation cares about them and what happens to them. Several times it was put as simple as that.

2. The need for counseling is reported as high and the availability of resources is low. JF&CS has licensed clinicians serving as School Based Consultants. Last school year (and half the year before that), this researcher acted as a School Based Consultant (SBC) for Torah Prep Boys' School for 12 hours a week, seeing 11 individual boys weekly. Another SBC worked at Torah Prep Girls' School for 16 hours weekly. This researcher was pulled from TBP completely and the SBC at TPG was asked to cover both schools (combined) for one eight hour day per week. This means most of the individual sessions are, at best, brief check-ins. The SBC holding this position is a wonderful, engaging therapist, but has little to no time with these students.

This position was and is funded through the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund. There are, admittedly, challenges to serving students while in school, namely, they have to miss class. There were other School Based Consultants at Torah Prep Girls' School, Esther Miller Bais Yaakov, and Epstein Hebrew Academy. The SBC from Bais Yaakov was pulled completely. The others had hours cut down dramatically. It is unknown to this researcher (and the rebbeim that participated in this study) the reasons for this, but the impact is felt within the community.

3. It should come as no surprise that education, day schools and tuition came up frequently in conversation. Tuitions are high. Many of the buildings are in horrible condition. Each school is overcrowded. Some schools are rarely able to make payroll. There are no special needs services within the schools. They need teachers and tutors, but cannot pay for them. Everyone who mentioned this also mentioned having no idea of how to equitably solve the problem, but stated they wanted to engage in a discussion with Jewish Federation about local Orthodox education.
4. There is a need for jobs. This was mentioned from the point of view of rabbis trying to retain families in the community, principals trying to entice rabbis to move here to teach, and entrepreneurs interested in opening businesses but having no support. A few participants mentioned housing deals they knew of from other Jewish Federations, typically \$ 1000 – \$3000 to put towards local homes. A program like JPro geared toward business owners, small business loans, or even business incubators would be a welcome addition.
5. Question Three data indicated 2255 to 2879 instances of help given to the Orthodox community per year. That number is even more incredible when one realizes that help comes from the rabbis and their discretionary funds, congregant donors and Tomchei Shabbos, not from Jewish Federation or a Jewish community agency. There must be some way to meet and see if Jewish Federation and the rebbeim could work together toward a solution.

6. A desire to help was evident. So strong was their drive to help, that two female participants were even willing to meet with Jewish Federation and become a part of a committee or team to discuss Orthodox needs and figure out ways to help. One of the participants has benefitted from assistance in the past and has a strong wish to give back and another one is still benefitting from assistance but wants to help. (Since the study participants are anonymous, the researcher let those two women know that if Jewish Federation was interested, the researcher would contact the two participants again and inform them, then they could contact Jewish Federation and reveal themselves as said participants, in order to maintain their anonymity.)

The need and desire for help was apparent from all who participated in this study. It is interesting that this study was finalized days after the Pew Research Center's survey report, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans" became public. The study reports that the Orthodox are younger than the rest of the American Jews and tend to have more children. If this national trend is reflected in St. Louis's Orthodox community, it stands to reason that their needs will only increase over time. By taking proactive steps such as those listed above, perhaps we can move more individuals and families toward self-sufficiency and potential donor status.

Appendices

1. Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Study – Questions for Rebbeim
2. Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Study – Questions for Community Members
3. Consent to Participate (for Community Members)
4. Interview Highlights with Rabbi Yosef Landa and Rabbi Levi Landa of Chabad of Greater St. Louis
5. Interview Highlights with Rabbi Menachem Greenblatt with Agudas Israel

Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Study - Questions for Rebbeim

Rachael Green Smith, RhD, LPC

1. How large is your congregation?
2. Out of your congregants, about how many families would be considered low income?
3. Approximately how many times per year does any congregant come to you for assistance obtaining food, money, shelter or professional counseling?
4. Where do your families turn for assistance?
 - a. Within this congregation?
 - b. Outside the congregation, but within the orthodox community?
 - c. Outside the congregation and orthodox community, but within the Jewish community?
 - d. Jewish Federation?
 - e. Mrs. Merle Hartstein's food pantry?
 - f. Jewish Family & Children's Service?
 - g. Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry?
 - h. Other types of assistance in the Jewish Community?
 - i. Other types of assistance in the secular community?
5. What are the reasons your congregants choose to get assistance from those places?
 - a. Proximity?
 - b. Confidentiality?
 - c. Ease?
 - d. Other?
6. What are the reasons your congregants do NOT choose to get assistance from those places?
 - a. Transportation?
 - b. Fear of recognition?
 - c. Paperwork?
 - d. Other?
7. What are the greatest needs of your congregants?
 - a. Kosher food?
 - b. Counseling?
 - c. Utility assistance?
 - d. Elder care?
 - e. Child care?
 - f. Rent/mortgage assistance? Other housing needs?
 - g. Medical care?
 - h. Other types of assistance?
8. What do you see as the greatest needs of the Orthodox community that are not being met?
 - a. Food?
 - b. Housing?
 - c. Counseling?
 - d. Utility assistance?
9. What suggestions do you have to help JFed meet those needs?

Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Study - Questions for Community Members

Rachael Green Smith, RhD, LPC

1. How large is your family?
2. Do you belong to a congregation?
3. Approximately how many times per year do you need some form of assistance, either for food, money, shelter or professional counseling?
4. Where do you turn for assistance?
 - a. Within your congregation?
 - b. Outside the congregation, but within the orthodox community?
 - c. Outside the congregation and orthodox community, but within the Jewish community?
 - d. Jewish Federation?
 - e. Mrs. Merle Hartstein's food pantry?
 - f. Jewish Family & Children's Service?
 - g. Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry?
 - h. Other types of assistance in the Jewish Community?
 - i. Other types of assistance in the secular community?
5. What are the reasons you choose to get assistance from those places?
 - a. Proximity?
 - b. Confidentiality?
 - c. Ease?
 - d. Other?
6. What are the reasons you do NOT choose to get assistance from those places?
 - a. Transportation?
 - b. Fear of recognition?
 - c. Paperwork?
 - d. Other?
7. What are the greatest needs of your family?
 - a. Kosher food?
 - b. Counseling?
 - c. Utility assistance?
 - d. Elder care?
 - e. Child care?
 - f. Rent/mortgage assistance? Other housing needs?
 - g. Medical care?
 - h. Other types of assistance?
8. What do you see as the greatest needs of the Orthodox community that are not being met?
 - a. Food?
 - b. Housing?
 - c. Counseling?
 - d. Utility assistance?
9. What suggestions do you have to help JFed meet those needs?

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

By signing this consent, you agree to participate in the Jewish Federation of St. Louis Orthodox Community Study. The purpose of the study is to identify how, where and why the St. Louis Orthodox Community receives the help and services they need. The study will consist of an interview with and by Rachael Green Smith, RhD about your experiences as a member of the St. Louis Orthodox Community. Risks involved are limited, but may include feelings of sadness or depression when talking about financial, emotional, medical or psychological hardships. Helpful numbers can be found below.

Dr. Green Smith will keep a copy of this consent with your full name printed and signed below. Jewish Federation will not see a copy of this consent, nor will they learn your name or any identifying information in order to preserve your anonymity. A blank copy of this form will be made available to you.

As compensation for your time participating in this study, you will receive a \$20.00 gift card to Kohn's Kosher Market.

Date: _____

Print Full Name: _____

Sign Full Name: _____

Helpful Numbers:

Jewish Federation of St. Louis 314.432.0020

Jewish Council Against Family Violence 314.422.1246

Jewish Family & Children's Service 314.993.1000

National Suicide Hotline 800.273.8255

St. Louis County Youth Connection Helpline 314.628.2929

Appendix 4

Interview Highlights with Rabbi Yosef Landa and Rabbi Levi Landa of Chabad of Greater St. Louis

Comments from the researcher printed in bold.

14 Oct 2013

Q1: How many Chabadniks are here? We are, deliberately so, a non-membership organization. Both the organization and the congregation. We have it set up that way because every Jew in St. Louis is someone we care about. We have events where many show up, and some where we have far less than that. We are not the only one struggling to define Chabadnik. Chabad struggles to define that. By what criteria?

How many people have you interacted with per year? Thousands of people, if you include even one time interactions. The number we interact with on a more regular basis, a couple hundred or so. The other reason we don't fit into the criteria so well is the vast majority would not identify as Orthodox, so most we interact with are not Orthodox.

Are the majority affiliated or unaffiliated?

We don't ask that. We want a low barrier to our events. Some people participate in our 12 week course and I don't know what, if any, synagogue these people attend. I wouldn't put them on the spot that way by asking. So the group that we service is not the one you might want information about, but we can give you information.

When I speak to you, am I also getting information on Chabad of Chesterfield?

We are all affiliated and I am the regional director. So, they are in our conversation.

Q2: Out of the people you touch what percentage would be considered in need? I don't know what the actual poverty level is, but there are a lot of people who are struggling. It's hard for me to give you a percentage. We constantly hear a refrain of people who are having a hard time: out of work, working for very little, struggling to make ends meet. You probably expect to hear this and I am going to meet your expectations. Orthodox families, their need for educating their children in the day school, it's not a luxury, it's not a choice, it's a necessity. The burdens of day school tuition are incredible and everyone's talking about it.

Tuition is the biggest burden to Orthodox families and the number of children is usually higher. My thought always has been that the best aid that Federation can give to day schools and day school parents is NOT to deinstitutionalize. I would much rather see a voucher of sorts given to the family and give them a choice. When a family is on the take from an institution, it doesn't want to open its mouth about the real needs. If you have a voucher in your hand it's as if you're making a choice as a customer. The end product will be a better one and the school will feel more obliged to meet their needs because they're a real customer. Maybe there should be a mix...a little to the institution a little to the parents, but that type of assistance is where the biggest angst is.

So if you had a magic wand, is that what you would use your wand on? Yeah. If they're older it's something else, kosher food is more, but I can't see that being a huge burden. The emergency, the point where the biggest problem is, is meeting their educational needs. It's not an option. It's fundamental. They're sacrificing in all these areas to send their children there. It would be nice if the Jewish community establishment would get off this issue of the separation of church and state as much as they are on it and ease up and encourage the government to find ways to appropriate parochial school education. They're such strict separationists.

Q3: How many times a year would you say that somebody comes to you for help? Weekly. Some are the same people, sometimes they have special needs. I know of donors who like to give to that kind of stuff, like to help people out. Sometimes I make a connection, sometimes I give from our little kitty, which doesn't have much money.

Do you feel you have a good grasp, then, of the programs here in St. Louis if they needed help? We know of JF&CS, Tomchei Shabbos, sometimes I write a check myself, we get in touch with somebody. It's discreet, we don't disclose. We have a lot of foreclosures. People sometimes don't come, but we become aware of their need. I have a text in my phone right now of a woman who's facing foreclosure. I have to call her back today. I can't solve the foreclosure problem. She's been a recipient. She has a family, she's a single parent. And sometimes some of these people are working very hard working two and three jobs. If I give them an odds and ends job, it helps them too. It's more dignified.

You have some bigger donors in your mind, then? Like if someone had to go to Israel for a funeral or had huge medical expenses? We sometimes might cooperate, a few rabbis will get together. That has happened. Sometimes these people have their relationships in several congregations. We've had collections for families who can't afford to send their child to a yeshiva out of town and the child very much wanted to go to Israel. Some very nice amounts of money were pulled together for this family. He's in yeshiva in Israel now. This is a young man who graduated Block Yeshiva High School and wanted to go on for one year to experience yeshiva in Israel. Who's weathered a difficult upbringing very, very well. People were impressed. We took care of that kid, not me myself, the community. I'm very proud of that actually.

Q4: What other places do people go for help? Marrying off children is an issue. There's some gemachs for that, the little things. The concept the gemach, it's a free loan for items ordinarily people spend money to use one day. Wedding dresses, silk flowers for weddings, there's a medical supply loan gemach.

They also turn sometimes within the congregation for assistance. There's professional stuff, like legal assistance, medical assistance. These professionals will use their contacts to help these people out. Food pantry is being used, JF&CS is being used, Tomchei Shabbos is being used. All of the above, if you include non- cash assistance.

Because those who can donate are already aware, without anybody opening their mouth, that there's a problem.

People who needed counseling services...do they go within the community? Or someone who's Orthodox friendly? My gut reaction is it's six of one half dozen of another. There's the comfort in someone who already knows your lifestyle, but yeah. I remember someone who was a gynecologist saying the last thing you want to be is a gynecologist in an orthodox community. None of your friends want to use you. Who wants to sit in shul next to their gynecologist? I would imagine a therapist is similar.

When I help a person trying to identify someone who would be a good counselor for them, they don't necessarily have to be orthodox. The important thing is that their counseling is really, truly value free. That they can appreciate the values of the patient. They don't impose some of their own values. I think there's a perception out there that within the orthodox community, we insist on having only orthodox counselors and that's not true.

Q6: 6 fear of rec? no. transport? No. Those are issues for older people.

LL: is there a way for someone to get assistance from JF&CS without coming down to the office?

I will find that out and let you know.

YL: Can rabbis do the intake? Can you deputize rabbis to do the intake for JF&CS and they don't have to see a JF&CS professional for paperwork? Rabbis would go through some training, not that big a deal.

LL: A really good idea. Maintain confidentiality. Paperwork reduced. Service availability, just directing people there and the conversation happens in a place that's a little more comfortable and respectful of their privacy.

That is a fantastic idea and I will pass it along.

Q7: Greatest needs? Counseling is good, it's a big need. Rent & mortgage assistance.

I've had requests over the years of people who can't afford to rent an apartment wanting a room to rent.

Occasionally see - and this is a matter of judgment - people who can't afford cleaning help. I'm not good at cleaning, I'm not able to clean. Sometimes you see people who need someone to come once a week. It's a luxury they can't afford, but it's really not a luxury. At the end of the day the kids are growing up in a house that's affecting their quality of life. It helps.

Do you see any bartering between families? Carpooling. There's a lot of that. There's pretty good help if someone's had a baby, people are good at that. If somebody's going through a rough time, a single parent for a while because of circumstances for a while, teenage girls will step in and take the kids for a while. You see a lot of things like that. Those things are extremely valuable and they can really only happen in a tight knit community.

Q8: Are there needs that aren't getting met? Big ticket items, it's education. That's the most stressful thing. There are some families that are quite proud and they don't want to go asking for handouts. I know from personal experience it's getting increasingly harder, because the schools are struggling.

What % if you lumped day school families, would you guess get some sort of tuition break? If you have two kids, full tuition at Epstein is \$30,000. You have two professional parents, they still would get some sort of assistance but they're probably paying a very large portion of that. There's a way to get that data, Federation should have that.

Q9: Deputizing rabbis in each congregation was a great idea . Think as big as you can. What would make your jobs to help people easier? What can we do to help you help? Streamline, deputizing is one way to streamline. I would like for a homey phone call, like I made to Merle. This woman I know suffers from mental illness. I know her many years. What she needs is one day a week someone comes, takes her out to go somewhere. The whole shpiel costs her \$20, subsidized from the Homemaker program. She's a needy individual. I called up Merle. JF&CS is doing their part, Merle says she'll pay some of it, I pay some of it, it's done. That quick homey help. What would she have had to do to get JF&CS to get someone to do that kind of help? There's discretion that a small mom and pop like Merle can do, JF&CS can't do, too institutionalized. How do we cut down that and make sure people get help they need without them getting turned off asking for help?

LL: How educated do you think we are about JF&CS programs? There are some programs that happen for only a brief period and then their focus changes. There might be programs we're not properly taking advantage of.

You're thinking some sort of program where someone from J Fed or JF&CS comes to the rebbeim and says here are our programs?

LL: Yeah.

YL: you know something, I don't have a point person at JF&CS. I know Lou (**Albert, Executive Director**) so very occasionally I will call him and ask him to direct me to someone. I don't have a contact person. Maybe this deputizing is to let every rabbi know here is your person. If you have a hard time identifying a person at JF&CS who is going to get the job done and be responsive to you, what do I do if there's a case and I don't know what to do? I avoid picking up the phone or I tell the person to call themselves.

LL: It's very difficult to navigate.

YL: if there's some kind of point person and deputize, that would work.

LL: I got a phone call from somebody who needed help and that very same day I got a call from Marcia Mermelstein (**at the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry**), when she was at working at Elderlink telling

me about a program. And that would have been the place to send these people to directly, and I did not have that information. I had no way to get back in touch with them and tell them. There are a variety of different programs. If it's difficult for us to keep abreast of these programs it's definitely difficult for some of these people facing the pressures they're facing.

YL: What about a volunteer matchmaking program? There are people out there who are volunteers who would love to do this kind of work, who would love to take an hour to help. It's just that us and them, we never met up. Is there some kind of connector for those who have a desire to volunteer Like who'll drive someone to the doctor?

No, not that I've ever heard. We hook up volunteers to stuff envelopes, organize, do stuff like that. That's a great idea, too. They probably get pretty tired of stacking cans on the shelf.

Is there anything else you'd like me to take back to Fed? There is a free loan, I don't know how burdensome it is. The downturn in 2008, I've heard of someone who's taken that out. **(Told about \$3000 loan program.)**

YL: So that needs to be out there for people to know. That's a nice little thing.

Appendix 5

Interview Highlights of Rabbi Menachem Greenblatt of Agudas Israel

Comments from the researcher printed in bold.

16 Oct 2013

Finding a therapist who understands orthodoxy is a concern. Someone who understands or who is familiar with it at least. That is a big thing. I'm always consulted about that.

Q1: We have 160 families. A number of them are members at more than one shul, so I would say maybe 150 full time and 10 what we call associate members that maybe their main synagogue is Young Israel or U. City Shul, but they maintain membership here cause they want to feel comfortable here and they come here sometimes.

Q2: The needs and the lifestyle of an orthodox family is much different than the national poverty level. You're talking about thousands and thousands of dollars that an orthodox family has to spend on kosher food and they don't have the option of McDonald's. Tuition, too. This is a good question. When you say struggling, do you mean they're not making it and they need assistance or they're just very, very tight and they really have to walk on eggshells but they'll make it until the end of the month? **Either one really, because both of those groups we might be able to help somehow.** Ok, I'm going to say about 15 families that could use outright assistance and another 25 families who live hand to mouth and when anything out of the ordinary comes up....you're talking about a number of the families have quite a few children. You're talking about clothing and you're talking about girls who can't shop just anywhere because they have to wear modest clothes. You are talking about families that dress nicely for Shabbat and Yontif, so things come up. So again like I said, 15 or so that require on-going assistance and another 25 that are very stressed in terms of their finances.

Q3: Sometimes they come to me directly for help, sometimes people come up to me and say, "I've got a friend, they wouldn't want me to talk to you, but....". I got a call yesterday from a woman....I actually have two women right now who really don't have a place to live. I put a call into Lou Albert (**Executive Director of Jewish Family & Children's Service**). One is a woman who has two high school age children. She's on disability. I'm at my end....I need to talk to Lou to figure some way to help her. I've got another woman, single mom, just lost her job and her house is being foreclosed on and she's out the door. So sometimes it comes in bunches. Before the holidays there are going to be more needs. I'm not going to tell you how often because it's hard to know, but some weeks I have a few, then sometimes I'll go a week or two without any. I have a charity fund. It doubles as a free loan fund – interest free. I make a campaign before the High Holidays and before Purim. I raise money, people give me nice contributions. I don't hoard it. In other words, I make sure.....I have about 10 or so families that I write checks to every Purim and High Holidays. So I have a fair amount of funds that come in that way from direct solicitation through emails or announcements. Additionally, once or twice a year on a yitzkor appeal, I say please consider my charity fund. Of if I have outright needs – someone just can't pay some bills – I'll say we've

got to help somebody out. I would say I'm writing roughly 100 checks per year. Sometimes they're repeat checks, sometimes multiple funds to the same family. It's not 100 different families.

Q4: They turn to me for help. A number of them, depending what their need is, will turn to JF&CS. I work with Lou, and I know that some of them will turn to JF&CS for help with utilities and the like. I don't know what the numbers are.

They will turn to Merle Hartstein's food pantry. They will turn to....well, I don't know if the Federation is a place to turn to outside of JF&CS. Not unless there's some loan money or grant money. **(Shared \$3,000 Jewish loan information with Rabbi Greenblatt, he did not know about it.)** This is great, especially if you have to replace your furnace or something. So, I'm sure there are a number of people who go to the Jewish Food Pantry. Again, people that go don't necessarily share that with me.

Outside the congregation within the orthodox community? I don't know that outside each rabbi's charity fund there is help. Maybe on occasion to a wealthy person in the community. Maybe. I can't give you any figures on that. In many cases people who have the means approach me and say I'd like to help, can I go through your fund? This way they get a tax write off. In that way, maybe there are people outside, but I don't know that that counts for a whole lot.

Within the secular community? I don't have any knowledge of that.

Q5: I think in terms of....it's easier for them to approach their rabbi. It's confidential. It's near. I don't think proximity is an issue. Confidentiality, yes. People would sooner come to me than to be seen picking up food packages. I know that before the holidays, if I call Lenny Kohn **(from Kohn's Kosher)** and say, Lenny....he gives. Sometimes he initiates it and calls me and says rabbi, how can I help? Maybe 10 families before the holidays. He'll take a box and he'll put some chickens and some roasts and some fish and give those.

Q6: It could be fear of recognition. I don't know that there's paperwork anywhere other than JF&CS. Merle Hartstein's place - she's an amazing woman, you should talk to her. **(She's definitely on my list, thank you.)** There is a fund that was started just maybe a couple of years ago. It's through the Vaad. It's to help families with wedding expenses for their children. It's called Hachnasas Kallal. They're dependent on contributions. I did announce that at one of my yitzkor speeches during the holidays; for people to send in contributions. I know that 3 families in our congregation that made weddings within several weeks of each other and they all were assisted on some level. Making weddings is expensive. There's the Diamond Meat Fund - they're butchers that retired a few years ago. Wedding dresses are collected by Faye Newman and Phyllis Shapiro. Rabbi Yari for centerpieces. Table and chairs, you call this number. We have a lot of great things.

Q7 & Q8: This is a broad stroke....it's hard when a person is in a hole financially. There are people who do need help with rent and mortgages and food and basics. There is that. I also know that there is a need for counseling on all levels. Let me just take a moment....the vast majority of children at my shul

attend Torah Prep. And I think that because it's a private school and because financially they don't have the means, they're not able to provide the kinds of social services counseling that larger more affluent private schools and public schools can. So if I could have a magic wand, I would like to....aside from helping financially any way I can – I like to think there'll come a time where financially people will find the right job – it's not a life sentence, but there'll be other people to take their place. I would love to see Federation – and I know that they do assist the day schools - I would like to see more assistance. Especially in the area of allowing them to create the kinds of programs they need to help the children, specifically in the way of special needs and counseling. I'm talking about beyond helping with scholarships. This is really something that is very difficult for the school to initiate without funds. They need a significant chunk of money. **Asked if Rabbi knew about St. Louis County Children's Service Fund.?** I know that JF&CS cut down their hours at Torah Prep, because my wife is at Esther Miller Bais Yaakov. For two years she had a woman from JF&CS that she dearly loved working with and my wife was very sad when JF&CS cut back her hours. **(They no longer have a School Based Consultant at all from JF&CS.)** I'd love to see, somehow, a community initiative whereby the schools in STL say we're talking about getting the funds to provide full time counselors on board. The school's (Torah Prep) got 245 students now. It's not small. A lot of the families are struggling. So when teachers alert parents to problems and say they need to do something for the child, the parent says we have no money for counseling. **(Told Rabbi about free counseling availability via St. Louis County Children's Service fund at area agencies.)** From time to time, people come to me with marital issues. I'm not a trained marriage counselor; I facilitate well. And I'll let them define the need and then I'll refer them, maybe to JF&CS and sometimes they'll say we're uncomfortable going to someone who's not intimately familiar with the needs of orthodox couples. Sometimes finances are an issue.

Q9: Who are the heads of subcommittees? Who are we talking about at the Federation? What are they doing with this? I would address this on two levels. On the level of the individual family, I think the rabbis could best identify who those families are and I'm not going to suggest how it could be done, or under what modality, but the rabbi of each congregation certainly has a list of people who need financial assistance. If the Federation could be helpful that way, whether it's to take the call from the rabbi and say, "you know, this family needs some help" or if the Federation wants to discretely allocate some money that can go through the rabbi's funds, I'm sure the Federation would have a way to do that in a way that's comfortable with auditing or whatever they have to do. That's a way that could help individuals. I'm getting up and appealing for donations; we're overtaxing the same people. If we could tap into some communal funds, that would be great. On an organizational level, I really feel that the day schools need more assistance than they're getting. I think it would behoove the Federation to do their research by connecting with other communities throughout the country. I have children in Detroit, Baltimore, Boston....I know that in large communities the day schools are being funded on a much greater level. It's easier to tap into the funds. I know what the flip side's going to be. They're going to say the orthodox community in St. Louis is smaller so we're not getting the same level of participation. Well, if the Federation truly wanted to service the entire community, the recognition that we do have a small community, hence we do have needs that aren't being met.... I feel comfortable making that suggestion to the Federation. I just feel the schools are beyond the level of great. In many cases each paycheck is a struggle. All the schools are struggling. So, again, on an individual level I'd like to see if the

Federation would talk to rabbis...or have some program where rabbis could funnel in those names. And on an organizational level I'd really love to see the Federation play a bigger role in the schools. It's our future.