

JEWISH EXPONENT

— WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH IN PHILADELPHIA —

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Headlines National

First National Study on Jewish Grandparents Conducted

By **Eric Schucht** - June 10, 2019



David Raphael and Lee M. Hendler believed they were on to something in the summer of 2017.

They were running focus groups and research on what was thought to be an undervalued resource: Jewish grandparents.

And their nonprofit, the Jewish Grandparents Network (JGN), just released the summarized findings of what it claims to be the first survey specifically targeting Jewish grandparents in the United States.



(Getty Images)

"A lot of people were very focused on young adults, young families and those are really important issues, but we also felt that in targeting Jewish life, that Jewish grandparents were an important part of that dynamic," Raphael said. "So we came up with the idea of gathering quantitative data as a beginning to get a better sense of what was needed, at the same time beginning to engage people in the conversation."

The voluntary survey was taken by nearly 8,000 individuals who self-identified as Jewish, lived in the United States, had at last one grandchild under college age and were between the ages of 55-80. The 20-minute survey was made available online from Nov. 5 to Dec. 3 and gathered detailed information on the demographics, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and needs of today's Jewish grandparents.

The study was conducted by Karen Radkowsky of the research firm, Impact:NPO, and targeted two groups of people.

The first, called the nation-wide sample, would be representative of the Jewish grandparents community at large. These approximately 1,000 participants were selected across the country at random.

The second group, comprised of about 7,000 participants, was known as the outreach sample. This group was more likely to be involved in Jewish community organizations and connected to Jewish life. To reach that group, the JGN partnered with 17 national and local organizations to elicit participation through resources like social media. Their partners included nine Jewish Federations, such as The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and the Jewish Federation of the Heart of New Jersey.

An algorithm used the responses to 31 questions on people's attitude and beliefs to group them into one of five categories.

The first 20 percent are known as the Joyful Transmitters. These people love being grandparents and feel it's important to pass on Jewish beliefs and values. Sixteen percent are categorized as Faithful Transmitters — those who want their grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism and to marry within the religion. Twenty-three percent are Engaged Secularists, who are grandparents active in the Jewish community, but don't model Jewish involvement for their grandchildren.

Next are the Wistful Outsiders, 20 percent wanting to be more involved with their grandchildren, but family dynamics get in the way. Lastly are the Non-Transmitters, 20 percent who are not engaged in Jewish life, nor interested in passing on Jewish practices to their grandchildren.

"The creation of these five segmentations will be enormously valuable in helping Jewish organizations and communities understand how best to connect with Jewish grandparents

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and their families,” Raphael said. “We believe that once you delve into the data and findings related to each cohort, it provides really important clues to engage with these folks.”

Other study results show that while the vast majority of Jewish grandparents find grandparenting to be a joyful experience, aspects of it can be challenging. Most of the grandparents surveyed showed an interest in passing on Jewish values, and about half of the grandparents in the nationwide sample have a child married to a non-Jewish partner.

Presentations of the findings have been conducted at the Jewish Funders Network annual conference, International Lion of Judah conference, Jewish Community Center Association Executive Leadership Milfgash, Jewish Federation of North America Professional Institute, the PJ Library annual international conference and the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies annual conference. An official full report of the findings will be made available in the near future.

Those interested in receiving a copy upon its release can email info@jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org.

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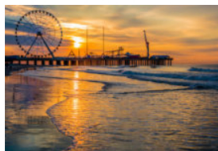
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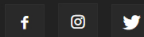
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