

# **A CENTRAL ADDRESS FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY?**

HOW THE LOS ANGELES FEDERATION CAN IMPROVE ITS  
OUTREACH TO ORTHODOX JEWS

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Introduction	1
Why Federations Should Outreach to Orthodox Jews	2
The Issue in Los Angeles	7
Research Questions	11
Methodology	14
Interviews	14
Survey	16
Ethnographic Research	17
Personal Stake in Topic	19
Findings	21
Positive Federation Perceptions in the Orthodox Community	21
Divergent Levels of Jewishness	22
<i>Kashrut, Shabbat</i> and other <i>Halachic</i> Concerns	24
Federation Values and Funding Priorities	30
Problems with Public Relations in the Orthodox Community	37
General Trends of Philanthropic Giving to Federations	41
Difficulties of Organizational Partnerships	44
On a National Scale	47
Recommendations	51
Recognition of Needed Change	51
Knowing the Population at Hand	52
Gaining Orthodox Buy-in	53
<i>Kashrut</i> Observance at the Highest Level	56
Targeted Marketing to the Orthodox Community	57
Strengthening Organizational Partnerships	58
Potential Difficulties with Implementing Change	59
Conclusion	62
Bibliography	65
Appendix A: Interview Guide for Federation Affiliates	69
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Individuals from Orthodox Organizations	70
Appendix C: Survey of Perceptions of Federation among L.A.'s Orthodox Jews	71
Appendix D: Jewish Federation Funding to Orthodox Social Service Programs 09-10	80

## **Executive Summary**

Federations are at the core of many American Jewish communities. The Federation's mission of mobilizing funds and support from the entire Jewish community to support Jews locally and around the world can only be fully carried out if representatives from the entire Jewish community are included in communal decision-making. It is crucial that the Federation represents the diversity of the Jewish community and includes all Jews as constituents. The goal of this thesis is to encourage the Federation in Los Angeles to be cognizant of this fact and try to more effectively reach the Orthodox population in its midst.

This thesis presents the results of a Los Angeles-based case study on the status of Jewish Federation's relations with the Orthodox community, as well as recommendations for how Federation can more effectively engage this community. It reviews the available literature on the subject and offers data from interviews with Orthodox individuals involved in Federation as well as those who choose not to be. In addition, it draws evidence from a community survey on perceptions of the Federation within a cross-section of Los Angeles' Orthodox community.

Findings indicate that while some Orthodox Jews retain positive perceptions of Federation, divergent Jewish interests between Orthodox Jews and the rest of the Jewish community, as well as Orthodox Angelinos' dilemmas with Federation's funding priorities play a large role in Orthodox non-involvement in the Los Angeles Federation. Findings also suggest issues concerning *halacha* (Jewish law) play a role in Orthodox nonparticipation, but also that some of Federation's difficulty reaching Orthodox Jews echoes their challenges reaching donors more broadly. The study offers a number of recommendations for how Federation can embrace and include the Orthodox community more effectively in the future.

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tremendous asset as I gathered research for my literature review. I could not imagine having to write a thesis before this amazing resource was available!

It is my sincere hope that this research will be helpful in ensuring that the Federation, an organization for which I have an immense amount of respect, is able to more successfully include Los Angeles' Orthodox community into its efforts of ensuring a Jewish future for the city of Los Angeles and *Klal Yisrael*. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to have conducted this research and hope that it provides a meaningful contribution to the Los Angeles Jewish community, and the field of Jewish communal service, more broadly.

## Introduction

I sat in a room with the professional head of an Orthodox educational organization in Los Angeles; he spoke at length about how the mission of his organization is to provide Jewish education and Jewish awareness in order to **secure the Jewish future**. As someone studying Jewish communal service, I was excited by what he was doing in the community—after all, those were the very same words many Jewish communal organizations use to describe their work. I then recalled the words of the mission statement of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles: “Through its network of agencies and programs, the Federation helps alleviate Jewish poverty, provide emergency relief, **ensure a Jewish future...**” Immediately I began to see the alignment between what this Orthodox organization accomplishes in the community and what the Jewish Federation achieves. Both organizations have the goal of ensuring that Judaism is going to be around for our grandchildren and their children, and encourage the community to protect and savor the way of life that we all hold dear. I believe that Federations are at the core of many American Jewish communities, so I excitedly began to ask him about his thoughts on the Jewish Federation, thinking that he would see this connection as clearly as I did.

What came next was a complete shock; he proceeded to describe the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles as more of a “peripheral idea” that is “not really relevant” to Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles. How is it possible that a Jewish organization can have the same ultimate goals as the Federation, yet fail to see why the Federation is relevant to Orthodox Jews? I wondered what was contributing to the negative feelings this person and many others in his community have about Federation. And what can be done to change this situation so that all Jews see the relevance of this organization that is so important in the

Jewish community? This thesis presents the results of a Los Angeles-based case study on the status of Jewish Federation relations with the Orthodox, and recommendations for how Federation could more effectively engage this community.

### ***Why Federations Should Outreach to Orthodox Jews***

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) is the umbrella organization for all of the 153 local Jewish Federations in the United States and Canada. It is an agency “dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing Jewish life and to meeting the needs of all Jews and non-Jews, wherever they live (JewishFederations.org).” In short, the Jewish Federation system is in place to strengthen individual Jewish communities throughout the nation. A local Federation generally sees itself as the primary central body for that Jewish community—as such, it is crucial that it actually represent the diversity of the Jewish community, even in the face of the difficulties that arise as a result of fundamental ideological and religious differences between parts of the greater community.

As early as 1913, The Jewish Federation of Atlanta made the argument that it was the only Jewish Federation in the country (Frankel 1913). This claim was indeed shocking because there were a number of other cities at the time that had already federated their Jewish philanthropic efforts. However, they were not referring to the status of the federated charities present, but rather the fact that these other Federations had only brought into the fold “the organizations of only one section of the community” and “the Reformed Jews, [and] the Orthodox Jews were not included either as organizations or as individual representatives on Federation Boards.” The Federation in Atlanta was asserting that the “cooperation of all sections of Jewry and the able leadership developed in both” actually contributed to its success as a Jewish Federation (Frankel 1913, p. 6). Even in 1913, it was



clear, at least to the Jewish Community of Atlanta, that the Federation mission of communal giving would be so much more powerful and effective if the entire Jewish community in a given area was included in communal decision-making. They understood that if the Federation is to act as a governing body for the Jewish community, it has to represent all of its constituents. Over time, Reform Jews have become accepted into the fold, but the same cannot be said of the Orthodox community.

Including Orthodox Jews in the work of Federation is important for the sake of promoting diversity and inclusion, but there is also a practical aspect to this inclusion. Orthodox Jews may currently only represent a small portion of a given Jewish community, but they are an essential component of the future of any Jewish community. According to the last National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) conducted in 2000 by the Jewish Federations of North America, then United Jewish Communities, Orthodox Jews made up 10% of the American Jewish population. However, by several accounts, this figure is almost surely an underestimate (Saxe, et al. 2006; Heilman 2006).

Even if we hold by that same figure nearly ten years after the study, the Orthodox segment of the population is growing tremendously, making their projected numbers worth noticing. According to the NJPS, 39% of the total Orthodox population was made up of children under the age of 18. If we assume that most of these children will not leave Orthodoxy, there is a huge increase in the Orthodox adult population looming in the coming decades (Dershowitz 1998). When this information is considered alongside the fact that only two cities among the 40 large and large-intermediate Federations have experienced growth in their overall Jewish populations in the last decade, the growing Orthodox segment may warrant more attention than it currently garners (Edelsberg 2004).

Numbers alone, however, may not tell the whole story about the current impact and potential influence of Orthodox Jews on the American Jewish community. We need not wait for Orthodox demographic numbers to grow in order to see the influence of this community.

On this topic, the renowned American Jewish political scientist, Daniel Elazar wrote:

In raw demographics, the Orthodox may represent a mere 10 percent, more or less, of the American Jewish community. The fact remains, however, that no more than 50 percent of American Jews are affiliated at any given time with any of the institutions of Jewish life, while the Orthodox are affiliated all the time. Therefore, at the very least they represent 20 percent of the affiliated. If one goes beyond affiliation to activism, it becomes clear that Orthodox Jews represent about a third of the total of Jewish activists within the American Jewish community, a community in which they are demographically the weakest. (Elazar 1991)

Since Federations often rely on people's connection to Judaism and the concept of Jewish peoplehood to appeal to their sense of communal imperative for the future of Judaism, Federations often find it necessary to engage and excite Jews with Jewish life before they can reach out to them as donors. Jews who are completely disconnected from their Jewish identity would presumably not buy into this premise. Based on this logic, it would seem that Orthodox Jews should be most committed to Federation, because as Elazar stated, they are incredibly affiliated Jews. One could certainly argue that simply because a person identifies as Orthodox does not mean that he or she has more of a Jewish identity than a Jewish person who subscribes to the Reform, Conservative or Reconstructionist ideology; however, most Orthodox Jews have crossed the coveted threshold of Jewish engagement that Federations seek in order to appeal to a population as potential donors.

From this brief discussion, an important question emerges: why is it that Orthodox Jews fit the mold of the theoretical Federation participant, yet according to anecdotal evidence and observation at Federation events, they seem to make up a small percentage of

Federation involvement? Silberstein, Rabinowitz, Ritterband and Kosmin offer an explanation for this phenomenon:

Members of the Orthodox community...are likely to create parallel philanthropic bodies to support Orthodox institutions. For the Federation campaigns, the net result of this parallel Orthodox structure is that the relationship between ritual observance and giving to the Federation campaign is curvilinear. That is, the probability of giving increases with religious ritual observance up to a point and then declines at the upper end of observance. (Silberstein et al. 1987, p. 6)

This would indicate that we should expect religious Conservative and Reform Jews to be committed to Federation, but as one approaches Orthodoxy on the Jewish denominational spectrum, Federation giving might wane. Within the Orthodox community, we should expect Modern Orthodox Jews to be involved to an extent, but certainly more than “Black Hat” (*Charedi*) communities.

If this is true, it does not bode well for the Orthodox community because Modern Orthodoxy may not have as strong a future as some of the more right-wing sects. According to scholar Samuel Heilman, Orthodox Jews have been “sliding to the right” in religious and cultural domains, which may be partially contributing to Orthodox separatism from the Federation system nationwide (Heilman 2005). Many factors may be contributing to this shift of Orthodoxy away from Modern towards *Charedi* sects, but chief among them is that Orthodox day schools are attracting more religious instructors, making the Orthodox children more religious than their parents. Heilman predicts the ultimate end of Modern Orthodoxy, which will place an even larger gap between Orthodox Jews and the rest of the American Jewry.

Additionally, xenophobia, or the dislike and/or fear of that which is unknown or different from oneself, may also partially contribute to Orthodox separatism from the

organized Jewish community. Though there are many divisions and sects within the Orthodox community, research indicates that Orthodox Jews tend to be more committed to unification against the liberal Jewish groups than to their own differences (Liebman 1965). Charles Liebman, a preeminent scholar on Orthodox Jews, also noted: “Orthodoxy perceives itself as the only legitimate bearer of the Jewish tradition” (Liebman 1965, p. 38). He continued, “Orthodoxy today... more than ever before sees itself as isolated from other Jews,” making it increasingly difficult for Jews across all parts of the spectrum to work together in Federation settings to advocate for and ensure the future of world Jewry, because that requires all parties to at least agree that we are all indeed members of the Jewish community (Liebman 1965, p. 89). This intolerance can be found in the reverse as well; many Orthodox Jews are “inadequately understood by the non-Orthodox ... [and are] directly or indirectly ridiculed or ‘put down’ for their religious, ‘old fashioned’ way of life” (Wikler 1979, p. 282).

Despite the separatism that exists between Orthodox Jews and the rest of American Jewry, Liebman admits “there is a recognition and admiration for Orthodoxy as the only group which today contains within it a strength and will to live that may yet nourish all the Jewish world” (Liebman 1965, p. 92). It is important to recognize the contributions Orthodox Jews will need to make to successfully plan the future of the Jewish community. Orthodox commitment to tradition and peoplehood is not only admirable, but it is for specifically that reason the opinions and priorities of Orthodox Jews must be included in organized American Jewish life.

## ***The Issue in Los Angeles***

Due to the large size of the Orthodox community in Los Angeles, these national trends are all the more important to consider in Los Angeles. In most respects, the community of Los Angeles can be used as a case study to explore the impact of issues pertaining to lack of Orthodox involvement in Federations. The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles echoes the sentiment put forth by the mission of the Jewish Federations of North America, in that it is aimed at serving *the entire* Jewish community of Los Angeles:

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles – L.A.’s largest Jewish nonprofit – identifies and funds social service, educational and humanitarian needs locally, in Israel and around the world. Through its network of agencies and programs, the Federation helps alleviate Jewish poverty, provide emergency relief, ensure a Jewish future, and support the greater Los Angeles community. (JewishLA.org)

This mission statement uses the terminology “ensure a Jewish future,” which should include the Orthodox segment of the population. Yet my personal experience growing up and working in the Jewish community of Los Angeles, as well as abundant anecdotal evidence suggests that there tends to be limited Orthodox Federation involvement in Los Angeles.

There are unique facets of Los Angeles that make the Jewish community here unlike many others in the country, which may make it difficult to generalize all Los Angeles-based findings to the nation as a whole. A report based on the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey showed Jews in the Western United States are less likely to give to Federations than Jews elsewhere in the country (Ament 2005). Cities in the West were not established until later in the history of the United States, and their Jewish communities are less rooted than their counterparts on the East Coast.

Additionally, unlike New York, Chicago and Boston, Los Angeles is challenged with incredible geographic diversity. The city is large with an estimated Jewish population

of between 500,000 and 600,000 Jews (LAJPS 1997) out of a total 9,862,049 Angelinos (US Census Bureau). Not only does this population make Los Angeles the second largest city in the United States, but things in Los Angeles are extremely spread out, and as the popular 1980's band *Missing Persons* very aptly reminded us: "Nobody walks in L.A." As a result Federation has the daunting task of trying to create a sense of community where the population is not only large and diverse, but people may not see one another on a regular basis, as is the case in other metropolitan centers.

We certainly cannot blame the inability of the Federation to reach Orthodox Jews on the geography of Los Angeles. While it is becoming more difficult to reach Jews as they spread into the more remote regions of the Los Angeles area, including Santa Clarita, Agoura Hills, South Bay, etc., Orthodox Jews are staying relatively put. They have clustered in particular areas of Los Angeles, creating several Orthodox enclaves, including Hancock Park, the Pico-Robertson area, and Valley Village. They are situated in concentrated neighborhoods that are walking distance from synagogues and schools. This is a development that runs counter to the Los Angeles auto culture and the more liberal Jewish population, making it theoretically easier to find and reach out to Orthodox Jews. This makes it even more curious why the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles has had such difficulty reaching out to Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles.

The results from the 1997 Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey (LAJPS), a demographic study that was conducted with primary funding from the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles and the Jewish Community Foundation, reported that 10.8% of Los Angeles's Jewish population was Orthodox at the time of the report (LAJPS 1997). This relatively small figure was accompanied by statistics showing the shift of people away

from Orthodoxy at an accelerated rate and that the Reform movement was growing—essentially saying that the Orthodox population was losing its strength in the Los Angeles Jewish community.

This report of the findings of the 1997 Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey was received with tremendous amounts of controversy. An article ran in the Los Angeles Times shortly after the release of the study with arguments of those in the Orthodox community who contested the portrayal of the Orthodox population as an insignificant portion of the Los Angeles Jewish population for the coming decade (Abrahamson 1998). For example, an advertising campaign launched in 1997, based on the results of a survey conducted by two Orthodox Angelinos, stated, “Orthodoxy is enjoying a baby boom and growth surge so dramatic that it will become the dominant Jewish denomination in a couple of generations” (Abrahamson 1998). A second survey, the article details, conducted by demographers Sergio DellaPergola and Uzi Rebhun, suggests “the intermarriage rate is likely to produce a decline in the number of Jews nationally, and an increase, ranging from ‘very moderate to quite significant,’ in the proportion of Orthodox homes” (Abrahamson 1998).

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles may see its mission as reaching the entire Jewish community in Los Angeles, but the presence of marginalized Jewish groups in Los Angeles is not limited to the Orthodox. As former Chairman of the Board of the Los Angeles Federation Stanley Gold mentioned in his presentation at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion School of Jewish Communal Service, groups such as Israelis, Persians, Russians, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) Jews, and others often feel left out of the organized Jewish community (Gold 2009). If in fact the Federation sees itself as a convening body at

the center of Jewish life in Los Angeles it is important for them to know how each of these groups feels about the Federation and then determine how best to reach these Jews. While this study will focus primarily on the inclusion of Orthodox Jews, it would behoove Federation to emulate it for the other groups as well.



## Research Questions

The main question governing my research is: How well does the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles include the Orthodox community as lay and professional constituents? In order to explore this, I needed to determine if the environment of Federation is conducive to those leading an observant lifestyle. Additionally, what are the prevalent perceptions of the Federation among the Orthodox community of Los Angeles? How do the relationships between Orthodox organizations and Federation contribute to these perceptions? Lastly, are these findings generalizable on a national scale, or are they unique to Los Angeles?

First, I want to be clear about whom I am including as Orthodox Jews in this study. Throughout the other available research on Orthodox Judaism, there are a number of different ways to define Orthodoxy. In his essay *Orthodoxy in America*, Charles Liebman chose to define Orthodoxy in institutional terms, or in other words, as “all Jews who are affiliated with nominally Orthodox synagogues” (Liebman 1965, p.22). This is the method two previous Jewish Communal Service students chose when they assessed how the Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles take advantage of services provided by Jewish Federation agencies in their thesis (Dubin and Saxe 1977). However, Liebman does put forth alternative ways to go about making this decision when embarking on research on Orthodox Jews. He suggests alternate definitions for “Orthodox” would include Jews who view the *halacha* (Jewish law) as an obligatory standard for all Jews, Jews who behave as Orthodox Jews in ritual or *halachic* terms, and Jews who define themselves as Orthodox without regard to their behavior (Liebman 1983). While each of these manners of defining Orthodox individuals has its pros and cons, given my time and resource constraints, I have chosen to include all individuals who self-identify as Orthodox. As much of the current research suggests,

“denominationalism is on the decline” (Bennett et al. 2006, p. 9); in this age of post-denominationalism, and the difficulties of drawing a clear-cut box around how to classify any Jews, especially the Orthodox, I felt that leaving it up to the individuals to decide whether they consider themselves Orthodox Jews would allow me to more closely approach the complexities of the Orthodox community. This is beneficial because if the Federation decides to undertake the endeavor of reaching out to Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles, no manufactured classification will allow the organization to deal with the realities they will actually face.

In questioning how the Federation could better include Orthodox Jews as constituents of the Federation, it is also important to be clear about who is considered a Federation constituent. The Federation is a uniquely positioned nonprofit because it has a multi-pronged objective. According to Jim Rosenberg, who wrote a paper on how a Federation can effectively raise funds to fulfill its mission, “the work of the Federation, together with the agencies, can be broken down into two simple ideas: (1) providing for those in need, and (2) community building” (Rosenberg 2006, p. 94); that is, not only is the work of the Federation inclusive of the people it helps through the agencies it funds, but Federation is also comprised of donors coming together to fulfill their collective responsibility to care for Jews in need. As a result of these two aspects of Federation, constituents would include all Federation professionals, volunteer leaders, donors, people who are not leaders but attend Federation events, as well as recipients of funding and services from the Federation and from agencies within the Federation umbrella. For the purposes of this research, I decided to focus on those in the more immediate circles of affiliation with the Federation: those involved with the fundraising work of the Federation, leaving out those who receive services from the

agencies, as they are tangentially connected with Federation, and there has already been research conducted, albeit in 1977, on Orthodox usage of Federation agency services (Dubin and Saxe 1977).

## **Methodology**

### ***Interviews***

My stated research question is a qualitative one: assessing how well the Federation includes its Orthodox constituents is not a matter of numbers but of people's personal stories of feeling accepted versus alienated. Thus, I conducted most of my research on qualitative and anecdotal aspects of this problem. In total, I interviewed 27 people divided into two interviewee subgroups: Orthodox individuals currently involved in Federation, and Orthodox individuals not involved with Federation but involved with other Orthodox organizations in a professional or volunteer leadership capacity. The interviews provided a vehicle to gain a sense of why individuals chose to be involved with Federation and potential barriers that may exist, as well as the way in which organizations relate to the Federation.

### **Orthodox Individuals Involved in Federation**

I addressed the internal issues present within a Federation environment for Orthodox Jews by including in my sample some of the Orthodox Jews who currently or have previously worked in a professional capacity for the Los Angeles Jewish Federation. I asked them about why they initially chose to work for the Federation and what keeps them involved. I also addressed barriers they have experienced regarding their Orthodox lifestyle during their involvement in Federation. This group provided valuable insights because even those who are committed to the work of Federation have often encountered issues that have made their involvement uncomfortable to some degree. They also have the best interests of Federation in mind, so they were instrumental in offering suggested remedies.

Although Orthodox Federation lay leaders would have added valuable insight into this topic, I chose not to include them in the interview sample. Including this population

would have entailed having difficult conversations with valuable Federation donors; due to the delicate nature of the lay-professional dynamic, my position as a Federation intern would have made it difficult to have such conversations with donors about their grievances with the Federation. I did not want to risk crossing boundaries, nor put my professional reputation in jeopardy. So while the opinions of these lay leaders may have enhanced my research, I chose to write the paper with the inside perspective coming from the professionals. Please see Appendix A for my Interview Guide for individuals affiliated with Federation.

### **Individuals from Orthodox Organizations**

In addition to the perspective of individuals affiliated with Federation, I wanted to gain a sense of feelings and perceptions of Federation from people who were not as closely connected. Rather than simply choosing random Orthodox Jews to interview, I decided to identify these unaffiliated individuals through their involvement with Orthodox organizations in Los Angeles. The logic employed here was that some people just do not affiliate with Jewish organizations; but, if they are involved with an Orthodox organization, I have more reason to question why they are not connected to Federation. I looked for organizations where I saw mission alignment with Federation. I determined this based on whether their mission could fit within one of the five Federation areas of funding concentration, or pillars: Education; Leadership; Serving the Vulnerable; Israel and Overseas; and Community. I contacted 15 lay and professional leaders of 8 Orthodox social service, learning, and *kiruv* (outreach) organizations, and interviewed them about their personal and professional relationship with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. I will not be mentioning the organizations by name in order to protect the anonymity of my interview subjects. Please see Appendix B for my Interview Guide for Individuals from Orthodox Organizations.

## *Survey*

For a more complete understanding of the relationship between Orthodox Jews and the Federation, I also felt it necessary to address some of the perceptions of Federation present in the Orthodox community of Los Angeles. As such, I conducted a survey that questioned a variety of Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles, regardless of whether they had a connection to a Jewish organization. The survey provided me with insights into various feelings, stereotypes, myths, and notions of the Federation prevalent in the Orthodox community.

The survey was intended not to yield quantitative data about perceptions of Federation among all Orthodox Jews, but rather to confirm my anecdotal evidence that there is some negativity toward Federation among some Orthodox Jews. The first question of the survey asked respondents whether they identified as an Orthodox Jew; only if they checked “yes” could they continue with the survey. To gain a clearer sense of the religious breakdown of survey respondents, I asked them to note how they identify Jewishly. They had eight categories from which to choose: (1) Modern Orthodox Liberal, (2) Modern Orthodox *Machmir*, (3) *Yeshivish* Modern (4) *Yeshivish* Black Hat, (5) *Hassidish*, (6) *Carlebachian*, (7) Traditional, (8) None of these labels apply to me. The options were taken from the Orthodox dating website Frumster.com.

I distributed the survey mainly via viral electronic methods including email; Facebook posting, sharing, and messaging; and Twitter. As a result of these methods, my sample included a majority of people from my own network of connections within the Los Angeles Orthodox community and was not entirely representative of the Orthodox community in Los Angeles. As expected, my respondents tended toward the Modern side of

the Orthodox spectrum for two main reasons: Many of Orthodox groups in the *Hassidish* world, or the right-most camps, are (a) less directly connected to me socially and (b) less likely to use the Internet. In fact, out of a total of 82 individuals who took my survey, 55% live in the Pico-Robertson area, commonly referred to as the Modern Orthodox hub of Los Angeles. Only four individuals who took the survey identified themselves as *Hassidish* or “Black Hat.” Ultimately, the write-in responses respondents provided made up a majority of the data I used from the survey; thus, neither my limited sample, nor the one-sided concentration of respondents within the Orthodox camp was problematic because I was not utilizing the survey to provide quantitative data. Please refer to Appendix C to see the survey questions.

## ***Ethnographic Research***

### **Valley Alliance Internship**

Throughout a good portion of my thesis writing I worked as an intern at the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance. The Valley Alliance department of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles is responsible for serving the Jews of the five valleys in the Los Angeles area including: San Fernando, Simi, Conejo, Antelope, and Santa Clarita. My position as an intern allowed me to sit in on many meetings with a broad cross-section of professionals and donors, gain exposure that acquainted me with Federation intimately from the inside, as well as gain access to information I may not have otherwise been afforded as an outsider. Certainly, much of the knowledge I gained through this unique position shaped my views and is incorporated throughout this thesis; however, specific instances and examples are highly censored and altered due to confidentiality issues.

## **General Assembly**

The issue of Orthodox Jews being alienated from the organized Jewish community is not confined to Los Angeles. To address how the issue manifests in other areas of the country, I took advantage of my attendance at the General Assembly, the annual convocation of the Jewish Federations of North America, which was held in Washington D.C. in November of 2009. I attended in my capacity as a FEREP recipient (Federation Executive Recruitment and Education Program), a scholarship given to students who are studying Jewish nonprofit management and want to pursue careers in the Jewish Federation system. While there, I engaged in informal interviews with some Orthodox Federation professionals and lay leaders to discuss the issues present for Orthodox Jews in the Federation system and to gain input about possible recommendations from those most closely associated with the matter. I also engaged in some ethnographic research in an attempt to assess how an event that represents the entire Federations system deals with the Orthodox community. I analyzed such aspects of the conference as the attendance rate of visibly Orthodox Jews, the availability of kosher food, and the degree to which Orthodox delegates seemed to interact and integrate with the less observant conference participants.



## Personal Stake in Topic

I was born and raised in the Los Angeles community, and I have returned to study to become a Jewish Communal Professional. As such, I am intimately familiar with the Los Angeles Jewish community on a personal, as well as on an organizational level. I find my own involvement with the field of Jewish communal service and my interactions with the Orthodox community to be oddly separate facets of my own Jewish engagement. This is strange because I am doing both as a result of my commitment to living a Jewish life and being an active participant in the Jewish community. Thus, it feels as though both of these experiences should fall under the category of Jewish community involvement, leading me to question the noticeable separation between the two.

Though I do not currently choose to affiliate denominationally, I was raised in a Conservative Jewish synagogue (*shul*) in the San Fernando Valley. Now, I attend *shul*, learn, and interact in several capacities with members of the Los Angeles Orthodox community. As a recipient of the FEREP Scholarship, currently interning for the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance, and heading for a career in a Jewish Federation, I often find myself having to defend my desire to work for the Jewish Federation to Orthodox Jews, and convince members of the Orthodox community that this work does in fact better the Jewish community as a whole.

I worry about the potential issues present in the Federation that may make it difficult to work in the environment while leading an observant lifestyle. I am willing to combat whatever challenges lie ahead to become a Federation professional so that I can engage in work I feel is necessary to strengthen and maintain the Jewish community. However, I know that this is a challenge that may be too great or uncomfortable for others to bear. It is

incredibly disheartening that prospective Jewish Federation professionals and lay leaders may have to feel a need to compromise between their Jewish practices and values and being involved with a Jewish organization; no Jew should feel any level of discomfort at the prospect of working in the Jewish community, based on Jewish issue. As such, I am determined that this should not be an issue in the future.

## **Findings**

A paramount finding that I discovered throughout my research is that perception plays a key role in shaping the relationship between Orthodox Jews and the Jewish Federation. False perceptions, if widespread, have just as much influence on people's decision-making as reality does, especially when they are shared by a person one knows and trusts. These perceptions have tremendous potential for impact on both sides of the equation: the perceptions of Federation among Orthodox Jews, as well as those of Orthodox Jews within Federation.

### ***Positive Federation Perceptions in the Orthodox Community***

There are many in the Orthodox community who view Federation in a very positive light. I have interacted with several Orthodox professionals and lay leaders during my internship experience at Federation. Many of these people have an immense respect and even passion for the work of the Federation done in the Los Angeles community and abroad. In the Valley Alliance department specifically, three members in a staff of only 14 consider themselves to be Orthodox. Due to this relatively high percentage of Orthodox presence in this small environment, some of the issues discussed present themselves to a lesser extent in the Valley Alliance than they do in the Los Angeles Federation at large. These positive feelings are not isolated to those who have involvement with the Federation; several of the survey participants characterized the Federation as “a great organization that funds numerous groups,” as an organization that is “supportive of important community programs for the broad Jewish community,” and is “very positive, helpful to the community, and a visual and active entity.” However, even though this is the case, for the most part, the perceptions

among Orthodox Jews regarding Federation were less flattering than I think the Federation would hope.

### ***Divergent levels of Jewishness***

A perception present among Orthodox Jews that was recurrent throughout my research is that the people running Federation lack a considerable amount of Jewish knowledge. Lack of Jewish knowledge among leaders of a Jewish organization is disappointing and upsetting for many Orthodox Jews who make Jewish education an extremely important part of their lives. One interviewee, an Orthodox employee of a Federation beneficiary organization who certainly has an insider's view into the inner-workings of Federation, addressed this sentiment. She characterized the people who work at Federation as “**woefully** unknowledgeable about Judaism.” She said that most lack even the “most basic knowledge about anything [Jewish]- that there's a second day of *yontiv* or basic definitions about what's *kosher*. People have said to me ‘we're having salmon, its kosher’ or ‘there's no pork-its kosher’ so even the most basic knowledge, let alone philosophical knowledge” of Judaism is lacking among many Federation leaders.

This Judaic knowledge deficiency may be based in perception rather than in documented evidence, but the issue surfaced often throughout the available literature. Sanford Solender, a visionary leader who dedicated his professional career to Jewish communal service as top executive and Board member of several Jewish organizations, wrote: “Leaders [of Jewish organizations] must be Jewishly committed and sophisticated, able to articulate and inspire in the universe of ideas, have the statesmanship which intra and intercommunity affairs require, enjoy community respect, and be capable of motivating young leaders” (Solender 1978, p. 154). Additionally, Marla Eglash Abraham formerly of

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion School of Jewish Communal Service and Steven Windmueller, Dean of the Los Angeles campus, echo this need for communal service professionals to not only possess a minimal level of Judaic knowledge, but also to incorporate it into the work we do:

Whether we represent synagogues, educational bodies, or social service organizations, all of us must be committed to making our institutions gateways for all Jews seeking to become a part of the community...We have a responsibility to join the insights of our Jewish texts and traditions to the functional tasks of governance, leadership, planning, and fundraising. (Abraham and Windmueller 2000, p. 254)

While it is not true that every Federation leader lacks an appropriate level of Judaic knowledge, it is a prevalent perception shared by many Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles, and dissuades them from considering Federation a place to affiliate Jewishly. Even more importantly, occasionally this lack of knowledge is not simply frustrating, it can lead people in power to make decisions that may have *halachic* implications or may bar Orthodox Jews from integrating into Federation settings.

Along the same lines lies the perception among Orthodox Jews that the people involved in Federation not only lack appropriate Jewish knowledge, but also are not “Jewish enough.” This speaks to a larger issue of xenophobia that exists on both sides. As an interviewee who works for an Orthodox *kiruv* organization pointed out, “There are definitely Orthodox people, especially to the right wing, [who think] you’re just assimilationists (referring to those affiliated with Federation), and you want to take my children and turn them into non-Jews.” However, a similar intolerance exists in the other direction as well. The same interviewee continued that while the Orthodox Jews are afraid that secular, “Federation Jews” will corrupt their religious children, there are the people in the non-Orthodox camps who think “[Orthodox Jews] are just going to try to convert my kids and put

*tefillin* on them... take them away and they won't eat in my house anymore." A fear certainly exists on both sides of the fence, and intolerance comes out of that fear. While this type of intolerance is fairly common between races, the Jewish community is seen as a unified community from the outside. The Jewish community has enough to deal with as a result of the anti-Semitism from outsiders, so prejudice between Jews can only harm the Jewish community's ability to stand up against outside anti-Semitism.

### ***Kashrut, Shabbat and other Halachic Concerns***

In an article written in the Fall 1994 issue of the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Jeffrey Korbman discussed potential issues that exist in the field of Jewish communal service for Orthodox and traditional professionals, pertaining to the *halachic* restrictions of the traditional Jewish lifestyle. He discusses several scenarios in which professionals might find themselves struggling between the laws that govern their Jewish lifestyles and the norms of Federation life. These discussions illuminate specific *halachic* concerns that may create a stumbling block for an observant Federation professional; they range from condoning mixed dancing at social events, to staffing missions planned without regard for the three-week mourning period prior to *Tisha b'Av* in the Jewish calendar (Korbman 1994).

However, to my astonishment, many of the issues put forth by Korbman did not resonate as entirely problematic for the Orthodox and traditional professionals of the Los Angeles Federation whom I interviewed. One Orthodox Federation professional discussed how her commitment to *halacha* trumped everything and that she simply creates an environment for herself that is comfortable: "Truthfully, in most of the jobs here, you create your programs around your schedule... we *do* have Orthodox people that work here and it's

not an issue. If they don't feel comfortable doing something they don't do it— we don't do it.”

Though I was pleasantly surprised by the limited *halachic* concerns, there were a few issues that came up time and again during my research process: *Shabbat* (Jewish day of rest) and *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws). According to one Federation employee, the Federation has an official *kashrut* policy that events open to the community must be held to the strictest level of *kashrut*, and events held in private homes are encouraged, but not required, to do the same. It turns out, though, that this Federation *kashrut* “policy” to which several interviewees referred, is not as clear-cut or consistent as one might hope or expect from Los Angeles's largest Jewish organization.

Food is something that accompanies MANY Jewish events, and whether kosher food is served is an initial indicator to most Jews who observe some level of *kashrut* how a sponsoring organization regards the more traditional individuals. It is true that higher levels of *kashrut* result in higher catering expenses, forcing Jewish nonprofit organizations to decide between values and inclusion, and budgetary restrictions. The Orthodox individuals who answered my survey understood this dilemma. “I do not expect the Jewish Federation to specifically serve Orthodox needs,” one respondent said, “it doesn't seem designed for this purpose, but I do believe that all activities should be basically *halachicly* compliant (*Shabbat* & *kashrut*), but understand that there is no practical way to accomplish this given that most of the constituents don't share these values.”

The problem when it comes to food is that the organization's decision in one direction or another can mean the inclusion of an entire group, or their complete alienation. Often, I have found that the Federation hires a caterer that uses a Conservative *mashgiach* (the person

whose job it is to ensure the facilities are abiding by all laws of *kashrut*) for these community events. While it is certainly kosher by some standards, it is not the highest level of *kashrut*.

“In my experience,” another respondent said, “the Federation does not serve the Orthodox community. Programming is not accessible, *kashrut* has been questionable at times.” Some went further and discussed their distaste for Federation’s substandard *kashrut* practices in stronger terms:

I don’t appreciate that Federation funds go towards non-kosher food and venues, as long as they are ‘kosher style.’ Meaning, I have been invited to Federation sponsored programming that was just not Kosher. Non-kosher cheese, drinks, chips etc. The actual policy of not upholding Jewish law as a part of organizational infrastructure is upsetting and I don’t support organizations that facilitate Jews doing things that are frankly wrong.

While this last quotation may represent a more extreme viewpoint, the inconsistency for the level of *kashrut* at Federation events creates a sense of uneasiness and lack of trust within the Orthodox community. This is problematic because even if Federation does hold an event to the highest level of *kashrut*, which it very often does, the community retains this tainted perception. One Federation professional said, “Our [Federation] food is always kosher...but you know I still get phone calls from people, ‘I went to a real estate event and it was at a non-kosher restaurant’, and you know, ‘is this event gonna be kosher?’ So they’re already skeptical.” In my experience, Federation policies regarding *kashrut* are inconsistent. I have been at events where the delivery person from the *glatt* kosher catering service suggests the seal be left on for a person who needs to see it, but a Federation staff person does not see the importance of this gesture, and removes the seal. Other times, I have been at events where people cannot eat because a conservative *mashgiach* was used and they do not “hold by” this as *kosher*.



Sometimes the *kashrut* issue becomes a bit more personal and can have an impact on an individual's level of comfort in particular situations. One Federation employee discussed that she tends to feel alienated from the rest of the staff when it comes to things like the daily lunch break. She discussed how she is often left out from the daily runs to the local restaurants because "the other employees think 'Oh, she only keeps *kosher*, we can't invite her to lunch' or something, you know, 'cause they probably don't want to go to a *kosher* place. So we won't even consider inviting her. So that's like one of the things I might not like or prefer." If it were up to her, she would like to be spending her lunch breaks with the other staff. This personal alienation resulting from *kashrut* at Federation has the potential to create more negative feelings among individuals in the community.

Other Federation employees have found difficulties balancing their personal sense of Jewish law with their office environment. "There are not too many people at my level [of religious observance, working in the Federation]," one Orthodox Federation professional said. "So, sometimes there's a conflict. Like for example, before Passover when we try to close up some of the cabinets, if it went against their height of observance, sometimes there might be a little memo saying 'Why are you doing things so strong?' You kind of have to gauge what you are doing office-wide as opposed to what you are doing personally." Perhaps this is just the sort of thing Orthodox individuals have signed up to struggle with; however, I would argue, that in a Jewish organization one should not have to endure such struggles; unfortunately, these issues are even more pronounced in Jewish organizations than they are in secular settings. When Orthodox individuals work in a secular setting expectations only apply to ones self, but whenever a community standard is present, it is difficult to create a level on which all can agree.

*Kashrut* is not the only *halachic* barrier that arose in my research; *Shabbat* and *chaggim* (holy days—generally the first two days and sometimes last two days of holidays that do not, according to Jewish law, allow one to work) proved another point of contention of some Orthodox individuals with Federation. Entering this research, I hypothesized that Orthodox Jews would *want* to work for Federation because of the benefits of leaving early on *Shabbat* and not having to take Jewish holidays as vacation time. In a given year, depending how the Jewish holidays fall, there can be up to thirteen days one might have to take off from work, if they do not work on *chaggim*. Contrary to this initial assumption, I learned that there is a history of discrimination against Orthodox Jews at Jewish organizations. As Liebman wrote in 1965:

Instances of observant Jews who have been denied employment in Jewish Federation-supported institutions or national Jewish organizations because they are Sabbath and holiday observers are legion. And even on a more personal level, Orthodox Jews have often suffered the effects of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping by some non-Orthodox Jews who are prominent in Jewish educational, cultural, and communal life. (Liebman 1965, p. 91)

Liebman attributes this to the resentment among more liberal Jews of the upsurge of Orthodoxy among young people.

As the field of Jewish communal service is professionalizing, the aforementioned level of blatant and directed discrimination is no longer occurring against Orthodox Jews. All job postings for Federation positions currently list “leave early on *Shabbat*” (JewishLA.org) as a benefit, and the building is closed on the *chaggim*. In fact, Orthodox Jews who have chosen to work for Federation and Federation beneficiary agencies are thrilled with this benefit. One Federation professional whose husband is observant, said her

previous job did not have flexible hours. “I needed to get a job in the Jewish community because of all the holidays,” she said.

While discrimination against professionals due to observance is no longer sanctioned in the personnel policies of Federation, the perceptions persist that Federation possesses an unwelcoming environment for Orthodox Jews because it continues to demonstrate that *halachic* concerns are not always a priority. A final example is illustrated by the following anecdote. In 2009, The Federation launched a ‘Fed up With Hunger’ campaign, which was intended to be a community-wide initiative against the issue of Hunger. It was thought that this would be a communal issue that could overcome denominational boundaries. However, due to lack of consideration for Orthodox needs during the planning of the public relations campaign, they failed once again to include this group. The campaign was set to launch during the High Holidays with reusable grocery bags as the main marketing item. The idea was to distribute the bags to congregations throughout Los Angeles, and have the synagogues distribute them to their congregants on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year. Very few of the Orthodox synagogues in Los Angeles had previously responded to marketing requests from the Federation, but because a high percentage of Orthodox Jews affiliate through synagogues according to the 1997 LAJPS, this should have provided Federation with access into the Orthodox community. The fact that these Orthodox synagogues agreed to distribute the bags was a step in the right direction, or so the Federation thought.

However, while this launch proved successful in many Reform and Conservative synagogues, one member of a Pico-Robertson Orthodox *shul* noted that “the Orthodox synagogues that do not hold by the West Los Angeles *eruv* were forced to wait until after the *chaggim* to hand out their bags.” There is a *halachic* prohibition for Jews to carry items on

*Shabbat* outside of domestic boundaries. An *eruv* is a communal attempt to ease these restrictions and designates an entire neighborhood as a domestic arena with a string outlining its boundaries. Depending of the strictness of observance, some Jews do not hold by the *eruv*. Thus, because Federation did not consider the *halachic* issue of “carrying” when deciding how to launch this campaign, they effectively left out the Orthodox community from being able to partake in the “launch” of the Fed Up with Hunger Campaign, which impaired their ability to successfully gain Orthodox supporters through the campaign.

### ***Federation Values and Funding Priorities***

When analyzing a nonprofit organization, students of Nonprofit Management are taught to look for how the organization defines three key things: Mission, Vision, and Values. Within the Jewish community the values of organizations becomes extremely important when individuals are deciding which organizations to support, because where one gives her Tzedakah should reflect her values. One survey interviewee, a professional at an Orthodox social service organization, said:

It doesn't feel as an Orthodox person, looking at the way Federation gives money, raises money...that they're particularly sensitive to the *Torah* outlook on priorities of giving, the *Torah* outlook on eating, social interaction, whatever it is... They don't appear to an Orthodox individual as really speaking to their values. It's almost like it's a totally foreign value system to a lot of Orthodox people. It's not a judgment statement, but a statement of reality that the Federation system is not based on *Torah* principles.

She continued to explain that if the Federation is not based on *Torah* principles, yet it carries the name Jewish Federation, psychologically an Orthodox individual is going to feel that it doesn't quite add up. Essentially, many Orthodox individuals are seeking more alignment between their own Jewish values and those of Federation, if it is trying to be a representative of the entire Jewish community.

### **Issue of Tzedakah in Federation Fund Allocation**

Once it has raised funds from its Annual Campaign, Federation's primary role is to allocate those funds. As such, the priorities of those funding allocations are of paramount importance to many Orthodox Jews in consideration of how involved they wanted to be with the Federation. Many Orthodox individuals expressed that the allocation priorities of Federation are not "*Torah* Priorities" and this is a problem for Orthodox Jews who live their lives by the laws and principles dictated in the *Torah*. On the one hand, there is not an expectation or desire to have the Federation become a solely Orthodox organization. "I don't expect the funds to go to only Orthodox organizations" one interviewee said, who runs an Orthodox educational organization, "That's ridiculous- it's the Jewish Federation- it appeals to a very broad base. But to me, there's an imbalance. What are your priorities?" But on the other hand, to some Orthodox Jews, the fact that Federation cannot serve the Orthodox community is not problematic. Their perceived mission of Federation is that it is to engage unaffiliated Jews, through "cultural Jewish appreciation." This, in their minds is a perfectly acceptable mission, but it makes Federation seem irrelevant to Orthodox Jews, and therefore an organization they chose not to support. It is not that they feel Federation should not exist, but they prefer to support Orthodox organizations others will not support. One interviewee said the "Federation ranks lower, of charities to donate to, for me personally, because it's not in any majority focused on any of the institutions that are important to the Orthodox. Our family often gets requests from secular institutions to support and our answer is: We're heavily committed to charities that nobody else is going to support."

Many Orthodox Jews feel that *tzedakah* (a requirement of Jews to give a portion of one's income, traditionally 10% to the less fortunate) is an important mitzvah, and as such, it

is necessary to be careful in the allocation of these funds. Some see Federation's mission as positive, but feel that it does not go far enough in what needs to be done in the Jewish community. Often, Orthodox Jews simply see different reasons for Jewish organizations to exist. The more liberal Jews who tend to be in decision-making roles in Federation often look outside of simply preserving Jews and Judaism, to things like repairing the surrounding community. A volunteer leader from an Orthodox *kiruv* organization shared that he thinks "[Federation is] very good with '*tikkun olam*' which has really come to mean just social action and social justice... [but], the sum total of the Jewish community is not about social justice and community service. That's not the sum total of Judaism. And the only way to say that you're the central address for the Jewish community is to represent, to be an actual representative of Judaism."

Another interviewee said:

While it's great to make the world a better place, the Jewish tradition [pertaining to distribution of *tzedakah*] is very clear: if you have a certain amount of charity, first you help your brother and your uncle and your cousin and your family members, then your people in your community. You go in geographical and relationship concentric circles, and only then can you go and save the world. But you don't save the world to the expense of the people closer to you.

He is referring to RAMBAM's levels of Tzedakah, put forth in his *Mishneh Torah* (Laws of Gifts to the Poor 10:7-14), a text which many observant Jews use as a sort of how-to guide for many of life's daily tasks, including how to give *Tzedakah*. Many Orthodox Jews feel that this commandment to aid community after immediate family means that their money needs to help Jews primarily. While many of the organizations and programs funded by Federation do aid Jews in Los Angeles, Israel, and other countries around the world, a large portion of Federation funding supports organizations that do not serve Jews as their primary

clientele. In fact, many of Federation's beneficiary agencies, including Jewish Family Service and Jewish Vocational Service, spend large portions of their budget on aid to non-Jews in the Los Angeles area. An Orthodox individual who has had much involvement in various Federations described this issue as problematic when Orthodox Jews evaluate the Federation as a potential organization for their own *tzedakah*: "They see that JFS is serving huge amounts of non-Jews while there are Jews who are in trouble, and JVS is serving huge amounts of non-Jews, where Jews are in trouble."

One survey respondent who identifies himself as Modern Orthodox *Machmir* explains his ideas of *tzedakah* in the following manner:

I have an obligation to give at least a tenth of my income to *tzedakah* and I have to make sure that money counts for the mitzvah. Therefore it should support the poor and hungry (*Tomchei Shabbos* meets that criterion perfectly); *Torah* learning (*yeshivas* meet that criterion); my community (my *shul* best meets that criterion). These are the key areas. Any additional funds I am able to give beyond my 10% minimum would go to other urgent priorities that fit more broadly into the three categories I outlined be it the poor in Israel; organizations that promote *Torah* learning through outreach or online; or that help *Klal Yisrael* and where the money is targeted, effective. If Federation only now and then misuses donors' funds (e.g. sending money to Arabs in Israel), it simply cannot be viewed as worthy of a donation --- especially when there are so many highly worthy organizations. This is despite the fact that the Federation does do some good. But, being 100% effective is better than being 70% effective and some small percentage harmful.

This is not to say that Orthodox Jews have no interest in aiding non-Jews. But as one Jewish Funders Network study reported, simply: "Orthodox donors give proportionally more to Jewish causes," and they are less likely to contribute to Federation when the priorities of Federation do not reflect this value system (Cohen and Berkowitz 2009, p. 13). The following write-in responses from the survey reflect Orthodox individuals' desire to see the Federation's values align with their own, in order for them to feel more comfortable giving a

gift to Federation's Annual Campaign as *tzedakah*. "It would be desirable if the Federation aligned its practices and funding priorities with Jewish law. For example, the Jewish Federation would be a highly desirable place to donate funds if I knew that my money would go to fulfill an important mitzvah, such helping a JEW in need." Another said: "You're saying you speak for the Jewish community, yet from an Orthodox perspective, Jewish values are defined by the Torah, and you're not necessarily structured around that. You're giving huge amounts of money to non-Jewish causes while there's Jews who are starving."

### **Jewish Education**

It is clear that Orthodox Jews often have trouble agreeing with Federation on how funding is allocated, but where is it that they would prefer these funds to be directed? Jewish education, specifically day school education, came up time and again from Orthodox individuals who see it as simply too low a priority for Federation. Their thoughts were that if Federation truly does care about Jewish continuity and community, education should bear a much larger focus. Former President of Gratz College Gary Schiff noted "the level of communal funding for Jewish education reflects its relative priority in the Jewish Community" (Schiff 1986, p. 31).

This sentiment is certainly echoed through my research findings; Orthodox individuals often look at the Jewish Federation's allocations track record on education in order to form an opinion about how well the Federation serves their needs. When asked how Federation could better serve your needs, a survey respondent said: "more financial aid to Orthodox schools in Los Angeles." An interviewee said, "We know specifically what helps Jewish continuity is Jews being involved in Jewish things. And we know specifically, education is number one- I mean, we know that already. So why isn't that slant indicated [in



Federation's funding allocations]?" he questioned. Although his position as the head of an Orthodox educational institution may shape his opinion, many in the community share this feeling. He went on to say:

The amount of money that the Federation funds for Jewish children's education in Los Angeles- it's a significant amount of money. But, *Toras Emes*, one Orthodox day school [in Hancock Park, one Orthodox enclave of Los Angeles where the majority of far-right, "Black Hat" Jews in Los Angeles are found], the largest in the area, gives more scholarship money than the total amount of money allotted through the Jewish Federation to children's' Jewish education, combined.

The costs of Jewish education are just so high, that the \$1.076 million given to Orthodox schools by Federation, yearly, pales in comparison to the individual school budgets. Of course, though, in order to make more of a dent in this arena, Federation would have to give up many other funding areas.

The reasoning behind education being such a high priority for Orthodox Jews varies. Some advocate for education because it is seen as a way to ensure Jewish continuity by combating assimilation, as one *Yeshivish* Modern Orthodox survey respondent purported:

I think that the priorities are often focused outside the Jewishness of the Jewish community rather than on all the issues we have within the community. Teaching, education, awareness are often not at the top of the list. In the 40's and 50's the Nazi's tried to destroy the Jews through hatred, violence and anti-Semitism. The US and other countries are destroying the Jewish community through assimilation and tolerance. To my knowledge, the Federation does not have strong programs to prevent this assimilation.

Regardless of the reasoning, day school education has gradually become normative for Orthodox Jews. According to figures from the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey, 91% of Orthodox Jews ages 6-17 have attended day school. These numbers speak for themselves in conveying the importance of day school education to Orthodox community. As such, many Orthodox Jews cannot even appreciate the other positive things Federation

does if they feel education is not seen as enough of a priority: “I’m sure they do a lot of good, but failure to do more to support day school education is a blind error.”

In 2007, when Stanley Gold began his tenure as the Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, the leadership of the Federation instituted a new set of funding guidelines. Some saw Gold’s move to require agencies to compete for funding and infrastructure as a step in the right direction because it makes the agencies more accountable. Unfortunately, this meant all agencies, and the Bureau of Jewish Education (now BJE: Builders of Jewish Education) was included among them. Many Orthodox Jews are disappointed by this fact that BJE is no longer receiving an automatic allocation because of the day schools it directly supports. Another noted that the Federation has “some helpful programs but are for the most part distant from Orthodox schools.” This issue, in it of itself, was enough to color the perception of the entire organization for this individual who, therefore, ranked the Federation as “unimportant” among organizations he would support with his charitable funds.

This issue of Federation funding priorities not lining up with those desired by Orthodox Jews is a difficult one to fix. It is an inherently cyclical problem, as one interviewee discussed.

“Orthodox Jews donate little to Federation because the allocations of Federation do not reflect *Torah* values, therefore, few Orthodox Jews are in places of decision-making power within Federation because they do not represent a large enough portion of the donor base. Therefore those priorities don’t change, and neither do the Orthodox donor patterns.”

The only way to break this cycle is for some Orthodox individuals to be willing to get involved with Federation knowing that their presence is important and would make a difference in policy and allocations, if they participated in the discussion.

### ***Problems with Public Relations in the Orthodox Community***

Another issue challenging the relationship between Federation and Orthodox Jews is the lack of visibility and understanding of the Federation within the Orthodox community.

Throughout my research, while speaking with individuals in the Orthodox community, I encountered much confusion of acronyms that are widely used in Federation circles.

Acronyms become so second nature to those using them that they often forget not everyone knows the meaning; this can lead not only to confusion, but can alienate those not in the know. JFLA seems like a perfectly appropriate acronym for the **J**ewish **F**ederation of **L**os **A**ngeles to an outsider, but it is in fact the acronym for **J**ewish **F**ree **L**oan **A**ssociation.

Evidence of this as problematic came when, in response to my survey asking about individuals' opinions of the Jewish Federation, one older Orthodox respondent wrote, "JFLA's campaigns seem to take a very opposite tack, appealing to non-observant Jews who want to make the world "green" (i.e. environmentally correct) through their lending programs. (That's the latest pitch I seem to recall)." In fact, Jewish Free Loan did recently launch a Green Loan Fund, which offers interest-free loans for environmental upgrades to residences, town-homes, condos, apartments & small businesses (JFLA.org). This was a direction that this particular individual does not feel comfortable supporting. It so happens that some campaigns speak to some donors in a more profound way than others, allowing them to choose where to contribute their funds; this is the beauty of the nonprofit sector. However, because of the acronym confusion, in this case this individual's dislike for the mission and practices of one organization actually led to an aversion to another. This could have been prevented had this individual been aware of the full names of the organizations in question.

Perhaps it was an incident many would write off as minor, but this is not an isolated occurrence. The lack of familiarity with the Federation cannot simply be blamed on the confusion of the alphabet soup of Jewish organizations. Several of the individuals with whom I spoke in the Orthodox community, even those working or volunteering for organizations supported by the Federation, did not know the difference between the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation. This problem exists in the community as a whole and is certainly not confined to the Orthodox population in Los Angeles. The legal name of the Community foundation is the Jewish Community Foundation of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles—legitimately confusing. Clarification and more effective marketing in general could solve these problems.

### **How Federation Benefits Orthodox Jews**

This lack of knowledge on the part of Orthodox Jews regarding Federation leads some in that subgroup to question whether Federation provides any assistance to the Orthodox community. One survey respondent summed this up perfectly in his comment: “The fact that I am Orthodox, and don't really know how they serve the Orthodox community means to me one of two things: (a) They don't serve the Orthodox community or (b) They need to boost their public relations with the Orthodox community.” Certainly, there is much evidence to support the fact that the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles does indeed support the Orthodox community in a profound way. This can be seen through anecdotal evidence, such as when there was a shooting at an Orthodox *shul* in late 2009, the first person the Chief of Police contacted to help mediate the situation was the Chief Executive Officer of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance. In this regard, and in many other situations and

occasions, the Jewish Federation advocates on behalf of all Jews in Los Angeles and beyond, and this certainly includes the Orthodox.

The help that Federation provides to Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles is not only confirmed with anecdotal evidence, it can be quantified as well. In fact, Federation recently compiled a document detailing specifically how much funding is used to aid the Orthodox community:

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles allocates funds that both directly and indirectly benefit the Orthodox community. Since Orthodox members of the Jewish community tend to have higher levels of Jewish affiliation and participation in communal programs such as day schools, camps and Israel programs, they are often the recipients of multiple funding streams from the Federation. The funding can broadly be divided into two areas: I) Jewish Education, Engagement and Identity II) Social & Human Services. (L.A. Federation 2010)

In the area of Jewish Education, Engagement and Identity, according to Beryl Geber, Associate Executive Vice President, Policy Development for the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, approximately \$1.076 million went to fund Orthodox individuals, in a variety of scholarship and aid programs through Orthodox day schools in the 2009 fiscal year. That figure does not include Orthodox individuals receiving camp grants, Orthodox Birthright participants, or grants for Israel travel. In the area of social and human services, according to Adynna Swarz, Planning & Research Associate for the Serving the Vulnerable Pillar, a total of \$466,700 was spent in the 2009 fiscal year on aid to the Orthodox community in grants to a number of organizations that wholly serve Orthodox individuals or have programs dedicated to serving Orthodox Jews in the Los Angeles community. Please see Appendix D for a detailed list of the programs funded by Federation that are designed primarily for observant households. It is clear that the Orthodox community is

unquestionably being aided by the work of the Jewish Federation in Los Angeles. Thus, it is up to Federation to reach out to Orthodox Jews to make sure they are aware of this.

Because the Federation is indeed serving the Orthodox population, it is all the more curious that Orthodox Jews feel alienated from the Federation. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that the ways Federation serves the Orthodox are primarily through services and funding, but Orthodox Jews are rarely seen as potential Federation donors. The heavy focus on day school and *Yeshiva* education in the Orthodox community, coupled with the higher birthrate of Orthodox Jews create a perception that Orthodox Jews have limited disposable income. Additionally, there is a perception that as you move to the right of the Orthodox spectrum, many men in the community spend much of their time in *Yeshiva* and therefore do not bring in a secondary income for the family; this too contributes to the issue of Orthodox Jews seen as beneficiaries of aid, rather than donors. There is certainly some truth to the statement that many Orthodox families “have not escaped the poverty cycle” (Solender 1978, p. 148). Certainly during this recent economic crisis, many Orthodox families have been hit incredibly hard financially, only exacerbating this problem. However, Liebman reminds us: “the Orthodox are also clustered in areas where Jews are of higher social class” (Liebman 1966, p. 211). Though this was from research published in 1966, it is still true in certain cases. The Orthodox, just as every other segment of the Jewish community, should be looked at as a multi-faceted group that includes potential large donors, as well as potential aid recipients. As such, it is important to make sure that the Orthodox community is a target demographic of the Federation marketing, just as every other segment of the Jewish population in Los Angeles.

During my research, there were a number of issues I had anticipated would be problematic, but it turned out they did not show up, save for the anomalistic appearance. For example, politics was an issue that might seem like a barrier, especially regarding Israel. However, it proved to be largely a nonissue, except for one comment: “I feel the Federation favors liberal/left programs and I personally am a conservative republican and do not feel the Federation is addressing my interests.” This is just proof positive for why it is important for Federation explore the issues present with reaching out to the Orthodox, rather than simply assuming it has an understanding for why things are the way they are. If we assume we know the issues that are alienating certain groups, we may spend time and energy in the wrong areas.

### ***General Trends of Philanthropic Giving to Federations***

Some of the findings regarding negativity toward Federation may have little or nothing to do with the level of religious observance of the individuals involved, but rather, may simply reflect the Federation’s struggle to keep a stronghold on being the main recipient of Jewish philanthropic dollars. While “the literature on Jewish philanthropic behavior is very thin,” it does seem that much of what came up from my research follows the general patterns of Jewish philanthropic giving and more general philanthropic giving that have been documented (Silberstein, et al. 1987).

According to Steven Windmueller, Dean of the Los Angeles campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the “current Federation system accounts for only 15% of Jewish charitable giving today” (Windmueller 2007, p. 252). The fact that Federations are taking only this small percentage of Jewish communal dollars can be attributed to a wide variety of characteristics about the current Jewish generation. Younger

Jews generally identify with Judaism in a much more positive way than their parents and grandparents, and as such are not so fixated on the negative aspects of Jewish life, such as keeping Israel together in crisis times, and the aftermath of the Holocaust. The late American Jewish scholar Gary Tobin points out, “Younger givers are somewhat more likely to view financial support for Israel as an option rather than an imperative” (Tobin 1993). Perhaps this is due to the fact that the Holocaust and consequently Israel’s independence are much more distant historical events for younger Jews. Also, Federations have to compete, not just with other Jewish institutions and initiatives, but non-Jewish organizations for their support. Tobin wrote:

The Americanization of Jewish giving has also included a growing propensity to give to philanthropies outside of the Jewish community. American Jews have become an integral part of the philanthropic mainstream, donating large sums to a variety of institutions and organizations in the realms of education, health, human services, culture, politics, and others. (Tobin 2001)

Additionally, some of the lessening of Federation giving can be attributed to individuals and family foundations that have recently garnered or inherited significant wealth, and are “engaged today in creating new initiatives designed to reinvent aspects of Jewish religious and communal life and to impact through their giving the larger society” rather than giving to a single annual campaign through the Federation (Windmueller 2007).

Federations around the country are certainly dealing with a smaller percentage of new Jewish donations, but they are also combating an ever-shrinking donor base. Many of the high-level Federation donors, among whom are the builders and founders of the community, are beginning to age out, and Federations around the country are struggling to maintain their primary bases of support. Some attribute this phenomenon to the assimilation of younger non-observant donors, and consequently unaffiliated potential donors of the Millennial and X



Generations. As one interviewee commented, “With the intermarriage and the assimilation that takes place in the non-Orthodox world, I think one of the results Federation is experiencing is shrinkage of their donor pool.” This perception matches reality: “Only two cities among the 40 large and large-intermediate Federations have experienced growth in their Jewish population” resulting in fewer Jews and therefore fewer potential Federation donors in each given city (Edelsberg 2004). Thus, in addition to the need to reach out to Orthodox donors as I have been purporting, Federations have an increasing need to reach out to donors more generally. However, this task has proven to be extremely difficult, especially in recent years.

The inability to reach new people in a community is plaguing many Jewish organizations across the country. According to the 2006 REBOOT report, ‘*Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam...*’ *Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choices*, “the vast majority of young Jews interviewed were unable to recognize the names of major Jewish organizations [including but not limited to Federations], never mind have an opinion of them” (Bennett et al. 2006, p. 3). It is one thing to reject an institution; it is entirely another to not even know it exists. The Federation is dealing with the difficulty of trying to engage a generation that lacks even minimal familiarity with traditional Jewish institutions. As such, many of these organizations, including Federations, are attempting to create “Next Gen” initiatives and Young Leadership groups to reach this segment of the population. It is too soon, though, to know if the young people that have been attracted will remain committed donors.

One of my interviewees calls himself “an individual who has been involved with Federation who was challenged by [Federation’s] inability to actually make a difference.”

This point of contention with Federation has less to do with the fact that he is Orthodox, and more to do with his frustration with Federation's lack of innovation. Federations are often stymied by the problem of inertia; many larger bureaucratic organizations have a unique inability to cease or reinvigorate status quo operations. While Federation is working on developing ways of engaging the younger generations of Jews whose donations will ensure the future existence of the community, Federation also must continue looking for ways to broaden its ever shrinking donor base. Based on what the research says modern Jewish donors are looking for, Federation can no longer simply rely on a communal imperative to garner donations. Instead, it must look for new and innovative ways to reach its donors and meet them where they are. Reaching out to the Orthodox community is simply one example of how Federation should always be looking for ways to strengthen and broaden its donor base.

### ***Difficulties of Organizational Partnerships***

Part of my research was interviewing leaders of Orthodox organizations in the Los Angeles area to determine the nature and satisfaction of their relationship with the Jewish Federation. There was an issue that emerged from many of the interviews: It seems as though Federation does not always take into account the individual needs of organizations with whom they are partnering. While it is true that the perspectives I am reporting are those of Orthodox organizations, many of the difficulties interviewees discussed regarding Federation partnerships may have less to do with their Orthodoxy and more to do with the fact that it is simply difficult to satisfy all parties involved in nonprofit partnerships. The difference in religious affiliation of the two (or more) parties only adds to, but does not solely contribute to, the potential strife between partnership participants.

Federation has long existed as an umbrella organization that made allocations to a core set of beneficiary organizations. These organizations did not, traditionally, have to do much to gain Federation's support, and Federation's role did not extend much beyond that of a funder. However, as Federation has recently changed the relationship with its beneficiary agencies, removing core support from beneficiary agencies like BJE, Jewish Family Service, and Jewish Vocational Service, it is entering into a new era where it has to reexamine its relationship with these agencies, as well as all organizations it funds. "There is a tendency in the philanthropic world to assume that collaboration has intrinsic value and effectiveness," and there is an implication that collaboration must entail a relationship beyond a purely funding relationship (Ostrower 2005, p. 36). From Federation's perspective, it would seem as though the Federation subsidiary agencies would benefit from a more active partnership with Federation. However, it is important to consider that not all organizations see this intrinsic value in partnership, and Federation must make certain that it knows what the individual organizations want and need before proceeding with a partnership agreement.

I have found that there is a clear hesitancy on the part of some Orthodox organizations to accept funding from Federation because of fear that they will be constrained by Federation's parameters and funding guidelines, while they would rather be given the space to achieve their mission in the way they see fit. For other Orthodox organizations, they do not see it in their best interest to partner **or** receive funding from Federation because Federation would demand having a say in the organizational behavior. Certain day schools, for example would not want Federation having a say in their policy; some feel "Federation often demands too great a voice in school policy to make its support acceptable" (Liebman 1965, p. 73).

One interviewee, the head of a new grassroots Orthodox social service organization, discussed with me his thought process regarding whether or not to incorporate under the Federation umbrella. While he saw the intrinsic infrastructural benefits Federation could provide, he decided against it because he felt he “would be constrained by Federation bureaucratic red tape.” One of the things he prides himself on is getting services to his clients in a timely fashion. He says that because he is not mandated by Federation policy, he is able to exercise judgment and sometimes retroactively approve clients for funding, in the case of a family that needs emergency aid but does not have time to get application approval. He feared he would be unable to make such determinations if his organization were completely under the auspices of Federation, yet he appreciates any funding and aid Federation wants to provide without being a beneficiary agency. Similarly, another professional from an Orthodox outreach organization shared this fear of Federation limiting its ability to exercise autonomy, but it, on the other hand, chose to partner with Federation on an event-by-event basis. He said if Federation “wants to fund us to do what we do, great. If you’re going to fund us and tell us what to do, then we won’t be able to be successful...We should do more with [Federation], but we can’t do it at the expense of not being able to innovate anymore.” For that reason, this particular organization chooses not to receive funding from the Federation but does choose to partner on events.

Another head of an Orthodox educational institution said he does not have time for the “photo opportunities” partnering with Federation requires. He simply would like to receive funding and not have to deal with Federation on an event basis or by sharing marketing materials; this particular organization prefers a funder to a partner. Alternatively, some organizations realize that in the face of new funding constraints and the new economic

climate, all Jewish organizations are doing important community work, and as such should take seriously the possibility of extensive partnerships where not only are funds exchanged, but there is collaboration involving resources, ideas, and leadership. In short, every organization sees benefits and resources from Federation differently, so is important that Federation keeps this in mind before forging new partnerships and reexamining old ones. If Federation assumes it can treat all organizations similarly regarding partnership, it will fail to allow its beneficiary organizations to aid the community at their fullest potential.

### ***On a National Scale***

The Los Angeles Federation does not exist in a vacuum; it is part of a large umbrella organization, the Jewish Federations of North America. Through my research at the General Assembly (GA), including observations and discussions, I determined, at least anecdotally, that the issue of Orthodox individuals being separate from the Federation system is not a Los Angeles-specific issue, rather it is generalizable nationally. The theme of the 2009 GA was “Anything is Possible.” The marketing included a number of questions with this phrase as the answer hung on large posters throughout the conference center. The one that stood out to me in this context was: “Can we unite the Jewish Community? Anything is possible.” This statement, hanging on the wall for all participants to see as they rode the escalator down into the Exhibition Hall, suggests that the Jewish community is fractured, and it would benefit the entire North American Jewish community to engage in more concerted outreach to groups often left out of traditional Federation environments. This should certainly include Orthodox Jews.

Certain provisions were made at the GA to ensure that Orthodox and other observant Jews could participate in all aspects of the GA. The conference began on a Sunday afternoon

in order to avoid people having to travel on Shabbat. But despite this effort made in terms of scheduling, my ethnographic research at the GA confirmed that Orthodox Jews remained fairly separate from the rest of the GA participants. Additionally, while kosher food was offered, it was incredibly expensive (e.g. \$10 for a Bagel and cream cheese) and as a result, participants who did not keep strictly *kosher* chose to eat at the local Starbucks or hotel café. This made the kosher food tables places where visibly Orthodox Jews congregated and stayed separate from the rest of the GA delegates.

During the conference, I spoke to many professionals and lay leaders from various Jewish communities throughout the country. What emerged was that disconnection between the Orthodox communities and the local Federations seemed to be more prevalent in larger cities. This is because in larger cities, there tend to be larger Jewish populations, and therefore, more options for Orthodox Jews to be insular and affiliate with other Jews like themselves. In smaller cities, Federation can more easily act as a central body, because Jews of different backgrounds will stick together as segregation is not an option in populations that small. As Silberstein, Rabinowitz, Ritterband, and Kosmin suggest, “The larger the relative size of the Jewish community, the less the sense of intra-group dependence and solidarity” (Silberstein et al. 1987, p. 3).

Additional evidence that similar issues are occurring in other large cities arose when individuals with whom I spoke discussed their experience with Federations in cities where they lived prior to coming to Los Angeles. One lay leader at an Orthodox organization shared with me a particularly difficult experience at UJA-Federation of New York. He was asked to be involved as a lay leader with a *Shabbat* dinner series, as the host of an Orthodox service, where Federation wanted to have Orthodox, Conservative and Reform services.

Initially he agreed, but what followed was a situation where he felt that what was exciting to him about Shabbat as an Orthodox Jew, could not have been conveyed within the structure they provided, as they wanted to have each denomination host an early dinner, followed by services. Many Orthodox Jews *daven* (pray) when Shabbat comes in, and then sit down for a long Shabbat dinner; this structure would not allow for that. “I was really excited and inspired about Jewish life and with the experiences that I had, but... I knew it was going to be an experience that would not give an accurate picture of my experience [with *Shabbat*], and there was zero flexibility whatsoever as to changing to structure to something that would actually do that.” So, while they “threw a bone to the Orthodox,” in his words, the Federation failed in this instance to give a lay leader the opportunity to actually lead and create an experience that would be Jewishly compelling for him. This description of an incident at the New York Federation suggests a similar climate exists in that community, confirming what my GA research suggests.

I also researched other cities’ more recent population studies sponsored by local Federations; I found that many research the denominational makeup of their city as well as Federation giving patterns, but very few actually make the connection and analyze giving patterns **among** Orthodox Jews. The report from the 2000 NJPS discusses Jewish giving patterns related to income level, marital status, number of children, but not in relation to denomination. I did find, though, that the Detroit Federation not only made this connection, but as a result of their population study, they made an effort to say that the Orthodox was a group to whom they needed to do specific outreach. The report from the 2005 study was released in 2007:

The Jewish Federation [of Greater Detroit] should concentrate efforts to increase donations from Orthodox households, who do give, but generally

donate smaller amounts. Although household income is not great [median \$54,000] these households are significant donors to other Jewish charities, even in larger amounts, and many are households with children, another group on which the Federation should concentrate. (Sheshkin 2005)

The Los Angeles Federation as well as other local Federations around the country, could benefit from the same type of research, as, for the most part, actual research is lacking on Orthodox Jews and the Federation system as a whole as well as in individual communities. For reasons put forth in this paper, I think this type of further research is not only warranted, but would be extremely helpful for the future of the American Jewish community.



## **Recommendations**

This study is not meant to point out the flaws in the operating practices of the Federation, but rather to hold up a mirror to the organization where one has not been held up before. It should allow the community to see that there is a gap between the Orthodox community and the Federation and provide some suggestions for the Federation to become truer to its mission of serving all of the needs of the community.

### ***Recognition of Needed Change***

Any hope for change starts with recognition that Orthodox Jews are an important group for the Federation to engage. However, before the Federation can make changes to include Orthodox Jews into its fold, it will have to ask: “Are we willing to adapt how we operate for the sake of who we want to engage?” as one interviewee said. Because it seems like a daunting task to actually implement change, especially in what is often considered a bureaucratic agency, it is beneficial to take heed from previous attempts to suggest organizational change within the Federation system. In 2004, *Advancing Women Professionals in the Jewish Community* attempted to change the status of female leadership within the Federation system. That report concluded, “long-term change will require a multi-dimensional strategy championed by the leadership and sustained by the collaboration of stakeholders throughout the system” (Bronznick 2004). Another report that looked at adapting Federation philanthropy for younger donors concluded, “If we endeavor to engage them on their terms and not just change the window dressing on what already exists, we will be planting the seeds of long-term relationships and our own Jewish future” (Goldseker 2007).

### ***Knowing the Population at Hand***

The Los Angeles Jewish community needs to conduct a new demographic study, which could echo the strides made by the community of Detroit in detailing the need to reach out to the Orthodox community as one of its Engagement/Outreach efforts after their 2005 population study. Just after the Detroit Federation concluded engaging families with children was central to their value system, as the future of the community depends on passing on the tradition of giving, the 2005 demographic study revealed that Orthodox families in Detroit have proportionally more children than the rest of the Jewish community. Additionally, the Federation had previously received smaller donations from Orthodox Jews; however, the study revealed that although Orthodox Jews do not have a high average household income, they are significant donors to other Jewish charities, thus they have the capacity to be significant contributors to Federation if cultivated properly. These two findings led Detroit to conclude it should concentrate efforts to increase donations from Orthodox households, prompting them to attempt new engagement, outreach, and marketing efforts to reach this segment of the population. The Detroit Federation was only able to determine, though, that outreach to the Orthodox would help them achieve their mission and be financially beneficial because they had conducted a local Jewish population survey. The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles is in desperate need of a new Jewish population survey, because as of now the Federation is making assumptions about the community based on facts from 1997. In a community like Los Angeles, that is so dynamic, it is a disservice to the community to rely on data that is more than a decade old.

## ***Gaining Orthodox Buy-in***

There are a number of simple things the Federation can do to include more Orthodox individuals in Federation settings and encourage them to come to events, such as holding parlor meetings in the homes of Orthodox Jews to reach the networks of some already involved Orthodox Jews, or advertising the strict *kashrut* at events. However, in order to change things permanently, over the long run, it is necessary to change the culture of the Federation to one that truly desires inclusion of this group, not just as recipients of aid, but also as donors and leaders in the community. The current mindset can only be changed, one interviewee said, “through a real concerted effort within Federation to ask some really difficult questions about themselves and how they can change, and whether or not there are ways they can do their business and will not fly in the face and be difficult for the Orthodox constituency.”

I cannot simply recommend that Federation alter its funding priorities to fit the needs of Orthodox Jews, because these decisions are made by boards and committees with governing power in the organization. It will be necessary for Orthodox Jews to become involved in Federation, become members of these boards and committees to get their voices heard. In fact, the only way for Federation to gain buy-in from the Orthodox community at large is to get their opinions represented during the decision-making process regarding allocation of funds and other important Federation functions. Their thoughts and their leadership in the direction that Federation is taking as it evolves are essential. Federation needs to “work to engage the Orthodox community to bring in lay leaders and hire more Orthodox employees,” as one Orthodox professional from a Federation beneficiary agency suggested, so that more Orthodox individuals will be in places of decision-making power to

get some of their interests represented. In his opinion of Federation board composition, Sanford Solender wrote, “leaders must be drawn from all the religious denominations, youth, women, the wealthy and the middle-class, academicians and intellectuals” (Solender 1978, p. 154). If this advice were heeded, Federation could have a more dynamic set of opinions represented when making decisions. Orthodox presence in these conversations will result in *halachic* issues being discussed, and conflicts thereof avoided, and should also result in Orthodox values being incorporated into communal decisions about funding priorities.

However, it is not simply about having more Orthodox leaders. As one interviewee suggested, perhaps it is two-fold: Her first suggestion was:

Hire in leadership positions people who are well respected in the Orthodox community and have the skills and tools to reach out and sponsor events that would be appropriate... I think that’s very important- and again having someone in a leadership position who- it’s not just enough to have an Orthodox person, but it has to be someone who is respected by the Orthodox who will respond.

As a survey respondent suggested, “perhaps with the consultation of Los Angeles’s Orthodox Rabbinate, the Federation could become more effective and targeted in serving the community --- those in need and those who need to direct the limited resources they are given to accomplish the *Torah's* idea of good (i.e. mitzvahs).”

The second part of her suggestion was to:

Start requiring people who work at Federation to start taking classes in Judaism, and to learn... have a weekly class that’s required for Federation employees to go to and rotate through different teachers; have Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox teachers... so [professionals] begin to understand in depth what Judaism is. I mean because the Jewish Federation – they see it as the Federation of the Jewish people but what makes the Jewish people? What makes the Jewish people Jewish?

Based on my findings, this increased knowledge of Judaism on the part of Federation professionals and lay leaders does have the potential to create an environment more

conducive to engaging Orthodox Jews, because it would give them less reason to doubt the commitment the Federation is making to the Jewish community if the people with power have more knowledge. While this suggestion may not be completely feasible in practice, implementing a Jewish learning program on a monthly or bimonthly basis for professionals and lay leaders would be a positive step for Federation to ensure that its leaders have a sufficient level of Judaic knowledge with which to interact with all constituents.

The groundwork for increasing knowledge of Jewish professionals has already been laid. In 2009, the Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California society created a document it called the *Brit Hamiktzoa* (The Covenant of Jewish Professional Leadership) that “articulates an understanding of the commitments and responsibilities of the Jewish communal professional” (Rothpan 2009, p. 198). Among the several tenets laid out in the *Brit*, first and foremost is Continuing Education (*Limmud*). The document reads: “I will continue to expand my Jewish understanding and knowledge” (Rothpan 2009, p. 199); thus, the field has recognized the very important need to have professionals that are competent and well-versed in Judaism. The challenge now becomes following up on the implementation phase of this plan. The Hebrew Union College School of Jewish Communal Service (soon to be the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management) will be offering a certificate program for Jewish professionals in the field, which would offer courses that address this issue. Perhaps Federation could set aside a small amount of funds to cover or subsidize the tuition for the Certificate in Jewish Nonprofit Management for their employees, and potentially lay leaders as well.

An additional component to gaining Orthodox buy-in is no different than gaining trust and involvement from other uninvolved Jews, and that is for the organization to be more

transparent with its funds. Measuring philanthropic effectiveness and stewarding donors is something that needs to be done across the board, regardless of denomination. “Federations need to describe more explicitly how they reach decisions to allocate and grant funds and on what basis they make awards” (Edelsberg 2005, p. 112). Donors in general want more efficiency and effectiveness, and all nonprofits are being held to higher standards of upholding their end of the bargain. To remain relevant to the next generation of donors, Federations must become both highly participatory and measurably effective as philanthropic enterprises.

### ***Kashrut Observance at the Highest Level***

Whether or not there is kosher food present at an event is a clear indicator to most Orthodox Jews whether the sponsoring organization took their needs into consideration. It is also a reflection of the values of the organization. As one Federation professional said, “if we cannot even get them in the door, how can we possibly engage them? And we certainly cannot get them in the door if they won’t eat the food.” While it is true that choosing to cater an event at the highest level of *kashrut* is a significant expense that will be financially burdensome, it is crucial that the Jewish Federation set the tone that it respects and values every Jew. It is my recommendation that the Federation clarify its *kashrut* policy so that every event and time food is served in a Federation setting, including people’s homes, it should be held to the highest level of *kashrut*. This is the only sure way to not offend anyone, and to send the message that Orthodox Jews are not just welcome, but wanted in Federation settings.

### ***Targeted Marketing to the Orthodox Community***

While ensuring that Orthodox Jews have a voice in the decision-making processes, and being respectful of Orthodox lifestyle choices are crucial components of reaching the Orthodox community, it is also important to be certain the whole of the Orthodox community is aware of the Federation and why it is relevant to them as Orthodox Jews. Under the leadership and direction of new Federation President Jay Sanderson, the Federation has recently begin to reexamine its marketing efforts, to reflect the Federation's goal of becoming the central convener for the Jewish community in Los Angeles. The tagline for the new marketing effort reads: "Only Federation has the strength of community." This seems to be an attempt on the part of Federation to clear up some of the confusion surrounding the role of Federation, to communicate the necessity for cohesiveness and a unified Jewish community, and to convey that Federation is, in fact, the institution positioned to help the community achieve this goal. The marketing campaign highlights individuals in the community who have benefited from Federation funds, displaying their pictures with an accompanying story so that donors can connect with them on a personal level. The main brochure also includes a comprehensive list of all organizations with whom Federation funds and/or partners. After reviewing the "Only Federation" collateral materials, including brochures, flyers, and posters, it is noticeable that none of these "faces of Federation" are visibly Orthodox or convey a story that might be particularly appealing to the Orthodox community.

Taking into consideration many of the findings presented in this thesis, I propose that the Federation adopt a targeted marketing effort, aimed specifically at the Orthodox community. This campaign should educate the Orthodox Jews about how the Federation is

currently helping the Orthodox community and should attempt to rid some of the false perceptions from the Orthodox community regarding Federation noncompliance with *halacha*, Shabbat and other religious issues. The current “Only Federation” materials should not be disseminated to Orthodox crowds or individual donors. Rather, the Federation marketing department should create some separate marketing pieces in the same visual tone and style of the current “Only Federation” materials, but with people pictured who represent issues and causes that are more central to the Orthodox community’s interests and needs. The brochure should include all of the organizations and partnerships from the larger list that Federation partners with and funds in the Orthodox community.

Because Jewish education surfaced as an issue that was supremely important to Orthodox Jewish in Los Angeles, it would benefit Federation to focus primarily on the work they fund in the area of day school education and other Jewish education programming in schools and *shuls* throughout Los Angeles. In fact, Federation has recently adopted a new policy that requires funds going toward scholarships for Jewish day school education should no longer filter through BJE. Instead, Federation checks will be made out directly to the families receiving the aid. This is aimed at ensuring individuals in the Los Angeles community are more aware of the funding Federation provides for Jewish education. This new policy is certainly a leap in a positive direction for relations with the Orthodox, as it addresses one of their primary issues of concern. The Federation should continue to keep the needs of the Orthodox community in mind when reconsidering policies, moving forward.

### ***Strengthening Organizational Partnerships***

Federation needs to refine how they approach their partnerships with Orthodox organizations. Federation needs to clarify the type of relationship preferred by each of the



agencies receiving funding, on an individual basis. For some, a relationship where Federation grants them funding and allows the organizations to reach out to their segment of the community in the ways they know how would be preferable. For others, a more collaborative partnership model would be helpful where Federation provides infrastructure and resources. Realization that each nonprofit functions differently is necessary, and the next step is to differentiate treatment with each partner which will enable Federation to avoid the difficulties present in all nonprofit partnerships before the added challenges arise due to religious differences and ideological disagreements.

### ***Potential Difficulties with Implementing Change***

Undertaking an endeavor to reach out to the Orthodox Jews of Los Angeles would be wrought with difficulty. “In the past, in order to keep everyone happy, or just simply to maintain the status quo, Federation would say ‘yes’ to everyone. We tried to be all things to all people, but the effect over time has been to dilute the impact of our work” (Philadelphia Strategic Plan 2003). Despite the recommendations put forth in the previous section, it would be exceedingly difficult to make all constituents and potential constituents of Federation happy. As Newton’s third law of motion states: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. While I have discussed why it is important to engage more members of the Orthodox community in Federation, it should not be underestimated that if this initiative were undertaken, there is potential for backlash from other members of the Los Angeles Jewish community. There is a real risk of alienating current donors who either disagree that we need to reach out to the Orthodox population or with changing the way Federation has always done things. However, not only is there potential to lose committed donors who are against such a policy, it might also make it more difficult to reach out to the

other groups that need to be included as well. If Russians, Persians, LGBT Jews, or any other groups that Federation has yet to form a steady relationship, perceive Federation as dominated or heavily influenced by Orthodox Jews, they might actually have less desire to get involved-- this is a real consideration of which to be wary.

Federation may also find that once given the platform to air their challenges with Federation, Orthodox Jews may bring up such polarizing ideological issues such as conversions, and who should be considered a Jew, that the community may see signs of potential fracture, rather than the intended inclusion and unity. Perhaps overcoming these challenges would require Federation to take a step further back to see if total inclusion of the Orthodox community is the correct direction in which to be moving. In other words, Federation must ask itself if a pluralistic model is the right goal and consider potentially adopting a new ideology, for example, a different type of pluralism, where it would not be necessary to struggle with bridging the massive gaps that exist between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews. In his essay *The Changing Situation in the Jewish Community and Implications for Federations*, Sanford Solender suggests that “the desire to have Federations speak for the local Jewish community is more attractive in theory than in application” (Solender 1979, p. 152), meaning the goal of Federations representing a unified message from the entire Jewish community is difficult, and may be the wrong approach. One interviewee, a professional at an Orthodox organization echoed this sentiment when he stated: “The model of pluralism sought by the pluralists is the wrong model. They’re looking for a religious pluralism: the acceptance of multiple legitimate religious approaches.” He points out, though, that “this approach will always be accepted by liberal theologians but rarely, if ever, by conservative theologians.” His logic was that an Orthodox person is

dedicating his life to religious Judaism, making it difficult for him to fully accept Jews who choose to practice Judaism a different way that is contrary or deviant from that doctrine he is following. What he suggests, instead, is a model of what he refers to as a political or pragmatic pluralism. He suggests that we should treat these interactions as politics. In the same way Republicans and Democrats can cooperate and reach across the aisle when necessary in order to make this country function, but set aside issues that are simply too highly contested, so too should Orthodox and more progressive Jews try to work together on forming a cohesive Jewish community, tackling issues on which they can work together, and avoiding those that cause too much strife between the groups. This sentiment is, in fact, echoed in some of the existing research. In addition to it being easier to actually find common ground with this pragmatic version of pluralism, Solender points out, “an inclusive, consensus-oriented Federation cannot take public positions on issues about which there is controversy in the Jewish community without risking harm to its capacity to fulfill its chief purposes” (Solender 1979, p. 152). Federation needs to walk the fine line of being a resource for all Jewish in the community without trying to speak for all Jews in the community. While this is a difficult balance to strike, it is doable when people sitting around the table are representative of the community. While not every person in the Jewish community will always agree with each decision the Federation makes, if they have all worked together to achieve communal decisions in the best interests of the community, the Federation can really call itself a representative body for the Jewish community.

## Conclusion

The need for Federation to reach out to Orthodox Jews is extremely important in any community.

Orthodox participation in a Jewish community is necessary to the viability of Federations. What is required is a planned out-reach by Federation's agencies to serve this clientele, appropriate involvement of Orthodox persons in community leadership on Federation and agency boards, a place for their separate social institutions in the organized community structure, and their increased support of the community campaign. (Solender 1979, p. 148)

Communal unity is important, and I believe I have successfully argued that it is crucial to the continuation of successful Jewish Federations, which often form the backbone for a Jewish community.

In order for this communal unity to be achieved, though, both lay and professional leaders of Federation need to be involved in the process of change. After all, the Federation is successful in its efforts by virtue of the unique partnership between volunteers and professional leaders. The professional is the representative of the Federation that has a constant voice, as the lay leadership tends to revolve on a more regular basis, but the power rests ultimately with the group that holds the fiduciary governance of the organization, which is the board. Thus, it is important that both Federation professionals and lay leadership represent and be able to advocate for the unique needs and interests of all facets of the Jewish community the Federation supposedly represents. Without these needs being addressed, members of that community will not be inclined to donate to the central Jewish "pot" of the community, and the community will have to redefine itself without these excluded groups. Successful planning for the future of the Jewish Federation requires successful social planning of the Jewish community (Solender 1983). If the Jewish Federation wishes to

effectively represent the Jewish community twenty years down the road, it has to understand what the Jewish community may look like at that point and plan ahead.

As the Los Angeles Federation website states, “Not only is the Jewish Federation the central address for the Los Angeles Jewish community, it is also the central point for advocacy on behalf of Los Angeles Jews” (JewishLA.org). Recently, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles started a blog; one entry was a post by the new Federation President, asking questions about how the community needs to proceed in the coming years: “Our city is home to one of the most extraordinary Jewish communities in the world” Sanderson wrote, “primarily because of our diversity. Community members represent every element of the religious spectrum, every age and every socio-economic category. But we all share one common concern: What is our Jewish future?” (Sanderson 2010). A person who refers to himself as “Abbushuki” responded:

It is time to end the JFC alienation of the fastest and only growing segment of this community: the Orthodox. They are the committed heroes who massively sacrifice life-style consumption to have and Jewishly educate lots of children. To attract them requires a complete turn-around of JFC allocations toward primarily items of Jewish continuity. If you solve this one, it answers all the other questions.

In response, Sanderson replied, “We will be reaching out in a more significant way to the Orthodox community” (Sanderson 2010). This is evidence that things are moving in the right direction.

Marvin Wikler agreed that rather than Orthodox Jews forming their own institutions because they feel separated from Federation, which they have currently, a more positive prospect would be “if the existing and well-established Jewish Communal service structure joined hands with the Orthodox community. This is easier said than done” (Wikler 1979, p. 279). I do not begin to purport that any of these changes will be easy. The Federation is

often operated as a bureaucratic institution, and there are a number of political issues including money, power, and others, that may make any transition extremely difficult in reality.

The fact is that we are a community, and the Federation has the goal of appealing to the entirety of the Jewish community. Thus, it is important to understand how certain people in our community are feeling about the way things currently stand. If things continue as they have been, our community will fracture and the Federation will never have as much impact as it potentially can with everyone's buy-in and contributions. The inclusion of Orthodox Jews and any other Jews who feel isolated from the mainstream Jewish community is crucial for the continuation of the Federation system, a successful Jewish future for Los Angeles, and the broader American Jewish community.

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## Appendix A

### Interview guide for Federation Affiliates

#### Intro:

A little about myself: HUC Student, FEREP Student, etc.

Tell him/her some of the central questions for my thesis:

#### Confidentiality disclosure

#### [Possible] questions

#### *About Federation Involvement:*

1. Can you tell me your job title and a little bit about what you do? [If known: As the \_\_\_\_\_ could you tell me a little about what you do on a daily basis?]
2. How did you end up working for the Federation?
3. As a Federation professional, how do you feel you are contributing to the Jewish community?
4. Would you consider yourself a Jewish communal professional

#### *About Orthodox Life*

1. I know there are a whole host of different strains and movements within the Orthodox community: If you had to categorize your religious observance, what would you consider yourself?
2. Do you belong to a Shul?
3. Could you describe for me your involvement in the Los Angeles Orthodox Jewish community?

#### *About the Intersection between Federation and Orthodox Life*

1. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or alienated because of something pertaining to your level of religious observance or denominational affiliation while in a Federation setting (office, meeting, event, etc)?
2. Have you ever disagreed with a funding priority decision of the Federation and how do you deal with that as a professional?
3. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or alienated by your Orthodox friends/fellow community members for the work that you do? Example?
4. Do you think Orthodox Jews are underrepresented in Federation life?
  - a. Do you think that having more Orthodox professionals advocating for the needs and desires of the Orthodox community would increase the amount of Orthodox donor participation in the Federation?
  - b. Why do you think that might be?
  - c. Do you think this is a problem?
5. If it were up to you, how would you alleviate some of these barriers?

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Guide for Orthodox Organizations**

#### Intro

A little about myself: HUC Student, FEREP Student, etc.

Tell him/her some of the central questions for my thesis:

How well the L.A. Federation is serving Orthodox Jews, and in this particular interview I'm interested in specifically how the relationship between your organization and Federation contributes to this, and also your personal perceptions about Federation as an Orthodox Jew.

#### Confidentiality disclosure

#### [Possible] questions

5. What is the mission of your organization?
6. Are you familiar with the work of the Jewish Federation?
  - a. How would you describe the goals/mission of the Federation, to the best of your knowledge?
7. Do you, in any way, see an alignment between the goals of your organization and those of Federation?
8. How would you characterize the “perception” of the Jewish Federation among your members/volunteers/donors?
9. How would you describe your organization’s relationship with the Federation?
  - a. Have you ever partnered with the Jewish Federation on an event, initiative, etc?
10. If you could design an ideal partnership opportunity between your organization and Federation, what would you want it to look like?
11. Are you satisfied with the level of interaction between your organization and the Jewish Federation?
12. What is your opinion about the following phrase: “The Jewish Federation is the Central Address for the Jewish Community in Los Angeles”

## Appendix C

### Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

#### Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

##### Welcome!

Hello! This survey explores current perceptions of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles among Orthodox Jews in Los Angeles. The researcher, Melissa Cowen, wants to learn about how the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles might be able to more effectively reach out to the Orthodox segment of the LA Jewish Community.

The thesis project is a requirement for a Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service Degree from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Southern California.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your answers to this survey will remain confidential. No names or other identifying information will be disclosed.

**FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY PLEASE CONTACT:**

Melissa R. Cowen

(818) 517-0624 or melissa.cowen@gmail.com.

Candidate for Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service, Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion (2010)

Candidate for Master of Public Administration, Nonprofit Management from the University of Southern California. (2010)

**TIME INVOLVEMENT:** The survey will take about 10-15 minutes of your time.

**PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS:** Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Richard Siegel, Director of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Communal Service: rsiegel@huc.edu or 3077 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or toll-free at 800-899-0925.

By completing this survey, you give permission for your responses to (anonymously) be included in the study and any published results.

Thank you so much for your time and your feedback!

##### Survey Eligibility

**Would you categorize yourself as either an Orthodox or Traditional Jew?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**Do you currently, or have you in the past 5 years lived in the Greater Los Angeles Area?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

##### Initial Questions about the Jewish Federation

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**Have you ever heard of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

**Please describe your opinions of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles.**

## Giving to the Jewish Federation

**Where does the Federation rank on your list of organizations you chose to support with your charitable contributions?**

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Very Unimportant

**Please describe the amount of the largest contribution you have made to the Jewish Federation's Annual Fund (United Jewish Fund-UJF) in the last 5 years:**

- ☐ \$ 1 - \$ 249
- ☐ \$ 250 - \$ 499
- ☐ \$ 500 - \$ 1,000
- ☐ \$ 1,000 - \$ 10,000
- ☐ \$ 10,000+
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ I have not made a contribution to the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles in the last 5 years.

## Why you Give

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**Please check the statements that best describe why you have contributed to the Jewish Federation in the last 5 years (check all that apply):**

- ☐ I believe in the work the Federation does domestically and overseas
- ☐ The Jewish Federation sustains the Jewish community, and that is important to me
- ☐ The Jewish Federation's work helps others, which is important to me
- ☐ I hope that in giving my money to the Federation, Federation will fund things important to me as an Orthodox Jew
- ☐ I believe it is more powerful to give as a unified Jewish community, than to give individual checks to organizations
- ☐ Please discuss any other reasoning behind your Federation contributions

## Why you don't Give

**Please check the statements that best describe why you have not contributed to the Jewish Federation in the last 5 years (check all that apply):**

- ☐ I have never heard of the Jewish Federation
- ☐ I have never been asked to make a contribution by the Jewish Federation
- ☐ The Jewish Federation is simply not on my top list of charities
- ☐ The Jewish Federation has funding priorities that I do not agree with
- ☐ I choose to support organizations that other Jews will not support, within the Orthodox Community

Please discuss any other reasoning behind not contributing to the Jewish Federation

## Federation's Funding Priorities

**Please discuss how you feel about the Federation's funding priorities to the best of your knowledge:**

## Likelihood of Donating to Federation

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**How likely are you to make a contribution to the Jewish Federation's Annual Campaign in 2010?**

- ☐ Very Likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Not Sure
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very Unlikely

### Other Federation Involvement

**Aside from contributions, please check all the ways you have been involved with the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles in the past 5 years:**

- ☐ I have used the Jewish Federation's online community guide to find information about Jewish organizations in Los Angeles
- ☐ I have used the Jewish Federation's community calendar to find out about a Jewish event in the Los Angeles area
- ☐ I have attended an event sponsored by the Jewish Federation
- ☐ I have volunteered for the Jewish Federation
- ☐ I have served on a board or committee of the Jewish Federation
- ☐ I have utilized a service or agency that was funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
- ☐ I have worked at the Jewish Federation in a professional capacity
- ☐ I have not been involved with anything related to the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles

**If you have worked at the Jewish Federation in a professional capacity, please describe your reasoning:**

- ☐ I consider myself a Jewish Professional and chose the Jewish Federation as a place of employment, accordingly
- ☐ I believe strongly in the mission of the Jewish Federation, and wanted to help carry it out
- ☐ I needed a job and the Federation had an opening
- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify)



## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**In the past 5 years, how often have you used the services of any of the following Federation Beneficiary Agencies?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often
Beit T'Shuvah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bet Tzedek Legal Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) (including the Jewish Community Library and Slavin Family Children's Library)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish Family Services (JFS) (Including Aleinu and SOVA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish Free Loan Association (JFLA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters (JBBS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zimmer Children's Museum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Federation Perceptions

**Do you know anyone who currently works for the Federation in a volunteer or professional capacity?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

**If asked by someone you knew and trusted, how likely would you be to volunteer for the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles:**

- ☐ Very Likely
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Not Sure
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Very Unlikely

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**Please describe how you feel about the following statements:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Federation's Shabbat practices are acceptable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Federation's kashrut practices are acceptable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**In your opinion, how well does the Federation serve your needs as an Orthodox Jew in the Los Angeles Jewish community?**

- ☐ Very Well
- ☐ Well
- ☐ Poorly
- ☐ Very Poorly
- ☐ Not Sure

**Do you have any suggestions for how the Federation could better serve your needs?**

**Please describe how you feel about the following statement:**

**"The Jewish Federation is the Central Address of the Jewish Community in Los Angeles."**

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

## Religious and Demographic Information

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**Please check the designation that most accurately describes your outlook on Judaism:**

- ☐ Modern Orthodox Liberal
- ☐ Modern Orthodox Machmir
- ☐ Yeshivish Modern
- ☐ Yeshivish Black Hat
- ☐ Hassidish
- ☐ Carlbachian
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ None of these labels apply to me

**Are you a Ba'al Tshuvah?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Where do you live?**

- ☐ Pico-Robertson or Beverly Hills
- ☐ Hancock Park or Fairfax
- ☐ Valley Village or Encino
- ☐ Elsewhere in the Greater Los Angeles Area

**What is your gender?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**What is your age?**

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-40
- ☐ 41-65
- ☐ Over 65

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

### Please describe your marital status:

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Engaged
- ☐ Single and actively looking for a spouse
- ☐ Single and not actively looking for a spouse
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

### Please describe your yearly household income, before taxes:

- ☐ I do not currently have an income
- ☐ Under \$ 30,000
- ☐ \$ 30,000 - \$ 50,000
- ☐ \$ 50,001 - \$ 70,000
- ☐ \$ 70,001 - \$ 90,000
- ☐ \$ 90,001- \$ 120,000
- ☐ \$ 120,001- \$ 150,000
- ☐ \$ 150,001- \$ 200,000
- ☐ \$ 200,001- \$ 350,000
- ☐ \$ 350,001 - \$ 500,000
- ☐ Above \$ 500,000

## May I contact you?

**If you found this topic interesting and would be willing to discuss your opinions further in an interview, please provide me with the most convenient way to contact you below.**

**Name:**

**Email Address:**

**Phone Number:**

## Final Comments

## Survey of Perceptions of Federation among LA Orthodox Jews

**Please use this space to share any other feelings, perceptions, or experiences you have about the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.**

### Thank you!

Thank you so much for sharing your opinions and for helping me with my Thesis!!

-Melissa

## **Appendix D**

### **Jewish Federation Funding to Orthodox Social Service Programs 2009-10**

(From a document compiled by Adynna Swarz, Planning and Research Associate)

#### **Chai Lifeline**

Though the Serving the Vulnerable Pillar's Poverty Initiative, funding was given to the West coast branch of Chai Lifeline, a national Jewish non-profit dedicated to helping Jewish families who have children with a life-threatening or chronic illness. The \$18,000 of funding was targeted to one-time emergency grants for families facing a financial as well as a health crisis.

#### **Etta Israel Center (Iranian Division) and Day Camp**

The Etta Israel Center has been a leader in providing services and education to Jews with developmental disabilities such as autism, mental retardation and cerebral palsy. Funding from The Federation's HaMerkaz Special Needs Program is directed at supporting and educating Iranian parents who have children with special needs, along with an Orthodox day camp. In 2009, Etta Israel received \$20,000 in funding.

#### **Friendship Circles of Los Angeles and Conejo Valley**

Both of these independent non-profit organizations provide a variety of programs and services for Jewish families raising a child with special needs and developmental disabilities. Funding from The Federation's HaMerkaz Special Needs Program supports Winter and Summer Day Camps in both the City and Valley, during periods of time when no other Jewish special needs programming is available. A total of \$13,500 was provided to the two Friendship Circles in 2009.

#### **JFS/Aleinu (Counseling for the Orthodox community)**

Specialized counseling services are provided at JFS/Aleinu by licensed mental health professionals and qualified interns who work in strict accordance with *halacha* (Jewish law). This highly respected program provides specialized services in general family problems, family life education, counseling, consultation to day schools and the community; and as well as preventing substance abuse, child abuse and domestic violence. Program funding of \$35,000 was provided in 2009.

#### **JFS/Kosher Food delivered to homes and congregational sites**

The cost of providing *kosher* meals delivered to home and at congregate sites for seniors far exceeds the standard government reimbursement, so the Federation helps to fill that gap through its funding of *kosher* meals, which has increased over the years. In 2009, subsidies for the Hirsh Kitchen and Valley Storefront were \$215,000.

#### **Jewish Free Burial**

Working in coordination with the local Jewish mortuaries, a traditional Jewish burial is accorded to indigent Jews who have no family members. Subsidies from the Federation are matched by the mortuaries from a pool of \$15,000.

**Mt. Zion cemetery maintenance**

Annual allocations are given to maintain this historic Jewish cemetery, now closed. Each year \$23,000 is set aside for grounds maintenance, with some donations from family members.

**Tomchei Shabbos (Touch of Kindness)**

For the past three years, the Jewish Federation has allocated funds to this grassroots organization which provides food for Shabbat (and beyond) for poor and income observant families, along with *kosher* market scrip, Passover subsidies and other financial assistance. Tomchei Shabbos serves more than 1,200 individuals weekly. In 2009, Tomchei Shabbos received \$40,000 from the Federation for food purchases, along with \$80,000 in cash grants for clients adversely impacted by the recession, as well as an additional \$7,200 from the Valley Alliance for food programs in the San Fernando Valley.