

# EVERY VOICE COUNTS

JEWISH  
ROCHESTER'S  
2019 REGIONAL  
SURVEY

## OUR NON-JEWISH ("JEWISH ADJACENT") PERSPECTIVE

Prepared by:

Jocelyn Goldberg-Schaible  
Rochester Research Group

Prepared for:

Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

Generously funded by:

Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation

7.15.2020

**“Every Voice Counts” was designed, fielded, and analyzed by  
Jocelyn Goldberg-Schaible (Rochester Research Group)  
in collaboration and partnership with  
Janet Sunkin (Survey Coordinator) and Judy Azoff (Survey Committee Chair)**

---



Jocelyn Goldberg-Schaible  
Rochester Research Group



Janet Sunkin  
Survey Coordinator



Judy Azoff  
Survey Committee Chair

*“This project was truly a labor of love from the three of us to the Jewish community we love. Although none of us were born or raised here, it is the community that became our home . . . where each of us have lived, raised our children, worked professionally, and volunteered — for the past 40 years.” -- **Judy, Janet & Jocelyn***

# Survey data tells us stories.

---

With **350 Non-Jewish participants**  
in the Every Voice Counts survey,  
here's what we've learned  
about our Jewish Community  
from the **"Jewish Adjacent" perspective.**

Who are these non-Jewish respondents,  
and why are they part of our survey?

---

## Opening Gateway Question:

Which of the following describe you?



**I am not Jewish, but I have had some specific relationship with the Rochester region's Jewish community -- as an employee, member, client, user, and/or donor -- and am interested in sharing my ideas and opinions in this survey.**



This question led, in turn, to the more specific qualifying question on the following slide.

# Which of the following describes your relationship with the Rochester region's Jewish community? [Please choose all that apply from the list below:]

- A. I am not Jewish, but I **work for a Jewish organization.**
- B. I am not Jewish, but I am a **member of a Jewish organization** [eg. the JCC, NCJW, etc.] / participate in their programming and events / attend or send my children to a Jewish summer camp, etc.
- C. I am not Jewish, but I **donate to / volunteer with / charitably support** one or more Jewish organizations.
- D. I am not Jewish, but I [or a family member] **receive(d) services from a Jewish organization.**
- E. I am not Jewish, but I am part of a school [eg. Brighton or Pittsford] that is linked to the **Rochester-Modi'in (Israel) Partnership.**



If you've interacted with our Jewish community in **some other way**, or perhaps interacted with some other organization not listed above [eg. NCJW, Hadassah, etc.], please explain:

- ***I participate in the Commission for Christian-Jewish Relations (CCJR)***
- ***I work with Hillel at the University of Rochester. Have attended Hillel and Chabad events at U of R.***
- ***Most of my parents' friends were Jewish; I was surprised to find that we were not. In High School I joined a youth Zionist organization before I knew that we weren't Jewish. (My parents were atheists) My heart has always been happiest among our Jewish friends and I credit the warmth and common sense of the community for helping to shape my character. While I am not Jewish, my "home" will always be in this community.***
- ***I attend services occasionally with my son and his family at Temple Sinai***
- ***I am a member of JCC. I have friends who are Jewish. I have dated men who are Jewish. I have participated in Neherim, a Gay Jewish organization that sponsors a summer camp at Easton Mountain***
- ***I am involved in a peer counseling program, Reevaluation Counseling, that has workshops on Jewish Oppression and being allies to Jews; I have learned much and done some healing work in that area.***
- ***I receive and read Shabbat emails from Rabbi Yitzi Hein (Chabad Pittsford) each week. I think I get them because I had signed up for Loaves of Love (making challah with our daughters).***
- ***Daughter participated in TYKES for a few years held at JCC. Close family friends are Jewish and we have attended Bar and Bas Mitzvah's at various temples, also musical and arts related events and performances at both of these locations (temples and JCC)***
- ***Community events in Pittsford (lighting menorah in town square, etc)***
- ***I was a presenter for Hadassah's "Check It Out" program for many years. I still value my time [there]. I was in the very first Monroe Community College Honors Studies Program "The Holocaust: A Journey Into the Human Capacity for Good, Evil and Indifference," a life-changing course. Later, along with Howard Konar, I Co-Chaired a year-long project to bring a Holocaust Museum exhibit to Rochester for 3-months. Though I am not Jewish, I am drawn to the Jewish community because I continue to learn of the unspeakable horrors they endured simply because of religious differences. #neverforget***
- ***I have had interactions with the Pittsford Chabad. I once was asked to turn off a light switch during Sukkot in a very Orthodox Brighton home I happened to be walking by !!!***
- ***Support in fighting anti-Semitism through peaceful rallies & vigils***

**A highly inspiring selection of Non-Jewish responses**

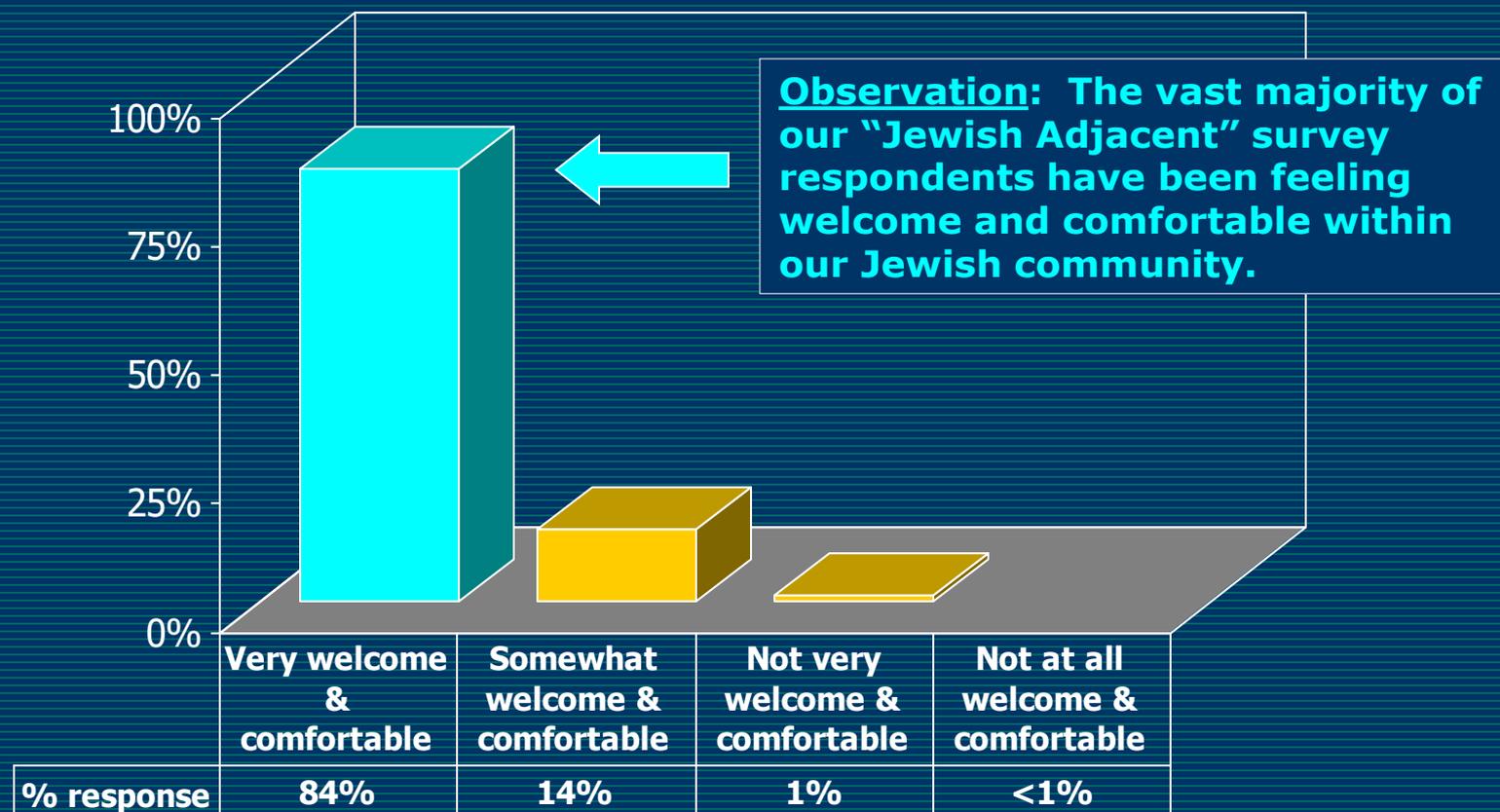


**"EVERY VOICE COUNTS" was, above all,  
an intentionally inclusive opportunity to  
hear a full spectrum of ideas & opinions**

---

What did we learn about the  
perspectives and priorities of  
these non-Jewish survey participants?

As a person who is not Jewish, how **welcome and comfortable** have you felt within our Jewish community?



[Asked if less than very welcome and comfortable:]  
How could our Jewish Community have made you feel  
**more welcome and comfortable?**

---

**Emerging Theme #1: Teach Us. Many of these Jewish adjacents want to learn about Jewish life, observance and practice. Some would welcome the opportunity for more involvement with and within our community.**

- *"Provide some basic written information about components of Jewish worship services at synagogues including traditions and etiquette for those not normally attending in this community."*
- *"Help non Jewish people to understand Jewish words, phrases, traditions, and expectations."*
- *"Explain Judaism, help employees/community not feel uncomfortable when at religious services by welcoming us to participate if allowed."*
- *"More marketing of Jewish community educational offerings."*
- *"Permit non Jews to serve on boards and committees."*

[Asked if less than very welcome and comfortable:]  
How could our Jewish Community have made you feel  
**more welcome and comfortable?**

---

**Emerging Theme #2: Create opportunities for Interfaith dialogue and learning built upon mutual respect**

- *"Interfaith discussion and opportunities would be welcome."*
- *"Understand that I may have different beliefs and they are just as important to me as the Jewish Community's beliefs are to them."*
- *"More dialogue between Christians and Jews without blaming each other for anti-Semitism."*
- *"Recognize I am not Jewish."*

As a person who is not Jewish, what have you found to be the **most positive aspects** of working for / being a member of / receiving services from / donating to / volunteering with a Jewish organization?

---

**Emerging Theme: Many of their experiences with the Jewish community have been impressive, inclusive and positive.**

- *"It is a welcoming, kind, supportive, inclusive community."*
- *"I appreciate learning about a new religion and being loved back despite not being that faith."*
- *"Sense of community and inclusion of all people, regardless of whether they are Jewish or not."*
- *"I carry the spirit of repairing the world with me when I leave the building."*
- *"I am educated and inspired by my Jewish friends who live their faith. I love the wisdom and caring that comes from my interactions with rabbis and community leaders."*
- *"The Jewish community in Rochester is very dedicated to social justice issues that are important to me and to interfaith dialogue and conversation, also important to me. The Jewish community is an important player in the civic life of our community."*
- *"A welcoming, supportive, inclusive community that is far more compassionate and community-oriented than the one I grew up around."*
- *"A welcoming environment of kindness and tolerance."*
- *"We are just a bunch of humans knuckling down to get stuff done. I have appreciated the Jewish community welcoming me when I've been asked to be involved. They have every right to be suspicious and distrusting of non-Jewish community members but they have always kept their doors open/lights on and welcomed us. I am very grateful for this."*

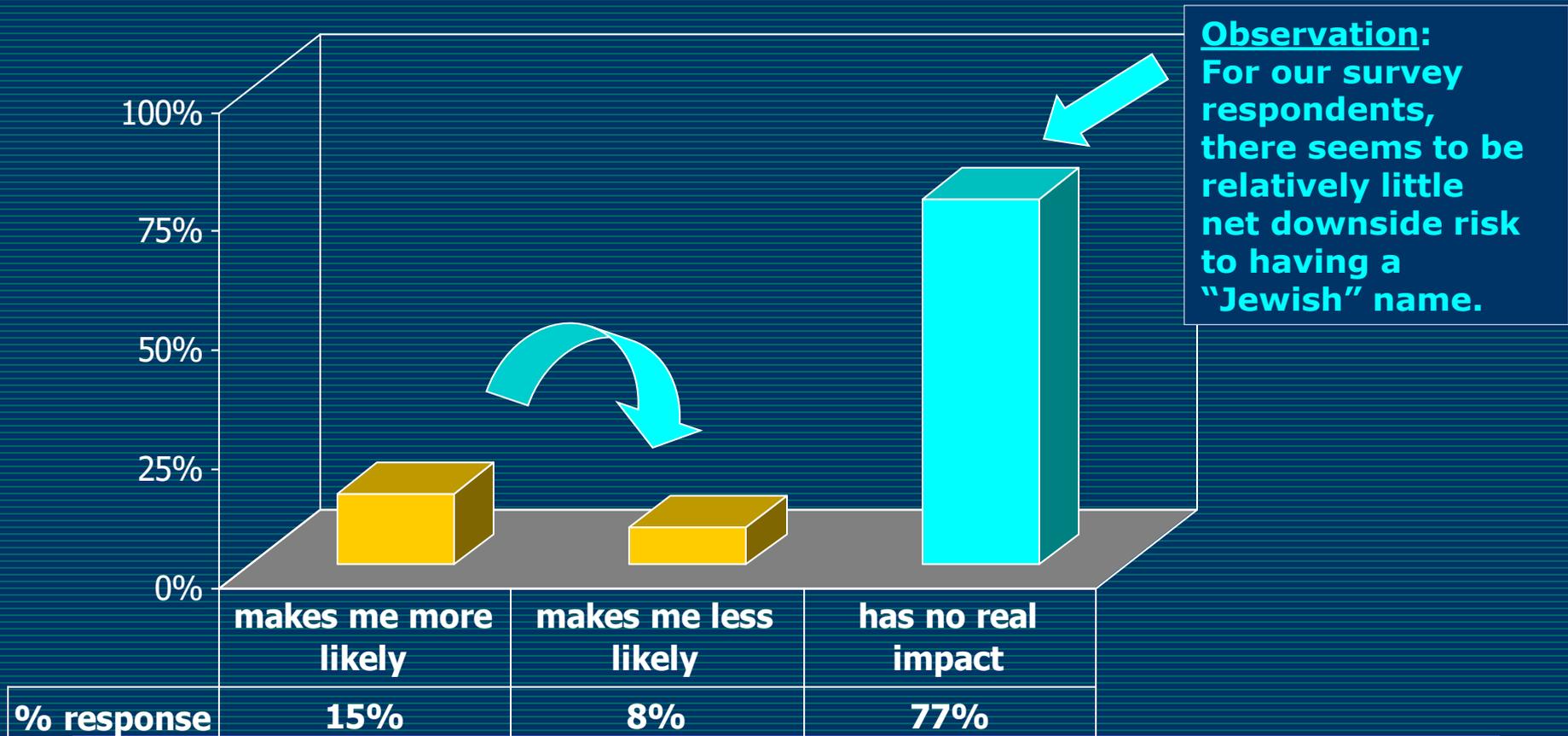
And as a person who is not Jewish, what **challenges or frustrations**, if any, have you found in working for / being a member of / receiving services from / donating to / volunteering with a Jewish organization?

---

**Emerging Theme: Teach us more about Jewish life so we can be culturally and religiously sensitive – as well as more comfortable -- in our interactions with the Jewish community.**

- *"I never know what customs and laws apply in any given space, and there doesn't seem to be any 'Hey, you're new here! Please join us and learn so you don't make a fool of yourself.' "*
- *"Lack of patience from some because I do not always understand Jewish customs. It is not meant to be disrespectful; it is a lack of knowledge."*
- *"Education reduces discrimination and fear..."*
- *"While there are many programs, almost all are based in Judaism. While I often have interest, I'm afraid I won't be accepted."*
- *"From an interfaith dialogue perspective, conversations about the Israel/Palestine issues can be very difficult and painful."*
- *"Sometimes Jewish people have expressed views to me that suggest that they believe that non-Jewish people cannot fully relate to or appreciate the Jewish experience. This may be true, at times, but I do not believe that it is always true."*
- *"Kashrut and Shabbat rules can take some getting used to. The only frustration for me comes from my own lack of understanding of the history of why the rules/restrictions exist."*
- *"I feel frustrated with the lack of education I have been provided about Judaism and what people receiving our services need..."*

Does an organization's **being Jewish**, and having **"Jewish"** in their name [eg. the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Service, Jewish Senior Life, etc.] make you **more likely, less likely, or have no real impact** on your choosing to have a relationship with that organization?



# Why is that?

## Why More Likely?

- *"Because I have always had wonderful experiences with organizations that are affiliated with the Jewish faith."*
- *"I've never before thought of this but.....If I were to think about it, it may make me more likely due to the fact I have immense respect for the Jewish culture and faith."*
- *"The fact that it is a Jewish organization would cause me to approach it with a feeling that it is likely very well run, focused on its mission, and welcoming to all."*
- *"Although I am not Jewish I feel connected to the Jewish community through the work I do and the relationships I have."*
- *"For reasons I cannot explain, I feel I have an affinity with the Jewish people. I was raised Catholic, and believe that religion has its roots in the Jewish faith."*

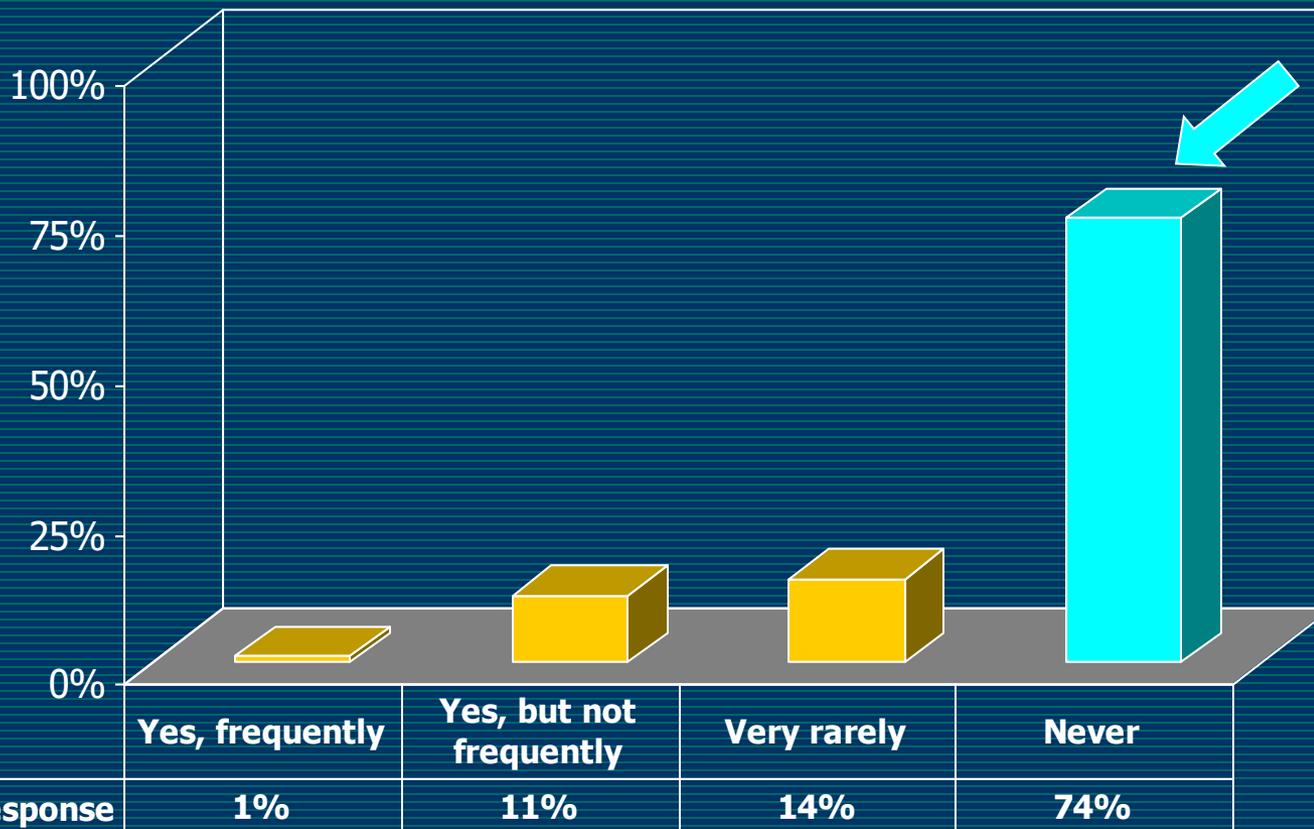
## Why Less Likely?

- *"I would be less likely to use their services because I would be under the impression that they were not for me."*

## Why No Impact?

- *"If you believe in the organization's mission, it doesn't matter what the name is."*
- *"People are all the same, no matter where we live, worship or work."*
- *"I respect that it is a Jewish organization and the organization respects that I am not."*
- *"The name doesn't matter, the quality of the organization is what counts."*
- *"Prior to working for a Jewish organization I would have been less likely. Now it has no real impact"*

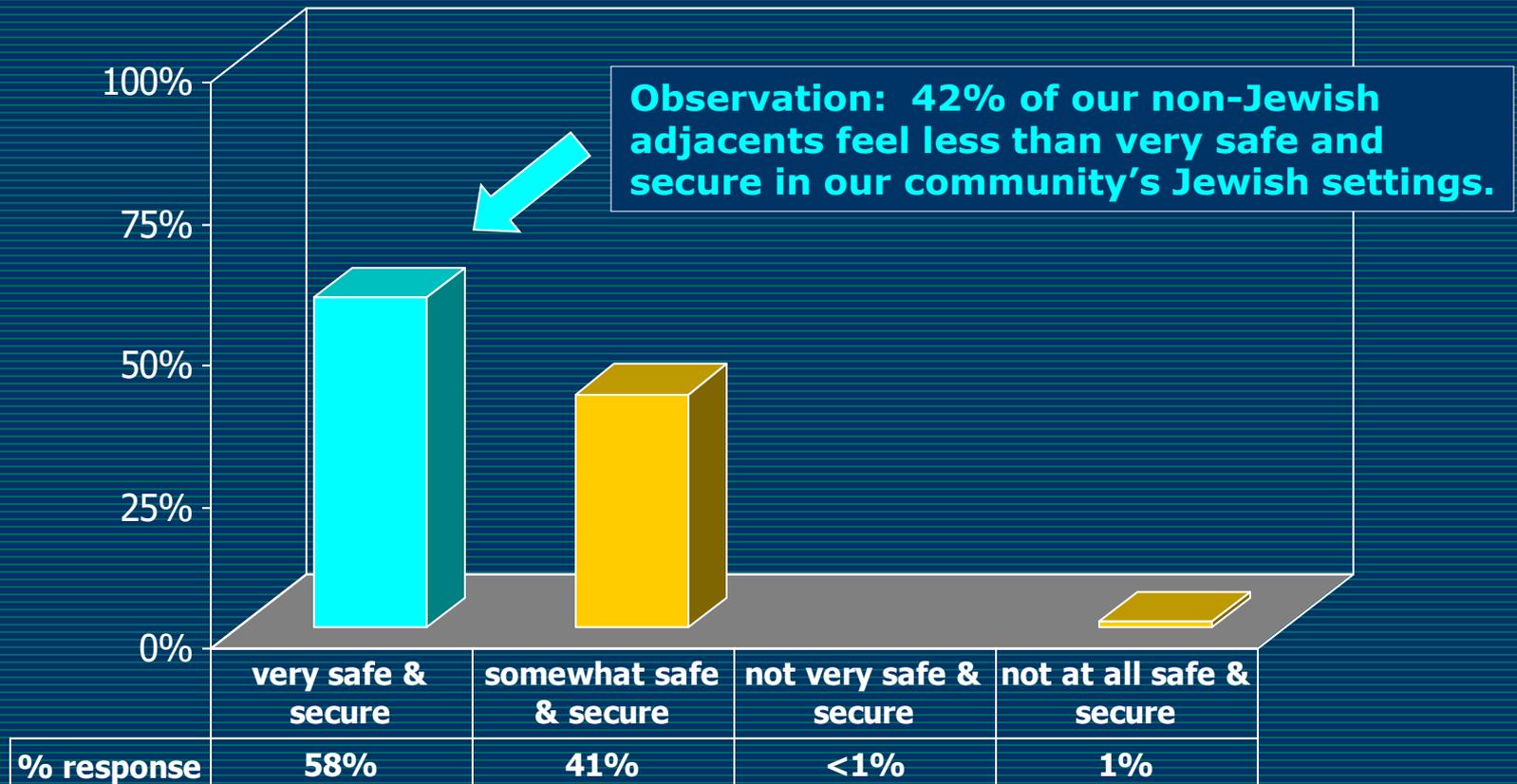
# In your relationship with the Jewish community, have you ever experienced, witnessed, or observed any incidents of **Anti-Semitism**?



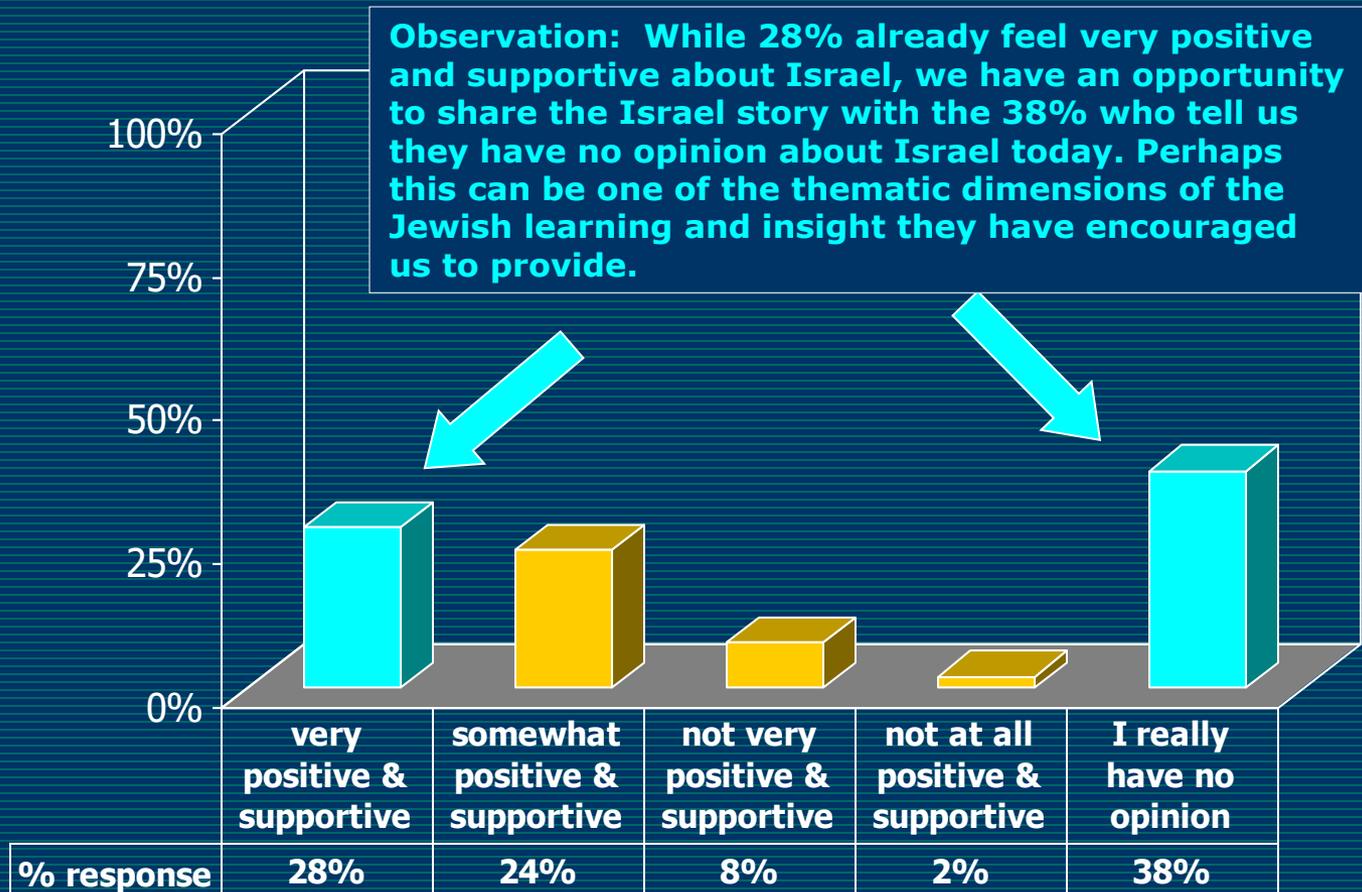
**Observation:**  
This is a very different response profile from the one we find among our Jewish survey respondents.

Perhaps our non-Jewish adjacents are less apt to recognize and identify as Anti-Semitic incidents such as humor, verbal slurs, stereotyping, etc. when they occur.

Given the recent incidence of violence against Jews around the world and even in the US, how **safe & secure** have you been feeling in our own community's Jewish places, events, gatherings, etc.?



All things considered,  
and given your relationship with the Jewish community,  
how do you tend to **feel about Israel** today?



# JCC Opportunity Assessment: The Non-Jewish Perspective

---

Earlier you told us that you have a relationship with the JCC, so we'd welcome your help with these next few questions.

The JCC recently purchased 105 acres of land (formally the Farash Homestead) directly adjacent to the Edgewood Campus, expanding the JCC's footprint to over 125 acres along the Erie Canal. The JCC has begun to identify a wide range of potential uses for that land, now in its natural state.

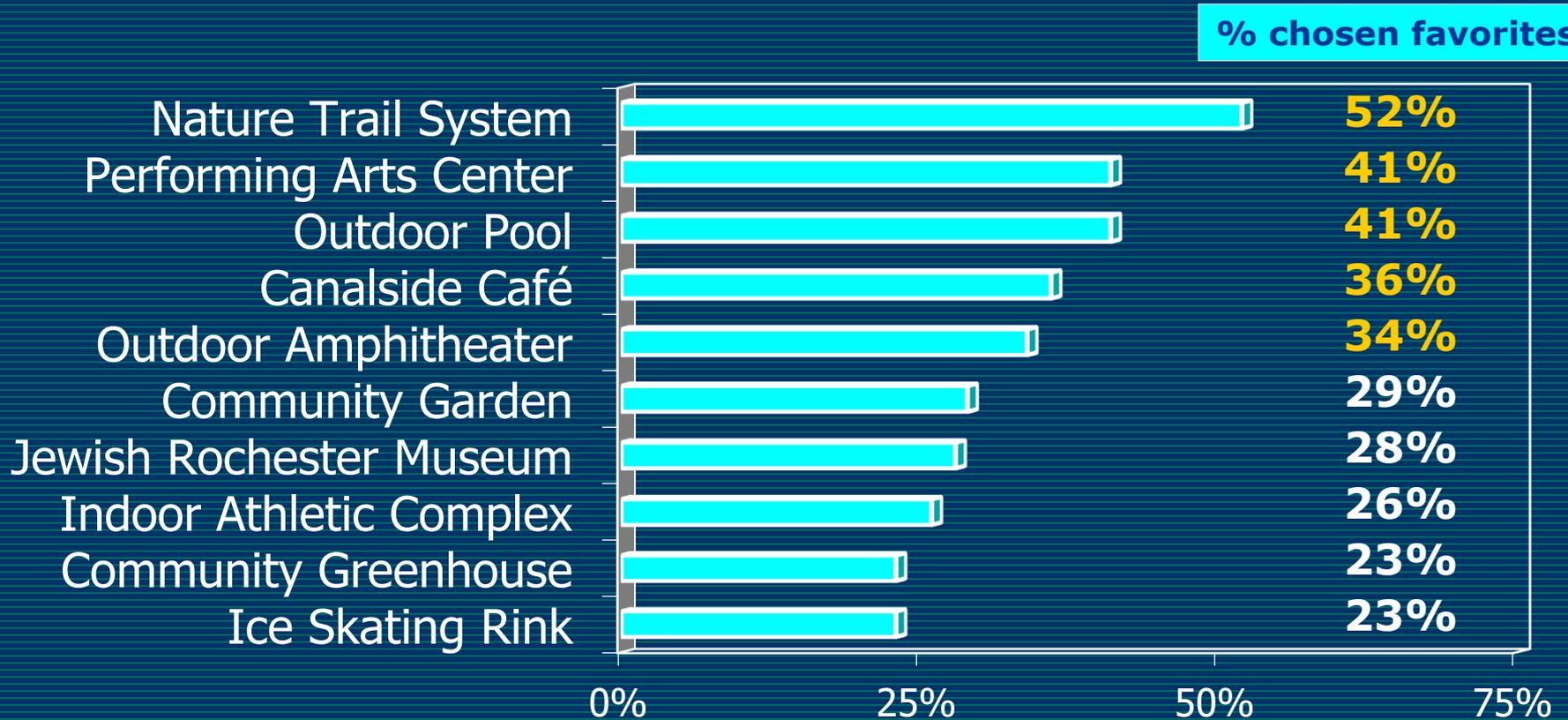
The expansion has many possibilities, with potentially huge impact on our entire Jewish community. The JCC's new leadership team has undertaken a collaborative process to re-imagine our JCC as it could potentially become tomorrow.

Looking to the future, the JCC is seeking your input and advice.

---

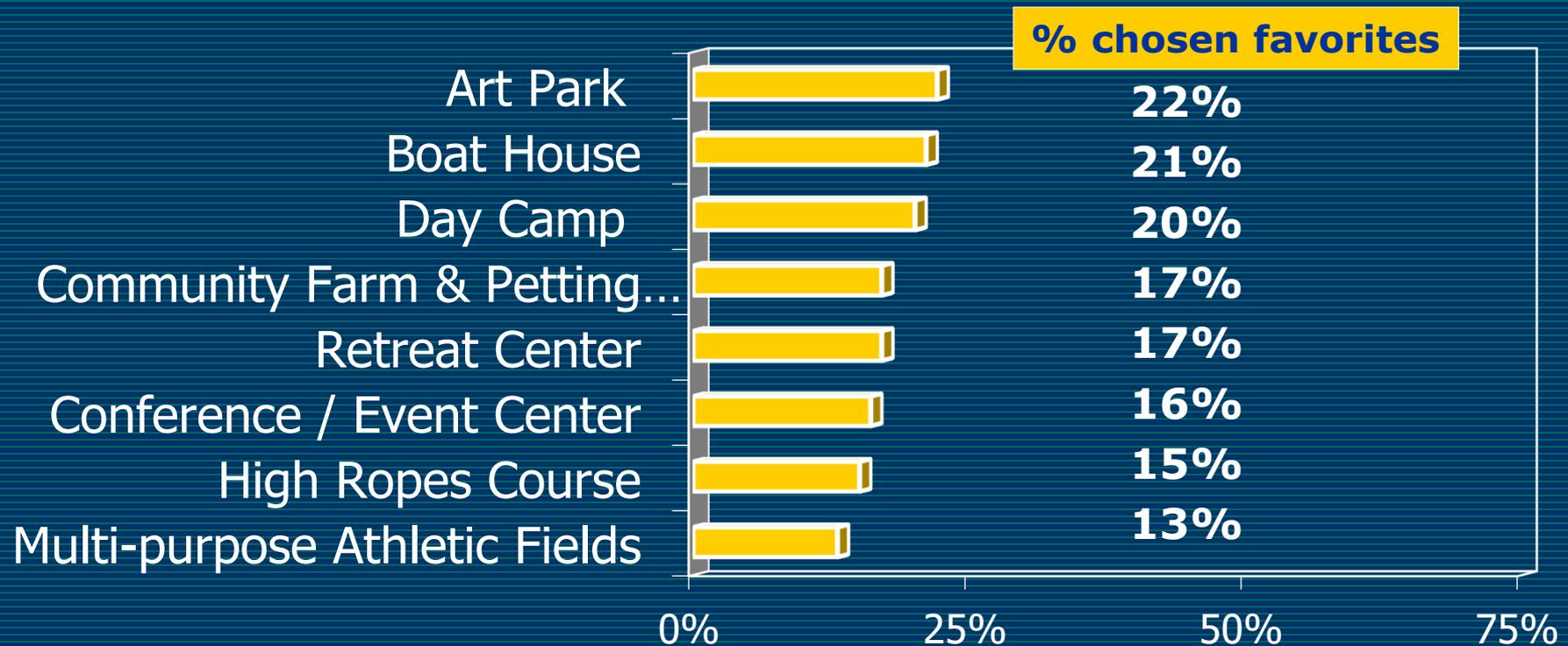
## 23 JCC Opportunity Concepts Non-Jewish Top 10 Choices

“And of all these ideas, which were your favorites?”  
[Please choose up to 6:]



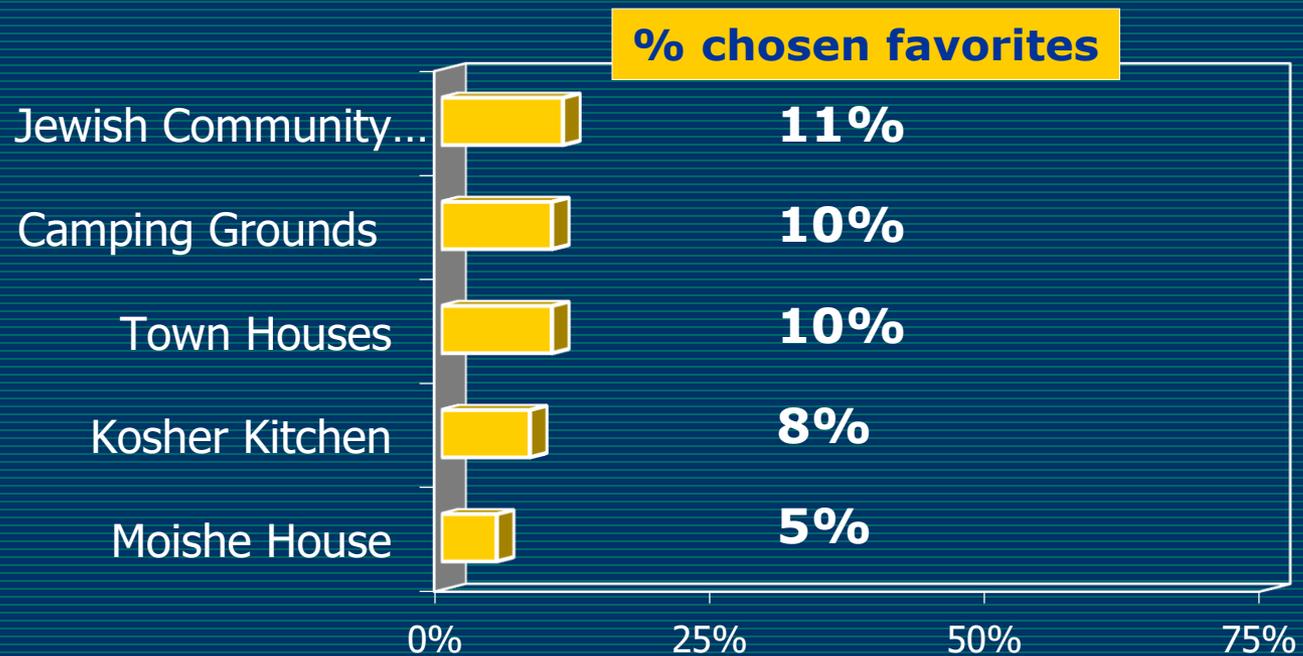
## 23 JCC Opportunity Concepts Non-Jewish Middle 8 Choices

“...And of all these ideas, which were your favorites?”  
[Please choose up to 6:]



## 23 JCC Opportunity Concepts Non-Jewish Bottom 5 Choices

“...And of all these ideas, which were your favorites?”  
[Please choose up to 6:]



Appendix:  
What else do we know about  
our non-Jewish survey participants?

---

Current Age

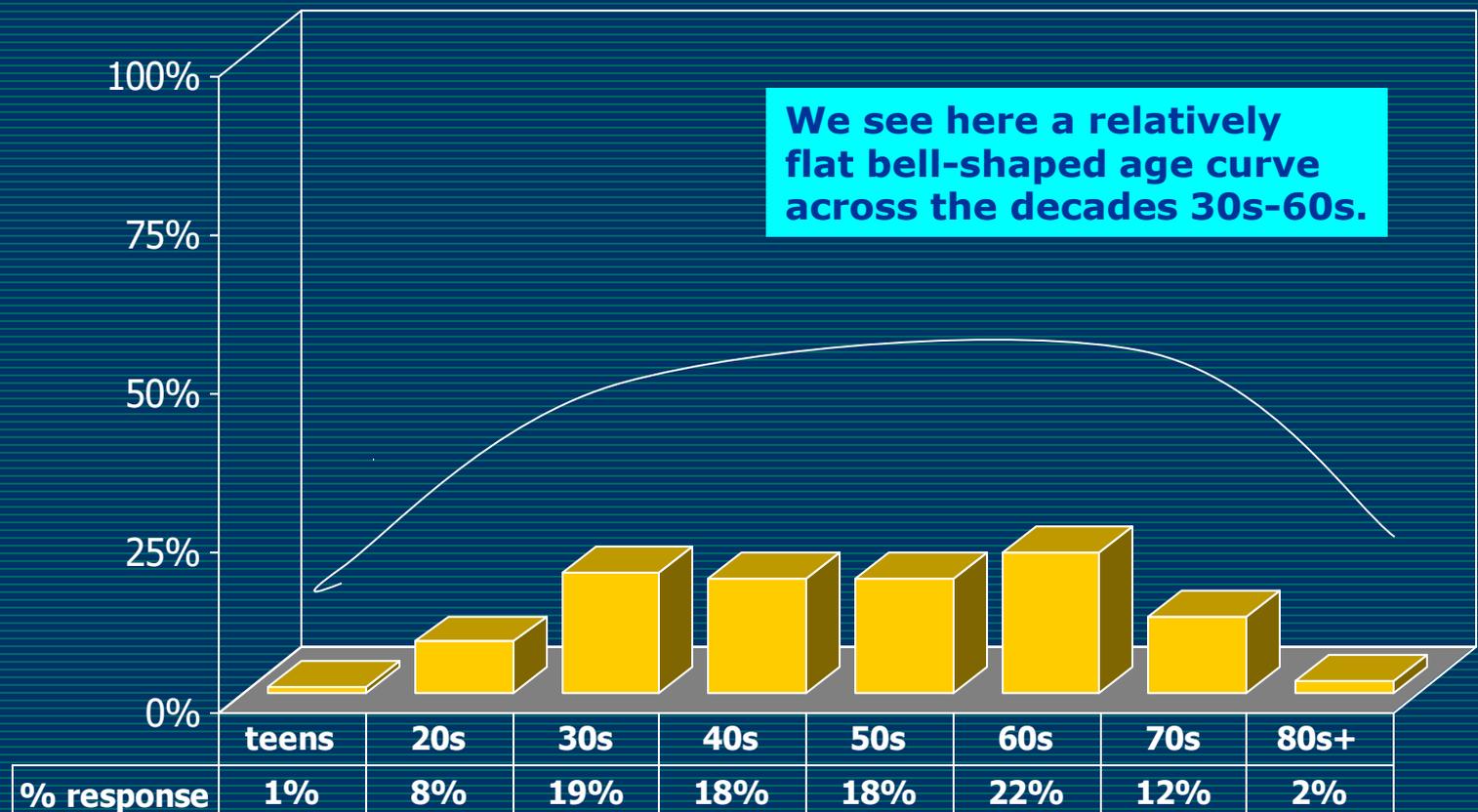
Gender

Religious Affiliation

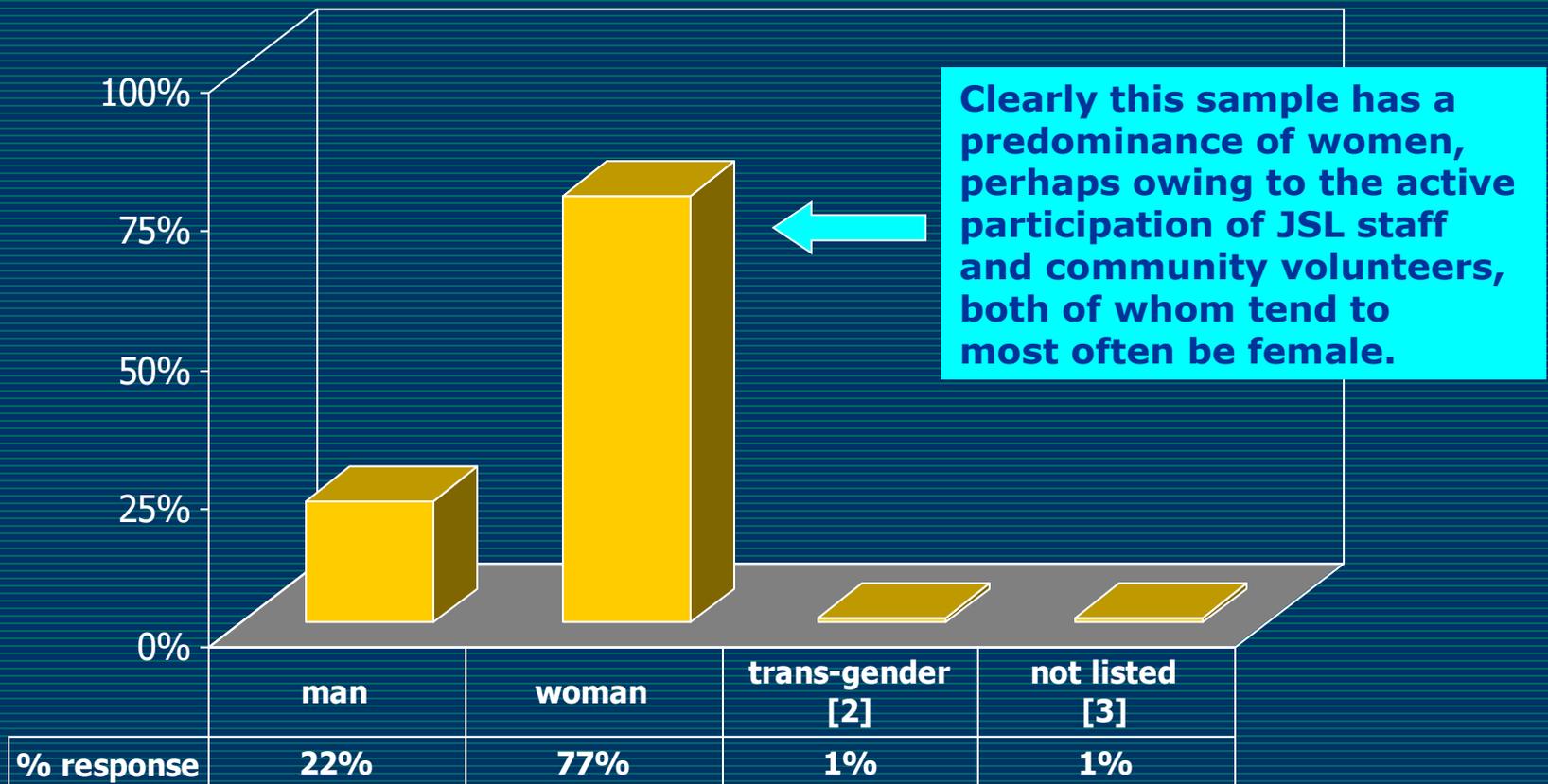
Race / Ethnicity

Their Jewish Community Connectivity Profile

# Your current age?



# Your gender?

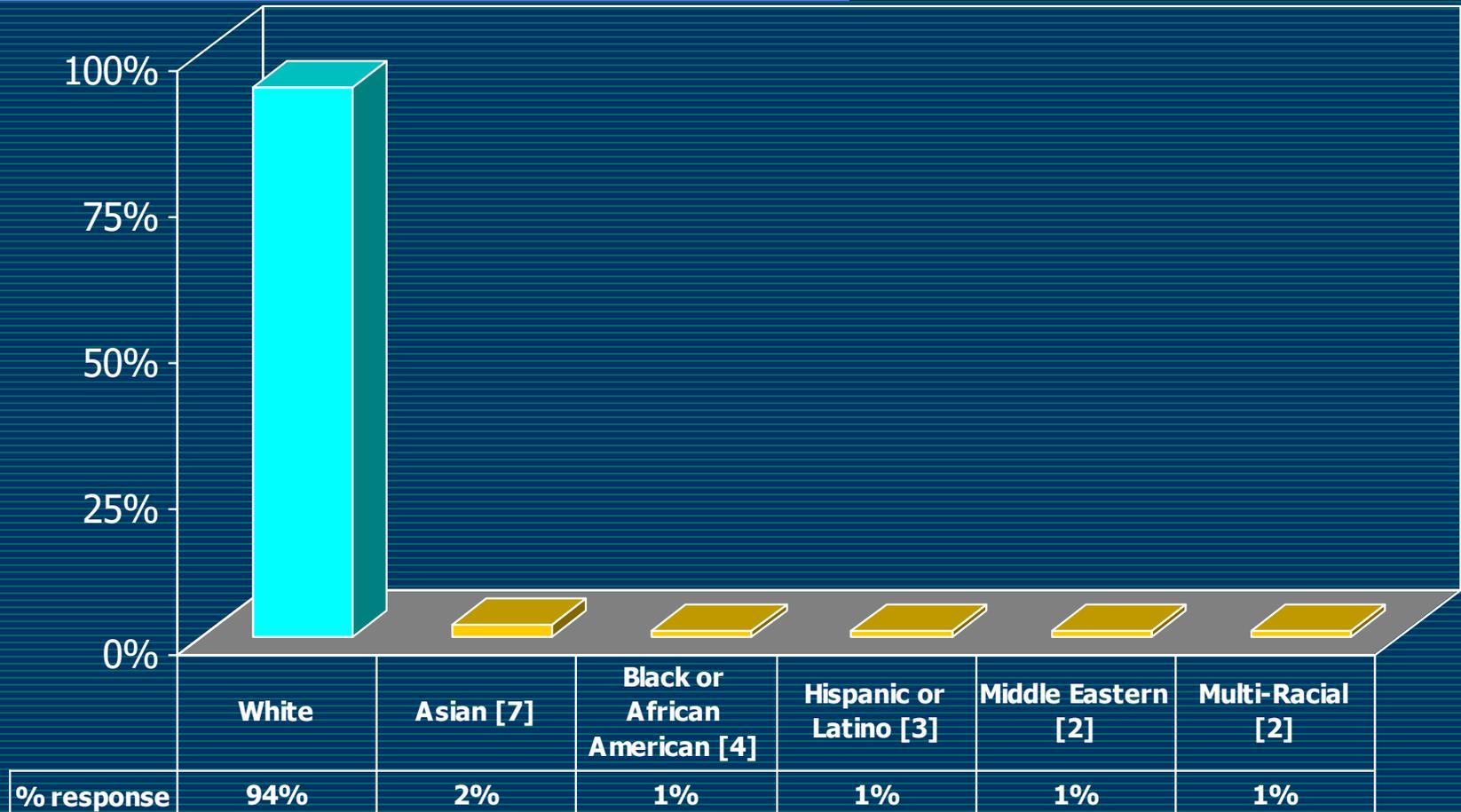


# Your religious affiliation (if any):

---

- 72 Catholic [many specifying “formerly Catholic” or “raised Catholic”]
- 33 Christian
- 18 None / “non-religious” / “not affiliated” / “Un-churched”
  
- Presbyterian [7], Methodist [6], Episcopalian [5]
- Agnostic [5], Atheist [5],
- Protestant [4], Lutheran [3], Mormon / LDS [3], Baptist [2]
- Unitarian [3], Universalist [2], Quaker [1], Wesleyan [1]
- “Spiritual” [3], “Secular Humanist” [2], “Golden Rule” [1]
- Muslim [1], Bhuddist [1]
- Eckankar [1], “Pagan” [1]
- “Non-Denominational” [1]

# Your race or ethnicity?



[N=350 Non-Jewish Respondents]

## Appendix:

# How have our non-Jewish survey participants been interacting with our Jewish community?

---

Please help us understand how you have been connected with our Jewish community by choosing all that apply for each of the organizations that follow.

[If you have no relationship with that organization, just choose “none of the above”.]

The JCC / Jewish Community Center [including fitness, child care, camps, theater, programs, events, etc.]

Jewish Family Service [including Brighton Food Cupboard, Brighten Your Wardrobe, Pencils & Paper, etc.]

### **Jewish Community Center**

**152** participated in **programs / events**

**123** **member** there

**50** **work(ed)** there

**49** received their **services**

**41** **charitably** supported them

**24** **child(ren)** attend(ed) Wolk pre-school, Geshet after-school, camps, classes, shows, etc.

**17** **volunteered** there

**118** none of the above

### **Jewish Family Service**

**32** **charitably** supported them

**31** participated in **programs / events**

**18** received their **services**

**11** **volunteered** there

**10** **work(ed)** there

**2** **member** there

**264** none of the above

Jewish Senior Life [including The Summit at Brighton, Wolk Manor, The Jewish Home, and the Jewish Home's Green House Cottages]

Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

### □ Jewish Senior Life

**124** work(ed) there

**43** received their **services**

**33** participated in **programs / events**

**23** **charitably** supported them

**6** **volunteered** there

**1** **member** there

**167** none of the above

### □ Jewish Federation

**49** participated in **programs / events**

**16** **charitably** supported them

**9** **work(ed)** there

**3** received their **services**

**0** **volunteered** there

**0** **member** there

**274** none of the above

One or more of the Rochester region's Jewish Temples or Synagogues

One or more of the Rochester region's Jewish Schools

[Hillel Community Day School, Derech HaTorah,

Ora Academy, Talmudical Institute of Upstate NY]

### **Temples/Synagogues**

**64** participated in **programs / events**

**7** received their **services**

**7** **charitably** supported them

**5** **work(ed)** there

**5** **volunteered** there

**3** **member** there

**271** none of the above

### **Jewish Schools**

**16** participated in **programs / events**

**11** **work(ed)** there

**5** **charitably** supported them

**3** received their **services**

**2** **volunteered** there

**1** **member** there

**315** none of the above

# One of the schools [Brighton / Pittsford] connected to the Rochester / Modi'in (Israel) Partnership

---

## **Partnership [P2G] School**

**16** participated in **programs / events**

**16** received their **services**

**6** **work(ed)** there

**6** **volunteered** there

**5** **member** there

**1** **charitably** supported them

**303** none of the above

# Concluding Summary: The Jewish-Adjacent Perspective

- A. I am not Jewish, but I **work for a Jewish organization.**
- B. I am not Jewish, but I am a **member of a Jewish organization** [eg. the JCC, NCJW, etc.] / participate in their programming and events / attend or send my children to a Jewish summer camp, etc.
- C. I am not Jewish, but I **donate to / volunteer with / charitably support** one or more Jewish organizations.
- D. I am not Jewish, but I [or a family member] **receive(d) services from a Jewish organization.**
- E. I am not Jewish, but I am part of a school [eg. Brighton or Pittsford] that is linked to the **Rochester-Modi'in (Israel) Partnership.**



**A profile of our participating non-Jews**

# Concluding Summary: The Jewish-Adjacent Perspective

---

- A very reassuring **84%** of our 350 non-Jewish respondents describe themselves as having felt **very welcome and comfortable** within our Jewish community.
- How could our Jewish community make them feel more welcome and comfortable? Their collective request: **Teach Us**. Many want to learn more about Jewish life, observance and practice. Some would welcome the opportunity for more involvement with and within our community. Also, create opportunities for Interfaith dialogue and learning built upon mutual respect
- The **best aspects** of their experiences with our Jewish community? When they find us – in terms of **our faith, our values, and our behavior** – to be **impressive, inclusive, and positive**.
- A **lack of familiarity** with our Jewish way of doing things can be frustrating and challenging. The answer: **Teach us more about Jewish life so we can be culturally and religiously sensitive – as well as more comfortable -- in our interactions with the Jewish community.**

# Concluding Summary: The Jewish-Adjacent Perspective

---

For example, while **28%** already feel **very positive and supportive about Israel**, we have an opportunity to share the Israel story with the **38%** who tell us they have **no opinion about Israel today**. Perhaps this can be one of the thematic dimensions of the Jewish learning and insight they have encouraged us to provide.

**74%** of our non-Jewish respondents have **never experienced, witnessed, or observed any incidence of Anti-Semitism**. This is significantly different from the experiences reported by both our Jewish adults and our Jewish teens. Perhaps our non-Jewish adjacents are less apt to recognize and identify as Anti-Semitic incidents such as humor, verbal slurs, stereotyping, etc. when they occur.

**42%** of our non-Jewish respondents **feel less than very safe & secure in our community's Jewish settings**. Like their Jewish counterparts, they should benefit from the **efforts already underway to make our Jewish community more secure, and to communicate effectively on behalf of those efforts** – so together we can **both be safer and feel safer**.

---

... questions or comments?

Amy Libenson

[ALibenson@JewishRochester.org](mailto:ALibenson@JewishRochester.org)

Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester