

# St. Paul Jewish Federation Community Planning Process

Priority 1: Warm, Welcoming Connections



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

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The Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul initiated the Community Planning Process in the spring of 2012. Through the leadership of a Steering Committee chaired by Randi Roth, the Federation facilitated listening sessions to learn more about what St. Paul's Jewish community was thinking and what people wanted to share. This process engaged more than 350 people and multiple demographics within the community. Through analysis of data from these listening sessions, a guiding principle and five community priorities emerged.

### **Guiding Principle**

To engage all St. Paul Jewish agencies, institutions and synagogues to build a vibrant, cohesive and inclusive Jewish community in Greater St. Paul. To be successful, lay and professional leaders will intentionally work together in ever-increasing collaboration and with common purpose.

### **Five Priorities**

- **Build the foundation of community: Warm, welcoming connections**
- Engage the next generation: Reach out – *l'dor vador*
- Inspire giving: Create the commitment to sustain a vibrant and caring Jewish St. Paul
- Strengthen Jewish education: Find and implement effective models for today's world
- Enhance cooperation between St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities

Research and recommendation panels were convened to identify the current state of affairs, learn from others engaged in similar work locally and nationally, identify realistic goals for the Greater St. Paul Jewish community, and make recommendations for a path forward.

Panel recommendations will be presented to and may be implemented by Federation agencies, independent agencies and bi-city agencies, synagogues and individuals in St. Paul's Jewish community. These intended users are encouraged to use and apply the recommendations in a way that best fits their constituency and organization.

Each recommendation will have an evaluation framework developed to start tracking the process and progress of how the recommendations are both received and used to better the St. Paul Jewish community.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – WARM AND WELCOMING CONNECTIONS PANEL

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Our panel focused on building the foundation of warm and welcoming communities. Listening Session data related to this topic revealed that people's concerns were community exclusivity, unsatisfactory outreach, and a general lack of cooperation among Jewish organizations. Our charge was to develop recommendations to strengthen the Greater St. Paul Jewish community by connecting community members with each other and to our synagogues, agencies and community organizations.

We began our work with a review of literature and learning from community organizations engaged in outreach and community building. We surfaced five key principles that emerged from the research. Welcoming:

- is active not passive,
- is person-centered, not organization-centered,
- includes multiple approaches and ways for people to engage,
- unites people around a shared purpose, and
- incorporates *Tikkun Olam* through Torah, *Avodah* and *G'milut Chasadim*.

Guided by our charge, the research conducted and the principles identified, the panel members propose five strategies with supporting recommendations:

**Strategy #1:** Utilize technology for communication and engagement.

Recommendations include developing a centralized digital hub, social media, and shared contact information.

**Strategy #2:** Provide an introduction, orientation, and connection for community members. Recommendations include a video tour of Greater St. Paul, home hospitality, and partnerships with Jewish vendors.

**Strategy #3:** Establish concierge position to facilitate connections and transitions. Recommendations include using a concierge to link people to community resources and allocating ongoing funds to maintain continuity of the concierge function.

**Strategy #4:** Promote a sense of community. Recommendations include increasing collaboration and programming among or across Jewish organizations (agencies, synagogues and other organizations).

**Strategy #5:** Create an additional panel focused on increasing the size of the Greater St. Paul Jewish community. The recommendations include recruiting people from outside of the Greater St. Paul area and people within the area who are not currently engaged.

## THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

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### **Listening Sessions**

The Board of Directors initiated the Community Planning Process in the spring of 2012. Through the leadership of a steering committee chaired by Randi Roth, the Federation facilitated listening sessions to learn more about what the St. Paul Jewish community was thinking and what people wanted to share. This process engaged more than 350 people and multiple demographics within the community. Community volunteers acted as moderators and note-takers for the listening sessions, asked a set of 12 questions at the meetings, and had participants fill out an exit survey at the conclusion of the session.

Through the course of 37 listening sessions, participants included agency members, staff, volunteers, donors, and various other community members. All ages participated, from teenagers to individuals over 100 years old. Most participants were born in the United States, Israel and the former Soviet Union. There was diversity in the areas participants lived, marital status, sexual orientation, income and synagogue membership. It was a challenge to engage those who were unaffiliated, meaning those who did not have a membership at a synagogue or Jewish agency.

This phase was led by Rainbow Research who provided an in-depth analysis of listening session data and survey results.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Steering Committee and Leadership Team met to analyze the data and identify priority areas for the community.

What emerged from these discussions included an overarching guiding principle and five priority areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Documentation and data created and shared by Rainbow Research can be found here: [COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS FINDINGS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

## Guiding Principle

To engage all St. Paul Jewish agencies, institutions and synagogues to build a vibrant, cohesive and inclusive Jewish community in Greater St. Paul. To be successful, lay and professional leaders will intentionally work together in ever-increasing collaboration and with common purpose.

## The Five Priorities

- Priority 1. Build the foundation of community: Warm, welcoming connections
- Priority 2. Engage the next generation: Reach out – *l'dor vador*
- Priority 3. Inspire giving: Create the commitment to sustain a vibrant and caring Jewish St. Paul
- Priority 4. Strengthen Jewish education: Find and implement effective models for today's world
- Priority 5. Enhance cooperation between St. Paul and Minneapolis Jewish communities

To this end, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and Task Forces forged a shared, aspirational vision and overarching goals, and they identified a series of issues that impact engagement within each of the different ages and stages, as well as community-wide.

## Research and Recommendations Panels

Research and recommendation panels were convened to identify the current state of affairs, learn from others engaged in similar work locally and nationally, identify realistic goals for St. Paul's Jewish community, and make recommendations for a path forward. The committee process would include 8-10 meetings whereby committee members would follow a 7-step approach to research:

1. Define the current state of affairs regarding the issue.
2. Specify scope of work.
3. Learn from evidence by:
  - Examining how other Jewish communities have approached this issue,
  - Examining how non-Jewish communities have approached this issue, and
  - Listening to views of those with deep experience in our community.
4. Make sure we are staying true to the guiding principle in our work.
5. Develop recommendations: (a) realistic aspirational goal for our community; and, (b) realistic path to achieve goal.
6. Communicate back to community. (Make recommendations; write report on what was considered, what was chosen, why.)
7. Evaluate efforts.

## WARM AND WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

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The charge of Committee 1 is to research and develop recommendations that help to create the foundation of the St. Paul Jewish community by creating a warm, welcoming environment and connecting with newcomers, existing community members and unengaged Jewish people in St. Paul.

Researchers and authors from diverse fields such as political science, organizational development, social work, and psychiatry have written extensively over the last decade about the importance of community. These authors argue that a sense of belonging to a community is as important as our relationships with family members, friends, and programs. We are inherently social beings who need family, friends and community to support our healthy development (Perry and Szalavitz, 2010). Noble-Carr, Baker, and McArthur (2013) found that people require a number of dynamic and complex relationships throughout the course of their lives in order to meet four needs:

- connection to people who care about us,
- connection to someone we care about,
- connection to a higher power, and
- feeling a sense of belonging.

Block (2008) synthesized the research of leading scholars and determined in his book, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, that it is imperative that we take on the challenge of transforming communities often based on isolation and self-interest into communities that place importance on connectedness and caring for the whole (Block, 2008).

Our isolation occurs because western culture, our individualistic narrative, the inward attention of our institutions and our professions, and the messages from our media all fragment us. We are broken into pieces. One aspect of our fragmentation is the gaps between sectors of our cities and neighborhoods; businesses, schools, social service organizations, churches, government operate mostly in their own worlds. Each piece is working hard on its own purpose, but parallel effort added together does not make a community. Our communities are separated into silos; they are a collection of institutions and programs operating near one another but not overlapping or touching. The work is to overcome this fragmentation. (p. 2)

## The Current Situation in St. Paul

St. Paul's Jewish community has approximately 10,000 members, a significant percentage of whom are not engaged with the work of Federation, agencies<sup>2</sup> or synagogues. This planning process aims to serve Jewish people living in the St. Paul metropolitan area and the surrounding suburbs. The planning process will serve both engaged and unengaged Jews, defined as those who are members or participate in agency, synagogue or other institutional programs and activities and those who do not participate in these functions. This section contains data collected that relates specifically to the focus of this committee.

## Baseline Data

Through the analysis of the listening sessions, several themes emerged as benefits and community values. These include:

**Benefits.** A majority of responses during the listening process indicated that they value inclusive and caring community with welcoming and supportive institutions. The responses indicated that people valued the following in the Greater St. Paul Jewish community:

- Closely knit, inclusive and caring community with opportunities to build long-standing friendships and broad relationship networks
- Community institutions that are welcoming, accepting and supportive
- Many opportunities for volunteering, community engagement and social justice related activities
- Good place to raise children, grow up, or retire
- Brings together people of diverse interests and backgrounds

## Concerns

**Community Exclusivity and Unsatisfactory Outreach:** Participants are concerned about what they see as insufficient outreach by our community to newcomers, the unaffiliated, youth, and diverse segments of the community including persons who are GLBTQ and secular Jews. A related concern is that we have not done enough or are not very effective in marketing and communicating about our community's Jewish organizations, institutions and groups, and what they have to offer. Participants are also concerned that because life-long residents of our community travel in narrow and exclusive social circles, newcomers and persons raised elsewhere feel left out and unwelcome.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the term 'agencies' refers to Jewish agencies funded by the Federation. Jewish institutions not funded by the Federation are referred to as 'organizations'.



**Lack of Cooperation Between Jewish Organizations and Communities:**

Participants expressed concern about duplication of services and the need for greater collaboration between and among St. Paul synagogues and Jewish agencies.

As seen in the data, members of St. Paul's Jewish community think that community connections are both a strength of the community and a challenge. To ensure a vibrant and engaged Jewish community in the future, it is imperative to address the barriers and capitalize on the many strengths and opportunities that exist as a matter of urgency.

**Opportunities and Challenges**

Committee members discussed the baseline data and their own experiences, personal and professional, and identified the following opportunities and challenges:

**Warm and welcoming connections**

In Minnesota, it can be a challenge to become connected when relocating here. We learned in Galit Breen's TC Jewfolk article ([Confessions of an Unaffiliated Jew](#)) how hard it is to truly engage and connect with community. Creating a more welcoming and engaging community is an opportunity for St. Paul's Jewish community to set itself apart.

**Lack of cooperation**

Historically, a lack of cooperation, collaboration and communication among Jewish synagogues and agencies has impacted the ability to strategize for the community. By engaging in joint planning and programming, we have the opportunity to develop future leadership and increase engagement.

**Multiple barriers to participation**

Many Jews have difficulty accessing programs and services. Barriers include high costs of participation, limited programming offered in outlying geographic areas, and institutional limitations. We have the opportunity to support a shift to person-based programming that meets people where they are.

**Fragmented communication**

Many community members have difficulty accessing information about programs and services being offered in a user-friendly format. Others report being bombarded by an overload of information. We have an opportunity to support cooperation and new and deepened connections through collaborative marketing and increased coordination.

**Research Approach and Process**

As described previously, each committee has been charged with following a seven-step approach to research. This section will outline each committee meeting and the approach,

including defining the scope of the issue, researching the issue and developing recommendations. This report will outline how the committee suggests taking actionable steps to making the recommendations a reality and evaluating the efforts.

**Meeting 1.** Committee members discussed things such as scope and outlined what welcoming looked like during their experiences in St. Paul's Jewish community.

**Meeting 2.** Committee members continued to define the scope, goals and focus of the Warm, Welcoming Communities Committee. The committee also started to discuss the direction and ways in which it might effectively research welcoming. During the meeting, the committee completed a research exercise on how welcoming is done in non-Jewish communities. During these conversations, committee members started to define what it meant to be a welcoming community, identifying themes such as having a layer of depth to welcoming and a clear purpose.

**Meetings 3 and 4.** Committee members finalized the focus and approach to creating welcoming recommendations. During this meeting, committee members reviewed information on other Jewish communities. At the end of the meeting, committee members brainstormed potential recommendations based on the research, and they generated a list of community leaders to talk to regarding their deep experiences in the St. Paul Jewish community.

**Meeting 5.** During this meeting, the committee reviewed Michael Patton's recommendation handouts and discussed how these could be used to help develop and report the panel's ideas. The meeting also reviewed Wendy's interview with Donald Gault of Ramsey County and the interviews done with leaders and agency executives in St. Paul's Jewish community. Finally, the committee agreed to focus on four primary realistic, aspirational, and actionable areas of recommendations.

**Meeting 6.** A draft report was written between Meetings 5 and 6. Committee members reviewed the draft, tightening language, clarifying the vision and identifying sections that needed more explanation. A plan was devised for revising the report and developing the public presentation.

**Meeting 7.** Committee members presented their process and recommendations to the Leadership Team.

**Meeting 8.** Committee members integrated feedback from the Leadership Team to create a final report. A strategy was developed for sharing recommendations with synagogues and agencies.

## RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

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Five Jewish communities, three Jewish organizations, four non-Jewish organizations and several examples within the St. Paul Jewish community were reviewed to understand how others have addressed the challenge of building community connections.

### **Jewish Communities**

The Jewish Communities reviewed were: 1) Durham Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2) Berkeley, California, 3) Tucson, Arizona, 4) Denver and Boulder, Colorado, and 5) Detroit, Michigan. Below we highlight the three communities discussed in depth.

1. **Durham Chapel Hill, North Carolina:** The committee reviewed the Durham Chapel Hill (DCH) Federation's Strategic Plan. The focus was on mobility and its impact on people's sense of belonging to a Jewish community, engaging in ways other than religiously, and tapping into the need for connections as a powerful way to connect newcomers. The DCH Federation recommendations included: 1) Build Community by Building Connections, 2) Build a Services Platform to Help Those in Need, 3) Achieve Long Term Financial Viability, and 4) Establish Operational Excellence.
2. **Berkeley, California:** Beth El's strategic plan highlighted the following goals: expand membership reach and retention, build financial stability, strengthen volunteer-staff partnerships, improve communications, and expand investment in intergenerational programming. An intended outcome was to create a new synagogue culture focused on engaging beyond annual dues and membership, creating space for shared learning, teamwork and communal observance.
3. **Tucson, Arizona:** The Strategic Engagement Plan of the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona outlined four goals: 1) Ensure a continuum of social, cultural, religious, spiritual and educational programming that increases/optimizes engagement at every age and stage, 2) Increase access to formal and informal quality Jewish experiences, 3) Strengthen coordination, collaboration, and communication between Federation, agencies and synagogues, and 4) Strengthen marketing and communication through effective utilization of technology.

Interviews with former Tucson Federation employees were shared with committee members. As a result of the Strategic Engagement Plan, a Jewish concierge position was created to increase programming related to welcoming interfaith families and creating programming in high demand such as PJ Library, Shalom Baby, and a new LGBTQ inclusion project.

## The St. Paul Jewish Community

1. **Mount Zion Strategic Plan:** Themes included the importance of strengthening connections and creating new opportunities for connections, inviting member participation and support for each other, enhancing effective communication and inspiring financial support.
2. **Community Interviews:** Interviews with agency leaders and rabbis in the St. Paul Jewish community generated a deeper understanding of the work agencies and synagogues are doing to be welcoming. Themes heard through these interviews included:
  - A large part of welcoming is to be friendly and accessible in the organization
  - Use of effective social media is essential
  - Reaching a wide audience requires having a layered approach of engagement. These layers are to build energy around an idea or program, engage people to participate in that program and help to embed them into that program and other parts of the community
  - Programs and events need to be person centered
  - Provide opportunities for local community members to be involved whether through volunteering or working.

## Non-Jewish organizations

1. **Trans-Action:** The committee read a piece (transACTION, Institute for Welcoming Resources: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) about welcoming in religious contexts. This article specifically focused on welcoming LGBT audiences in a Christian community. The discussion of the article centered around making transgender people feel welcome in the community, creating all-gender facilities, creating an outreach plan that is inclusive, and making sure to use welcoming and inclusive language.
2. **Welcoming America:** This article (Raum, Clinton School of Public Service, 2011) focuses on nine case studies of an immigrant's integration into a new community. Key themes that we learned were that marketing can be used to create positive communities, and it's necessary to foster dialogue and relationship building into community settings.
3. **Religious Hospitality:** The committee read a piece by Peter Morales called "Religious Hospitality: A Spiritual Practice for Congregations". This article focused on what hospitality means in different religious settings. Key lessons from this article were that true hospitality is about reaching out to those you do not know. It is not a duty, but rather a practice, and hospitality goes beyond the safety of our own communities.

## Resources On Welcoming

1. **Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI)**: The committee reviewed the Jewish Outreach Institute’s “Field Guide: To an Inclusive Jewish Community”. This document highlights moments and encounters for the purpose of giving the right tools and creating nurturing, supportive Jewish communities. Several effective practices were identified ,including providing a voice for community members, a warm welcome, newcomer guidance and active invitations.
2. **Jewish Connection Partnership (JCP)**: Jewish Connection Partnership is a program of the Jewish Outreach Institute. A 2001 study of JCP programs revealed five steps to successful outreach. The five stages in this outreach are: 1) Developing community support, 2) Finding the people, 3) Reaching out, making contact with a positive personal connection, 4) Providing services tailored to the target group, and 5) Making the transition to the wider Jewish community.
3. **Big Tent Judaism**: Big Tent Judaism is a professional affiliate program of the Jewish Outreach Institute that has reached Jewish professionals across North America. JOI/Big Tent Judaism staff train Jewish communal professionals on how to address barriers and best welcome newcomers into the Jewish community. A key concept was to take Jewish life out to where people are, rather than waiting for them to walk through the door.
4. **Healthy Communities: Initiative for Peaceful Families and Connections**: The committee reviewed a conversation with Donald Gault, the Healthy Communities Section Manager. One aspect of the initiative’s work is making authentic connections.

We learned a lot about when welcoming fails and when it works.

Welcoming fails when...	Welcoming works when...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is no one to engage with new community members beyond the greeter</li> <li>• there are great activities you want to attend, but you realize you can’t afford to go, there is no one around to watch your kids, or you can’t attend without becoming a member</li> <li>• you wait for people to come to you</li> <li>• you show up but no one engages you in conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people feel like someone else made “space” for them in their lives</li> <li>• when the invitation is made more than once</li> <li>• when people feel they can come as they are</li> <li>• you get an invitation to an event and know you have someone to sit with</li> </ul>

## WELCOMING PRINCIPLES

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Through the research, the committee members identified four key principles used to guide the development of recommendations. We recognize that as society changes, welcoming changes. It is important to interpret these principles within the current context of the greater St. Paul community.

- 1) **Welcoming is active, not passive.** Effective welcoming provides opportunities for people to create meaningful relationships and connections. For example, in planning community events, the planners should not only post an invitation online or on Facebook, but directly reach out and invite people through direct phone calls or face-to-face interactions. Organizers should set goals to include people to their organization or event so as to reach beyond the usual suspects.
- 2) **Welcoming is person-centered, not organization-centered.** Being person-centered means that these recommendations focus on what community members need and want. For example, rather than putting on programs students may not be interested in, Minnesota Hillel allows students to create and build their own programming. The mission of Federation in this scenario is to equip each agency and synagogue with the ability to develop their skills to be even more community-centered.
- 3) **Welcoming has depth and layers, not “one size fits all”.** Welcoming effectively is a multi-pronged approach. Solutions are tailored to the specific needs of our varied community members. Multiple entry points will be created for people who may or may not already be engaged in the community. Finally, welcoming that has depth and layers can engage people in multiple ways, both formally and informally.
- 4) **Welcoming unites people around a shared purpose.** Welcoming should be centered on an idea or vision that engages people in the St. Paul’s Jewish community by creating multiple opportunities for Tikkun Olam through *tefillah* (study of Torah), *avodah* (work) and *g’milut chasadim* (loving deeds).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### **Vision**

Jewish community members in Greater St. Paul engage and connect to others in Jewish life and through a continuum of vibrant and meaningful social, cultural, religious, spiritual and educational experiences fostering enduring commitment to the Jewish community throughout the region and around the world.

### **Focus**

Our panel discussed the depth and breadth of Warm and Welcoming Communities early in our research. We decided to focus our research and recommendations on creating connections for new and existing community members. We see the need for a comprehensive communication strategy and process for outreach to reach all segments of our community.

We recognize the need to recruit Jews to our community and to engage completely unaffiliated individuals and households, but we feel that the scope of that issue, an important subset of warm and welcoming community, needs its own in-depth research by another panel.

### **Strategies and Recommendations**

The following strategies and recommendations are essential to achieving our vision and goal. All work together to create a multi-layered, in-depth approach to supporting warm and welcoming connections for our very diverse Greater St. Paul Jewish community.

We are recommending five major strategies to serve multiple and diverse needs of our community: 1) utilize technology for communication and engagement, 2) provide an introduction, orientation, and connection for community members, 3) establish a concierge position to facilitate connections and transitions, and 4) promote community-wide programming. Each major strategy has recommendations for implementation, and 5) create an additional panel focused on increasing the size of the Greater St. Paul Jewish community. Agencies and synagogues will have the opportunity to determine and participate in whichever recommendations work best for them.

**1. Utilize technology for communication and engagement** – It is crucial to create a more customized and targeted community-wide approach to communicating information about programs, services, and activities. We will use this communication approach and social media platforms as a catalyst for enhanced engagement.

### *Recommendations*

- Develop a centralized easy-to-use portal, central hub or website with applications and resources to market all programming for different target groups.
- Utilize social media platforms to inform community members of events and programs.
- Develop a current database of emails and mailing addresses of the greater St. Paul Jewish community that can be **shared** by synagogues and other Jewish organizations to enable effective program marketing.
- Invest in and train agencies and synagogue staff members to more effectively use social media for marketing.

### *Research Basis*

This recommendation has its basis in several areas of research. The panel gained insight from the Federation of Southern Arizona's Strategic Engagement Plan and from interviews with leaders in the community. These communities and individuals stressed the importance of using technology in an effective manner. The transACTION article highlighted the importance of outreach that is inclusive and welcoming to diverse populations.

### *Implementation*

To effectively implement these strategies, it will be important that there be funding along with a coordinated effort across the community. We recommend the following key initiatives for successful implementation:

- a. Revamp a greater St. Paul Jewish community website funded by the Federation that promotes connections among organizations, agencies, synagogues and community members.
- b. Collaborate with entities such as TC Jewfolk (Jewfolk Media) to leverage their expertise and influence while highlighting programming, services and resources available in St. Paul.
- c. Fund the development of shared resources to train staff across the community in the areas of marketing communications and social media.

## **2. Provide an introduction, orientation, and connection for community members –**

The Greater St. Paul Jewish community should provide multiple entry points for all community members. These should include affordable opportunities for formal and informal programming that takes place in the city and suburbs of greater St. Paul.



### *Recommendations*

- Create a video tour of the Greater St. Paul Jewish Community that will inform newcomers and the greater community about varied resources available.
- Develop a platform to connect people in the community for Shabbat dinner, holidays and other special occasions.
- Develop partnerships to provide Jewish products (i.e. challah, coupons to kosher restaurants, etc.) to community members.

### *Research Basis*

From the research on immigrant integration (Raum, 2011) and the Jewish Outreach Institute, the panel learned how important it is to create and facilitate integration and connection efforts in a community. Guidance to newcomers was found to be particularly important. In Tucson's Concierge Program, a primary duty of the concierge was to make connections for newcomers. Similarly, the "Shalom Milwaukee" program was centered on connecting newcomers to different congregations or agencies that fit their interests.

### *Implementation*

- a. Fund the development of a compelling and light-hearted Jewish community video tour that will be made available on the Jewish community website as well as synagogue and agency websites.
- b. Create a part-time position to:
  - Work with synagogues and agencies to develop opportunities for home hospitality experiences.
  - Build partnerships in the area to provide Jewish goods(challah, etc.), for community welcome baskets.
  - Provide invitations and information about community resources.
  - Reinvigorate the Sholom St. Paul welcoming efforts.

**3. Establish a concierge position to facilitate connections and transitions** – Design and implement a customized concierge approach to assist with navigating the Jewish community and transitioning between stages of engagement. This includes welcoming newcomers, helping people of all ages access information and resources, guiding engagement as people transition from one life stage to the next, and facilitating participation in programs, events and services.

### *Recommendations*

- Develop a concierge function to link people to community resources.
- Work with congregations and agencies to develop appropriate resources for the concierge.

- Allocate ongoing funds to maintain the continuity of the concierge function.

### *Research Basis*

This recommendation is largely based on the Federation of Southern Arizona's Strategic Engagement Plan. Their primary recommendation was the creation of a concierge program. St. Paul federation staff had the opportunity to interview the author of the strategic engagement plan and a former Southern Arizona Federation employee, regarding this model. Other Federations including the Minneapolis Jewish Federation and the Jewish Federation of Madison also have concierge and outreach coordinator positions.

### *Implementation*

- a) Hire and train a part-time position to serve as a concierge for the Greater St. Paul Jewish Community. The position could be supported by Federation funding and linked to all synagogue and agency websites.
- b) Determine effective ways for linking the concierge with community resources.
- c) Develop systems for monitoring and measuring concierge activities to use as data for program improvement and evaluation.

**4. Promote community-wide programming** - Organizations often have difficulty being nimble and adapting to community change. One example we heard in the Greater St. Paul Jewish community, was, "We just wish we would be convened more often with other agencies," and that there is a feeling of uncertainty about what other agencies need or how to offer support or collaboration. There is a desire to have Federation play the role of convener and connector across the Greater St. Paul Jewish community.

### *Recommendations*

- Convene agencies and synagogues regularly regarding creating a welcoming community, sharing effective practices, and finding points of collaboration.
- Create a forum to share needs, opportunities, and engagement for newcomers in the community.
- Enhance the ability to share information and programming resources across synagogues and agencies.

### *Research Basis*

The Federation of Southern Arizona strategic engagement plan gave an example of a roundtable of agencies and synagogues coming together with their leaders to better engage the community. This recommendation is also largely supported by our research into Big Tent Judaism and the Jewish Outreach Institute. In Big Tent Judaism, training is offered to Jewish communal professionals to learn and practice effective welcoming.

*Implementation*

- a) Begin the process by convening agencies and synagogues on a quarterly basis to explore opportunities for collaboration.
- b) Bring in speakers or programs from the Jewish Outreach Institute and Big Tent Judaism to create a broader culture of welcoming in the community.

## EVALUATION

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The following impact measures can be used to evaluate current and future engagement:

- Increase the number of Jews participating in programs, services, membership affiliation and/or Jewish community.
- Decrease the attrition of Jews already participating in programs, services, membership affiliation.
- Increase levels of meaningful collaboration between organizations and agencies.
- Deepen engagement and connectivity across the continuum of Jewish activities.
- Strengthen Jewish identity, both individual and communal,
- Increase membership and affiliation.
- Increase number and diversity of community members serving in leadership and/or volunteer positions related to supporting Jewish causes.

The key thrust of this plan is for community members, agencies and synagogues to work collaboratively and strategically to engage large numbers of Jews and deepen the engagement of all Jews in the Greater St. Paul area.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

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The above strategies recommendations may be implemented by Federation agencies, independent agencies and bi-city agencies, synagogues and individuals in the St. Paul Jewish community. These intended users are encouraged to use and apply the recommendations in a way that best fits their constituency and organization.

As an example of implementing communication through social media and technology, a new marketing position may be created at the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul. This person would be responsible for regular communication with each agency and synagogue, develop a communication/marketing plan and train staff at each agency and synagogue to create vibrant, cooperative communication strategies. Agencies and synagogues would have the option of participating in this program to enhance their communication with members, program participants, and hopefully, reach currently unengaged audiences.

Each recommendation will have an evaluation framework developed to start tracking the process and progress of how the recommendations are both received and used to better St. Paul's Jewish community.

To facilitate success, the following actions will serve to guide the work of lay and professional leadership and community members through the implementation phase:

**Public presentation** – The draft plan will be presented to the community. This will serve to educate community members about the plan's contents, importance of championing the vision's implementation, goals and recommendations outlined in the plan, and to continue to gather support for the transformation of the community culture to one of unity and collaboration.

**Generate stakeholder input and support** – Sharing the plan with key stakeholders and community members is important to broadly inform, obtain feedback, and use as a tool for engagement and support during implementation. The plan will be shared with the Leadership Team, listening session participants and interviewees, agency and synagogue boards, community professionals, and members of the Jewish community at large.

**Appoint a small Strategic Engagement Implementation Oversight Team** – Effective planning is not an act but rather a continuous process of planning, implementation, evaluation and adjustment. To make this a living document, the action plan should be further developed and reviewed quarterly to monitor progress, measure impact and decide where changes need to be made. To this end, JFSA should appoint a small team of 3-5 seasoned lay leaders to monitor and oversee implementation of the plan in coordination with the Leadership Roundtable. The Oversight Team should be comprised of leaders committed to raising the resources and championing the implementation of the Strategic Engagement Plan.

**Develop implementation and evaluation plans and phase in the initiatives over a three-year period** – Ad-hoc work committees will be formed to oversee the implementation of recommendations. They would develop detailed plans with timelines, assign responsibilities, estimate costs and recommend possible funders. They will periodically evaluate the initiatives to see if they are moving us toward our goal of increased communication, improved visibility of programs, agencies and synagogues and engagement in the programs. Special consideration should be given to phasing in the initiatives based on the availability of staffing and financial resources.

**Secure the necessary resources** – The Strategic Engagement Implementation Oversight Team will work in partnership with the Federation, agencies and synagogues to identify potential funding sources to raise the necessary funds. They will facilitate the partnerships necessary to support the initiatives from multiple income streams. Sources may include supplemental gifts, annual campaign allocations, foundation resources, corporate donations or grants. The goal is to secure sufficient funds for a three-year period so that the initiative (e.g. development of a new community-wide website) can be fully implemented, gain traction and yield results.

**Work collaboratively with community partners to implement the strategic engagement plan** – The Leadership Roundtable should convene on a regular basis to share information, engage in planning and strategy development, and address issues and challenges that emerge in order to increase engagement in Jewish life and ensure a vibrant community.

## CONCLUSION

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As with any good plan, success will depend on the level of commitment to act on implementing the plan. The Federation, agency and synagogue professionals and lay leadership will need to work together to raise necessary funds, implement the recommendations, monitor progress and adapt the plan based on ongoing and evolving needs. Agencies and synagogues also will be encouraged to be proactive in implementing innovative new programs, such as those listed in the engagement plan, that have a high potential for impact utilizing internal institutional resources.

**APPENDIX 1: LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS**

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<b>Agency Heads</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Lay Leaders</b>
Barbara Brooks	Rabbi Morris Allen	Tracy Arnold
Ted Flaum	Rabbi Shlomo Bendet	Jennifer Bagdade
Barry Glaser	Rabbi Jeremy Fine	Tom Cytron-Hysom
Steve Hunegs	Rabbi Adam Spilker	Burt Garr
Benjie Kaplan	Rabbi Asher Zeilingold	Leslie Hahn
Michael Waldman		Miriam Itzkowitz
		Barb Lehmann
		William Lipschultz
		Rhoda Mains
		Louis Newman
		Jeff Oberman
		Betsy Rest
		Steve Shaller
		Sally Silk
		Jeff Tane



## APPENDIX 2: COMMITTEE MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

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### ***Wendy Baldinger, Panel Chair***

Wendy Baldinger is immediate past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul and has been involved in the community planning process from its early stages. Wendy is a past president of Sholom and has been involved with Hadassah, Temple of Aaron, Hillel, AIPAC and Talmud Torah. She is a music specialist at many preschools is the Twin Cities and owner and director of Wendy's Wiggle, Jiggle and Jam! Music concerts for kids and their families. Wendy and her husband, Steve, are long time residents of St. Paul.

### ***Rabbi Zalman Bendet***

Rabbi Zalman Bendet is Director of Chabad of Greater St. Paul, MN, as well as director and instructor of the St. Paul Chapter of the Jewish Learning institute. He received a BA in 2006 and rabbinic ordination from the Rabbinical College of America in 2010. He has been a certified JLI instructor since 2011. Rabbi Bendet has served on the Jewish Federation of Greater St. Paul's Board since 2013, and he works closely with the St. Paul JCC, Talmud Torah, JFS and other Jewish agencies and congregations in St. Paul.

### ***Maureen Davidson***

Maureen Davidson has been a member of Mount Zion Temple for the past 30 years. She has served on the temple Board of Directors, Executive Board, Sisterhood co-president, Membership Committee and other committees. She recently retired after 23 years as director of senior services at the West 7th Community Center. Her collaborations with Jewish Family Service include the NORC Project.

### ***Frances Fischer***

Frances Fischer is Program Director at Beth Jacob Congregation in Mendota Heights. She holds degrees in sociology, social work and Jewish non-profit management. She has been a Jewish professional in three different cities, working for Federation, Hillel, and synagogues. She lives in Eagan with her husband, three children and two dogs.

### ***Gail Gendler***

Gail Gendler is a member of the Board of Directors for Mount Zion Temple and is past president of Mount Zion Temple Sisterhood. She currently is an Area Director for the Midwest District of Women of Reform Judaism. A realtor with Edina Realty, she has a degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota. Gail and her husband, Roger Bjork, have two adult daughters and live in White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

### ***Ellen Konstan***

Ellen Konstan, originally from California, has lived in Minnesota since 1992 and in St. Paul since 1994. She is an active volunteer in the community, including chairing membership efforts at Mount Zion Temple, serving on the Board of Jewish Family Service, and taking leadership positions in the St. Paul Academy Parent Association. Ellen embodies the spirit

of welcoming home, as she, her husband Joe, and their children Ben and Sam regularly host and welcome visitors to St. Paul's Jewish community.

***Shelley Robbins***

Shelley Robbins is a university professor and program director who lives in suburban St Paul and is a member of Mt. Zion. Shelley has been a lifelong community volunteer, serving on Boards of Directors for a number of professional and community organizations in Chicago, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities including the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, where she served on the Allocations Committee and supported leadership development programs for women leaders.

***Ben Savin***

Ben Savin is the Youth Programs Coordinator at the St. Paul JCC. A St. Paul native, Ben has been active in St. Paul's Jewish community for many years, including Talmud Torah afternoon school, NFTY high school youth group, and countless JCC and Camp Butwin experiences. Ben is excited and honored to serve the community as a member of this panel.

***Margie Solomon***

Margie Stein Solomon is a career coach and talent development consultant. She grew up in St. Paul and lived in Atlanta and New Jersey before returning to the Twin Cities with her family 16 years ago. Margie facilitated several Listening Sessions that were the initial steps in the Community Planning Process. She has been an active volunteer at Sholom, currently serving on the Board and Executive Committee. Margie is a lifelong member of Temple of Aaron and has been involved in several of its committees and strategic initiatives over recent years.

## APPENDIX 3: STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

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### ***David Milavetz, Panel Coordinator***

David Milavetz earned a Master of Public Policy degree with emphases in public leadership and nonprofit management from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and a BA in International Studies from the University of Denver. His training and experience is in program evaluation, research design and implementation. David has experience conducting evaluation and research within community, nonprofit, and informal education settings. He is particularly interested in using evaluation to support organizations and programs in creating their desired impact.

### ***Nora Murphy, Panel Facilitator***

Nora Murphy has a broad set of experiences as an evaluator and researcher. She earned a Ph.D. in Evaluation Studies from the University of Minnesota, an MA in Research Methodology from the University of Pittsburgh, and a BA in Education from Earlham College. With strong quantitative and qualitative skills, she has conducted evaluation and research in schools, school districts, local community organizations, national non-profits and government entities. Murphy's primary approach to evaluation is to view programs and people as fundamentally interrelated, applying systems theory as a framework for evaluation planning, design, implementation, analysis, and reporting. Her evaluations also are utilization focused, and she facilitates the evaluation process and design with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect use.

## APPENDIX 4: ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following promising strategies were considered by the panel members but were outside of the panel's current scope and focus. Because they were promising, we are including them in this report for future reference.

**Recruit new members to the Greater St. Paul Jewish community.** – Engage unaffiliated Jews currently living in our community, and recruit Jews from other communities to St. Paul. As St. Paul continues to develop and become more attractive as a city, particularly to young professionals, there is an opportunity for the Jewish community to create new programs, activities and recommendations that capitalize on these emerging trends. We recommend that the Federation add another panel to work on this area specifically.

**Funding start-up** - Invest in start-up ventures that bring together members of the community and potentially attract members to our community.

**Support Connection-focused Opportunities** - Not membership, affiliation, or fundraising, but connections. While these opportunities might lead to this, it's not the measure of success.

**Comprehensive Volunteer Strategy to Facilitate Engagement** – Develop a comprehensive strategy to recruit, train, place and motivate volunteers in a variety of meaningful volunteer opportunities throughout the community in collaboration with community partners. This includes identifying, planning and evaluating a wide range of volunteer opportunities for different target groups (e.g. Mitzvah days, mentoring, tutoring, gateway and encore careers for boomers, pastoral visitations, ambassadors to retirement communities, patient advocates, concierges, etc.), establishing a clearinghouse, matching volunteers, and evaluating the impact of the experiences.

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