

## B'nai Tzedek Young Philanthropy Grant Program

### PROJECT TITLE:

#### **I. Proposal Summary (Executive Summary) for use on ballot.**

*The Proposal Summary should be about one paragraph of 1-3 sentences and should include the most general description of the use that will be made of the funds. Be concise and compelling, your readers are age 13-32.*

Living Jewishly...what does that mean to you? For our organization, being *inclusive* is living Jewishly. Our Inclusion program gives students with special needs a gift....the gift of a Jewish day school education. Students with different learning abilities work with an experienced team that provides tutoring, case management, and behavioral support so that they can more fully experience the richness of Jewish educational, cultural and social life. With your help, we can expand the program, defraying the cost of hiring an additional special education teacher to complete the team and meet a growing request for services.

#### **II. Project Description (Program Narrative)**

**What is the problem or need you are trying to address and how will you do it?**

**Do your best to keep this document to 1 page.**

This section *should provide the reader with an* explanation of the problem or need the program will address as well as who and how many people will be impacted by this funding. Remember funding is over 3 years in the amount of \$5,000 per year, totaling \$15,000.

Children learn best when they feel supported - when the people with whom they spend the greater part of their day understand and respond to their unique learning needs, interests and abilities. It's important for all students, and especially so for students with special needs. Recognizing this, we began providing inclusion services in 2014 to students, parents and teachers in the two Jewish day schools (Martin J. Gottlieb and Torah Academy) so that children with ADHD, dyslexia, autism, Down syndrome and other learning and behavioral challenges can make strides in learning and feel fully connected to their Jewish community. Prior to this time, there were no special education teachers in the schools.

An Inclusion special education supervisor, school counselor, special education teacher and tutor work with students, parents, siblings and teachers to help them develop strategies for successful learning and communication. We provide individual sessions, group workshops, lunch bunches (lunchtime projects), reading programs, academic testing, teacher support, behavioral support and links to resources. The team becomes a central point of contact for parents. We are opening doors for students with different learning abilities, and supporting them and their families in the process. Not only is this program working to create better life outcomes for students, it is also increasing community awareness of inclusion.

In the spirit of inclusivity, staff work with students with identified special needs, students who are struggling academically and behaviorally, and, essentially, every student in between. In the beginning, the focus was on supporting the needs of identified students, but now services reach every student in school: typical, special needs and remedial. The Gottlieb School has established a goal to double their enrollment over the next several years, having two classrooms of 20 students. With this growth comes an increased need for inclusion services. We currently serve 25 special needs students at MJGDS, 16 at the Torah Academy and 3 in preschool...but the total number of enrolled students across the schools is 261. We anticipate the number of identified students growing to more than 50 by next year as more testing is done and new students enroll.

The additional special education teacher would work as part of a team supporting both schools, in partnership with existing staff and school leadership. We anticipate this position to cost approximately \$48,000 annually including salary and benefits. To sustain the Inclusion program, we plan to continue seeking donor commitments that support the mission of the program. We are working in partnership with the community to help make EVERY child comfortable in school and able to learn.