

MetroWest Jewish Camp Enterprise

Transforming lives, Securing Jewish community



Summers at Jewish overnight camp turn Jewish young people into spirited and engaged Jewish adults, laying the groundwork for strong, vibrant Jewish communities. Research indicates that young Jews immersed in the "24/7" experience of residential Jewish camp are significantly more likely than non-campers to grow into Jewish adults who:

- Have a strong, well-developed Jewish identity
- Affiliate with Jewish organizations and practice their Judaism actively
- Pursue professional careers in Jewish communal service
- Feel a strong attachment to Israel
- Marry other Jews

These are all strong indications of Jewish commitment and practice. But in MetroWest, as across the nation, only an estimated 10 percent of age-eligible Jewish children attend Jewish camp. Many local parents are accustomed to sending their children to overnight camp, just not Jewish camp*. Today, our MetroWest community has an extraordinary opportunity to engage more youngsters in Jewish camp and dramatically strengthen our Jewish future

**The Foundation for Jewish Camp defines a Jewish camp as sponsored by a Jewish institution, linked to Jewish agencies, or otherwise expressing an overt Jewish mission. These non-profit camps incorporate Jewish programming into the camp experience.*

Sources for this publication include the Foundation for Jewish Camp and research studies including: "The Impact of Childhood Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Identity," Steven M. Cohen and Lawrence Kotler-Berkowitz, United Jewish Communities Report on the National Jewish Population Survey, 2000-01.



Through the MetroWest Jewish Camp Enterprise, we seek to:

- Double the number of local youngsters who attend Jewish camp over a period of five years, setting a new community standard of 20 percent of age-eligible youngsters taking part in this life-transforming experience
- Enhance the image of Jewish camp in MetroWest by presenting it as a viable and attractive option for many more Jewish families
- Broaden support for Jewish camp across the community

Working with a highly successful national partner organization, the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC), and drawing on the best expertise in the field, we seek to create a model of community change that will help spur similar efforts across the country, transforming young lives today and Jewish community tomorrow.



How will we achieve our goals?

Our collaborative team

— The Jewish Community Foundation (the planned-giving and endowment arm of United Jewish Communities of MetroWest), The Partnership for Jewish Learning and Life (a UJC MetroWest agency), the national FJC, private donors, and area camps — has developed the most comprehensive community-based plan in the nation for transforming participation in residential Jewish camp, focusing on four areas:

1. **Jewish Camp Enterprise Manager:** For the first time, our community will have a full-time employee focused exclusively on promoting Jewish camp, weaving it into all facets of the community.
2. **Marketing and Recruitment:** Utilizing the expertise, knowledge, and resources of the FJC, we will seek to promote Jewish camp through traditional means as well as through sophisticated “viral” and social marketing techniques.
3. **New camper incentive grants:** Based on success nationally and locally, we will utilize camper incentive grants — \$1,000 incentives for new campers — to help “tip the balance” toward Jewish camp.
4. **Fundraising and Leadership Academy:** We will work with area camps to increase fundraising capacity, specifically in annual and endowment efforts, thereby broadening scholarship options in a sustainable way for Jewish families. We aim to help the camps develop targeted scholarship funds for MetroWest children to attend specific camps.

Partner Camps: Spanning the Spectrum

While we will encourage families to choose any Jewish camp, we will work most closely with area “partner camps” spanning the spectrum of denominations and interests:

- URJ Camp Harlam (Reform)
- Camp JRF (Reconstructionist)
- Camp Moshava (Modern Orthodox)
- NJ Y Camps (JCC-affiliated)
- Camp Ramah of the Berkshires (Conservative)
- Young Judaea Sprout Lake/Tel Yehuda (Hadassah Youth Zionist)

Why MetroWest, and why now?

MetroWest is the right community at the right time. Within the region — in the Poconos to the West and upstate NY and the Berkshires to the North — are some of the finest Jewish camps in the nation. Also, since some of the nation’s oldest camps are in this region, we believe there is significant untapped potential support for Jewish camp in this community through alumni and their families.

MetroWest has a history of pioneering innovative programs that become national models. Finally, we are the home community to national leaders in the field of Jewish camping, and thus we have the best leadership in the nation on board to steer this initiative.

If you are interested in learning more about support for this exciting initiative, please contact Kim Hirsh, Development Officer, Jewish Community Foundation of MetroWest, (973) 929-3026, khirsh@ucnj.org.

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