

WINTER 2012

CIRCA

Newsletter of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life

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12th Annual

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works for your

congregation

**How
May
We Help
You?**

PHONE CALL FOR Education Department
M. Fifth Grade Religious School Teacher
OF _____ CELL _____
PHONE _____
MESSAGE Needs ideas for
all-school Purim program.
Also looking for resources
for students with special
needs.
SIGNED _____

TELEPHONE
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PHONE CALL FOR Rabbinic Department
M. President of congregation B'nai
OF _____ CELL _____
PHONE _____
MESSAGE Wants to discuss
this week's Tarte of Torah
Also interested in scheduling
a rabbinic visit for the
fall.
SIGNED _____

PHONE CALL FOR Cultural Program
M. Member of J...
OF _____ CELL _____
PHONE _____
MESSAGE Interested in a
consult on a class
of a...

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Message from
ISJL Board Chair
Rayman L. Solomon

Several months ago I received an extraordinary email from my friend, Charles Lipson. Charles grew up in the small Mississippi Delta town of Marks with his two brothers and his parents, who ran a business there. Charles' email included a very interesting column from Rabbi Steven Moskowitz of the Jewish Congregation of Brookville on Long Island's North Shore. Rabbi Moskowitz writes about the first funeral he ever conducted over 20 years ago, in Clarksdale, MS, which was for Charles's father, Harry M. Lipson, Jr. The Rabbi, who was a student intern, was extremely self-critical of the service he performed. He told of going the next day to sit by the grave and ask forgiveness for what he perceived to be an inadequate performance of his duty both in terms of style and substance. The response to the Rabbi's column, which Charles shared with a group of friends, was that from the family's perspective the Rabbi was totally incorrect and too harsh on himself. Charles pointed out that what was most important to his family was the chance to talk before the service to the Rabbi about his father -- to express their grief through sharing family stories in private. It was the gift of having a rabbi in a community that could no longer afford to employ one that mattered beyond all else to the family.

This is the insight that led to the creation of the Rabbinic Program at the ISJL over ten years ago. As Macy Hart saw the growing number

of congregations throughout the United States without even the resources to have part-time rabbinic coverage, he decided to address the problem by the creation of an itinerant rabbi program in the South. The program employs a recently ordained rabbi who travels to unserved congregations in our region for Shabbat services, adult learning, and B'nai Mitzvah preparation. It also allows the rabbi to become acquainted with the congregants, which makes pastoral duties much more meaningful during times when face-to-face visits are not possible, and communication is by email or phone calls. However, these relationships are most important when significant life events require a rabbi's presence.

I personally have experienced this over the past ten years with the three ISJL rabbis. Rabbi Debra Kassoff visited my hometown of Helena, Arkansas several times during her years in Jackson. When Helena no longer had the resources to keep Temple Beth El open, Rabbi Kassoff presided over a beautiful weekend of services and events that functioned both as a reunion of former congregants and relatives of congregants and a meaningful way to mark the end of an active and proud congregation that had existed for over one hundred years. Similarly, when my father received the rather singular distinction of having a tugboat named after him, my parents wanted a rabbi to deliver the invocation at the boat's dedication, which had become

a community-wide event. Rabbi Batsheva Appel traveled from Jackson for the weekend and creatively and beautifully crafted an appropriate service and prayer to fit a unique situation. And most importantly Rabbi Kassoff came to Helena last summer to conduct my mother's funeral. Because of the Institute's program, at this most difficult of times, we were able to have the service led with great meaning by a rabbi who knew my mother and could speak eloquently and bring some comfort to our family. We also appreciated the outreach of the current ISJL rabbi, Marshal Klaven, who has traveled to all thirteen states of the ISJL's region and established himself as a true spiritual leader of our virtual community.

The Rabbinic Department of the ISJL has received major support from several important national and regional foundations. We are also exploring new and significant partnerships with large multi-rabbi congregations to provide coverage to the communities that have no rabbi. But we constantly need to find the resources to maintain this signature program. It is the essence of Judaism that we continue to provide religious teaching and pastoral care to all Jews, and with your continued support the ISJL can keep fulfilling this crucial mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Solomon'.



Message from
ISJL President
Macy B. Hart

One night, as we often do, Susan and I went to a small, packed venue to listen to live music. The singer, whom we had only heard about from our friends who were joining us on this late night excursion, produced a very large, full-music sound with only four musicians. There was no drummer, and therefore no pounding percussion to set the tempo for the group, the room, the experience. This responsibility fell to the bass fiddle player. He was new to the group; this was his first night and the house was packed. The communication between him and the singer had to be perfect, and it was. The success of each song, sometimes fast, lively and upbeat, other times slow, delicate and even soulful, was dependent on the big fiddle man, who was providing the tempo for the delivery of each musical message from the singer. For their musical conversation to be successful, the tempo had to be felt, not just heard.

Watching the band play, I thought about the ISJL and its relationship to its partnering communities. We are like that bass player, helping to push the tempo of Jewish life in the South, sometimes pushing forward in the lead, other times nestling in the background. We work with our partnering communities, both large and small, Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative, affiliated and nonaffiliated, to create new harmonies. Each individual community brings its own unique tone to the band. The ISJL's mission is to work with our partners to produce beautiful music that transports and transforms our audience.

The ISJL continually strives to be innovative and relevant. We want to be a catalyst for meaningful change as well as a collaborator for concepts that are life-long successes. Our philosophy of trans-denominationalism has proven that the barriers that are self-imposed within each community are not impenetrable and that working together does not mean surrendering our individual affiliations. We hope that another group of communal leaders from another part of the country observes the success of the Institute's approach of multi-state pooling of resources and picks up the next pieces of the puzzle. Leaders who know their regions as well as we know the South could follow in our footsteps since the issues the ISJL addresses are national in scope.

Therefore, we are especially gratified to be recognized by the Slingshot Fund as one of the most innovative Jewish organizations in North America for the 6th year in a row. Because of our long tenure on the list, we were named a Standard Bearer, a new designation of the ten organizations who have been selected for five or more years who continue to provide impact and leadership. The *Jewish Forward* newspaper called it a "top 10 list" of Jewish organizations across the country. The Institute is in fabulous company, but more importantly, this honor shows that the ISJL is setting a tempo and shaping a brighter future for our community partners.

Growing from 3 to 26 staff members in only 11 years, the ISJL is programmatically heavy and administratively light. Most Fridays our offices are nearly empty as so many of our staff members are on the road delivering outstanding programs to Jewish communities across the South. So far, our holistic approach to Jewish life has brought together over 100 congregations and communities in a communal pursuit. There are large congregations at the same table with small congregations who often struggle to survive. The trio has grown to a quartet, which then has grown to a small orchestra, and now becomes a symphony as the ISJL realizes its vision of true community. Our communal sound is based on many individual instruments.

Across these 13 states, we are constantly holding metaphoric rehearsals that lead to better Jewish education, rabbinic services to communities that have none, community engagement where even the smallest youth or adult groups can be involved in repairing the world, ongoing exposure to art and cultural programs, preservation of a precious history of an extreme minority that reached beyond its numbers to help shape their communities, and a future that has been re-energized. Thanks to all who have supported us, and we hope that you will add your own instrument to the band.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Macy B. Hart'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with the first letters being larger and more prominent.

ISJL Named as Standard Bearer By *Slingshot* '11-'12

For the past seven years, *Slingshot*, created by a team of young Jewish philanthropists, has featured the 50 most innovative Jewish projects in North America. In order to be listed in *Slingshot*, organizations are selected from among hundreds of nominees across North America. Now after seven editions, the ISJL and nine other organizations have risen to the top again and again as leaders within the community and mentors to

other organizations. These ten projects, now called Standard Bearers, have been listed in at least five editions of *Slingshot*. In conjunction with *Slingshot's* evaluators, Standard Bearers were chosen not only for sustainability but also because they continue to achieve *Slingshot's* core criteria of innovation, impact, leadership and organizational efficacy.

According to Will Schneider, Executive Director of *Slingshot*, "Seven editions of *Slingshot* ago, Jewish innovation was still largely undefined and unexplored, and 66% of the organizations listed in this year's guide weren't even founded yet. Over the years, the Standard Bearers consistently set, exceeded and reset the high standards that emerging organizations and projects in Jewish life aspired to match. In truth, we had trouble selecting a name that would set them apart as examples of ongoing excellence without placing them on an "emeritus" list or implying that their innovative days were behind them. We settled on Standard Bearers because these groups set benchmarks for the field and lead by example with ongoing innovation and relevancy."

Slingshot is used by philanthropists, volunteers, not-for-profit executives, and program participants to identify path-finding and trailblazing organizations grappling with concerns in Jewish life such as identity, community, and tradition. ISJL was chosen by a panel of 36 foundation professionals from across North America. This was ISJL's sixth time being featured in *Slingshot*.

Through our unique model, the ISJL encourages communities large and small to assume the shared responsibility of promoting Jewish life and tradition region-wide. The ISJL implements innovative solutions to deliver Jewish programming and resources to communities across the South, and our inclusion in *Slingshot '11-'12* as a Standard Bearer reaffirms the impact of our work and allows us to continue building our capacity. We see that we are helping create a rich Jewish life for this next generation.

Slingshot '11/'12 was released on October 18, 2011. The community will meet on March 14, 2012 in New York City at the annual *Slingshot* Day, where over 250 not-for-profit leaders, foundation professionals, and funders of all ages will engage in candid conversations about philanthropy and innovation.



When One Door Closes, Another Opens



By: Rabbi Marshal Klaven

The old expression goes: “when one door closes, another opens.” It’s a statement that comes to temper life’s bitter moments when sadness and disappointment reign after some individual aspiration falls short. But, as I experienced recently with the holy congregation of Beth Ahaba in Muskogee, OK, the comfort of these words can be felt communally as much as they can be felt personally.

After 100 years of sacred service to this Northeastern Oklahoma community, the congregation of Beth Ahaba made the heart-wrenching decision to close their doors. Amidst tears and laughter, congregants honored their relationships with one another and the community in a moving deconsecration service designed by the ISJL’s Rabbinic Department.

Among the many meaningful memories shared was the 20 years of inspirational service provided by then UAHC Southern Regional Rabbi Solomon Kaplan. His steadfast support helped hold

this congregation together, as they fulfilled the eternal values of our heritage: clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, keeping faith with those who slept in the dust.

Sadly, Rabbi Kaplan passed away just prior to the congregation’s move into a new building. His wife, Peggy Kaplan, attended the dedication ceremony on June 2, 1984, presenting a beautiful gift to the congregation: a hand-crafted mezuzah, testifying to her husband’s love for all Southern congregations, particularly his deeds of love with Beth Ahaba (“House of Love”).

The mezuzah contains three pomegranates, for the three patriarchs, four leaves for the four matriarchs, and eight blossoms for the eighth day in which all children enter God’s eternal covenant. With the mezuzah, there was an accompanying plaque that read:

Let us get up early to the vineyards.
Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
Whether the vine blossom be opened,
And the pomegranates be in flower.
There will I give thee my love.
~ Song of Songs 7:13 ~

In full bloom was the love of this congregation. And now, in their twilight, the open doors of this House of Love began to close. And, while there was sadness, it was tempered with the passing of this gift. “Rabbi Klaven,” wrote Beth Ahaba congregant Miriam Freedman, “this mezuzah we are now giving to the ISJL. I know y’all will give it a good home.”

And, that’s the truth! Though we are still in the process of finding a new home for the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, this mezuzah one day will find its place therein. Thereby, whenever one passes through its threshold, they will remember Rabbi Solomon Kaplan as well as the history of Beth Ahaba, understanding that “as one door closes, another opens.”

Expansion of Rabbinic Services

By: Rabbi Marshal Klaven

In 2009, the ISJL Rabbinic Department averaged an astounding **40 visits to 20 congregations** per year, which touched over two thousand lives. So, one can understand how wonderfully surprised we were when, in 2010, the Rabbinic Department reached an unprecedented level of service to our Southern communities, going on **48 visits to 28 congregations** across 10 states, reaching 4344 individuals!

This year, we proved that this extraordinary level of service to Southern Jewry was no fluke. Thanks to our **2011 Clergy-on-the-Road** (Rabbi Bob Levy and Cantor Mark Perman), our 2011 Rabbinic Intern (Student Rabbi Joseph Robinson), our Administrative Assistant (Ms. Shirley Eriksen) and ISJL Rabbi Marshal Klaven, the Rabbinic Department proudly supported **34 congregations, in 11 states, on 57 visits, reaching a total of 4113 individuals.**

We sincerely thank the following congregations and communities for inviting us in as well as all others whose contributions made possible this level of service. We are deeply appreciative and feel blessed by such relationships. And, we pray, just as we are blessed by them, may we all – together – go on to bless others, as we sustain and strengthen Jewish identities in the South.

Beth Shalom (Auburn, AL)	Beth Israel (Biloxi/Gulfport, MS)
Mishkan Israel (Selma, AL)	Adath Israel (Cleveland, MS)
Etz Chaim (Bentonville, AR)	Our Home UU Church (Hattiesburg, MS)
Meir Chayim (McGehee, AR)	MRLC, St. Philips, UUCJ (Jackson, MS)
Temple Shalom (Fayetteville, AR)	Beth Israel (Meridian, MS)
Shomrei Torah (Tallahassee, FL)	B'nai Israel (Natchez, MS)
B'nai Israel (Panama City, FL)	Ole Miss Hillel (Oxford, MS)
Beth Tefilloh (Brunswick, GA)	B'nai Israel (Tupelo, MS)
Shalom b'Harim (Dahlonega, GA)	CCA Correctional Facility (Tutwiler, MS)
B'nai Israel (Fayetteville, GA)	URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp (Utica, MS)
Rodeph Sholom (Rome, GA)	Anshe Chesed (Vicksburg, MS)
Am Shalom (Bowling Green, KY)	Congregation Emanuel (Statesville, NC)
Adath Israel (Owensboro, KY)	Beth Ahaba (Muskogee, OK)
Temple Shalom (Lafayette, LA)	Adas Israel (Brownsville, TN)
Temple Sinai (Lake Charles, LA)	UCJC (Crossville, TN)
B'nai Israel (Monroe, LA)	B'nai Israel (Jackson, TN)
CCAR Convention (New Orleans, LA)	Emanu-El (Longview, TX)

TAP

By: Malkie Schwartz



The TAP program has been underway for more than two years now! TAP stands for Talk About the Problem. It is a peer mediation program where students help their peers resolve their conflicts peacefully.

TAP was selected as a Mississippi Kids Count Success Story for 2012! This year the annual publication of the Mississippi Kids Count will focus on Child Safety. TAP is one of a few programs that will be highlighted in the Data Book and in an accompanying DVD.

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life will receive an award at the Kids Count Summit in February 2012 where we will have the opportunity to share our work with the Summit participants. We are honored that the Kids Count panel chose to recognize TAP. We look forward to telling others about TAP and the students who were champions for peaceful conflict resolution in school.

Launch of TAP at Jim Hill High School

The Community Engagement Department recently launched the TAP program at Jim Hill High School where many of the Blackburn Middle School mediators now attend high school. The program began with a swearing-in ceremony for 30 newly trained mediators. Federal Judge Henry Wingate, the first African American to become a federal judge in Mississippi, presided over the ceremony.



AmeriCorps Mississippi, Community Engagement Fellow Julia Miao



As I prepared to graduate from Cornell University, I signed up for AmeriCorps because I believe that to be successful I need to be able to contribute to a better world that I would be proud to live in and be a part of. By the time I had enrolled in college, I had already lived in China, Australia, Austin and Mississippi. This journey gave me a unique appreciation for the ongoing struggles that people from poor socio-economic backgrounds suffer. AmeriCorps allows me to take action. It is obvious that changes need to be made to better educate the youth of the state. This is especially true for communities that have been stricken by poverty.

My job as an AmeriCorps member, assigned to work with the ISJL, is multi-faceted. I help develop as well as implement ISJL's community engagement initiatives including TAP and Read, Lead, Succeed. These programs are consistent with my primary focus which is to improve the academic ability and high

school preparedness of sixth through eighth graders through tutoring and mentoring programs.

The TAP program creates a safer school environment for students by addressing conflicts in a safe, non-judgmental, and confidential environment. This allows the problem to be resolved among peers before it escalates to the level of violence. Over the past few months, I have been working with ISJL program materials to train student peer mediators. I also help support and supervise the implementation of the program throughout the year in order to ensure its success.

Aside from working with TAP, I have helped design and pilot a program known as Read, Lead, Succeed. It provides middle school students with individualized literacy instruction and additional opportunities to read. The program strategically recruits and selects students who are struggling but have the capacity to read above a baseline level. I train the middle school students to become "Reading Leaders." These student-leaders

read once a week to Pre-K students. Before each official Read, Lead, Succeed meeting with the Pre-School, I meet with each of the middle school students to practice various reading strategies targeting fluency, comprehension, as well as reading expressions and pace. This preparation also helps the reading leaders feel more confident while reading to the Pre-K students.

As I introduce, organize and implement TAP and Read, Lead, Succeed, I am preparing programs for replication by putting them to practice, identifying their weaknesses and working to make them stronger. Through this experience, I am able to build the capacity of the department of community engagement and insure that students living in poverty can benefit from high quality programming.

Teacher Training Institute The 12th annual ISJL Education Conference

June 24-26, 2012 will mark our 12th annual education conference. Our conference began with a modest gathering of committed teachers set out to change the way we educate our Jewish children. Our conference has now grown to nearly 200 participants representing congregations large and small from all over our 13 state region.

Over our 11 years, we have created a wonderful formula for this gathering of Jewish teachers and leaders. Our participants are exposed to leading experts and resources in the field of Jewish education. They learn new teaching skills and techniques, they explore new aspects of their Judaism, they network with other schools and teachers, they enjoy great food and entertainment, and they are challenged to dream big for their students and congregations.

While our formula has proven to be successful, we are always introducing new elements to the conference

for returnees as well as new participants. A unique element of the conference is our tracks. The tracks create the feel of a sub-conference within the conference. Each participant chooses a group and stays with their group for 3 sessions. They not only get to know their group well, but they also gain a deeper understanding of a topic or category of teaching. This year we will be introducing new tracks such as Spirituality, Israel and Text.

The conference has grown because of its reputation both among the participants and the speakers. Our participants know that they will have a quality experience, resulting in many schools bringing as many teachers as possible. Our speakers are so moved by the work of the ISJL and our amazing community of teachers that many of them ask to return and have recommended the conference to their colleagues.

This year our key-note speaker will be Harlene Winnick Appelman, the Executive Director of the Covenant Foundation, with over 35 years of distinguished contributions to the field of Jewish education. Harlene will be focusing on Family Education, a critical part of Jewish education. She is a distinguished Jewish Educator from Ann Arbor, MI and one of the first winners of the Covenant Awards, before becoming the foundation's Executive Director in June of 2005.

Ms. Appelman has worked in Jewish education for nearly thirty-five years, as a pioneering family educator, director of community education and outreach, and most recently as Chief Jewish Education Officer



of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. She is known internationally as a creative force in Jewish education on both the institutional and communal levels.

Harlene will be joined by representatives from the URJ, USCJ, Gratz College, Matan and other excellent educators, guests and presenters.



Each week at our Education Department meetings, Lauren Fredman, 2nd Year Education Fellow and Social Media Coordinator, reminds us to send her pictures from the road, for our Facebook and Twitter pages. As pictures begin to trickle in, and Lauren starts to post them, in a sense we all get to become

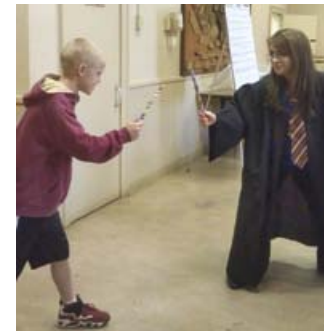
a part of each other's visits. We see our programs come to life, and our ultimate goal of creating joyful, positive Jewish experiences for the students that we reach, comes to fruition. We see crafts that we practiced making over and over again in the office, we see the sparks in our colleagues'

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eyes, as they do what they love to do best: teaching and learning.

These pictures —of a Fellow dressed in full Harry Potter garb for "Harry Potter Hanukkah," of students learning about the topography of Israel by using different types of candy, of students smiling and laughing with their families and their pets as they are led in a pet blessing ceremony—remind us that we are making memories and nurturing and strengthening communities. And since our programs are always visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, they involve every type of student in our classroom, ensuring that no child gets left behind.



Our presence on Facebook and Twitter is certainly strategic—we understand the importance of sharing our messages and our pictures with a global community—but, perhaps selfishly, our entree into the world of social media also allows us to watch our world come alive. We are glad to share our world with others, but it also reminds us of the reasons why we work every day to shape confident, competent Jews, who will one day find pictures of their religious school years, on the internet or in a photo album, and think fondly about the things that they learned and their wonderful experiences.



North of the Border: Jewish Life in Laredo, Texas

By : *The ISJL History Department*

As the first Texas border city south of Eagle Pass to have a railroad, Laredo prospered in the 1880s, becoming a key stop in a long railroad network of Mexican-American economic exchange. At the same time that the railroad came to Laredo, Jewish residents began arriving as well. In 1881, a newspaper noted that the Jews of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico were holding Rosh Hashanah services together at the home of Morris Hirsch. Hirsch, a German immigrant and resident of Nuevo Laredo, worked as a rancher and businessman, serving as vice president of the First State Bank. Like Hirsch, most of the Jews who arrived in Laredo in the late 19th century were of German or western-European descent. Jews quickly made a large impact in the city's commercial sector, as an 1881 Laredo newspaper noted: "Rosh-Hashanah or the Jewish new year, commenced on Friday ... All business houses of our Jewish citizens were closed ... It gave a rather mournful appearance to our city to see most of the business houses closed."

Thanks to the railroad, Laredo's population grew significantly, from 3,521 people in 1880 to 13,429 by

1900. Many Jews arrived in Laredo in this era and became some of the city's foremost civic and commercial leaders. Confederate Army veteran Sam Alexander and his wife Rosa were German immigrants who arrived in Laredo in the 1890s, though it was their sons who contributed heavily to Laredo's growth and development. By 1896, their eldest son, Isaac, owned I. Alexander Clothing Company with his brothers Louis and William. Isaac also served on the board of directors of the Laredo National Bank and entered into the agricultural field, pioneering the growth of onions and other vegetables in Laredo. Ben M. Alexander, too, was an important figure in Laredo for much of his life. After working at Laredo Mercantile Co. where his brother Louis was manager, Ben worked with the Mexican National Railroad and joined the Laredo National Bank in 1908, becoming its president in 1923. After Ben's death in 1938, Louis succeeded him as bank president.

Ironically, it was the Mexican Revolution that led to organized Jewish life in Laredo. In 1916, the U.S. National Guard stationed troops in Laredo due to the bloody revolution being

waged on and across the American border. That September, a Rabbi Gerstein arrived to organize a Young Men's Hebrew Association for the Jewish soldiers stationed in the area and to make plans for high holiday services in Laredo. Two other rabbis from New York arrived in Laredo later that month to help organize the YMHA which also appealed to Jewish residents of Laredo, who served on its executive board. Rabbi B.H. Birnbaum conducted Rosh Hashanah services in Red Men's Hall in 1916, the first public high holiday services ever held in Laredo, which drew much of the local Jewish community. Due to the leadership of these New York-based rabbis, Laredo Jews established Congregation B'nai Israel in 1916. By 1919, the Jews of Laredo had formed a Ladies' Jewish Aid Society, a cemetery association, and a Sunday school, organized by Albert Granoff, which was held in a Laredo public school.

By the time the Jews of Laredo were establishing community institutions, a new wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had started settling in the area. The Immigration Act of 1924 severely limited the number

of Jewish immigrants eligible to enter the United States. However, the act did not limit immigration from Latin America. If they were patient, many Eastern European Jews were able to enter the United States after spending time in Mexico. Morris Greenblum arrived in Nuevo Laredo from Eastern Europe in 1925, followed by his family in 1927. While in Mexico, after working as a peddler, Greenblum collaborated with a neighbor and opened a number of furniture stores in Nuevo Laredo. By 1940, Greenblum was able to come to the United States after bribing the necessary officials to pay for visas for himself and the rest of his family. Greenblum's son, Irving "Pancho" Greenblum, grew up speaking Yiddish and Spanish and, after spending the first years of his life in Mexico, recalls how confused his teachers in Laredo were that, while he looked like an Anglo, he "couldn't speak any English." Irving later joined his father's business, Mexico Furniture, which was located in Nuevo Laredo, crossing the border each day to get to work.

While B'nai Israel remained an active congregation, it contained two distinct groups: a larger group of German Reform Jews who had been in Laredo since the 19th century and the more recently arrived Orthodox contingent, which was smaller but growing. Despite their differences, the congregation began to discuss the possibility of constructing a house of worship. The group



eventually purchased a plot of land, though they had not yet made a decision about the religious affiliation of the congregation. In a tenuous sign of unity, the two groups collaborated for high holiday services in the 1920s, renting the same building though holding separate services. By the end of the 1920s, the two factions had split as the Reform-controlled B'nai Israel moved forward with plans to build the city's first synagogue. The congregation, which numbered around 30 or 35 families, dedicated the temple in September, 1939.

While B'nai Israel built a new house of worship, the Orthodox Jews of Laredo formed Congregation Agudas Achim and continued to meet in rented spaces. While the group was nominally Orthodox, the services were not strictly traditional as men and women sat together. Rabbi H.J. Horowitz arrived to serve the Orthodox congregation, though they lacked a building, in 1941.

The congregation at that time numbered around 30 or 35 families. In the wake of World War II, Agudas Achim purchased and renovated a former army base building to use as a synagogue, moving it to a heavily Jewish residential neighborhood known as "The Heights."

Despite their differences, the two congregations formed a joint Sunday school in 1943 and shared use of the Jewish cemetery. In 1969, Agudas Achim added school rooms to its facility and started its own religious school. B'nai Israel joined the Reform Union of American Hebrew Congregations by 1962, while Agudas Achim later affiliated with the Conservative movement.

Later generations of Laredo Jews have remained active in commercial and civic life. Appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt, Jennie Goodman served as postmaster of Laredo from 1935 to 1960. Joe Brand

opened a men's clothing store in Laredo in 1935 and served on the local school board. Jews remained leaders of Laredo National Bank; Maurice Alexander served as Chairman of the Board while Max Mandel and Gary Jacobs served as president of the bank. While in many other cities Jews in the late 20th century became professionals rather than merchants, today, most of Laredo's Jews remain involved in the retail business. Many have continued their family businesses.

In 1980, an estimated 420 Jews lived in Laredo. Since, the Jewish population has declined as Jewish children raised there move away to larger cities in Texas and beyond. By 1995, B'nai Israel was down to three contributing members. In the early 2000s, the congregation decided to close its temple, holding high holiday services for the next several years at the Laredo National Bank

or a local hotel. By 2010, B'nai Israel decided to end this practice and formally dissolved. Several of B'nai Israel's former members have joined Agudas Achim. The Conservative synagogue's membership, though shrinking, numbers 35 to 40 families.

Nonetheless there is hope for Laredo's future. The city's population has grown steadily in recent years. The passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement ensures that Laredo will play an important part in the future economic relationship between Mexico and the United States. Today, Laredo is booming with economic opportunity and may yet again attract enterprising Jews.

To learn much more about the Jewish history of Laredo, or over 200 other southern towns, visit the Encyclopedia of Southern Communities at www.isjl.org.



Answering the Call

Every day we receive calls from all over the region asking for our assistance. These are just a few examples of the many ways in which the ISJL has "answered the call"

How can we make a speaking engagement an affordable event for our congregation?

How can I prepare my son for his Bar Mitzvah without a rabbi in our community?

Is there someone who can help preserve our community history?

What kind of special program can I plan for the tenth anniversary of 9/11?

What can we do to honor the history of our diminishing congregation?

How can we introduce a peer mediation program into our school?

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

Rabbi Michael Cook Tour



We received a call from Rabbi Elliot Stevens in Montgomery, AL asking about Rabbi Michael Cook as a presenter. To make the event affordable we enlisted partners in nearby cities to create the tour. Rabbi Steven's congregation did host Rabbi Cook and along the way he presented seven lectures in communities that were able to take advantage of hosting this great event by sharing the costs.

RABBINIC



B'nai Mitzvah Students

This summer we were approached by members of the Jewish community in Auburn, AL and Lake Charles, LA to help individuals with the sacred rite of become a Bar/ Bat Mitzvah. In spite of the distance, we used technology over the course of a year to provide our students with a deeply personal program. We have also been called upon to help to create other meaningful life cycle events such as weddings, funerals, conversions and baby namings in communities in our region without a rabbi.

EDUCATION

9/11 All- School Program



We received many of these requests since the anniversary fell on the first day of many religious schools. They asked for an all-school program that would commemorate 9/11. We wrote a lesson that would allow every student to walk away with a sense of pride in our country, while learning about the Jewish value of remembrance (zachor). The final product was a 60-90 minute all-school program that was then sent out to each of our 77 partner communities.

HISTORY



Laredo, Texas Jewish History

Last spring, the Jewish community of Laredo contacted our history department about commissioning a major oral history project in the border town. This fall, our oral historian spent a full week there, filming interviews with a number of Jewish Laradoans. He is currently editing the results of his trip into a video that will capture the personalities and stories of Laredo's unique Jewish community.

MUSEUM



Temple Bnai Sholom

When Temple B'nai Sholom, in Brookhaven, MS was deconsecrated, it was announced that the building would be donated and used as a history museum. It was agreed upon that with the donation of the building, a B'nai Sholom Jewish Heritage exhibit would also be included in the museum. The ISJL Museum and History staff were called upon to design and fabricate the exhibit that is currently on display to ensure that the legacy of the Brookhaven Jewish community is honored and preserved.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Peer Mediation Program

Since the launch of TAP (Talk About the Problem), a peer mediation program, we have been asked to replicate the program in more schools. Most recently, we introduced the program at Jim Hill High School where the Blackburn Middle School student-mediators currently attend high school. Jim Hill High School now has a total of 30 student mediators who have been trained to help their peers resolve their conflicts peacefully.

How does the ISJL Programming Department actually work?

By: Ann Zivitz Kimball

There are several ways that your congregation, federation, JCC, religious school, university, or other organization can take advantage of the ISJL Programming Department.

If you have a Scholar in Residence weekend, or lecture series, or would like to enhance Shabbat worship, have a concert or a fundraiser with one of our musicians or performers, and want to engage a presenter for a specific date, the first step is to contact Ann Kimball: akimball@isjl.org or 601-362-6357. Once you decide who and when Ann will contact the presenter and book that specific date for you and start preparing for your special event. OR, through our marketing of a presenter already in your area on an upcoming date with another organization, you can join an already existing tour.

What does the ISJL Programming department do to help us prepare for the event?

- We make all the presenter travel and lodging arrangements
- We send you all the materials you will need to make flyers, post on your website, and create a press release, OR if you prefer, we will produce those marketing materials for you.
- We order books and have them shipped directly to you and send instructions on exactly how to do the author signing after a lecture.
- At the conclusion of your event, we bill you for the balance of the honorarium +

your share of the expenses.

How much does it cost?

All of our presenters have varied honoraria and all of our presenters, partner with the ISJL, for you, at a much lowered rate than they work on their own. Also, depending on where that presenter is coming from and where you are, the travel expenses vary. It costs nothing to email or call anytime to inquire about

specifics.

What does it mean to share expenses?

Once you book your special event, we begin actively marketing that same presenter within a 3-5 hour drive and a few days on either side of your event. If your event is Friday night and another organization books that same presenter on Saturday or Sunday, the expenses are divided by the number of organizations involved in that particular tour.

A very common occurrence is for 2-4 partners to share 1 airline ticket, 1 rental car and the other travel and lodging expenses. That sharing, plus the already reduced honoraria make ISJL



Many different ways the ISJL Programming Department can work for YOU!

TEMPLE	EMANUEL	PRESENTS
<p>Noa Baum January 6th and 7th</p> <p>Friday night: 8:00pm New Member Shabbat Service and Dinner with Family Bureaucracy Adults \$12 Kids \$12</p> <p>Saturday night: 7:00pm "A Land For Us" The most exciting and inspiring story ever told for white and black Jews</p> <p>The Baal Shem Tones February 17th and 18th</p> <p>Friday night: 8:00pm Evening Shabbat service</p> <p>Saturday night: 7:00pm Cantor and Dessert Reception Adults \$12 Kids \$12</p>	<p>March 16th, 17th and 18th Pincus Forum Weekend With Dr. Joel Hoffman</p> <p>Friday night: 8:00pm Services, Dinner and Lecture by Joel Hoffman Adults \$12 Kids \$12</p> <p>Saturday morning: 9:30am Lecture by Joel Hoffman Shabbat Service</p> <p>Sunday morning: 10:00am Lecture by Joel Hoffman and Shabbat Adults \$12</p> <p>Saturday night: 8:00pm Kali Boney Comedy Show and Dinner</p>	<p>Max Jared March 31st</p> <p>Saturday night: 8:15pm CONCERT Adults \$12 Kids \$12 (incl. snack)</p> <p>Batsheva April 28th</p> <p>Saturday night: 8:15pm CONCERT Adults \$12</p> <p>Dr. Stuart Rockoff May 17th and 18th</p> <p>Scholar in Residence Southern Jewish History The good, bad and ugly</p> <p>Thursday night: 7:00pm Lecture in Hebrew</p> <p>Friday night: 8:00pm Services, Dinner and Lecture Adults \$12 Kids \$12</p>

All spring 2012 programming for Temple Emanuel in Virginia Beach, VA

Greenville December 11th
Hefrow Union Congregation

Huntsville December 4th
Congregation Ethel Shalom

Birmingham December 6th
Birmingham Jewish Federation
December 7th
Temple Beth El

Montgomery December 8th
Temple Beth Or
with Huntington College

Jackson December 10th
Goldring/Waldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life

Mobile December 9th
Springhill Avenue Temple

Six Partners for Seven lecture tour

Batsheva Chanukah Concert Tour

December 20, 2011 – Chattanooga, TN - Jewish Federation
Community wide 1st night candle lighting, dinner and concert

December 21, 2011 - Rome, GA - Congregation Rodeph Sholom
Chanukah dinner and concert

December 25, 2011 – Montgomery, AL – Congregation Agudath Israel
"Traditional Christmas day"

Another proud presentation of the:
Goldring/Waldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life
For more information on the ISJL - www.isjl.org

Concert Tour; Three Partner cities

"Conversations Between Christians and Jews"

3rd Annual Spartanburg Interfaith Connections

Friday, November 11, 2011
Temple Beth Israel 7:00 pm*
Hosted by members of the Regional Area Jewish Council and their Synagogue Partners

Saturday, November 12, 2011
Monticello Baptist Church 11 am
Partners of Jews Through a Jewish Filter
What is Jewish World Travel?

UNC Charlotte University Business Center, **Great House 4 pm***
A Faith Family Fellowship Against Anti-Semitism
How to Support the Process of the Process

Sunday, November 13, 2011
Central United Methodist Church 9:45 am*
Antisemitism, High and Holy
Revealing the Symbols of Suffering

Guest Speaker
Dr. Rabbi Michael Cook
Dr. Cook is Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is also a frequent speaker at interfaith dialogues and conferences. He has authored several books on Jewish-Christian relations and is a frequent contributor to the New York Times, the Washington Post, and other national publications.

The Humanities Council
Supporting the Humanities

One Synagogue, two Churches and a University; Four lectures in Four venues in One city.

Congregation Beth Israel presents

An Evening with the BAAL SHEM TONES

Helene and Michael Rates
Saturday, September 17, 2011 @ 8:00

The Baal Shem Tones are a husband-and-wife duo from Atlanta whose music has been described as "Jewish Americana and Jewish soul" with "a uniquely haunting quality that blends old and new Jewish music with a modern twist." They have performed at synagogues and at national conferences throughout the U.S. and Canada and have produced two CD's - All Our Lives and Jewish Shabbat - both of which will be on sale following their concert. A bronze coin album that is a Baal Shem Tones concert is more than great music, for many it is a spiritual experience that takes you back to home.

The concert will begin with a Hoshana Service at 8:00 and will be followed by coffee and dessert on the CBS Social Hall. Tickets for this event are \$12.00 and can be purchased on the CBS Office (252) 843-1111.

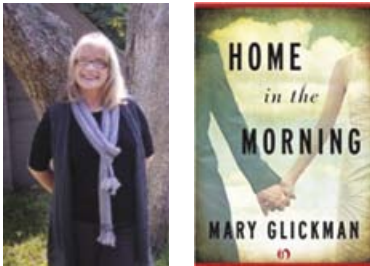
A partial grant presentation of the Goldring/Waldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. For more information on the ISJL - www.isjl.org

One Congregation, One Concert

How can the ISJL Programming Department help make your Adult Education, Religious School Enrichment, Fundraiser, Scholar in Residence Weekend, Holiday Celebration... Even Better?

Four Amazing Additions to the Programming Department! And there are still more to come!

Mary Glickman



Author and Lecturer Mary Glickman presents:

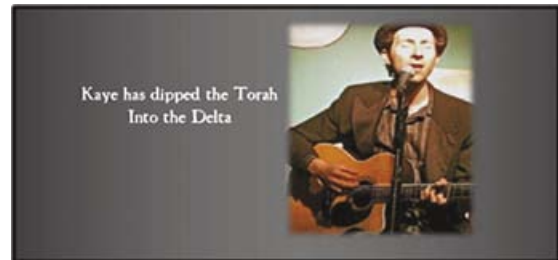
Home in the Morning

In this stunning novel, a Jewish family in Mississippi tries to survive the tumultuous 60s and the secrets that will bind them together—and keep them apart.

Mary's riveting novel traces the ways that **race** and **prejudice**, **family** and **love** intertwine to shape our lives.

Soon to be a major motion picture!

Saul Kaye



The international touring artist whose music takes the listener on a journey from Torah to the Delta. Imagine Shlomo Carlebach meets Muddy Waters.

Saul Kaye is The Pioneer of Jewish Blues!

"...Your album is awesomely beautiful and beautifully awesome...as are you. Really Superb!" -Craig Taubman

Max Jared



Max's passion for people and music was fueled by experiences at the URJ Greene Family Camp, leading him to become his NFTY region's Songleader.

"Max has a contagious personality which provides an atmosphere of engagement, fun, and genuine sense of caring. He has the unique ability to connect with a broad spectrum of people- from the very young to older senior adults." -Judi Ratner

Keith Barany



**His Show
is a great mix
of Jewish and
Mainstream
Comedy!**

A Proud graduate of the Yeshiva Day School, Keith nonetheless describes it this way:
"I served 14 years in a minimum security Yeshiva for a crime I didn't commit!"

He currently contributes to
"The Jimmy Kimmel Show"

The New York Post called him "the wittiest comic working today!"

Rolling Fork Judaica Replanted at Hillel in Tuscaloosa, AL

By: Rachel Jarman

Over the past three years, the Hillel at the University of Alabama has been in temporary housing on campus after the sale of their old building. They celebrated relocation to a wonderful new building in May of this year. At the final phase of the dedication, they rededicated their Torah with a Siyyum Hatorah celebration on November 13th, where honored members of the Hillel family added the final twelve letters to the scroll.



We were approached by Michael Honan, a co-chair of the board of Hillel to find out if the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience might have a pair of rimmonim (crowns on top of the Torah) from a historical congregation that we would make available on a long-term loan. He was interested in having a historical piece of Judaica in their new sanctuary to bridge the past with the present and the future.

The rimmonim were once a part of a congregation in the Mississippi delta community of Rolling Fork. Congregants were merchants, cotton farmers and Rolling Fork even maintained a Jewish mayor, Sam Rosenthal, for over 40 years. Like many small communities in the region, when people started to leave Rolling Fork for opportunities elsewhere, the Jewish community was not able to replenish itself and the Henry Kline Memorial Congregation closed its doors in 1992.

The rimmonim were in the care of the Lamensdorf family and were donated to the museum collection in 2001. As the plans for replanting were being made, museum staff learned of the many relationships the Tuscaloosa community had to the Rolling Fork families of the past, a testament to the strong bonds that link members of the Southern Jewish community.

Faye Levin, an ISJL Board Member, attended the ceremony and was honored to place the rimmonim on the Torah. By replanting

a piece of Southern Jewish history in this new worship space, the Hillel will be continuing the legacy of Jewish life in the South which is within the heart of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life's mission of documenting and preserving the rich history of the Southern Jewish experience. We were honored to be a part of this joyous occasion.

Thank You to Our Contributors!

In these CIRCA pages, you can see the impact our education, history, museum, cultural, community engagement and rabbinic programs have on thousands of people just like you. With deep appreciation, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life extends thanks to everyone who made a contribution in 2011 to enable our important work.

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<i>Ellis Hart</i> –Ilene Engel & Bob Arotzky	<i>Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Kantor's</i> <i>recovery</i> –Doris & Joe Metz	<i>Sidney Morris' recovery</i> –Susan & Macy B. Hart	<i>Marsha Stein's birthday</i> –Marilyn Wexler
<i>Frank Hart's birthday</i> –Reva & Ellis Hart	<i>Eli Mason Kaplan's birth</i> –Barbara Kabakoff	<i>Syril Portnoy's recovery</i> –Doris & Joe Metz –Reva & Ellis Hart	<i>Joanna Sternberg's work with</i> <i>Julius Fryhan</i> –Foundation, St Francisville, LA –Anne & Paul Marks, Jr.
<i>The birth of Jamie Asher Hart</i> –Sheryl & Gordon Bogen –Ilene Engel & Bob Arotzky –Imogene Berman & Family	<i>Miriam Kaplan's birthday</i> –Janet H. Brueck	<i>Dr. Barry & Lori Ripps</i> –Pat S. Langnau	<i>Dylan Strasser</i> –Simon R. Strasser
<i>Macy B. Hart</i> –Beth Huppinn & David Bennett –Charlett & Marshall Frumin –Amy & Artie Finkelberg –Terri & Adam Finkelstein –Jane Slotin –Susan & William Epstein –Linda & David Altschuler	<i>Carolyn Katz</i> –Karen & Tommy Westall	<i>Dr. Stuart Rockoff</i> –Vickie & David Vogel	<i>Sami G. Tanenbaum</i> –Larry Weiner
<i>Mary & Frank Hart</i> –Ilene & John Pachter	<i>Hilda & Irwin Kaufman</i> –Leslie & Fred Miller	<i>Aubrey, Cohnor & Bee Rubin</i> –Dan Cohn	<i>The birth of Eli Joseph Tennen</i> –Sheryl & Gordon Bogen –Ilene Engle & Bob Arotzky –Imogene Berman & Family
<i>Reva & Ellis Hart</i> –Carson M. Hughes	<i>Rabbi Jimmy Kessler</i> –Janet & Elton Lipnick	<i>Leon Schipper's birthday</i> –Michele, Ken, Alana, Jacob & Eric Schipper	<i>Dr. Rolf Weil's birthday</i> –Janet H. Brueck
<i>Susan & Macy B. Hart</i> –Leah, Eric, Lev & Eli Tennen	<i>Rabbi Marshal Klaven</i> –Temple Shalom of NW AR- Fayetteville, AR –Anshe Chesed Congregation- Vicksburg, MS –Beth Shalom-Auburn, AL –Congregation Beth Israel, Gulfport, MS –Dr. Gwen Cooper –Rabbi Joshua Strom- Temple Shaaray Tifila, New York, NY –Temple Emanu-El- Longview, TX –Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, Alexandria, LA	<i>Mary Shainberg's birthday</i> –Janet H. Brueck	<i>Rachel & Megan Weiss</i> –Gayl & Arthur Weiss
<i>Benjamin Hearon becoming a</i> <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> –Carol & George Penick	<i>Mr. & Mrs. Ellis L. Krinitzsky</i> –Deborah Krinitzsky	<i>Shirley & Ben Shanker</i> –Marilyn Wexler	<i>Alice & Brian Wertheim's</i> <i>birthdays</i> –Susan & Macy B. Hart
<i>Jimmie Hess' birthday</i> –Susan & Macy B. Hart	<i>Betty Lee & Ben Lamensdorf</i> –Lynn & Woods Eastland	<i>Lou Shornick</i> –Philippa Newfield & Phillip Gordon	<i>Mary Wiener's</i> <i>ISJL Board appointment</i> –Wendy & Julian Good
<i>Juliane M. Heyman</i> –Judy T. Robinson		<i>Madison Silver becoming a</i> <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> –Imogene Berman & Family	<i>F. Kenneth Zadeck</i> –Donald J. Zadeck
<i>Carolyn Hicks</i> –Linda & Jay Rosenkranz		<i>Mr. & Mrs. Marty Silver's</i> <i>new home</i> –Janet H. Brueck	<i>Jack Zarrow</i> –Richard Borg
<i>Mindy Humphrey's birthday</i> –Susan & Macy B. Hart		<i>Leanne & Alan Silverblatt</i> –Lynn & Woods Eastland	

ISJL Education Program

Every Jewish child deserves an excellent Jewish Education!

Curriculum- Base of Jewish Knowledge

The ISJL curriculum provides lesson plans for each grade which include the larger objectives, a comprehensive script, and a list of supplies and texts.

Community Visits – Personalization and Implementation

The ISJL curriculum is known for its unique delivery system of traveling Education Fellows. Each community is assigned a Fellow who visits three times a year for a weekend full of programs, and ongoing support.

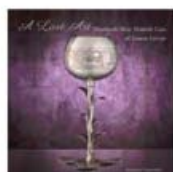
Conference – Teacher Training Institute

The ISJL Education program kicks off the year with its annual conference designed to train and enrich Jewish teachers and directors, creating a southern community of Jewish educators.

For more information on how your synagogue can become an ISJL Education Partner contact:

Rachel Stern, Director of Education: rstern@isjl.org or

Jordan Magidson, Associate Director of Education: jmagidson@isjl.org or 601-362-6357.



The Amit Program's ANTIQU JUDAICA Appraisal Show

Atlanta's very own Antique Judaica Appraisal Show is coming to town!
Sunday, March 25, 2012

Jonathan Greenstein, owner of J. Greenstein & Co., the nation's pre-eminent Judaica dealer, will share tips on how to collect Judaica and individually appraise items brought by those attending.

The event will also feature a community celebration honoring
Helen Hackworth ~ Brenda Bonamy Lewis ~ Sylvia Schwartz
for their contributions to Special Education in the Atlanta Jewish Community.

The Amit Program provides educational programs and support services in the Jewish community to families of children with learning disabilities and / or developmental disabilities.



For information about the event or to register go to
www.amitatlanta.org
or contact info@amitatlanta.org or 404-961-9966



LimmudFest New Orleans: Learning and Lagniappe

SAVE THE DATE
Friday, March 9–Sunday, March 11, 2012
Tulane University

Limmud means learning, and LimmudFest is a celebration of Jewish learning and community.

Music, Dance, Kosher Food, Text Study, Art, Spirituality, Israel, Culture, Social Action, Jewish History, Networking, Children's Programming and Babysitting

Limmud Scholars-in Residence at local synagogues
Cultural program beginning with Havdalah on Saturday
Learning and fun all day Sunday

HOME HOSPITALITY WILL BE PROVIDED WHEREVER POSSIBLE
OR WE CAN HELP YOU FIND HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

For further information contact gail@limmudfest.nola.org and visit our website at www.limmudnola.org

Internships are available in the following ISJL Departments for summer 2012:

Rabbinic – filled

History – Contact Dr. Stuart Rockoff

Oral History – Contact Josh Parshall

Museum – Contact Rachel Jarman

Community Engagement – Contact Malkie Schwartz

601-362-6357 or information is on our website
www.isjl.org - Internships

Please remember the ISJL in your Planned Giving

A planned gift is any major gift, made in a lifetime or at death as part of a donor's overall financial and/or estate planning.

1. Outright gifts that use appreciated assets as a substitute for cash.

Donate appreciated properties like securities and real estate and receive a charitable deduction for the value of the asset, and pay no capital gains tax on the transfer.

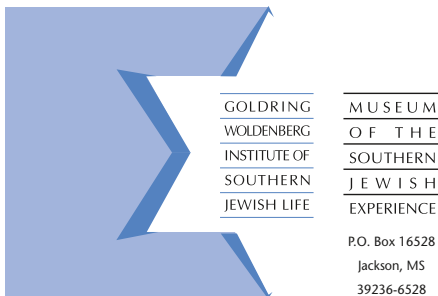
2. Gifts that return income or other financial benefits to the donor in return for the contribution.

Donors who establish a life-income gift receive a tax deduction for the full, fair market value of the asset minus the present value of the income interest retained.

3. Gifts payable upon the donor's death.

A bequest or a beneficiary designation in a life insurance policy or retirement account are both exempt from estate tax.

When you visit your Accountant this Tax Season, find out which type of Planned Giving is best for you!



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