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WINTER 2019

JFED CONNECTS



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JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS **LEADERSHIP**



FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO,
Andrew Rehfeld

Personal statement on the move from CEO of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis to the Presidency of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

In December, after over six years of service as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, I announced my resignation in order to become President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). I want to share some personal reflections about this exciting opportunity, and what it means both for St. Louis and HUC-JIR.

I came to Federation after a process of recruitment that began in January of 2012. I had not intended to leave my prior career as a political science professor at Washington University in St. Louis. However, I saw the role as an opportunity to support an important, vibrant Jewish community.

North American Jewish communities are facing complex challenges; and, I believed and still believe that Jewish Federations are uniquely situated to address them. Jewish Federations were set up to address urgent existential threats characteristic of the 20th century. As the threats have changed, Federations have been significantly challenged. In times of dynamic change, legacy institutions must recognize the different nature of the threat before them and be willing to change appropriately to address them.

In St. Louis, through a truly inspirational staff, board leadership, and philanthropic investors, we reimagined a legacy institution to take its strength and reposition it as a community development organization. This is an organization that operates “bottom-up,” engaging people first, and seeking collaborative partnerships to improve our entire region.

This engagement-first, community building strategy is much different from the long-standing view that Federations were simply fundraising organizations.

**We do not just fundraise,
we seek investors to help us
achieve our mission.**

And that mission is to preserve and enhance Jewish life in St. Louis, in Israel, and anywhere there is a need.

We help individuals lead lives of dignity, meaning, and purpose. We build connections to our tradition, our people, and Israel, so that Jewish engagement and service to others becomes part of a life well lived.

Oh, and by the way, that work requires significant philanthropic investment. Just like any other non-profit organization.

Therefore, while we may no longer be simply a fundraising organization, our donors' philanthropic support remains critically important and central to what we do.

By inspiring our donors to invest based on our mission beyond “raising money,” we have achieved real results. Since adopting our community-development, engagement-first framework, we have attracted far greater financial support and significantly outpaced our peer Federations throughout North America.

Coming from the outside enabled me to look at old problems in new ways and develop a new vision to deliver on our mission.

While the vision may have been mine, the achievements of our Federation are not mine alone. They are the achievements of a team comprised of the 65 individuals who work tirelessly in partnership with dozens of volunteer committee members to inspire, educate, serve, and connect our community.

They are the achievements of the security team members who warmly welcome people at our front desk and our support staff who make sure our administration runs smoothly.

They are the achievements of the fiscal team that helped us achieve a 4-star Charity Navigator rating last year.

They are the achievements of our marketing team that creates impactful and inspiring communications.

They are the achievements of our facilities and operations team that ensures our building is a welcoming place to be.

They are the achievements of our community impact team (what we used to call “planning & allocations”) that identifies our community's needs and invests our resources for maximal impact: saving lives, supporting those in need, and connecting individuals to Jewish life, here in St. Louis, in Israel, and around the world.

They are the achievements of the educational team of the Center for Jewish Learning who tell the story of our people and inspire about our tradition.

They are the achievements of our engagement team who connect people to Israel, to PJ Library, and to leadership development through the Millstone Institute.

They are the achievements of the team at the Holocaust Museum & Learning Center that is well on its way to establishing a new museum to fight hate and antisemitism today, preserve the legacy of our St. Louis survivors, and ensure that the lessons of that dark time are never forgotten – for our own community and our entire region

They are the achievements of the NORC team who help hundreds of seniors combat loneliness and isolation.

They are the achievements of our development team who help inspire the philanthropic investment of our community to serve others.

And they the achievements of are our officers, our Boards of Directors and Trustees, our Women's Philanthropy team, and the more than 500 – yes 500! – individuals who over the last 12 months decided to get involved in our work in some way.

I may be leaving, but the work of the Federation will remain; and I am confident it will remain strong.

Given the importance of the work we are doing and the dynamic team now in place, it was not an easy decision to pursue the presidency of HUC-JIR. But when I received an invitation to apply for the job, I recognized the enormous potential of HUC-JIR to shape the future of professional leadership of the Jewish world, and through its graduates, to shape the future of the Jewish people globally.

The opportunity to lead HUC-JIR was appealing to me because it allows me to return to academia and bring together different parts of my professional and personal life.

At the same time, I applied to this position with intense humility, recognizing that while I am a committed Reform Jew, I am not a rabbi or cantor. Could someone with my experience and background lead the flagship seminary of the Reform Movement?

HUC-JIR is a broad institution of higher learning with graduate programs that train students to become rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, Jewish non-profit management professionals, scholars, and pastoral counselors. I hope that my wide-ranging professional background and personal engagement with Jewish life will bring to HUC-JIR a new kind of leadership that will help energize and inspire its extraordinary faculty, staff, and students across all programs and all four campuses.

HUC-JIR is a uniquely positioned institution with the resources, history, reach, and most importantly, the commitment of its alumni, the thousands of professionals it has trained who have become some of the most important Jewish leaders in the world today. I am thrilled by the opportunity to work collaboratively with a dynamic team of professionals, deans, program directors, academic administrators, and faculty in Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem to shape the future of professional Jewish leadership by inspiring, educating, and learning from a new generation of students.

I can only hope to live up to the historic legacy of transformational leadership that characterized those who held this position before me, from its founders, Isaac Mayer Wise and Stephen S. Wise, to its most recent president of blessed memory, Aaron D. Panken.

As we prepare to leave St. Louis later in 2019, I have to end with a more personal note.

This city has been our home since 2001. Along with Federation, key institutions have created deep roots for us. Central Reform Congregation, Kol Rinah, Temple Israel, and B'nai Amoona, along with Hillel at WashU and JCRC, have created deep personal connections and shaped our family's Jewish identities. Washington University of St. Louis, Saint Louis University, Crossroads College Prep, and Flynn Park Elementary School shaped our family's educational and professional lives. These institutions and the people who welcomed our family created a deep sense of belonging for us; they will continue to draw us back to our region.

I am truly honored and humbled to have been selected to become the 13th president of HUC-JIR. I will carry the warmth of the St. Louis community with me as I approach this new role with the same three-step process I took when I came to our Federation as an outsider over six years ago: to listen, listen, and listen to the key stakeholders who make HUC-JIR the premier Jewish seminary in North America, a world renowned institution of higher Jewish learning that is dedicated to the formation of academic, spiritual, and professional leadership for Reform Judaism and the wider world.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF ST. LOUIS LEADERSHIP



FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR, Gerald P. Greiman

We often hear the term Jewish pluralism in the context of both Israel and diaspora Jewry. But, what does it mean?

To me, it means viewing Judaism as a big tent, and recognizing and valuing, on an equal basis, all the various ways in which Jews choose to live out their Jewish identity, including but not limited to participating in the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and/or Reconstructionist streams of Judaism.

Jewish pluralism is alive and well in the United States. Here, 14 percent of affiliated Jews belong to Orthodox synagogues, while 86 percent belong to Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist congregations. In the United States, Rabbis from all of the streams perform weddings and conversions, and American Jews take various approaches towards keeping kosher, observance of the Sabbath, and other Jewish practices.

In Israel, the situation is vastly different at present. Most Jews in Israel are either Orthodox or secular. The Jewish identity of secular Jews largely is defined by the fact that they live in Israel. Matters such as marriage and conversion are controlled by the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate. And, the Chief Rabbinate, backed by the Israeli government, regularly seeks to impose conformance with Orthodox practices on all Israeli Jews, e.g., no public transportation on Shabbat and sex-segregated access to the Western Wall.

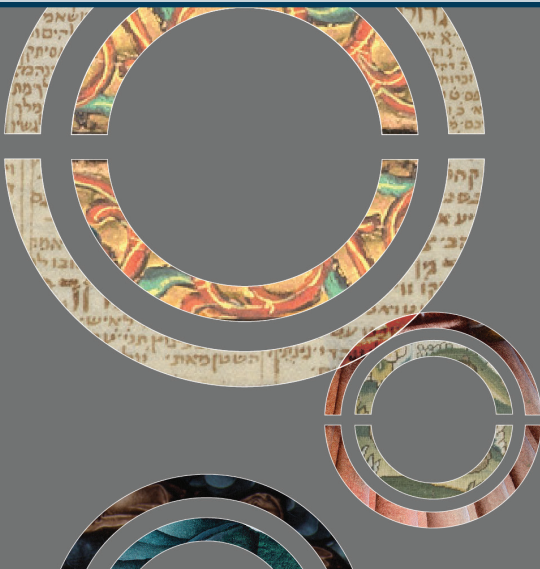
However, things are changing in Israel. The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) has a growing membership, composed of both native Israelis and North American immigrants.

There presently are approximately 50 Reform congregations within Israel. According to a recent study, over 10 percent of Israeli Jews identify as Reform or Conservative.

Notably, Orthodox dominance over Jewish religious life in Israel is not due to widespread popular support for adherence to strict Orthodox practices. Rather, it largely is a by-product of the Israeli parliamentary system of government, requiring coalitions among multiple political parties to form a government, including ultra-Orthodox parties that demand Orthodox control over religious practices as the price of joining a coalition. Also, Israel, upon its founding, adopted a system inherited from the Ottoman Empire, in which there is no separation between religion and state, and each religious community is subject to state control of its practices.

If, as it should be, Israel is to be viewed as the Nation-State of the Jewish People – those living in Israel as well as those in the diaspora – Israel must recognize and honor the full range of approaches to Judaism found in the big tent, not just Orthodox practices.

Among the core commitments of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis are working to ensure that Israel remains a vibrant democratic homeland for the Jewish people, and to preserve its democratic civil society and pluralistic character. For many years, Federation has been investing in and supporting activities and organizations that promote Jewish pluralism in Israel. And, we will continue to do so. Again, for Israel to be the Nation-State of the Jewish People, it must fulfill that role for all Jews in Israel and around the world, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and secular.



2019 WINTER/SPRING ADULT EDUCATION COURSES

REGISTER ONLINE AT JFEDSTL.ORG/ADULT-EDUCATION

COMMUNITY IMPACT UPDATE

PLANNING

The Measuring Community Impact Initiative is a long-term learning process to determine how Jewish organizations define and aspire to achieve a set of shared results. In a collaborative and inclusive process, the Jewish Federation of St. Louis aims to make a communal and organizational culture shift toward a continuous improvement mindset. In order to make real change in our community, we must be able to measure and understand if the work we are doing is meeting needs.

Measuring and evaluating community impact will provide a number of important benefits:

- Better meeting the needs of our constituents and community
- Understanding if we are meeting our missions or the intended outcomes of our work
- Identifying areas for growth and adjustment to improve our work
- Increasing our ability to tell the story of our impact, leading to more dollars raised to support our work
- Making informed decisions to be more effective and efficient with our time and resources

A pilot of the Measuring Community Impact initiative will launch soon. **To learn more about the initiative, contact Emily Bornstein, Manager of Impact & Evaluation, at EBornstein@JFedSTL.org.**

AGENCY HIGHLIGHT

Congratulations to The J for putting together Sababa, St. Louis' first Jewish arts and culture festival! On October 14, more than 3,000 community members came to Sababa to celebrate Jewish culture in all of its diversity.



The festival featured local, regional, and national visual art exhibitors, culinary experiences, and musical performances, as well as activities from local Jewish organizations.

FUNDING

The 2014 Jewish Community Study estimates that 48 percent of all married couples in St. Louis Jewish households are interfaith. In October, the Board of Directors approved five grants to support interfaith inclusion work in the St. Louis Jewish Community over the next three years. The funds are coming from an endowment generously established by Jonas Weil (of blessed memory) to fund interfaith inclusion efforts.

FUNDING cont.

Central Reform Congregation, Congregation Temple Israel, Congregation Shaare Emeth, Kol Rinah, and United Hebrew Congregation will be receiving the funds and using them to create welcoming, engaging, comfortable, and educational spaces for interfaith couples and families.

ANYTHING GRANTS

Applications for Anything Grants from the Staenberg Family Foundation are due by February 14. The Foundation will distribute about \$50,000 in grants ranging between \$1,000-\$5,000.

Each grant will total one half of the applicant organization's project budget, and grantees will be responsible for raising the remaining dollars needed to complete their projects. Eligible grant applications could be, as the name says, for anything, including things like hiring a nonprofit consultant; purchasing technology; staff or board professional development; building beautification or improvement; or one-time programmatic needs.

Find out more at JFedSTL.org/Anything-Grants.



ANYTHING GRANTS™
STAENBERG FAMILY FOUNDATION

WAFJA APPLICATIONS OPEN

Applications open February 4 for grants to help elderly. Women's Auxiliary Foundation for Jewish Aged, a supporting foundation of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, is now accepting applications for its fifth funding cycle. St. Louis area 501(c)3 organizations with a mission and priority of Jewish elderly in the community at-large are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted from a professional employed by a St. Louis non-profit working in conjunction with the Jewish community.

To fill out an application, visit JFedSTL.org/Womens-Auxiliary-Foundation. Applications close March 18, 2019 (no exceptions).

Women's Auxiliary Foundation for Jewish Aged is focused on providing financial support for programs and organizations that ensure the dignity and honor of the Jewish elderly in the community at-large. Once applications are submitted, we may contact you with questions or request additional information.

If you have any questions, please contact Lori Kabrun-Berry at 314-442-3828 or LKabrun-Berry@JFedSTL.org.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

With your support, we exceeded our \$10 million goal for the 2018 Annual Campaign! **THANK YOU!**

Make sure to look out for our Annual Campaign Donor Booklet in an upcoming issue of the *Jewish Light*. We are proud to be able to celebrate and thank all of the people who supported our Annual Campaign and made an IMPACT!

Each one of you has made it possible for us to continue to help individuals in our community lead lives of dignity, meaning, and purpose.

You are the reason we can continue to meet the needs of our community – expanding and strengthening an engaged, vibrant, and flourishing Jewish community; securing our safety and well-being; developing our financial, human resources, and infrastructure; and strengthening our connection to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

For full results of the Annual Campaign, check out our Campaign Dashboard at JFed100Days.org.



PIECES OF OUR COMMUNITY

The great work being done by 29 local Jewish women's organizations will be featured and celebrated during Pieces of Our Community, taking place February 21 at Hilton St. Louis Frontenac Hotel, Ambassador Ballroom, 1335 S. Lindbergh Blvd.

Ruchi Koval will be speaking on "Finding Your Niche" and how each person has a unique piece in the fabric of our Jewish community. Ruchi, a graduate of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland and the Beth Jacob Jerusalem Institute, runs women's character-development workshops and is a certified parenting coach, motivational speaker, Jewish Women's Renaissance Project trip leader, and blogger at outoftheorthobox.com.

Cost is \$36. Enjoy food from all of the local kosher caterers; valet parking is included.

Register at JFedSTL.org/events/Community or call Katie Sheldon at 314-442-3751.

BOARD NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR FEDERATION BOARD

Jewish Federation of St. Louis has opened nominations of candidates for consideration for Federation Board and committee membership.

Per Federation by-laws, a committee consisting of six members of the Board of Directors and six members of the Board of Trustees will be meeting through mid-May to develop the 2019 Board Slate.

All candidates should have the following attributes:

- A demonstrated interest in and active commitment to the Jewish community.
- A demonstrated interest in the work of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis and its affiliate and beneficiary agencies.
- The willingness, time and ability to assume leadership responsibilities.

All nominations are kept in strict confidence.

Please access the online form at JFedSTL.org/Board-Nominations to submit your recommendations. If you have any questions, please contact Development Associate Jayne Langsam at JLangsam@JFedSTL.org or 314-442-3870.