CONNECTING CLASSROOMS AND CABINS:

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JEWISH SUMMER CAMPS AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

By

Sarah Magida

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Sarah Magida

Approved By:

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Advisor

_____
Director, SJNM

_____
Director, NYSOE

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Abstract

This paper explores the current, existing relationships between synagogue religious schools and Jewish sleep-away camps. This paper begins with the research regarding the importance of building connections between different parts of the Jewish community in general. In an attempt to show why camps and religious schools are a good place to begin building these connections, the paper then explores research about why both camp and religious school can serve as important venues of Jewish enculturation and identity building.

The paper then moves on to explore two of the existing models of relationships between camps and synagogues: the synagogue-camp model, exemplified by Wilshire Boulevard Temple and its camps, Camp Hess Kramer and Gindling Hilltop Camp, and the Nadiv Program through the Foundation for Jewish Camp, exemplified by Nadiv Educator Sarah Lauing and the partnership between Temple Shaaray Tefila and URJ Crane Lake Camp. Based on interviews, articles, and document review, the paper finds that connections between schools and camps lead to the potential for stronger Jewish identities for participants in both, stronger relationships among staff and children, and higher levels of experiential education at both institutions. Additionally, the paper looks at how these models could be improved or adapted by addressing concerns of synergy, communication, and time management. Finally, I suggest other potential synagogue and camp partnerships that revolve around curriculum and caring for children.

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Introduction

Children at camp often say that they are "living 10 for 2," meaning that the only reason they put up with the 10 months of the school year and going to religious school is so that they can get back to camp for two months. What would it look like if camps were more connected to religious schools? Would kids get just as excited about the other 10 months of their Jewish lives? I am interested in the potential for building bridges between Jewish summer camp and religious school. To that end, this research was designed to find out what models of connection already exist between the two. I am also interested in why there has not been more effort to connect them in the past, and where there is potential to connect them more in the future.

Camp is listed among the most powerful experiences in the formation of Jewish identity on almost every list (Cohen, Miller, Sheskin, & Torr, 2011). Camp[1] is also high on the list of institution-based Jewish experiences that had a strong impact on my Jewish life. At the same time, most young Jews in the liberal Jewish community receive the majority of their Jewish education from synagogue supplementary schools.[2] Knowing these two facts, and reading research about "linking the silos" (Wertheimer, 2005) has led me to see the importance of creating connections between these two venues of Jewish education and identity formation.

Literature Review

It is logical that the more Jewish experiences an individual has, the stronger his/her Jewish identity will be. The research backs this up. As Jack Wertheimer puts it, "a cluster of educational experiences can powerfully reinforce Jewish identification" (2005, p. 2). Allan Finkelstein also cites studies showing that affiliation with more Jewish organizations fosters

[1] This paper focuses on Jewish sleep-away camps, because of the deeply immersive environment that they provide. Wherever the word "camp" is used, it refers to sleep-away camp.
[2] I am using the terms supplementary school and religious school interchangeably.

stronger Jewish identity (2001, p. 88). This is true regardless of other factors such as denomination (Kotler-Berkowitz, 2005). Jonathan Woocher agrees, saying, "the more time on task, the more learning" (1994, p. 22). According to the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA) Conference about linking the silos, "research demonstrates that almost every form of Jewish education produces long-term impact…. Experiences are cumulative and add up" (2008, p. 4). According to Amy Sales and Leonard Saxe:

> research suggests that despite the immediate emotional benefits of a trip to Israel or a summer at camp, no single intervention changes the trajectory of a child's Jewish life. Rather, adult outcomes appear to be linked to an accumulation of positive Jewish experiences…. no single institution can or should be expected to carry the sole responsibility" of socialization. (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 12-13)

The idea that more Jewish experiences lead to stronger Jewish identity is also supported by anecdotal evidence. Dr. Zachary Lasker suggests that when students encounter the same strongly influential person in multiple settings, they see that Jewish identity is not limited to any one setting. Furthermore, people can develop deeper relationships if they encounter one another in multiple settings. He also suggests that there are benefits for both the professionals and the participants. The participants get the best of a good educator in more than one setting, get to know them as people, and see that silos can be broken down, while the professionals get to exercise different skills, get to know a different environment, come to know more about the learners, and are invigorated by a different environment (Lasker, 2014). Wertheimer suggests that educators understand the importance of exposure to a variety of educational formats (2005, p. 8), and JESNA supports this idea with their finding that sending people into other Jewish settings would result in them returning to their initial setting as stronger, more engaged Jews (Jewish Education Service of North America, 2008).

It used to be that family was the main source of Jewish identity building, but modernization has led to a breakdown of traditional, organic communities; more individualism; and the nation-state as the dominant entity to which people are loyal (Woocher, 1994). Therefore, rather than relying on the family as the main source of Jewish education, we must rely on the community (Woocher, 1994). All of this happened towards the end of the twentieth century, when Jewish families became so mainstream and assimilated, that children no longer developed a Jewish identity "through osmosis." As a result, families now rely on the community to socialize children through synagogues, day schools, and camps (Sales & Saxe, 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, today's Judaism is characterized by choice, diversity, and blurred boundaries (Woocher, Woocher, & Ross, 2008), and therefore we need to think about the "totality of community as a system that impacts the Jewish journey of the individual" (Finkelstein, 2001).

Today, people are looking to be individuals, and yet, at the same time, they are looking to connect to others (Woocher, Woocher, & Ross, 2008). This leads to the idea of networks where there is room for customization and individuality is celebrated (Herring, 2001). Alan Silverstein suggests a slightly different paradigm of individualism. He borrows from Franz Rosenzweig and says that we should think of each Jew as somewhere on the ladder of commitment. These ladders have three different elements—heart, head, and hand. Heart is spiritual concerns such as prayer and ritual; head is learning such as books, values, ideas, and wisdom; and hand refers to deeds of loving kindness or working for institutions. Each of these areas is more, or less, inspiring at different times, but it is the job of Jewish professionals to help people move up the ladder at their own pace (Silverstein, 2001, p. 82). Woocher and Wertheimer suggest that there need to be many different communities to engage different people at different stages and that parents look for the

option that is the best fit for their individual child, recognizing that different things will fit different children at different times (Woocher, 1994, p. 19; Wertheimer, 2005, p. 7).

Jewish organizations need to work to create links between organizations, between individuals, and between organizations and individuals. In the educational realm, Wertheimer explains that we need to find ways of building "institutional linkages between various formal and informal educational programs, between families and schools, between educators in various venues, [and] between the key communal agencies engaged in support of Jewish education" (2005, p. 2). If we can link the silos so that organizations are cooperating, learners will benefit and families will be better able to negotiate the variety of educational options available (Wertheimer, 2005). JESNA suggested that these links would need to connect vertically through different ages and stages (Jewish Education Service of North America, 2008). However, Wertheimer suggests that the links need to be provided both vertically (through ages and stages) and horizontally (across organizations) (2005, pp. 31-32). In order to do this, we must foster "'synergies and smooth handoffs' so that Jewish education is experienced as a whole (journey) greater than the sum of its parts" (Woocher, Woocher, & Ross, 2008). To accomplish this, different elements of the community need to feed data and individuals to each other (Finkelstein, 2001).

This idea requires strong relationships between individuals. According to Nachama S. Moskowitz, we need to help find a way for people to connect with one another (Moskowitz, 2007). The JESNA Conference also found that people and the relationships between them will play a key role in linking the silos. This will lead to conversations, which in turn will lead to shared values and shared language (Jewish Education Service of North America, 2008). It is up to leading Jewish professionals to foster opportunities for collaboration among educators. In addition, there also need to be strong relationships between learners and educators. Educators

will need to trust that the learners will make choices to help build their Jewish identity, and learners will need to trust that educators will guide them to appropriate opportunities (Woocher, Woocher, & Ross, 2008).

There are several challenges to achieving this variety and connection. The JESNA Conference suggested that the greatest difficulties in creating a more linked environment would be the question of who would be responsible for linking the silos, the "our program" mentality, and the competitive environment (Jewish Education Service of North America, 2008). Woocher also addresses the pervasive protectiveness that people in the Jewish community feel when he discusses Mordechai Kaplan's idea of a community of communities. Woocher says that "Turf and the perception of destructive competition are realities in Jewish organizational life," and that "pragmatically, we will need not just the involvement of multiple institutions, but their collaboration and mutual support…" (1994, p. 45).

This leads to the second difficulty—the question of autonomy versus dependence. Woocher suggests that responding to this challenge will allow the Jewish community to "take maximum advantage of the full (though limited) array of resources, do together those things that can best be done in concert, and still give each institution the freedom to pursue its own vision of what Jewish community can and should be" (1994, p. 46). According to Finkelstein, we speak the language of community and unity, but we still act on the ideas of silos and competition (2001, p. 86).

This leads to the third main challenge—the language that we use is limiting. Rabbi Hayim Herring talks about the fact that organizations are looked at through the lens of metaphors. He points out that Daniel Elazar suggested the magnet metaphor for the Jewish community, because according to Elazar, the core of very engaged Jews pulls the less engaged

Jews into the community. According to Herring, however, this metaphor is limited in that it only provides one lens, it is polarizing and judgmental, it misses patterns of geographic mobility, it does not address generational differences, and it ignores the context of life beyond the periphery (Herring, 2001).

Herring suggests that we think about a new metaphor to help combat this challenge. He prefers using the image of a network with nodes and links of vibrant activity. For Herring, this highlights the key characteristic of mutual, as opposed to individual, interest. According to his definition, a network is "at least two organizations that, while retaining their autonomy and identity, agree to work together to provide a higher level of service to an identified constituency than they can provide individually" (2001, p. 20). He suggests that these organizations use a lot of real-time communication, have clarity of purpose, see technology as a means to an end, and that their members have a variety of specialties and collaborate often (Herring, 2001).

The ideal situation would be to build relationships throughout the Jewish community, but all of these challenges show that creating connections will be a difficult process, especially on the large scale of the whole Jewish community. Instead of trying to change the whole community, we need to start small. One place that researchers are thinking about beginning to build these connections is between Jewish summer camps and religious schools. In *Limud by the Lake Revisited*, for example, researchers argue that:

> closer ties between camp and other arms of the educational system may be valuable at the level of idea generation, curriculum planning, and program development. Such a connection can be especially important to the denominational camps, whose mission is not only to socialize children as Jews but as Jews who understand and appreciate the perspective of the movement and are being groomed for its future leadership. (Sales, Samuel, & Boxer, 2011, p. 29)

These two areas make sense for a variety of specific reasons as well. Camp has a strong impact on future Jewish expression. Alumni of Jewish camps are 50% more likely to join a synagogue

than those who did not attend Jewish summer camp (Foundation for Jewish Camp, 2007). This is because of the magic of camp: camp is an immersive setting where community is easily built and campers are given experiences where they can comfortably try on new behaviors.

Camp is an environment where everything is enclosed and therefore can be controlled. It is also a 24/7 environment where there is "continuous interaction among campers and between campers and staff" (Sales & Saxe, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, at Jewish camps, being Jewish is just part of the air. Judaism is part of the environment of camp—there are religious symbols; names of many buildings, activities, units, etc., are in Hebrew, or Hebrew is spoken at camp, though these sometimes send mixed messages because the Hebrew may not be precise (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 91-95).

Regardless of the mixed messages, this enclosed 24/7 setting allows community to form virtually overnight because of the close quarters and the fact that campers and staff do everything together. Camps also have strong cultures and deeply entrenched traditions, which help to quickly bring people into the community (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 47-50). At camp, "community is both the source and product of Jewish life" (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 5-6).

This community aspect allows campers to try on new behaviors because camps put up barriers to the outside world, thereby quickly creating safe, fun environments that allow for experimentation (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 15-16, 45, 47). Additionally, there are moments when children are more open to learning and counselors can serve as role models, giving campers the opportunity to try on behaviors that they would not otherwise try (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 69-72). Furthermore, campers are able to learn and feel good about what they learn, have a direct experience to help them learn it, be exposed repeatedly to the learning, and reflect on their experiences and learning (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 13-14).

Because of this magic of camp there are many differences between the impact of religious school and camp. The 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey found that "attending Jewish overnight camp positively impacts rates of in-marriage, synagogue affiliation, ritual activity and attachment to Israel—leaving a much stronger impression than up to six years of religious school" (Fax, 2006). The main differences between camp and religious school are the community aspect and the relationship between students and teachers.

> With rare exceptions, religious schools pay scant attention to community building and group bonding, and offer few opportunities in which these might occur spontaneously.… Supplementary religious schools are 'adult environments,' located in the synagogue that the parents (not the children) have joined. (Sales & Saxe, 2004, p. 49)

Additionally, learning at camp is focused on the relationships between the campers and the counselors, who do everything together, while at school the relationship between students and teachers is much more hierarchical and the focus is on the content (Sales & Saxe, 2004, pp. 68-69). Saxe and Sales also suggest that camps are voluntary in a way that schools are not, and therefore they have an open and relaxed attitude that does not easily translate to religious school (2004, p. 63). Additionally, religious school does not have a reputation of being fun (Sales & Saxe, 2004, p. 9). All of this means that even when parents send unwilling children to camp, the reluctance does not last because of the fun that pervades the environment.

This sounds like bad news for religious schools, but the truth is that camps reach a much smaller and more elite portion of the Jewish community than do religious schools. In 2001, 35% of Jewish children between the ages of eight and seventeen attended or worked at Jewish summer camp (Kotler-Berkowitz, 2005). In the 2011 report *Limud by the Lake Revisited*, researchers suggest that camps only serve about ten percent of the population of Jewish youngsters. Furthermore, the children who attend camp come from "elite" Jewish families—

families that are already deeply involved in other aspects of Jewish life. Because camps only reach a very particular cross section of the community, there are many initiatives to "expand the reach of camp by increasing the number of Jewish youth participating in a Jewish summer camp experience" (Sales, Samuel, & Boxer, 2011, p. 23).

Religious school, on the other hand, is where the majority of young Jews receive their Jewish education. According to the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey, 72% of Jewish children in America, ages 6-17, were, at the time, enrolled in formal schooling. While this number includes supplementary schools that meet one or more days a week as well as day schools, most students are not enrolled in day schools. 27% of students are enrolled in day schools, while 42% of students are enrolled in some sort of supplementary school. Supplementary schools are where a large percentage of our students receive the bulk of their Jewish education (Kotler-Berkowitz, 2005).

All of this research speaks to the importance of building relationships and connections between religious schools and camps. There are a variety of organizations that are already doing this type of connected work. There are synagogues that run their own camps. The Foundation for Jewish Camp has a program called Nadiv in which educators are hired to serve both camps and schools (either synagogue schools or day schools). There are other examples as well, but these tend to be more perfunctory, so I have chosen to focus on the synagogue-camp model and the Nadiv model.

In looking at these models, I wanted to understand how the connection has been successfully built between these two types of organizations and where there is room to improve this connection. To this end, my research questions included: what methods are currently being

used to link camps and synagogues? What are the goals of those methods? How effective are they? What are their challenges?

Methodology

In order to understand the synagogue-camp model and the Nadiv program, I have chosen to focus on these two models in general and one example of each of these models. Clearly, each of the examples that I have chosen is not completely representative of the model on the whole, but it will present one idea of what the model looks like.

For the synagogue-camp model, the example that I chose to use is Wilshire Boulevard Temple and its camps, Hess Kramer and Gindling Hilltop. This example was chosen because I had access to the camps and was able to observe a morning at Hess Kramer. I also had a connection to the camp through the director. In addition to observing camp, I interviewed the director of the religious school, the camp director, and one of the rabbis who works both at the camp and the religious school. I also examined the curriculum for the religious school and a lesson plan for camp the day that I observed.

For the Nadiv program, I interviewed the Program Manager of Nadiv, who was brought on to lead the project after it had begun, so everything that he shared about the initial stages were his understanding, and not first-hand experience. I also looked at two outside reports documenting the early history, successes, and challenges of the program. These reports were put out by an independent reviewing agency called BTW Informing Change. They were brought on in early 2012 as an evaluation partner (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 10). To get a more specific idea of how the Nadiv Program runs, I looked at one example for this model—the relationship between Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Crane Lake Camp and Temple Shaaray

Tefila of New York City. I spoke to Sarah Lauing, the Nadiv educator working in this partnership, as well as the directors of the religious school and camp in this partnership, Mindy Davids of Temple Shaaray Tefila and Debby Shriber of URJ Crane Lake Camp.

Findings

Wilshire Boulevard Temple

In the model of synagogue-camps, there will always be some connection between what happens at the synagogue and religious school and what happens at the camp—the two institutions are part of the same organization. However, there is very little research on this type of organization, so most of the research was my own original work, and I was unable to compare my findings to those of other scholars. At Wilshire Boulevard Temple (WBT), I looked for cohesion in the staffing, the curriculum, and the interactions between the two parts of the organization.

History and Structure

The first summer camp was established in America in 1861 (Krimsky, n.d.). The following year, Congregation B'nai B'rith was established in Los Angeles—this synagogue later became Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, n.d.). The first Jewish summer camp was established in 1914 (Hurwitz, 1999, p. 34), but it was not until the 1950s, 60s, and 70s that Jewish camping reached its height (Slutsky, 2007). Camp Hess Kramer, the first of the two Wilshire Boulevard Temple Camps, was established in 1952 and seventeen years later Gindling Hilltop Camp was established (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, n.d.).

The religious school and camps are two very separate parts of Wilshire Boulevard Temple. There are some staff members who work at the camps and also teach in the religious school, including Rabbi David Eshel, who is one of the rabbis at the synagogue and also serves as camp rabbi. There are also monthly meetings between Rabbi Bruce Raff (Head of Religious School), Doug Lynn (Camp Director), and the head of the Day School at WBT.[3] There is some attempt to connect the two branches of the organization, despite the fact that only ten percent of the campers at both Hess Kramer and Gindling Hilltop are students at Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

Rabbi Raff works with Rabbi Rochelle Tulik and Cathy Gordon, the principals of the Religious School, to write the religious school curriculum. According to Rabbi Raff, there is a three-year cycle through God, Torah, and Israel. Teachers are given pacing guides to help them determine where they should be, though according to Rabbi Eshel, who teaches in the religious school, teachers are also given the freedom to move within this structure.

I was able to examine these pacing guides, and they indicate that there is an emphasis on holidays, Hebrew, art, and music. For example, art and music are taught in all grades from kindergarten through sixth grade, and Hebrew is taught in kindergarten and then from third through sixth grades. Holidays are also taught in all grades from kindergarten through sixth grade, but there is no set curriculum after second grade. In third grade the teachers are simply encouraged to talk about the holidays from the perspective of "why, not how."

Israel and God only appear in the pacing guides once each, in third and fourth grades respectively. Torah, conceived widely as including Prophets, etc., is in the curriculum in first, fourth, and fifth grades. Additionally, there are two topics which were not mentioned by either of

[3] While Wilshire Boulevard Temple has a day school, I have chosen to focus on the religious school and the camp for the reasons listed above.

the rabbis in my interviews, but which, according to the pacing guides, are taught. One is history, which is part of the sixth grade curriculum. The other is values, and when I saw how often values come up in the pacing guide, I was surprised that it was not mentioned as a core idea that they teach. It is taught in kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade, and there is a curriculum about heroes in sixth grade, titled "Jewish Heroes Jewish Values."

At camp, Rabbi Eshel is the main designer of this curriculum, but Doug is ultimately responsible for everything that happens. Rabbi Eshel has help from the seasonal educators in creating the curriculum, because they like to make it their own. The program is a spiral design through God, Torah, and Israel. Each summer one of these three topics is the theme, and they rotate through them and build on what was done in the past in such a way that from third through tenth grade students will not see the same program twice. There is also additional Israel programming throughout the summer for all campers, no matter what the main theme of the summer is. The camp used to run age-specific programming, but that system meant that education was compartmentalized and could not be brought into all-camp programs or into meals, *t'filah*, or other all-camp elements of the programs, as Rabbi Eshel explained.

Successful Connections

There is an informal overlap between the two branches of the synagogue from a staff and participant perspective. Rabbi Eshel said that he has a different and stronger relationship with kids who are at both the camps and the synagogue than kids who only participate in one of these areas. On the other hand, Rabbi Raff and his staff spend several days each summer up at the camps interacting with the campers. Additionally, there are a lot of former campers who work in the religious school and vice versa, but this is not a formalized connection.

There is an effort to begin moving toward more intentional and formal cohesion between the programs. According to Rabbi Raff, in order to move towards this model, Rabbi Raff, Doug, and the director of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple day school sit down once a month to check in with one another. According to Doug, much of this effort stemmed from a visioning and strategic planning process that the temple went through recently. The fact that the leadership is thinking about the connection is a good first step and an important success. All three of these leaders are clearly on board with the idea that there should be a strong relationship between the camp and the religious schools.

Another success is that the approach to education seems to be similar in both sides of the organization. Both Rabbi Raff and Rabbi Eshel spoke about the importance of experiential education, of trying things out and having fun with the experiences. Additionally, in both places there is someone who writes the curriculum, but the people who implement it are given a fair amount of leeway to make it their own. These similarities in approach will provide a great foundation as WBT moves towards a clearer connection with its camps.

Challenges to Connection

Given that this effort to build cohesion is so new, the main challenge is that it is unclear what the relationship will or should look like going forward. To date, according to Doug, the only formal overlap is that Rabbi Eshel teaches in the religious school and is privy to conversations with Rabbi Raff; however there is no direct consideration of the religious school in the creation of the camp curriculum or vice versa. Perhaps this is because such a small percentage of campers are students at Wilshire Boulevard Temple. Additionally, while both sides of the organization talk about God, Torah, and Israel as the themes that they teach (a potential

starting point for building more of an intentional relationship) the pacing guides from the religious school show that there are many other topics that are also important to religious school.

Furthermore, Rabbi Eshel pointed out that the group only began talking about cohesion in the last few years since Rabbi Raff joined the team and that the conversation so far has mostly been an agreement that there should be more cohesion. According to Rabbi Raff, they have not really looked at the big picture of how the different departments are interconnected, though they hope to begin looking at that in the future.

Both Rabbi Eshel and Doug reported two possibilities that have been discussed for what this greater level of curricular cohesion might look like. The goal would be to use camp to either prepare students for what is coming up in religious school the following year, or to reinforce and review at camp what kids learned the previous year in religious school. According to Doug, they believe that doing just one of these things would be a cleaner and easier process, thereby clearly demarcating the years. If they are going to try to follow this model, there will need to be more clarity in the themes that are taught in each setting and whether or not they actually overlap.

Additionally, Rabbi Eshel spoke about why they are not considering bringing a camp model into the religious school, saying that he believes that camp-style programming at religious school misses the mark. This is because one hour at camp is connected to what happens during the other 23 hours in the day, while even one hour at religious school is divided among a variety of different areas and topics.

All of these challenges suggest that there is a lot of room for improvement, and some suggestions will be made below, but it is also clear that some impressive and important things have come out of the fact that both the camps and the religious schools are a part of the same larger institution.

Nadiv Program

This program connects Jewish camps to Jewish day schools or synagogue schools. Partnerships like this, between separate schools and camps, were initially built as business models to share the cost of year-round educators (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 3). The funders of the Nadiv program chose to focus on the educator, and not on the curriculum, because curriculum is not really a term that is used in the camp setting. Furthermore, according to both Rabbi Ramie Arian and the BTW Informing Change report, while the Foundation for Jewish Camp can take responsibility for overseeing Nadiv on the camp side, there is no overarching organization or body on the school side with curricular oversight, so focusing on curriculum would not have made sense from a structural perspective (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 3; Arian, 2014). The funders did hope that the program would, in addition to setting up a model for cost sharing, increase camper enrollment and improve the quality of experiential education at schools (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 3).

History and Structure

The idea of creating a model with a full-time educator is not new. People have been thinking about this type of model for a while, and they have been doing it informally for a long time as well. For example, Rabbi Arian pointed out that the Leo Baeck Day School and URJ Camp George hired a joint educator on their own, before this program began. This partnership and the Legacy Heritage Foundation camp-synagogue partnership served as models for the Nadiv program (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 3).

The original idea for the Nadiv program was conceived in 2002 by the camping bodies of the Reform and Conservative movements, but when they presented the idea to the Jim Joseph

Foundation, the timing was off, and the proposal was rejected (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 2; Arian, 2014). Later, after the Jim Joseph Foundation came under new management, the URJ reintroduced the proposal on a recommendation from the AVI CHAI Foundation. This time, the Jim Joseph Foundation accepted the proposal on the condition that the program be opened up beyond just the Reform Movement, so they brought the Foundation for Jewish Camp in to oversee the project (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 2; Arian, 2014).

Despite questions about the long-term sustainability of the program, the grant became official in March 2011. At this time, in order to provide guidance in areas such as job descriptions for the educators and the development of the community of practice, an Advisory Council was created. The Advisory Council includes representatives from congregational schools and day schools as well as representatives from intermediary organizations such as the Jewish Education Project and RAVSAK (a network of Jewish day schools). However, there are no funders on the Advisory Council (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 3). Shortly after the Advisory Council was formed, Rabbi Ramie Arian was brought on as the Project Manager (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 5).

The next step was to build the partnerships. Camps were selected first through a closed process designed to facilitate a successful pilot. The Advisory Council, funders, and Program Manager spoke to the directors of potential camps and visited the camps. They considered fourteen camps and narrowed them down to six. Then the schools were chosen through a decentralized process, and in five out of the six cases, the camps initiated the partnerships. Through the closed process, the group specifically tried to pilot the program with both day and supplementary schools, community and denominational camps, and across a wide geographic area in order to see where it would work best. The Foundation for Jewish Camp and the URJ

played a behind-the-scenes role in building the partnerships and with the hiring process, which was also decentralized. For example, the Foundation for Jewish Camp crafted a job description, the Advisory Council vetted it, and each partnership adapted it to fit their specific needs (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, pp. 4-8).

The hiring was completed by mid-June 2012, and summer 2012 was the first summer with the educators at camp. The first community of practice meeting was held that first summer, in July 2012, and the first in-person community of practice meeting was scheduled for November 2012 (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, pp. 11-12). At the time that I am researching and writing this paper, the program is just past its midpoint, so the outside evaluator is expected to report on the progress again soon, but there have been some strong successes and some challenges that have arisen both from the initial report and from anecdotal evidence.

The funders designed the program with an even-stepped, cascading funding model in which the they paid for 100% of the program in its first year, 80% in its second year, and so on, decreasing the funding by 20% of the original amount over each of the five years of the program. In order to help clarify the legal and human resource issues about time and cost sharing within the partnerships, every partnership created a memorandum of understanding. In five of the partnerships there is a 50-50 sharing, with the camp as the employer of record. In the sixth partnership there is a 62-38 divide with the main focus on the school, which is the employer of record (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, pp. 6-9).

In the end there were four structures of partnerships—independent camps/day schools (Herzl Camp/Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School and Camp Mountain Chai/San Diego Jewish Academy), Young Judaea camps/day schools (Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake/Solomon Schechter Day School of Bergen County), URJ camps/day schools (URJ Camp

Coleman/Davis Academy), and URJ camps/congregational schools (URJ Crane Lake Camp/Temple Shaaray Tefila and URJ Camp Kalsman/Temple De Hirsch Sinai). These partnerships are also geographically diverse—ranging from San Diego to Seattle to Minneapolis to Atlanta to the Northeast (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 1).

Both Rabbi Arian and BTW Informing Change reported that from the outset, the program had three main goals—enhancing the educational seriousness at camps, bringing experiential education to schools, and building synergy to enhance both institutions and create a mutually beneficial partnership (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 1). In addition to the goals of the funders, there were four main themes that came out in terms of why people participated in the pilot program. They wanted to improve the quality of Jewish education in general and experiential Jewish education in particular; they were excited about the whole-child approach and the opportunity for institutional collaboration; they liked the idea of consistency in Jewish education that otherwise would not exist, especially for the camps; and they wanted to be part of an innovative experiment (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 2). They also highly valued the independence to build unique partnerships (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 4).

Debby Shriber was excited for the first and the last of these reasons. She spoke about the importance of having an innovative educator who could focus on Jewish education and who could rewrite and modernize the camp curriculum and begin to change campers' attitudes. Mindy Davids suggested that she was excited about the first and second of these reasons, saying that she was able to hire a higher caliber of educator thanks to this program and that Temple Shaaray Tefila has a strong connection to the idea of Jewish camping, but does not send a lot of students to camp despite having the financial resources to do so. Interestingly, Mindy also said that for her, funding was a very big draw because she was able to jumpstart programs that were in

existence but needed to be revitalized. Finally, Sarah Lauing was excited for the first and second reasons given above. She spoke about the idea of creating synergy between camp and a congregation and her belief that a full-time camp educator is really important. She was most excited, however, about creating camp-like programming in the congregation and recruiting for camp in the congregation. Rabbi Arian suggested that he was interested in joining the program for the fourth reason. He said that philosophically, it is clear that camp is a powerful Jewish educational venue, but camp professionals do not use this type of language, even if this is really what they mean. On the other hand, school is also a good venue for Jewish education, but people think that it is boring.

Successful Connections

Each of the partnerships has had its own unique successes and challenges, but there are also some common themes across all of the different partnerships. One of the main successes has been the longevity of the educators and therefore their ability to build relationships with colleagues, campers, and students. All six camps had the same senior-level educator for three summers in a row, while five out of six are expected to have the same senior level educator for four summers in a row at the end of next summer. Additionally, these educators are thinking about camp year round, an idea that is spreading throughout the URJ. For example, Debby Shriber, who works at URJ Crane Lake Camp, described the great strides that she has seen in the quality of Jewish education at camp. She said that Sarah Lauing (the Nadiv educator) has "given the face of Jewish life at CL … a whole facelift …she's had the ability and time to focus on it in a way that we've never been able to have anyone do before, so I really believe that she's the director of Jewish life."

Sarah described two of the innovations that she has brought to camp. The first is what they call "blowout programs." These are all-camp programs that take place for an extended time and involve role-playing and reenactments. These programs involve more resources, time, and energy to create, and they put the campers in the experience that they are learning about, thereby creating a greater impact. The second innovation has to do with the way that faculty are integrated. Beginning in eighth grade, campers are asked in advance what they want to learn, and faculty are pushed to teach innovative content creatively, for example teaching Israel through film. Debby talked about a third innovation—Sarah has introduced values of the week and a travelling *midot* [values] program. In this program, *limud* [the hour of learning each day] is brought to other activity areas at camp. The success of this program was exemplified by a story about two girls who said, "Uch, when are we going to *limud* today?" Their counselor said, "You just had *limud*." The girls were so surprised because they had been in a different activity area—they just thought they were in programming and were actively involved.

Mindy, who works at Temple Shaaray Tefila, also sees the advantage in the longevity, saying that she appreciates that because she has been around for a few years, Sarah is able to anticipate how people will respond to the programs, and this has transformed the experiential programming at the temple by molding the program based on the feedback and built a community of families in the MASA Family Program. Sarah recognizes this too—for her the greatest successes have been in building relationships and raising the level of Jewish education at both institutions. These great relationships exist with the campers, the staff members, the students, and the directors. Debby also spoke about the fact that she has a great relationship with both Mindy and Sarah.

At the schools, some of the educators have been able to do some new and different things because of the relationships that they have built and the experiences that they have had at camp. For example, Rabbi Arian shared that the Nadiv educator at Davis Academy was able to introduce her students to a deaf rabbi who she knew from camp. She connected the school trip to the Paperclips Museum and ideas about the Holocaust to modern times by discussing ideas of inclusivity of disabilities. At another day school, the Nadiv educator is working to build community in the day school through the introduction of camp-style Maccabiah competition (though at the time I conducted my interviews this had not yet been implemented), and at one camp they have published programs written by the Nadiv educator under joint branding to help other schools served by the camp that have fewer resources. Another important success came through the community of practice which was helpful in providing mutual support and learning as well as an opportunity to think about integrating the two different roles that the Nadiv educators have (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 6).

All of these benefits were things that the funders had hoped for, but there were some unanticipated benefits as well. Rabbi Arian spoke about the fact that from the first summer to the second, all six camps saw an increase in the number of campers from the partner schools. They are hoping for a reciprocal increase in school enrollment but expect that this will be much smaller. Mindy said that she sees having a strong camp presence in the synagogue to help with recruitment as one of the greatest successes of the program. According to Rabbi Arian, retreat programs have also been an unanticipated benefit. In some cases, schools added retreats at the partner camps when they had not had retreats at all in the past, while in other cases schools moved their retreats from other venues to the partner camp.

Finally, Rabbi Arian said that the funders felt they have succeeded in their desire to see how different models would play out. There are three Reform Movement partnerships and three community partnerships. At the URJ camps there is more curricular design and education as well as more support from visiting rabbis, while at the community camps the Nadiv educator is the main educator for the camps. There are four day school partnerships and two congregational school partnerships. Both of the congregations are large congregations where the Nadiv educator runs a large part of the program. At the day schools, there are two educators who are mostly classroom teachers, and there are two Nadiv educators who are not in the classroom at all but are responsible for all-school activities and experiential education. Also, at the day schools, the Nadiv educators are not supervisors, and this represents another element of variety.

Challenges to Connection

Despite looking at a variety of models, the funders were clear that they wanted to work within camps and schools. Therefore, some camps were not chosen because they were looking to partner with non-school organizations such as JCCs, while other camps were not chosen because of timing. There were also some camps that were chosen but did not participate in the end due to an inability to find partner schools (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, pp. 4-6). Rabbi Arian also pointed out that there were some camps that could not participate because the program was so expensive—at some camps the Nadiv educator would have been making more than the camp director. Additionally, there is a discrepancy in the salary of camp staff and religious school staff—camp assistant directors are paid about half of what religious school educators make with benefits after being in the field for about five years. Debby pointed out that the Nadiv educator is

paid at the synagogue rate, which is higher than the camp rate. This is also problematic because the Nadiv educator is not really full time at either organization.

There were concerns on the school side as well. Many schools also worried about the high cost of the program (Mindy also referred to this as a challenge). Additionally, much of the early material about the grant focused on the camps and the benefits to them (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, pp. 6-9). Because of this, some of the schools were initially unsure of the potential added value that the program could provide for them (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 4).

Once the program was past the initial phase of building partnerships, there were three difficulties that arose in the hiring process. First, while the goal was to recruit at a variety of national events, some of these events occurred before the partnerships had been finalized (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 3). Second, many of the applicants were less senior than funders and partners had initially anticipated. Finally, applicants applied to specific partnerships and could apply to more than one partnership, which caused a few problems between different partnerships, who wanted to hire the same educator (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 9).

Another challenge stemmed from a misunderstanding. According to Rabbi Arian, the partners believed that the first year of the program began once the educators had been hired and began working, but the funders considered the year of planning to be the first year of the program. Because of this confusion the second year was shifted from 80% coverage by the funders to 90% coverage, and then the third year went back to the original plan with 60% coverage by the funders (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 8).

There were a few minor challenges that arose after the program implementation began. For example, there is a lot of inconsistency in how successful the Nadiv educators are in bringing

experiential education into the schools. This is due to the fact that the degree of success in this area is largely dependent on the receptivity of the schools, and while some of the schools are supportive of this effort, others are less supportive. Additionally, the partners and educators would have liked more clarity and more communication regarding the expectations from the beginning (BTW Informing Change, 2012a, p. 6). Furthermore, according to Rabbi Arian, the Nadiv educator in one of the partnerships resigned, and the school then dropped out of the partnership. The camp was still looking for a new school partner at the time that this was written.

Ultimately, though, it seems that the two greatest challenges are negotiating the time of the Nadiv educator and building synergy between the organizations. The partners and educator negotiate the time themselves according to the memorandum of understanding, though for most of the partnerships the educators are at camp 100% of the time during the summer and one day a week during the school year and spend the other four days during the school-year workweek at the school. Debby pointed to the difficulty of getting work done with any momentum in just one day a week. On the other hand, Rabbi Arian said that May, when schools have big end-of-the-year programs and camps are gearing up, is the main time that this difficulty arises. While the fall tends to be a bit better, the Nadiv educators return to school exhausted from the summer while their colleagues tend to return well rested.

While many schools try to be generous to the Nadiv educators, there can be human resource or union concerns that arise from the time constraints that they face. For example, in some cases other teachers at the school do not fully understand the nature of the position of the Nadiv educator and complain that it is unfair for the Nadiv educator to get what they perceive as preferential treatment. They do not always understand that the Nadiv educator was at a

conference during a school break and at camp during the summer and not on vacation like the other teachers.

Even when other teachers are not complaining about this, often being away presents challenges to the Nadiv educators and the institutions for which they work. For example, Sarah said she felt like she was always missing something from one institution when she was working for the other. Even though both Mindy and Debby are very understanding, Sarah said it can be difficult. She also said that it seemed to her that the program was trying to accomplish too many goals and that this added to the time constraints. Mindy described the challenge as trying to make one plus one equal three, saying that when the Nadiv educator takes time from one organization to do work for the other, the supervisor loses out on that work time, but the Nadiv educator has still been working. Additionally, Mindy suggested that the deal favors the synagogue because the Nadiv educator spends the majority of his/her time there but the cost is split evenly.

In terms of building synergy, Sarah said that she felt that the definition of synergy was unclear. She talked about doing two very different things at the two institutions and therefore needing to readjust her understanding of what synergy meant. Another challenge in this area is that it is difficult to get the directors of the two different programs in the same room. Rabbi Arian said that when he conducts site visits, he requires the director of the partner program attend. Because of this difficulty, when the six educators, camp directors, school directors, a few funders, and a few key people from the Foundation for Jewish Camp came together in October 2014, they focused on this idea of synergy and found ways to set up more regular check-ins.[4]

Another challenge regarding synergy stems from the fact that the camps serve many congregations. For example, both Mindy and Debby pointed out that URJ Crane Lake Camp

[4] I conducted my interviews in the lead-up to this meeting, so I do not know how successful they were or what plans they came away with.

serves 180 congregations and Temple Shaaray Tefila is just one. This means that the camp cannot invest time and energy creating synergy with just this one synagogue. According to Mindy, Temple Shaaray Tefila's specific challenge lies in the fact that they also receive a Camp Connect grant from the Foundation for Jewish Camp. This grant has the goal of recruiting for all Jewish camps, which has complicated the Nadiv goal of recruiting for URJ Crane Lake Camp.

Each institution also faces its own independent challenges. For example, according to Debby, URJ Crane Lake Camp used to be a private camp (2015 will mark its 18th summer as a URJ camp), and as a result, there is a history of antipathy towards the Jewish elements of camp. Sarah has begun to change that, but it has been a struggle. According to Mindy, someone else at Temple Shaaray Tefila was already doing camp recruitment work, and Sarah needed to navigate that responsibility with the other person. In the end they decided that Sarah would organize the camp ambassadors from URJ Crane Lake Camp and the other person would still own other elements of recruitment.

Future of the Programs

Despite all of the challenges that have arisen, the funders are hoping that the Nadiv program will continue beyond June 30, 2016, when the financial commitment reaches its end. They also hope that this program will inspire other partnerships in the field (BTW Informing Change, 2012b, p. 1). The partnership between Temple Shaaray Tefila and URJ Crane Lake Camp is representative in that the participants say that they would be willing to continue under certain circumstances. Debby said that she is committed to Sarah and to what she has done, but that she is not necessarily committed to the model. Mindy said that she would be interested in

continuing the program under the current circumstances, though it seemed that she would not be interested in continuing the partnership if the circumstances were to change.

At this time, it is more likely that the model will move forward in other permutations, which will likely be less expensive, than that it will continue or expand under the current model. For these reasons, Rabbi Arian suggests that the program is probably adaptable, but not replicable. The Wilshire Boulevard Temple model is still evolving, and as it continues to move forward, the leaders of both branches will need to consider the past successes and challenges in the decisions that they make.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research shows that the more Jewish experiences an individual has, the stronger his/her Jewish identity will be because they will have the opportunity to see that Jewish identity does not exist in only one setting. This notion can be applied to the children who attend both religious school and camp at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, as well as the members of Temple Shaaray Tefila who also attend URJ Crane Lake Camp. These individuals have a stronger relationship with the staff members involved in the partnerships and may be more likely to attend programs at the synagogues. The research also shows that different people seek different Jewish experiences at different stages in their lives. If these experiences are linked, people will have an easier time moving between areas. Both at WBT and at Temple Shaaray Tefila, there were a few examples of people who joined one program because of their relationship with a staff member from the other program.

There are benefits to the individuals who attend both the camp and the synagogue in these partnerships, but there are benefits for the organizations as well. Both of the partnership

models build strong relationships among the staff members at both types of organizations, as well as between these staff members and the campers/students. Additionally, in both models there is a high-level educator thinking about camp year-round. For the synagogue-camp model, another success has been the ongoing communication between the two branches of the organization. For Nadiv, other successes include the longevity of the educators and the high level of education, especially experiential education, at both types of institutions.

While these models are great, they are not perfect. Both models also faced the challenge of having and expressing a clear understanding of where they are going with the partnership, and doing this from the very beginning. In both models, synergy was another great obstacle. There are only a small percentage of students who participate in both sides of the programs. In the synagogue-camp model there were different themes in the camp curriculum and the school curriculum, though the leadership suggested that the themes were more similar than the pacing guides suggested. In the Nadiv model the concern with synergy had to do with the leadership of the two organizations coming together and thinking about what was happening at the partner organization.

This is an area where I believe that the Nadiv program could learn from the Wilshire Boulevard Temple model. Despite the fact that the leadership at WBT suggested that the curricula were closer than they seem to be, the fact that they sit down and meet once a month to discuss things that impact both of them and to check in with one another is a very valuable practice. The Nadiv leaders only meet in person two or three times a year, and I believe that it would help them manage the synergy as well as the time constraints on the Nadiv Educator if they met more regularly.

The Nadiv model also faces several other challenges. It is very expensive and will only become more expensive as the outside funding lessens. It is also unclear if there is equal benefit for the two sides of the partnership. Finally, because the partnership involves staffing, time management will be a concern, both in terms of how to get everything done in a short amount of time and in terms of how to respect the time of the employee, so that s/he does not burn out.

The synagogue-camp model seems to be a strongly connected one, but at least in the case of Wilshire Boulevard Temple and its camps, there is still room for improvement in this area. However, not every synagogue can support and sustain its own camp. Research suggests that the Nadiv model is adaptable but not replicable, in part because camps cannot have the types of relationships that Nadiv builds with every synagogue. So what might other models look like?

Debby spoke about a model that has been used at other camps in the past where a youth educator who works at a synagogue for the nine months of the school year is consistently hired for positions at the same camp. This allows the synagogue to pay someone for nine to ten months and know that this person will have a salary for twelve months of the year. It also allows this person to hone the experiential skills that come from working at camp and to bring the high level of education from the synagogue to the camp. This relationship would be beneficial to both the camps and the schools because the staff would really only be doing one full-time job at a time. Debby pointed out that while this system addresses the desire to have someone return to camp year after year, especially someone who is a fairly high-level educator, it does not address the concern of having someone think about camp year-round, and therefore does not provide the same quality of curriculum at camp. Debby's solution to this, which I think is a great one, would be to hire someone part time to write the curriculum for the camp.

I would even suggest that this would be a great job for a student while they are in school, studying to become a Jewish professional, particularly for someone who has studied education. For example, I would suggest that URJ camps hire Hebrew Union College education students as interns to do this work, and I am sure that community camps could also find similar partners to do similar work. These people would then be hired during the summer to work at the camp and provide curricular support for the counselors.

Another way that camps and religious schools could build connection would be for the camp and all of the religious schools that it serves to build a consulting consortium. In this model, each synagogue and the camp would be able to share with all of the other synagogues and the camp what they do well and help them improve in that area. This would allow the camp to build connections with all of the synagogues that it serves and allow the synagogues to build relationships with one another. Additionally, every organization would have the opportunity to improve based on the expertise of the other organizations.

Camps and synagogues each hold different information about the children and each care for the children in different ways. Nell Noddings contends that "care is basic in human life and not something to be regarded as an added attraction—that indeed all people want to be cared for" (2002, p. 11). If camps and synagogues worked together and were more connected, it would vastly improve care for the children. There are a whole variety of ways to accomplish this, so I will suggest only a few ways here. Camps will sometimes notify clergy when campers are kicked out of camp, but why should this only be done when the camper has done something wrong? Camps could contact clergy or educators to share when campers win sports tournaments, get the lead in the play, or are named captain for Maccabiah, also known as Color War. On the other side, religious schools could share exciting things that happened to students during the year with

the camps, for example, when a child learns a new prayer or makes the honor role. This type of sharing would allow both the camps and the schools to help the children feel more cared for. Another way that this might work would be for the camps and the schools to work out some sort of deal where the camps provide care packages on behalf of the school during the summer and the schools could reciprocate during the school year. Perhaps these could be personalized, or given out at a time when the educator, clergy, or counselor thinks the child would need it most.

Camps and religious schools could also build connections through curriculum. This would be a much more complex relationship to create, but I believe that it is doable. This model is built on the idea that many religious schools teach similar themes in particular grades and that camp could be used to bridge these curricular themes. In order for this idea to fully take root to the greatest extent and with the greatest effect possible, an organizing body would need to mandate the themes that would be taught in the religious schools. Organizations such as the URJ or the Association of Reform Jewish Educators (formerly National Association of Temple Educators) would be good candidates for this in the Reform Movement. Under this model, the synagogues would still be free to write their own curricula if they so desired, but they would be asked to keep it to particular, standardized themes. For more information on this model, please see the Curriculum Guide that goes along with this paper.

Building these partnerships can be particularly difficult because of the deeply entrenched traditions at and feelings towards these two types of organizations, but ultimately I believe that children will benefit from strong connections between camps and religious schools. These connections will help provide a lifetime of meaning for people because they will reinforce the idea that Judaism is not limited to just one arena. I believe that building partnerships will strengthen individual Jews and the Jewish community as a whole.

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